

# Challenges and Prospects of Public Administration Education and Training in Africa: The Case of Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

In more recent times, education and training in public administration have become very important because the public service is expected by the citizens to provide value for money spent. In developing countries, and especially in Africa, in view of the numerous developmental challenges, the call for effective public administration education and training has been extremely intensified. Consequently, there is the need to examine what governments are doing in this regard and whether initiatives being undertaken will yield the needed results. In this paper, the intention is to examine the challenges to and future prospects of public administration education and training in Ghana. What, exactly, are the major challenges facing public administration education and training in Ghana? Are there, indeed, any prospects for those pursuits? How can such education and training help in establishing the developmental state for which many, including international organizations, are calling?

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## KEYWORDS

education, Ghana, public administration, training

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Education and training in public administration have recently become important all over the world. Citizens—or what some scholars call customers and clients—expect the public service, national development's primary instrument, to deliver consistent value for money spent. Second, as some scholars note, the state is in flux—or, even, in crisis—because of the economic and technological changes that continue to sweep the globe and that in turn are altering the nature and functions of the state (Bogason & Brans, 2008; Coxhead et al. 2010; Kim, 2011; Mishra, 1998). The essence of public administration education and training in modern times is well captured by Greenwood, Robins, and Walkley (2000, p. 2):

The fundamental assumptions about the scope of state activity have changed during the decades since the end of World War Two.

The extravagance of highly interventionist “big government” commanding seemingly unlimited resources has been replaced by a definition of state responsibility which is more restricted and funded by fewer resources. On both the political left and right it has become accepted that free markets play a greater role in economic management; that the private sector has an increasing role in providing services, including law and order, which were previously the sole domain of the state; that individual responsibility is replacing state paternalism for large areas of welfare; and, in some cases, international and supranational arrangements are usurping the state's traditional role in managing external relations. The consequence of these developments for the public administrator is, in basic terms, “less to do” but with “far less resources with which to do it than in the past.”

The state thus continues to shed its major functions as provider of basic goods and services and facilitator of political, economic, and social development (Coxhead et al., 2010; Mishra, 1998; Rosenbaum, 1997).

Public administration is a key mechanism of society's attempts to sustainably improve the human condition by delivering essential services. Society therefore suffers when public administration is weak. As Mishra (1998) notes, public administration education and training need to be reinvented to enhance the work capacity of the public sector. The state and its main agent, the public bureaucracy, continue to be vital to service delivery and driving national development. To Mishra (1998),

as the effectiveness of the delivery of services by public agencies depends to a large extent on the caliber and competence of individuals manning public bureaucracy, it becomes an immediate objective and goal for every government to ensure that its public servants are educated and trained properly and adequately to meet the challenges posed by globalization and supra-national organizations on one hand, and web technologies on the other. Such an objective can be achieved if the standards and quality of the higher education system, particularly public administration education and training, are enhanced by adopting innovative methods. (p. 2.)

For this reason, many universities across the globe have developed public administration programs. In other cases, governments fund them.

In developing countries, especially in Africa, the numerous developmental challenges have intensified the call for effective public administration education and training. Africa is passing through critical times: not only are the socioeconomic and political structures of the continent undergoing phenomenal change, but so are people's expectations of greater opportunities and superior goods.

In all these instances, the capacity of the public sector to deliver critical services continues to erode rapidly, leading to serious capacity deficit that, as Kim comments (2011), has become a major issue in developing countries in general. Public sector capacity has declined as the role of the state and its resources for meeting economic crisis have shrunk, as the cost of governance has risen, and because of more complex problems. To Kim, more needs to be done, and it needs to be done better with less. Additionally, there "is the dilemma of rendering efficient and effective administrative support to people by a sprawling bureaucracy which has been labeled as 'status-quoised' and obstructive to the factors which could be harbingers of change" (Mishra, 2007, p. 96). It is thus necessary to examine what governments are doing in this regard, and whether initiatives being undertaken will yield the needed results.

In this paper I intend to examine the challenges to, and the future prospects of, public administration education and training in Ghana. Specifically, I will examine the extent to which they are helping individuals acquire the knowledge and skills to achieve organizational objectives and national development. Information on this subject when it comes to Ghana is inadequate, especially with respect to indigenous management (Dotse, 1991; Haruna, 2004). As Haruna argued (2004), public administration education and training in Ghana have narrowly focused on "the need to respond to the pressures of global forces, including Western nations, multinational corporations, and nongovernmental organizations, without paying as much attention to the uniqueness of the social, economic, and political experiences of Ghana" (p. 172). He has therefore called for a public administration education that will be more useful in

infusing training in generic courses with the knowledge and ethic for operating within the unique context of Ghana. To do this, curricula should provide not only the basic professional tools but also knowledge of and sensitivity to the multicultural dimensions required for judging public decisions in Ghanaian society. (p. 172)

What, exactly, are the major challenges facing public administration education and training in Ghana? Are there, indeed, any prospects for those pursuits? How can such education and training help in establishing the developmental state for which many, including international organizations, are calling?

The challenges in question continue to undermine the progress in the 1960s and 1970s toward making the subject a mainstream issue. They include the overwhelming acceptance of the superiority of business administration education over that of public administration; the inability to link recruitment to the public service to education and training in public administration; the generally unfavorable perception of the public sector; the failure of government to provide meaningful training for public and civil servants; and, above all, the serious lack of incentives (particularly remuneration) in the public sector compared with the private sector. Although these challenges are not unique to Ghana, what we find intriguing is the failure of Ghanaian policy makers, administrators, and scholars to learn from how other countries have met them, and from the literature on the necessity of public administration education and training in nation building.

Effective public administration and training have become crucial in view of the transition, under Ghana's structural adjustment program, from a more neoliberal state to one that is developmental, especially with the current democratic dispensation (Ayee, 2013; Haruna & Asante, 2011). In this regard, public servants are expected to influence national development; hence the urgent need to develop their capacity when it comes to policy development and service delivery. Public administration education and training are also more critical as Ghana attempts to further consolidate its burgeoning democracy and develop its capacities to manage its resources, especially the newly discovered oil, to avoid what the literature calls the "resource curse" that has befallen many resource-rich African countries. Public sector reform has been a critical element in developing an effective public administration in Ghana. Yet, despite the numerous reforms that have

been and are being undertaken, the public sector continues to perform below expectations (Ohemeng & Anebo, 2012; Ohemeng & Ayee, 2014). One reason is the inadequacies of education and training in public administration: They have failed to produce personnel who fully understand and appreciate public administration in general.

The case of Ghana merits attention for a number of reasons. It was the first African nation to gain independence from colonial rule; and, as noted by Ayee (2013), "Its political struggle shaped the struggle for the independence of most African countries." Since then it has become the "black star" of Africa, taking the lead on a number of fronts. It made the public sector the fulcrum of development, so that education and training in public administration became vital aspects of its developmental ethos, ones from which other African countries learned and continue to learn. Second, since the 1980s Ghana has been the poster child of the World Bank, assiduously implementing public sector reforms, making it a test case for its brethren African nations. They use its reforms in a number of areas in the public sector as a barometer—especially its recent adoption of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and democratic credentials. It was, predictably, the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to be visited by the first black president of the United States, following in the footsteps of his two predecessors.

Third, at the time of independence Ghana's public service, including its human resources, in terms of capacity far exceeded that of the now famous Asian Tigers. Yet, 30 years later, the Asian Tigers have transformed their public services and human resources to an extent that Ghana and other developing countries were expected by the World Bank to emulate; but the reality, in the words of one scholar, is that "by the end of 1982," Ghana "had completed the transition from a prosperous middle-income developing country with great hopes at independence to a nation suffering from Fourth World Poverty" (Herbst, 1993, p. 27). According to Hodder-Williams (1984, p. 233), "It would be absurd not to recognise the collapse, for

instance, of the Ghanaian state. To some extent, Ghana [was] a state only because the outside world assert[ed] that there [was] a Ghanaian state.” Ghana thus constitutes a suitable case study in getting public administration working through education and training; other African countries may learn from it. As Pellow and Chazan explained (1986, pp. 209–210), “The Ghanaian proclivity for experimentation has made Ghana into a veritable laboratory for the investigation of different approaches to endemic African problems.”

For this article, I used two primary methods of obtaining information. First I reviewed the extant literature on the subject, including studies explicitly on Ghana. Second, I conducted elite interviews with a number of people involved in public administration education and training in Ghana, including the president of a private university college; two heads of departments; two lecturers from, respectively, the Ghana Institute of Public Administration and the University of Ghana Business School; and three former public administration professors. Further information was obtained from a number of public servants. The interviews were conducted using the narrative approach, where interviewees were induced to tell their stories (Dodge & Foldy, 2005; Ospina & Dodge, 2005; Spector-Mersel, 2010).

A short review of the literature on public administration education and training is followed by a discussion of their historical development in Ghana. The next section deals with the challenges to, and prospects for, public administration and training there, and the final section concludes the paper.

### **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND THEIR BENEFITS**

It should be obvious that the right kind of public sector is indispensable to help humankind solve its many and complex problems. The quality of the education and training of today’s and tomorrow’s governmental employees and leaders must be improved (Greenwood et al. 1997). What, exactly, are public administration education and training, though? Much scholarly ink has been spilled in trying

to understand them. Education is primarily concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, whereas training is about developing the skills to do something (Jahn, 1981, pp. 97–99).

Education prepares people for relatively undifferentiated roles, positions, and work settings; training is concerned with an individual’s performance in a specific position in a given work setting (Jahn, 1981). Jahn (1981, p. 97) further notes, however:

Training is concerned with the role of performance of workers in organizational systems. More precisely, it is concerned with the development and maintenance of competencies to perform specific roles by persons holding positions in existing systems. In comparison, education is concerned with the more general growth and development of an individual. However, training cannot be strictly differentiated from education: the processes of learning involved in each are similar, as are the methods and techniques used in their implementation. Thus training and education are related, although the former focuses on the performance or predetermined tasks and the latter on personal maturation and growth.

In the public sector, training in public administration is a salient aspect of manpower development (Paul, 1983). To Paul, therefore, employee training and development are activities that are not only desirable, but ones to which an organization must commit resources if it is to maintain a viable and knowledgeable workforce.

There is still no consensus on what training is (Huque & Vyas, 2004). Management guru Mintzberg (1979) defines it as “the process by which job-related skills and knowledge are taught,” thus encompassing both formal classroom education and on-the-job training. This definition also shows their interdependence, and that they do not end with graduation from school.

Huque and Vyas (2004), on the other hand, in their study of public administration education

and training in India and Hong Kong, went yet further, and examined how they may affect behavior. They define training as “a process involving a sequence of programmed behaviour and facilitating the application of knowledge” (p. 19); Paul (1983) calls it “the process of developing or augmenting such knowledge, skills and attitudes in a person with a view to enabling him to apply them in his work situation” (p. 9). Similarly, Nti and Owusu-Ansah (1974) support the idea of training as a way to change behavior. They perceive it as “the process of helping individuals to gain competence in their present or future work through the acquisition and development of appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes” (p. 17).

As already noted, the complexity of what may be termed “wicked problems” in societies should make obvious the importance to them of public administration education and training. Huque and Vyas (2004) think that “the fundamental purpose of training is to provide organizations with manpower sufficiently skilled to meet the demands of a shifting work environment... [and] to avoid persistent and economically damaging shortages of skills, including those that could inhibit technological advancement.”

Balducci (1995) has identified two main purposes of training. It can be a means both of transmitting accepted knowledge, techniques, and values, and of modifying accepted knowledge and values. He notes that “in the first instance, training is an important tool for maintaining order and, in the second, training represents an instrument for change” (p. 63).

Stout (1993, p. 54) believes that education and training can benefit both the employer (organization) and the employee. For the organization, training, in particular, can lead to improved work performance, increased safety at work, and better staff motivation, and can provide more consistent customer (citizen) satisfaction. For the employees, on the other hand, benefits may include more job satisfaction, improved job performance, better career prospects, and greater salary expectations. For the public sector, Huque and Vyas (2004) observe, “Training of public servants is believed to facilitate the

entire efficient operation of public services. Identifying training needs and trends and anticipating and responding to future training needs enhances the efficiency of government operations” (p. 15).

The effect of such education and training on society in general can be significant. Apart from equipping public administrators with the needed skills to develop and implement policies, it can heighten sensitivity to social values: something made more urgent by globalization, where public administrators move among countries, especially from developed to developing ones, whether as consultants or project managers, or in other capacities. It is believed that such “sensitivity to social values and culture systems is an essential feature of efficient public service administration. Public administrators, therefore, need training if they are to be kept aware of changing cultural and social trends” (Huque and Vyas, 2004, p. 15).

Kroukamp (2007) is of the view that “the ability of the public service to deliver and expand basic services will decide whether the country becomes a stable political economy driving development in Africa or remains a volatile country beset by massive inadequacies in service delivery” (p. 86). That stability is achievable if public administrators are sufficiently trained to understand the needs of the country, because such knowledge of and sensitivity to multicultural dimensions will help shape and judge public decisions (Haruna, 2004). Thus, “public administration knowledge can be used by practitioners to frame problems, evaluate options for appropriate action and identify conditions for successful implementation” (Bogason & Brans, 2008, p. 90).

It will also enable public administrators to tailor policies to essential developmental needs, as well as to get them properly implemented, because they may then better understand the local environment and improve the performance of the administrative systems of government (Paul, 1983). Even if public servants have adequate education when entering government service, they may still require training to induct them and adapt them to their new jobs, and to upgrade their skills to match the changing task

requirements (Paul, 1983). As the United Nations has noted (1998, p. 4), “Public managers need more training in the new realities and skills which are required for more effective performance in increasingly complex environments.”

### **THE GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GHANA**

In this section, I briefly review the historical development of public administration education and training in Ghana, and follow that with a short discussion about the schools and training institutes that offer them. Although the subject has not been entirely ignored hitherto, the focus, particularly with respect to institutions, has been limited to the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA), and—to some degree—the University of Ghana Business School. The rationale for looking at other institutions is that they can help enhance the capacity of public administrators with training in policy-oriented topics, and in the policy process more generally (United Nations, 1998).

Unlike other developing countries, such as China, Egypt, and India, Ghana does not have a long history of public administration education (Greenwood et al., 1998; Haruna, 2004; Haruna & Asante, 2011; Mishra, 1998). The colonial period saw some forms of such training only on a limited scale; nevertheless, according to Haruna (2004, p. 175), it “helped to build a core of public employees and created a professional public service system, enhancing thereby opportunities for Ghanaians to assume responsibilities in public employment.” Unfortunately, this education and training were meant for the colonial expatriates, at the expense of local civil servants, who occupied the lower ranks (Adu, 1969).

As in other African countries, the study of public administration in Ghana really began in the early 1960s, when governments of newly independent states “were faced with the problem of expanding public services at a time of large-scale premature retirement and resignations by expatriate officers” (Adedeji, 1974, p. 13). Furthermore, as Adedeji noted (1974), “Governments were themselves committed to

Africanization of the administrative post. The need to provide public administration education was therefore most keenly felt.” This was especially true in Ghana, where the immediate post-independence government saw it as a way to rid itself of all vestiges of colonialism, resolve labor force problems, and ensure continuity and growth of the efficiency of the civil service (Ayee, 2001a; Nti & Owusu-Ansah, 1974). It was a policy, however, that, according to Owusu and Ohemeng (2012, p. 123), “laid the foundation for capacity problems.” The government thus established capacity-building institutions, such as the GIMPA, the Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS), the Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC), and the Management Development Productivity Institute (MDPI), to train personnel for public agencies and various decentralized bodies.

In Ghana, institutions for public administration education and training can be placed in one of two categories: government-owned or, on the other hand, government-managed institutions that primarily engage in non-degree training programs. A good example is the CSTC; more recently, there are the ILGS and university-related institutions (offering a degree or equivalent program) (Ayee, 2001c; Paul, 1983). The latter dominates the Ghanaian scene (Ayee, 2001c).

### **The Political Science Department at the University of Ghana and Public Administration<sup>1</sup>**

The Department of Political Science was established in the 1961–62 academic year. Until then, and during the period of the University of Ghana’s affiliation with London University, a course in government was taught in other departments. Public administration is one of the four branches of the discipline currently studied there, and a specialization leads to a BA (Honours) with Public Administration. Courses include an introduction to public administration, organization theory, public policy making, development administration, the public policy process in Ghana, human resource development and management, decentralization and local government administration,

public enterprises, comparative public administration, politics and the bureaucracy in Africa, public finance administration, policy monitoring and evaluation, and public sector reforms and social development (University of Ghana, 2012). The department also offers a PhD in political science, but students can specialize in public administration.

### **Public Administration at the University of Ghana Business School<sup>2</sup>**

The University of Ghana Business School, formerly known as the School of Administration, was established in 1962 by the College of Administration of what was then the University College of the Gold Coast. It began as a department of commerce in the then Kumasi College of Technology (Djan, 2007). The school currently has six departments and two training centers. One of the six is the department of public administration and health services management. Its core objective is to train those working in the public sector, and those who intend to do so, in contemporary public management ideas and knowledge as well as in sector-specific practical analytical skills.

The department currently has two programs at the undergraduate and five at the graduate level. The former are the public administration and health services management options, leading to a BSc in Administration. At the graduate level are the Master of Public Administration (MPA); the Master of Business Administration (MBA), Health Services Management; the Master of Philosophy in Public Administration; the Master of Philosophy in Health Services Management; and the recently introduced PhD in Public Administration.

The MPA, the core graduate program until the MBA started, was introduced in the 1974–75 academic year and covered such subjects as Public Policy Analysis, Public Policy Towards Business, and Urban Policy Analysis. These courses emphasized an analytical approach to the country's myriad problems. It was in this context that Public Policy Analysis was made a required subject, while Public Policy Towards Business and Urban Policy Analysis courses were set as electives (Dotse, 1991).

### **Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration<sup>3</sup>**

Established in 1969, the GIMPA, an offshoot of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), was the first institute to focus solely on public administration education and training in Ghana (Haruna & Kannae, 2013). Its emergence has been attributed to the recommendations of the Mills-Odoi Commission in 1967, which called for an institution to train bureaucrats (Aye, 2001a; Haruna, 2004).

The main objectives of GIMPA were (a) promoting the study of public administration and management in Ghana; (b) developing greater management awareness of the changing values and needs of the community, and the best responses to them; (c) educating senior executives in the best ways of maintaining the vitality and integrity of their organizations, thereby assisting the economic development of the country; (d) arousing and maintaining the interest and participation of management in the development of the country; (e) promoting understanding and cooperation between government and other public bodies, and between persons and bodies engaged in private enterprise; and (f) assisting Ghanaian enterprises in achieving—through better management—increased productivity and profits, and more effective cost control (Haruna & Kannae, 2013).

To those ends, GIMPA was supposed to serve as a practical training ground for the newly recruited, as well as for existing public servants who wanted to upgrade their knowledge of the public sector, by offering them a professional qualification. After obtaining a university degree, public servants were thus expected to have a professional degree; and it was supposed to be attained at GIMPA by nine months of training.

To achieve its objectives, GIMPA, according to Haruna (2004), annually offers two main categories of courses. The first, for in-service professionals, emphasizes the skill areas of economic planning, research, budgeting, procurement and finance, human resources, marketing and public relations, organization theory and practice, administrative skills, administrative law, civil service rules and

regulations, and comparative administrative systems. The second category includes tailor-made or in-plant courses designed to address specific agency needs. More recent offerings prompted by Ghana's reform efforts involve training in strategic planning, performance measurement, contracting out, and privatization procedures.

### **The Management Development and Productivity Institute<sup>4</sup>**

The Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI) is an institution that offers short-term management training to civil and public servants. It was established in October 1967 under a joint Ghana Government, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and International Labour Organization (ILO) project. The MDPI replaced its forerunner, the National Productivity Centre (NPC), which had been established in June 1964 by the Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP) government as part of the then National Planning Commission. It was incorporated as a parastatal by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1077 of July 1976. The institute was formally handed over to the Ghanaian Government by the UNDP and ILO in 1977, when the joint sponsorship ended (MDPI, 2006).

The institute exists to promote increased productivity in both public and private organizations, primarily in Ghana, to enable them to contribute to the sustainable growth of the economy. It achieves this through "Productivity Improvement Activities," "Management Development Programs," and "Research and Publications and their Dissemination."

Its main objectives are to bring about (a) practical aspects of training and problem solving to grow managerial capacity and productivity; (b) consultancy services to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness; and (c) macro-micro economic studies, enquiries, and research to identify management techniques and practices that will improve and develop the standard of management in all aspects. In terms of training, it offers courses in general management, industrial engineering,

marketing, financial management, and oil and gas management. These are, however, short courses that usually run no more than 10 days.

### **Civil Service Training Centre**

The Civil Service Training Centre (CSTC) is one of four service-owned training institutions in the country. The others are the Government Secretarial School, the Cartographic School, and the Institute of Technical Supervision. The CSTC is of interest because it engages in management training, while the rest are for secretarial and other specialized programs. The Colonial Government established the CSTC in 1953 to assist the Establishment Secretariat—now the Office of the Head of Civil Service—in training lower- and middle-level civil servants. After independence, it was at the forefront of the government's Africanization policy—which, as already noted, was to build the capacity of civil service personnel. Today the Centre is still a source of knowledge for civil and public service training. Its four major functions are to offer (a) induction courses for all new entrants into the service; (b) promotion courses for lower- and middle-level civil service officers; (c) short-term, competency-based courses for its target population; and (d) finally, tailor-made courses for institutions on request.

### **Institute of Local Government Studies**

The Institute of Local Government Studies (ILGS) came into being in 1999 as a project of the Ministry of Local Government and as part of an effort by the Government of Ghana to equip the local government system and administrators to further development and reduce poverty. With some assistance from the World Bank and the Royal Netherlands Government, structures, equipment, literature, technical assistance, training, and education activities became available the same year. It was not until 2003 that an act of Parliament (Act 647) formally set up the ILGS.

The institute recognizes the importance of technical competence, especially of the bureaucracy, in best using available resources. The ILGS also recognizes that the bureaucracy must walk a tightrope in managing competing interests

while including diverse local perspectives (Ofei-Aboagye, 2004, p. 1). It offers education and training at the postgraduate level, with specialization in Masters of Sciences in Local Government Administration and Organization, Local Government Financial Management, Local Economic Development, and Environmental Science, Policy, and Management.

### **CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

In this section, I examine the challenges to public administration education and training in Ghana. First, it is necessary to understand that since independence, the growth of tertiary education in Ghana has been exponential (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). A search of the website of the National Accreditation Board, for example, shows that public and private institutions classified as tertiary number not less than 80. With such growth, some of the identified challenges might have been expected to diminish. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The burgeoning of tertiary education has had no significant impact on the study of or training in public administration.

#### **From Public Administration Schools to Schools of Business**

A careful search of the programs offered by the rapidly emerging public and private universities reveals that almost all have a faculty or department of business administration, but few have departments of public administration. The one or two public administration courses that exist are subsumed under business administration and, for the most part, deal with only one or two aspects of the subject. Furthermore, none of these schools offers any courses relating to public policy analysis or, even, development administration or public management. This is not surprising, since these schools are profit-making enterprises, and public administration sells less well than its business cousin.

Compounding this problem are those that accompany existing public administration schools becoming business schools, and existing public administration programs migrating to business schools. Debate persists over whether public and business administrations can coexist.

Although a number of scholars have argued that their focus joins these schools like Siamese twins, others argue that they are polar opposites, require differing management skills, and should not be housed together (Bowman & Thompson, 2013; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Ventriss, 1991; Wooldridge, 1987). Second, as Pfeffer and Fong argued (2002), the power of the business schools is ill founded: "Although business schools and business education have been commercial successes, there are substantial questions about the relevance of their educational product and doubts about their effects on both the careers of their graduates and on management practice" (pp. 78–79).

That the compatibility of public and business administrations and the superiority of business over public administration are fallacies seems not to have dawned on Ghanaian school administrators, especially those in the public sector (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Bowman & Thompson, 2013; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Starkey & Tempest, 2005; Zell, 2001). Thus did the School of Administration become the University of Ghana Business School, with overwhelming emphasis on business programs, eclipsing public administration, despite protests from a significant number of prominent people both in and outside of the university. The consequence of this change, lamented the head of the department, is that the public administration department has now become an island in the school. It lacks the resources, including human resources, to run its programs. It is hardly to be wondered at that in 2009, the public administration department was "referred to as an endangered species. At that time, we had only four faculty members, and I was the youngest. All the others are almost about to retire," says the head of department.

Similarly, GIMPA, which was established specifically to train for the public service, has turned its attention to business programs, governance, and law. The Public Services School, with significant programs in public administration, and its resources have nearly vanished because GIMPA became a university with fee-paying students and lost its subvention from the Government Consolidated Fund.

A comparative analysis of the faculties at the Faculty of Business and the Public Services School shows vast differences. Although the former boasts more than 20 members, the latter has only seven, three of whom are due to retire in the next year or so. The School thus relies on outsiders to help carry on its public sector training, and the young staff are made to bear larger teaching loads and other academic work. No one can be shocked at current developments, because this untoward circumstance is just one of the many reasons the Public Services School has amalgamated with the School of Governance, with the latter taking over GIMPA's teaching and training. For example, while the School still retains its certificate programs, as well as the Bachelor of Public Administration degree program, major degree and postgraduate (master's and doctoral) courses are offered by the Business and Governance Schools. Modern management techniques, such as performance management, are offered at these schools to public servants not only from Ghana, but from across Africa. Similarly, the African Capacity Building Project, an initiative of the World Bank to build the capacity of public servants on the continent, is now situated in the School of Governance.

Siffin (1976, p. 69) is of the view that

after two decades of building institutes and other arrangements for public administration, education, training, research, and consultancy business schools, industrial engineering schools, and economic development institutes are preferred instruments of education and training for the managers and designers of programs and projects in developing countries.

This is unfortunate. Siffin (1976) continues that these alternative instruments are not likely to address essential features of the training and education agenda. We need to revisit this notion of the superiority of business over public administration if the dream of building a strong developmental state is to be realized, because such a state requires an effective public administration system, especially when the ability of business schools to produce effective

managers is in question (Bennis & O'Toole, 2005; Bowman & Thompson, 2013; Grey, 2004; Miles, 1985; Mintzberg, 2004).

### **Public Sector Recruitment and Retention Policies**

The long-term damage that poor recruiting policies and decisions can inflict on an organization includes high training and development costs caused by poor performance and high turnover. These, in turn, undermine staff morale, the production of high-quality goods and services, and organizational memory (Richardson, n.d.). Richardson further notes that

no longer are citizens content to grumble about poorly produced goods and services and the underqualified, untrained employees who provide them. As societies become more critical and litigious, public service organisations must seek all possible avenues for improving their output and providing the satisfaction their clients require and deserve. (p. 4)

One of the best ways to achieve this improvement is a recruitment policy that ensures that those recruited to the public service have the qualifications and at least a working knowledge of the public sector environment (Collins, 2008). That knowledge can be gained through public administration experience and training. Knowledge of public administration can further reduce the cost to governments of training public servants (Collins, 2008).

In Ghana, a critical challenge is that a close integration of public administration education and public service training with broader personnel policies, such as recruitment, promotion, and retention, has never been accomplished (Paul, 1983). That failure, and the open recruitment policy idea, are resulting in significant employee turnover as graduates jump immediately into areas they consider their domain of training. In an interview with the chief director of a ministry, for example, she lamented that all the men who were recruited with her had left the civil service for greener pastures—especially the private sector—within a little over two years. She believed that these individuals may not have understood the public sector

environment, and therefore felt that they would be better off in places where their education and training were more directly relevant.

On the question of the effect of public sector recruitment and public administration education and training, an interviewee noted:

People get into government irrespective of the courses they take at the university. The Office of the Head of the Civil Service employs generalists and, therefore, recruitment policy does not target people with a public administration background. There should be a recruitment policy that should target those with a public administration background. If this is done, people will be rushing to the universities to do these courses in order to get employment in the civil service. Thus, there is the need to change public sector recruitment policy.

Many think that such a policy, and the subsequent education and training, can effectively promote the concept of public service as “a calling.” People will appreciate the essence of public sector ethics and values, which are critical (Kennedy & Malatesta, 2010). As already noted, citizens of today’s world need not just public servants, but also those who understand what public service is all about: especially upholding its integrity through values like honesty, transparency, accountability, and responsibility.

### **The Generally Perceived Image of the Public Sector**

The public sector’s image and its unattractive employment conditions have made public administration education unpopular. The world over, the public service is described as corrupt, overly bureaucratic, staffed with lazy and unresponsive people, untrustworthy, irresponsible, and so on. In most countries, public perception is very negative and extremely cynical (Āijala, 2001; Haque, 2001). It has been reinforced by persistent criticisms from political leaders and international organizations, especially the World Bank, which continues to treat the service as a scapegoat for its own shortcomings (Haque, 2001, p. 73).

Ghana is no exception. According to an interviewee, “80 percent of undergraduate students do not want to specialize in public administration because they are of the view that they do not want to work in what some of them consider a degraded working environment or organizations.”

It must be acknowledged that the public service in Ghana has not helped itself carve out a good name. Inefficiencies and corruption are rife. Rebranding is therefore imperative, and one can only hope it will inspire students to take the public sector seriously, and to seek to enter it.

### **Public Administration Courses and Pedagogical Approaches**

In this paper, I have thus far considered the courses and course structures of public administration education and training in Ghana (Ayee, 2001a; Haruna, 2004). Most such courses are stuck in traditional Western managerial thinking. Although nothing is inherently wrong with this, especially from a theory perspective, the practicality of adapting such theories to local situations has not been addressed, and perhaps will not be in the near future. For most public servants, though such a theoretical focus explains the urgency of adapting, more relevant to them would be applying the theories to cases in Ghana.

A number of interviewees noted that performance management is taught at these institutions with the literature of, and examples from, the developed world, and with little, if any, literature on the Ghanaian situation or, even, on developing countries. Trainees are not even taught the details of filling out appraisal forms, so they are filled out incorrectly, systematically sabotaging the entire appraisal system in the public sector. As Ayee has noted (2001b, p.8):

The curriculum content of the institutes does not show concern for and sensitivity to environmental management. This is a serious oversight that must be addressed because of the crucial role environment issues have assumed in Ghana and other sub-Saharan African countries. Administrative aspects of environmental con-

cern must not be far less established but be present in the curricula of the training institutes.

Ayee (2001b) has also noted some deficiencies in the Ghanaian training programs. The courses for public servants are very academic, not practical, and the mode of delivery prevents participants from exchanging practical experiences. Most of them are still delivered as lectures and seminars with few or no visual or audiovisual aids. Ayee also observed that while degree-granting institutions offer four-year undergraduate and two-year postgraduate programs, all others offer only short programs ranging from two to four weeks. Theory and the practical aspect of public administration must thus be integrated with the existing curriculum (Bogason & Brans, 2008; Broadnax, 1997). Students will then see the connections between the course itself, its theory-based underpinnings, and the practice of public administration, and not complain of too much theory (Broadnax, 1997). Finally, Ayee thinks there is not enough educational material on public administration, public policy analysis, and management relevant to the specific needs of Ghana and other African countries. The publications on public policy, administration, and leadership and management in Ghana are inadequate. The literature used by the institutes slants strongly toward issues and problems of the Western world.

#### **Attitude Toward Training in Local Institutions**

Civil servants' attitudes to training, especially in Ghana, are currently quite unenthusiastic. Many public servants prefer training abroad. Although this stance may be justified by the inadequacy of the training material, especially the literature, these individuals see training abroad as an opportunity to travel at the expense of the state—even as a kind of holiday. One interviewee lamented that the money spent by such individuals could be used to obtain the training literature in Ghana.

#### **Ineffective Performance Management System in the Public Services**

One of the most common means of identifying the training needs of individuals in any organ-

ization is an effective performance appraisal system (Bawole et al., 2013; Cleveland, Murphy, & Williams, 1989; Dotse, 1989). A manager or training director must first engage in needs analysis, gathering information about the utility of proceeding with developing, implementing, and evaluating a particular program. A variety of information sources are searched and integrated (Herbert & Doverspike, 1990). Dotse (1989) has identified a number of advantages of a good performance appraisal system. It promotes a process view of training, which is itself a process in the personnel and human resources management system of the country. It provides the data for promoting a variety of personnel and human resources management functions, and the rationale for particular human resources development programs.

Unfortunately, though performance appraisal continues to be part of the management process of the public sector in Ghana, as a technique for identifying the training needs of public servants it leaves much to be desired (Bawole et al., 2013). Annual appraisal forms, including those used to identify training needs, are not submitted. In fact, according to some interviewees, performance appraisal (in the civil service especially) is something not enthusiastically done. The system is so haphazard that it prevents managers from identifying the specific training needs of individuals in the organizations and from informing training institutions of needs, so that they can tailor their courses and programs (Bawole et al., 2013). In other words, inadequate public administration education and training has become the norm. How unsurprising, then, that, as Ayee noted (2001b), many participants in training programs complain bitterly about them.

#### **THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GHANA**

Do Ghanaian public administration education and training have a future? This section focuses on some of the things being achieved, especially by training institutions, to enhance these enterprises. Despite some of the challenges just noted, there is hope. A number of developments are under way that I believe bode well.

### **Asserting the Independence of Public Administration Departments**

The first development is the creation by some private universities of public administration departments that concentrate on training students for the public service and on enhancing the skills and knowledge capacities of those already in it. They thus complement the work of the traditional institutions. As already noted, almost all of the private institutions have subsumed public administration under business administration programs.

Some schools have realized the problem and are preparing to change. Institutions such as Mountcrest University College and the University of Professional Studies have developed proposals to create public administration departments. Mountcrest has gone even further and proposed a unit that will study public enterprise in Ghana and will help train individuals working in related organizations. Similarly, the Department of Public Administration at the University of Ghana Business School (UGBS) has also developed new programs, such as MSc in Climate Change and Sustainable Development with special reference to Ghana. A number of these institutions have also introduced courses in Information Communication Technology: specifically, E-government.

### **Departments and Institutes Building the Human Capacity of Public Administration**

The incapacity of institutions, especially their human incapacity, to undertake public administration education and training—of which Ayee (2001b) complained in his study—is also being addressed at all institutions in this field. As noted earlier, for instance, in 2009 the faculty in the public administration department at UGBS was so small that it was referred to as “an endangered species.” It has to be said the situation was not unique to this department; it was something that affected all of its counterparts in the other schools as well. Fortunately, a young cadre of public administration and policy scholars is emerging; not to mention others, from abroad, who are now teaching and researching on topics hitherto ignored. The Department of Public Administration at UGBS

now stands at 15 faculty members, a significant number of them holding PhDs. Others are working on their doctorate programs.

The same is true at GIMPA; indeed, the merging of the School of Public Services with that of Governance has boosted capacity. The GIMPA now also has the Public Sector Management Training Programme (PSMTP), constituting one of the many responses to the multifaceted capacity needs (capacity building, retention, utilization, and regeneration) in sub-Saharan Africa. This program is funded by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), and is designed to help equip African countries with critical development challenges. It provides both graduate and short-term professional, non-degree training in Public Sector Management.

### **The Development of Doctoral and Other Programs in Public Administration**

Doctoral programs in some schools have also increased proportionally in recent years, while others are in the process of developing them. For instance, the Department of Public Administration at UGBS and the School of Governance at GIMPA now have doctoral programs in public administration. The Political Science Department at the University of Ghana now emphasizes admitting to its doctoral program students who will specialize in public administration and public policy. Mountcrest University College is also developing a doctoral program in public administration. Furthermore, many students are pursuing public administration doctoral degrees compared to those of business administration. Such developments are extremely promising.

### **Aggressive Marketing and Other Strategic Developments**

In the sheer number of students, public administration totals pale in comparison to business administration students. These departments have commenced aggressive recruiting through a number of strategies. An interviewee commented that “marketing public administration is a big problem. Students come into the UGBS not interested in public administration

but, rather, more interested in the business sector and, hence, business administration. The problem is that we are not marketing the department.” To this purpose, the interviewee continued, “We are doing an outreach program with the OHSC and the PSC to link up with stakeholders so that we will be recognized as an institution that trains senior public servants, for example.” The interviewee continued that, in the high schools, “We are setting up a counselling unit to help explain the essence of public administration as a program to be taken for one’s own development, and that of Ghana in general.”

### CONCLUSION

Public administration education and training programs in Ghana and other developing countries are in flux. The reason is the many challenges confronting them, and my intention in this paper was to identify, explain, and understand some of those challenges. Recognizing the importance of the state in the country’s development after years of the neoliberal policies that have hollowed it out demands such a study. The negative impact on the capacity of the public sector to develop and implement policies designed to promote the overall development of the state has been colossal. Other reasons are the recognition of the role of the state in national development, and the quest to become a developmental state with emphasis on the public sector. Ghana wants and needs to reduce poverty and ensure economic growth as well as manage its natural resources (especially oil) in such a way as to deal with the sector’s numerous problems. That recognition calls for effective development of public sector institutions, especially the bureaucracy, to be able to deal with the many attendant challenges.

Building the developmental public sector, however, calls for effective public administration education and training for those already working in it as well as for those who aspire to do so in the near future. We live in an environment where the state is undergoing rapid transformation. Indeed, and as Fitzgerald noted (2007, p. 125), “The rate of change and transformation evident in the strategic and

institutional environment, the challenges of nation building and globalization, as well as the overall complexity of the ongoing developmental challenges” demands well-trained public administrators who are well versed in both policy development and implementation. I thus agree with Adedeji, who in 1974 stated that

what African governments need in future years are not intelligent amateurs in administration but officials who possess specific skills in administration and management (e.g. personnel administration, budgetary planning and financial management, etc.). Breadth must be replaced by depth; the generalist has to give way to the functional expert. (p. 21)

Furthermore, effective public administration education and training can contribute to and enhance democracy. Modern public administrators have moved from the traditional role as the custodian for developing and implementing public policy to enhance and strengthen the role of citizens into the process of development. We live in an era where citizen participation in public service as well as collaboration, including co-production, has become the norm. To this end, and as King, Feltey, and Susal noted (1998), public administrators are to take initiative to talk with citizens; to establish one-on-one relationships. Go out and get democracy; don’t separate yourself from your job. Public administrators must realize that they are citizens also, and think about their lives and plan participation efforts accordingly. King et al. go on to argue that public servants should be sure that public projects are advertised so that people are informed.

The challenges facing public administration and training in Ghana are serious ones, and they must not be glossed over by the government or, especially, school administrators, whether in public or private institutions. A critical national discussion about them will ensure that public administration education and training, which appear to be subservient to business administration, put their clothes on, so to speak, and reassert themselves as major players in developmental issues. To incite such discussion,

I have identified a number of initiatives being taken by individuals, departments, and schools in general to enhance the value of public administration education and training in Ghana, and to rouse them from their deep lassitude. Although these initiatives are laudable, it is important that institutions take bolder steps, including changing the way public administration education and training are administered in the country. I concur with Kim (2011), who cogently argued that

public administration schools and training institutes should provide effective education and training to prospective students and/or trainees to build their capacities and competencies, but some schools and institutes may not meet such new demands. Therefore, standards for educational and training programs should be developed and broadly exercised. In other words, it is necessary to develop appropriate standards for educational and training programs through proper review or accreditation in order to improve public sector performance. Many schools and training institutes deliver numerous programs for prospective students and public sector employees, but the quality of such programs is sometimes in question. In that regard, a professional review or an accreditation system should be developed and utilized for the development of educational and training programs (p. 17).

If such initiatives are undertaken properly, we believe, the emperor will no longer be naked, to the relief and benefit of all.

- 2 The University of Ghana Business School was formerly known as the School of Administration. During this period, business and public administration programs were in tandem. The name change occurred in the early 2000s, and has significantly affected the public administration aspect of the school.
- 3 For more on GIMPA, see P. F. Haruna and S. Asante (2011).
- 4 This information is taken from the Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI) website <http://www.mdpihana.org>.

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## NOTES

- 1 For more on this, see D. K. Greenstreet and J. Nti (1974).

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