

EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TUTORS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE EASTERN REGION OF GHANA

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ABSTRACT

There has been an increasing acceptance over the years that teachers are the oil that lubricates the engine of education in society. If that is so, then tutors who teach other teachers are seen as the most valued in society. Continuing education of tutors has therefore been identified as an essential ingredient for the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes of tutors to help them enhance their delivery effectively and efficiently. The study examined the influence of demographic characteristics of tutors and their participation in higher education. Four colleges out of six in the Eastern Region of Ghana were sampled conveniently. These were: Mount Mary College of Education, Somanya, Presbyterian College of Education, Akropong, Presbyterian Women College of Education, Aburi and Seventh Day Adventist College of Education, Asokore-Koforidua. The respondents for the study were purposively sampled out of the tutor population in the colleges. The targeted population was all tutors who had either completed their master's degree or were pursuing master's degree programmes. They were 122 in number comprising 188 tutors and 4 principals. The study revealed that though a significant percentage of tutors had salaries as the only source of income to cater to their needs and their family's needs. It did not discourage them from pursuing higher education albeit they had financial support from spouses and family members.

Keywords: higher education, demographic characteristics, tutors, age-cohort, physiological needs, lecturer level

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Teachers are among the strongest and most potent occupational force in the world promoting the well-being of society in all areas whether rural, urban, industrial or economically underdeveloped. Teachers like other professionals, therefore, need time to update their skills, add to their skills, add to their knowledge of subject matter and learn effective strategies to impart their knowledge to the children they teach and to society at large. Learning to learn is the new concept of education, but teachers can only learn when there is some form of motivation. Every profession is built upon a body of knowledge and skills, which is constantly changing. Tutors in colleges of education embark on continuing education to enhance their knowledge and skills to improve on things in their colleges or embark on their personal ambitions.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is generally acknowledged that education and training are a continuing and lifelong process (Knowles 1980; Houles 1980 and Clyne 1997). All over the world, no longer can a person's education be associated exclusively with the period of induction and learning which occurs in the early years. It is a process that goes on through career years and beyond. This is clearly evident in all professions of which teaching is one category.

Teacher training colleges have existed since Ghana's independence. Initially, individuals with Middle School Leaving Certificates (MSLC) were admitted to pursue a two-year course to acquire Certificate 'B' (Cert B). Thereafter, graduates from these institutions with the Cert 'B' taught for some years and went back to the teacher training colleges to pursue another two-year programme to acquire Teachers Certificate 'A' (Cert A) Post 'B' qualifications.

To meet the challenges of the middle school system, Cert 'A' (4 years) and Cert 'A' (two-year) post-secondary programmes were introduced in the teacher training colleges. In this case, persons with MSLC were admitted directly to pursue a four-year programme to acquire a Certificate 'A' qualification. This system virtually replaced the Cert 'B' and Cert 'A' Post 'B' programmes. Graduates from secondary schools were also admitted to pursue programmes in the teacher training colleges for two years to acquire Cert 'A' Post Secondary (Post-Sec) qualifications.

Due to the introduction of the two-year Certificate 'A' (Post-Sec) programme, the four-year certificate 'A' programme was gradually phased out. The two-year Cert 'A' (Post-Sec) programmes for Ordinary Level holders were made three years upon which those who participated in the programmes acquired Certificate 'A' (Three-Year Post-Sec). This educational system was in place until the introduction of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) systems in the late nineteen eighties. In anticipation of these systems of education, the two-year Certificate 'A' (Post-Sec.) which was upgraded to three-year Certificate 'A' (Post-Sec) became firmly established and subsequently the Certificate 'A' (4 years) was completely phased out. Nevertheless, the main purpose of these colleges remained the training of teachers for the country's basic schools (Ghana Education Service, Documentation, 2010).

As expected in every organizational structure, every institution has a policy governing its operations, and educational institutions are not different. Educational policy is driven by different priorities, which are dependent upon the social, political, cultural and economic contexts. It is also informed by national and international concerns and initiatives expressed in elements such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), and the 1992 Constitution.

According to Hargreaves & Fullan 1992, teacher education or development as is used by many teacher educators is a complex, multi-faceted process, made up of initial teacher training, in-service training or continuing education and lifelong education hence the need to improve on the education of the teacher.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Demographic characteristics of tutors pursuing higher education

Knowledge about student characteristics and motivators help us understand who is likely to participate and, conversely, why others choose not to participate. Knox's (1977) developmental-stage orientation of adult life stresses the importance of understanding an individual's contextual situation, that is, their family, work, and community roles; physical condition; personality; and earning interests which all affect the adults' ability and willingness to participate in adult education. Further complicating the issue, deterrence to participation is exasperated by a prospective student's perception of the magnitude of his problems. In other words, "deterrents" is a multidimensional concept. No single factor appears to cause nonparticipation; however, individual student characteristics and life circumstances appear to have the greatest impact on participation (Kerka, 1986).

Knowles (1980) maintains that knowing the personal characteristics of learner's is an important aspect of planning learning courseware and strategies and more important factors that are important to participation and success in learning programmes. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), the findings of the UNESCO study states that individuals who pursue higher education programmes are over twenty years old, either married or unmarried, male and female, and often employed either part-time or full-time in professional and technical occupations and usually live away from the cities. In related research conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics in the United States on the profile of participants in higher education programmes, it was clear that students with characteristics related to family and work responsibilities were more likely to participate.

According to Holmberg, (1995) and Thompson and Melody (1998) the age range of these learners are mostly between twenty and forty years olds usually with a dependent or more. Comparing this information with Havighurst (1961) Developmental Tasks and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is not surprising that persons within the middle-age tend to take advantage of available learning opportunities. Most people at that age are working to meet their physiological needs and establishing their families while at the same time learning to enhance their competencies for job security and improved income. Sargant (1997) came out with the observations that participation in learning programmes decrease with each successive age cohort- with 86 per cent of 17-19-year-olds; 43 per cent of 35-44 years old and 19 per cent of 65-74 years old. It is evident from earlier works done on participation in distance learning that most learners are either in full-employment or part-time workers.

Concerning the sex that dominates in distance learning, Kwapong (2008) and Hunte (2010) identified that more women participated in distance education. Though the study of telecourses participants by Sheets (1992) also revealed that two-thirds of the learners were women, varied findings emerge from other studies possibly depending on the socio-demography and the nature of the programme used for the study. Osei's (2010) study at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology revealed that more men participated in the Executive Masters Business Programme than women. It was generally evident that more men participate in recurrent education than women.

On the contrary to the above, the societal perception of women and their productive and reproductive roles affect their participation in formal education. Society perceives women as homemakers and childminders hence any activity that takes them from such normal schedules is frowned upon. As a result, women find it difficult to embark on further studies of any kind, especially at their adult stage when they have began families (Evan 1995; Compora 2003; Przymus 2004).

A study conducted by UNESCO (1998) on women and higher education also show that despite improvements during the last two or three decades, access to higher education remains a problem for women in many countries. While women have fairly equal access to higher education in the more developed regions where they comprise 52 per cent of tertiary students, their share of tertiary education in the less developed regions ranges from 33 per cent in China to 49 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the least developed countries, only 27 per cent of women reach the tertiary level. Poor access to higher education is accompanied by the under-representation of women in science and technology and clustering of women in the traditional female studies of arts, humanities, languages, education, nursing and medicine. In many countries, women's enrolment also decreases as they move up in the higher education system.

A Commonwealth survey (1998) also reveals that the Commonwealth average of women participant in higher education was 24 per cent. The proportion of women decreased significantly as women moved up the academic and occupational ladder. Large numbers of women were not clustered in the wings waiting to step up. Only at the lecturer level women begin to be represented in numbers that equal or come close to those of their male colleagues, but the average for the Commonwealth was only 33.8 per cent. The pattern that emerges suggests that women are being appointed at the lecturer level but either get stuck at this level or drop out of academic life, unable to combine family and academic commitments.

Persons with characteristics related to work and family responsibilities are more likely to participate in higher education programmes. In particular, individuals who are older, financially independent, married or had dependents than their counterparts who fall below this category. Generally, studies have revealed that adult learners are becoming a fast-growing segment of higher education (Kim and Merriam 2004).

It has frequently been claimed that work experience can contribute to higher educational standards in schools and higher education can contribute to the development of a flexible, highly skilled and enterprising labour force. This potential was endorsed by the Dearing Report on higher education, although there is little research evidence about the contribution of work experience to the higher education curriculum. There has been empirical evidence of work experience in higher education, which suggest that work experience is related to a more positive view of the learning experience and higher employment rate (Blackwell, Bowes, Harvey, Hesketh and Knight 2001)

In the same vein, (Blackwell, Bowes, Harvey, Hesketh and Knight 2001) posits that in Britain, as in many other countries, over the past 40 years, there has been endemic concern about economic competitiveness. Some of the proposals for enhancing competitiveness draw upon human capital theories in arguing that higher education standards are conducive to

greater national wealth. Work experience enriches higher education curricula and contributes indirectly and significantly to national economic well-being.

The relevance of work experience in gaining appropriate employment is one of the key ideas. Nearly 48 per cent of graduates felt that relevant work experience in a similar organization was an important factor in enabling them to obtain their job. (Purcell and Simm, 1999, p.16).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The teaching staff and principals of all Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana were used as the population of the study. There are six Colleges in the Eastern

3.1 Region and they have a total population of 282.

Ghuari and Gronhaug (2005) defined research design as the total plan for relating the conceptual research problem to the relevant empirical research to enable the researcher to choose a research strategy that allows effective answering of the research problem within constraints such as time, money and skills affecting the research. In the view of Kinnear and Gray (2004), it is the basic plan that guides the data collection and analysis phases of a research project. The cross-sectional survey was the research design selected for the study. The choice of the survey as the research design stemmed from the fact that Babbie (2007) asserted that surveys are excellent means for measurement of attitudes and or orientations within a large population. According to Robson (2000) cross-sectional often employs the survey strategy. This method has been adopted because it enabled the researcher to systematically obtain data from a large number of tutors who are pursuing higher education and those who have already completed their higher education programmes in the Colleges of Education. Again, it is used to explain how some factors are related in different institutions.

Questionnaires and interview were the principal tools used for the study to collect data from the respondents. Using a questionnaire in a survey as a means of data collection tool has some significant advantages. The most obvious is the fact that it is the most convenient means of collecting data for the topic where a large sample population is involved. This data collection method makes quantitative analysis of the data easier. Less skill and sensitivity to administer is required if the questionnaire is correctly worded (Saunders et al., 2007). It is useful for collecting data on opinion, behaviour and attributes (Dillman, 2000 cited in Saunders et al., 2007).

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS

After the data collection exercise, the data was carefully examined to ensure all questions were answered appropriately. The data generated from both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were analysed independently of each other. Data analysis allows the researcher to make sense of the data collected. To do this, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the close-ended items and the open-ended questions were analysed by grouping them into themes and sub-themes. The open-ended questions gave more insight into the views and opinions of the respondents. The raw data was coded and entered directly into the SPSS package. Tools for data analysis were used to produce

descriptive statistics. The results generated were subsequently presented using frequencies, percentages, tables and pie charts. However, the data generated from the interview were analysed qualitatively.

4.1 Findings/Results

Background of Tutors which influenced them to Pursue Continuing Education

It was necessary to find out whether the background of tutors predisposes them to pursue higher education. Consequently, respondents were asked to provide information on their background and the information provided accordingly.

4.2 Sex Distribution

The researcher wanted to establish the male, female representation of the tutors in the Colleges of Education to determine which group of the sexes was mainly pursuing further education. The data on the breakdown of the various sexes are presented in Table 1

Table 1. The total population of males and females in the four colleges sampled

Name of Colleges	Population of teaching staff	Population of female tutors		Population of male tutors		Total of female tutors with 2 nd degree/those still in school		Total of male tutors with second degree/those still in school	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
		Presbyterian College of Education	58	18	31	40	69	11	61
Mount Mary College of Education	45	9	20	36	80	8	89	13	36
S.D.A. College of Education	62	12	19.4	50	80.6	9	75	26	52
Presbyterian Women’s College of Education	28	8	28.6	20	71.4	8	100	19	95
Total	193	47	24	146	76	36	77	82	56

From table 1, the total population of tutors in the four colleges sampled were one hundred and ninety-three thirteen with forty-seven, thus (32.2%) of them being females and one hundred and forty-six, representing (68.5%) being males. Out of the total number of females, 76.6 percent were those either pursuing their master's degree or had completed their master's degree. With that of the males, 56.2 percent were also either pursuing higher education or had

a master's degree. Therefore to establish the sex that was mainly pursuing higher education in the Colleges of Education, for the female;

$$\frac{\text{The sum of masters degree holders and those pursuing masters}}{\text{The total female population}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{36}{47} \times 100$$

$$= 76.6\%$$

Therefore, 76.6% of female tutors had either completed their masters or were pursuing their master's degree.

And for the males;

$$\frac{\text{The sum of masters degree holders and those pursuing masters}}{\text{The total male population}} \times 100$$

$$\frac{82}{146} \times 100$$

$$= 56.2\%$$

Therefore, 56.2% of male tutors had either completed their masters or were pursuing their master's degree.

Therefore, from the table, it was realized that, although there were more males than female tutors, the percentage of female tutors pursuing higher education was more than their male counterparts 76.6 percent and 56.2 percent respectively.

4.3 Age Distribution

On the ages of tutors, none of the tutors was below 30 years of age. However, 56 percent of them were between the ages 30-39. Whereas 36 percent were between 40-49 years, only eight percent of the tutors were between the ages 50-59. Majority of tutors in the Colleges of Education who either have second degree or pursuing higher education to acquire second degree are between ages 30-39 and only a fewer number of them in the same category were between 50-59 years. From the data received, it was realized that since staff mainly in their mid-lives in the colleges were pursuing further studies age was an influence in their participation in higher education.

4.4 Teaching Experience

When it came to the level of tutors' teaching experiences, it was revealed from the data collected that no tutor respondent had worked for less than six years. However, 19.5 percent had taught for between 6-10 years, 39.0 percent had taught between 11-15 years, whereas

those who had between 16-20 years of teaching experience recorded 27.1 percent. Those who had taught for 21-25 years were 8.5 percent and 5.1 percent represented the data gathered from those with 26-30 years teaching experience. Only 0.9 per cent of tutors had taught for 30 years and above. Table 2 explains it further.

Table 2 Teaching Experience

X(years of practice)	f(Frequency)	fx
8	23	184
13	46	598
18	32	576
23	10	230
28	6	168
30	1	30
	$\sum f = 118$	$\sum fx = 1786$

$$\frac{\sum fx}{\sum f}$$

$$\frac{1786}{118}$$

$$= 15.13$$

To determine the median of the frequency, the scores had to be arranged in an ascending manner and the median calculated. Thus; 1, 6, 10, 23, 32, 46.

In order to find the median, the point of contact will have to be calculated = $\frac{n+1}{2}$

$$\text{Therefore, } \frac{6+1}{2} = \frac{6+1}{2} = \frac{7}{2} = 3.5$$

Hence, the point of contact is 3.5.

Therefore, the median will be a summation of 10 and 23 divided by 2.

$$= \frac{10+23}{2} = \frac{33}{2} = 16.5$$

Hence the median score is 16.5

Therefore, the mean number of years the tutors had taught was 15.13. Meaning that the average number of years they had taught was 15.13 years and the median score (middle score or the 50th percentile) was 16.5. Implying that the 50th percentile of the age distribution of which the tutors had taught was 16.5 years.

4.5 Ranks in Ghana Education Service

Rank in Ghana Education Service was sought to find out which rank members formed the majority in the pursuance of higher education among the respondents. The responses are presented in Table 3

Table 3. Rank in Ghana Education Service

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Assistant Director I	16	13.6
Assistant Director II	38	32.2
Principal Superintendent	64	54.2
Total	118	100

According to the figures in table 3, the majority of respondents 54.2 percent were Principal Superintendents, followed by 32.2 respondents who were in the ranks of Assistant Director I (AD I), whereas a minority of respondents representing 13.6 percent were Assistant Directors II (AD II). This means that majority of tutors pursuing higher education were in the lower ranks.

4.6 Qualification at entry as tutors of the college of education

The study sought to find out the qualification of the tutors at entry as staff to the College of Education. This was in order to find out whether they went into higher education to meet the standards demanded by their employers to qualify them to teach in the college or to satisfy other needs. To this, 86.1 percent of tutors claimed they had a teaching appointment with a first degree, 2.1 percent of those with a masters' degree had a teaching appointment with a Diploma in Education Certificates and 11.8 percent of the tutors had a second degree before getting a teaching appointment at the College of Education. The majority of the respondents had teaching appointments with first degree and only a few of them went there with Diploma and second degree. Meaning that 97.9 percent of the tutors had either a bachelor's degree or master's degree at the time of recruitment. This however suggests that these tutors had the internal motivation to continue their education, which is good for the training processes of the trainee teachers since these tutors would have gathered enough experience and knowledge to aid the trainees to learn and become good teachers.

4.7 Marital Status

It is a widely accepted belief that marriage comes with different roles and responsibilities such as a married person, it is usually difficult to participate in certain activities, education included since it takes between a year or two to complete a masters program, all things being equal. Therefore it is assumed it is easier for the unmarried to pursue higher education as compared to people who were married, (Nukunya 2003). Thus it was necessary to gather data on the marital status of respondents to ascertain which way marriage influenced their decision to pursue higher education. The summary of the responses obtained indicated that only 2.6 percent were single, and an insignificant 0.8 percent were widows/widowers. Those who

were either divorced or separated were 22.9 percent and a significant majority of the tutors, 73.7 percent were married. Apparently, marriage was not an obstacle to their pursuing higher education as the majority of the tutors who were either pursuing a higher education program or have a second degree were married.

4.8 Marital Influence on Higher Education

As in which way marriage influenced their ambition to pursue higher education, their responses were varied. Whereas 78 percent of those who were married stated that marriage was not an obstacle in pursuing higher education because they had moral and financial support from their spouses and other family members, others claimed it delayed their further education because they had to give birth, take care of the home and cater for other responsibilities. Overall, marriage was not an obstacle on the majority of the tutor's path in furtherance of their education.

4.9 Number of Dependants

Apart from marriage, some people may wish to deny themselves of further education and give attention to their children's education. The responsibility of people increases when one marries and begins to make babies. The number of children or dependents of respondents was sought to find out how the number of dependents motivated them or otherwise in their participation in higher education. It was realized that all respondents had children or dependents ranging from one to over four. The majority of the tutors 32.0 percent had at least two children/dependents, only 6.0 percent had a child/dependant each. Those with three children/dependents were 28.0 percent and 20.0 percent had four children with 14.0 percent respondents having more than four children/dependents. Looking at the figures, the number of dependents did not seriously affect tutors' participation in continuing education as all tutors in one way or the other had dependents but they were pursuing higher education despite their responsibilities.

4.10 Other Sources of Income

Information on other sources of income was needed to find out how tutors were making extra monies to help them in their schooling. The question that was asked was if tutors had other sources of income apart from their salaries. In response, the majority of them (75.4) percent responded in the negative and 24.6 percent were affirmative. The implication is that, since the majority of tutors did not have other sources of income, most tutors depended only on their salaries to finance their education and to fend for their families and other dependents they have. It would be worthwhile to state that over 83.1 percent of the tutors participated in higher education without study leave with pay. However, for those who had other avenues of income, the majority of them, 82.8 percent were engaged as tutors of Distance Education programs and the Universities, 10.3 percent did small scale businesses and only 6.7 percent had farms to earn extra income. Furthermore, all the tutors who had other forms of income were those in the lower ranks in the teaching service.

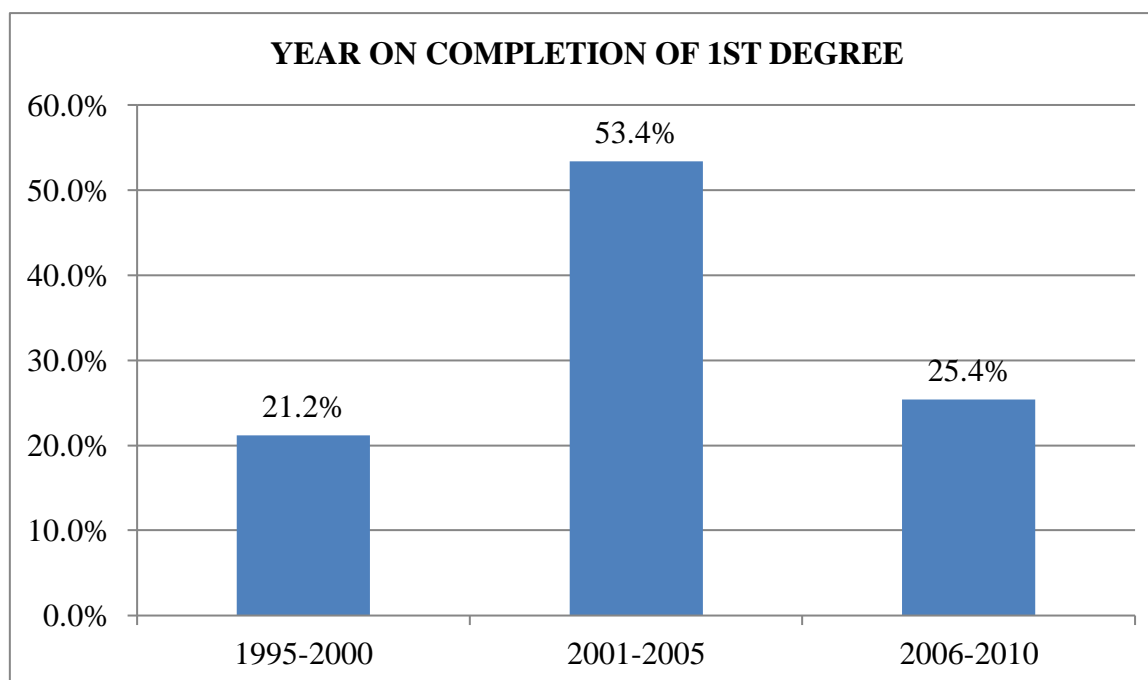
4.11 Number of years of teaching before pursuing first degree

Quizzed on the number of years tutors taught after initial training before acquiring their first degree, thus if they did not enter into the teaching profession with a first degree. From their responses, 25.4 percent taught for 1-3 years after initial training before going for further studies. This was followed by 55.9 percent who taught for 4-6 years and 13.6 percent responded they taught for 7-10 years before pursuing further studies. Only a few of them (5.1) percent taught for over 10 years before doing the same. From the results, it is obvious that the majority (55.9 %) of tutors go for further studies between 4-6 years after initial training. This implies that no tutor had a first degree before they started teaching but tutors had the quest to further their studies at the early stages of their career as represented by 55.9 percent,

4.12 Year in which First Degree was acquired

From the preceding discussion, it was mentioned that all the tutors in the colleges taught for some number of years, between 4-10 years after initial training before going for further studies. Hence the researcher decided to find out the periods within which the tutors completed their bachelor degrees. Their responses are interpreted in figure 1.

Figure 1



From the diagram, between 1995 and 2000, 21.2 percent of tutors completed their first degree, 53.4 percent completed in the years 2001-2005, and the remaining 25.4 percent of the respondents completed between the years 2006-2005. If the majority of these tutors completed their first-degree programs between the years 2001 and 2005, and they have furthered their education to acquire a second degree before 2010, then it is obvious that the policy on Colleges of education played a role in most of these tutors' pursuance of higher education unlike what they did willingly after their first appointment as tutors.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section dwells on the discussion of results of major roles the background of tutors of College of Education play in their participation in continuing education. The background of tutors which includes: sex of respondents, age, marital status, teaching experience, academic and professional qualifications, rank or grade, and a number of dependants/children of tutors were looked at in detail. The implication of the background on tutors in continuing education is further discussed below.

5.2 Sex of Respondents

There has been an assumption that males were participating in higher education as compared to females. This however was not seen among tutors of Colleges of Education since females dominated male tutors who participate in higher education. For the background characteristics of the tutors, out of the one hundred and ninety-three respondents, (24.4%) were females, and (75.6%) being males. Out of the total number of females, 76.6 percent were tutors who were either pursuing their master's degree or had completed their master's degree and that of the males constituted 56.2 percent making female tutors more involved in master's degree programs.

According to Nukunya (2003), it is a general belief that, to most Ghanaian women, getting married, having children, and keeping a home were counted as topmost priorities. Contrary to this traditional belief, continuing education and education for that matter amongst females is being encouraged at all levels of education. This suggests that efforts at addressing continuing professional education for female teachers must consider the various attributes of women. Despite the efforts made at improving participation in higher education during the last two or three decades on women and education, access to higher education remains a problem for women in many countries.

While women have fairly equal access to higher education in the more developed regions where they comprise 52 percent of tertiary students, their share of tertiary education in the less developed regions ranges from 33 percent in China to 49 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the least developed countries, only 27 percent of women reach the tertiary level. Poor access to higher education is accompanied by the under-representation of women in science and technology and the clustering of women in the traditional female studies of arts, humanities, languages, education, nursing, and medicine. In many countries, women's enrollment also decreases as they move up in the higher education system. In the area of higher education, both in teaching and management, women are still a long way from participating on the same footing as men due to their level of education.

Women have made some progress in achieving parity in teaching but are grossly under-represented in higher education management. A Commonwealth survey (1998) reveals that the Commonwealth average was 24 percent of women and the proportion of women decreased significantly as women moved up the academic and occupational ladder. Women begin to be represented in numbers that equal or come close to those of their male colleagues but the average for the Commonwealth was only 33.8 percent. The pattern that emerges

suggests that women are being appointed at the lecturer level but either get stuck at this level or drop out of academic life, unable to combine family and academic commitments.

Numerous studies have proved this point, for instance, it has been established that females perform special functions such as caring for the children, supporting the family income through engagement in petty economic activities, and taking care of the home. Thus likely these functions can prevent female tutors from pursuing higher education. It is a pity that continuing education programs often coincide with the period of marriage and home care by females all over the world, hence the initial training given to a female most at times serves as the beginning and the end of the person's professional and academic career. Kelvin (1976) claims that traditionally, the timing of higher education coincides with the period in which many women marry, give birth, and raise children. In the same vein, Evans 1995; Compura 2003; Przymus 2004 also contended to the fact and stated that the societal perception of women and their productive and reproductive roles affect their participation in formal education. Society perceives women as homemakers and childminders hence any activity that takes them away from such normal schedules is frowned upon. As a result, women find it difficult to embark on further studies, especially at their adult stage when they have begun families. These available studies give a reason why more males participate in higher education than their female counterparts but the findings from the study however were contradictory to the above views, as more women in the colleges were pursuing higher education notwithstanding the societal roles placed on them.

5.3 Age of Respondents

It is clear that tutors above fifty years were not participating in continuing education unlike tutors in their middle ages, thus 30 to 45 years. The issue is that most people try to enhance their academic and professional competencies when they are still young and healthy. It is widespread that the job performance declines with the increase in age and older workers are perceived to be lacking flexibility and being resistant to new technology, this might be the reason why older tutors were not in continuing education. The age profile of those studying is changing over time, as is the working-age population. As a result, mature students tend to face different family/social situations which can act as a motivation or a barrier to access higher education. The age of a professional is a powerful index in predicting his social, psychological, and physiological character (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982). According to Knox (1977), participation in continuing education becomes critical in the youthful and middle ages where they need to succeed and progress in a profession is very paramount. The findings of the study on the age of the tutors indicated that all age groups of tutors could be pursuing higher education programs, but the statistics showed that the majority of them did so before age forty-five, with the age bracket of 30-39 years age seeming to be the modal age period when tutors participate in continuing education. According to Maslow, at a certain stage of the individual's life, the individual strives to achieve higher and self-actualization needs and ages 30-40 are periods of seeking for higher and self-actualization needs among tutors of Colleges of education as gathered. To him, education is very much work-related even though it can be sought for, for other reasons. This period can be said to be the period that one is expected to be responsible in life and be able to achieve something for posterity (Knowles 1980). Moreover, Sargant (1997) came out with the observations that participation in learning programs decreases with each successive age cohort- with 86 percent of 17-19-

year-olds; 43 percent of 35-44 years old, and 19 percent of 65-74 years old. However, there were few older participants, who were above 50 years of age. Similarly, tutors above age fifty were among those who had acquired a second degree but the results proved that there was no tutor above 55 years among those still pursuing higher education. Perhaps, they were in their later years and were about to retire from active service hence, they did not want to be saddled with learning new skills. Comparing this information with Havighust's (1961) Developmental Tasks and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is not surprising that persons within the middle-age tend to take advantage of continuing education opportunities. Most people at that age are working to meet their physiological needs and establishing their families while at the same time learning to enhance their job competencies for job security and improved income.

On the other hand, many people would only continue their education at a later age when they feel they have satisfied most of their needs and have some time to spare for education. This confirms Cross's assertion that, in old age, participation may be enhanced especially for those above 45 years because, at this age, they might have satisfied those needs that limit their participation and are free to devote their energy to achieve statuses to enhance achievement and work towards self-realization (Cross 1981). Knox's (1977) developmental-stage orientation of adult life stresses the importance of understanding an individual's contextual situation, that is, Knox believes the individual's family, work, and community roles; physical condition; personality; and earning interests all affect the adult's ability and willingness to participate in education. Further complicating the issue, deterrence to participation is exasperated by a prospective student's perception of the magnitude of his problems. In other words, "deterrents" is a multidimensional concept. Tutors as adults at a certain age in their career lives are deterred by factors such as old age and other responsibilities, hence the inability of those above age fifty to participate in higher education programs.

5.4 Teaching Experience of Respondents

Generally, when a person enters into a profession the urge to stay in the profession increases with time when factors favorable to stay are high. It came to light from the study that over forty percent of tutors had been on the job for over twenty-five years, this suggests they have an interest in the job and would like to stay. Hence the continued persistence including the younger ones to gain knowledge and experience through continuing education. The high participation of the energetic group was due to the fact that they had realized the need for the acquisition of enhanced skills which they could apply in the teaching and learning situation. From the study, it was established that tutors seem to re-enter into professional continuing education in their early years in the teaching service after initial teacher training education. Mezirow (1984) cited in Brookfield (1986) describes continuing education as a formal education program for professional training or for credentialing of personal interest to the learner, for which academic credit is awarded. To him, the purpose of continuing education is to help maintain, expand and improve individual knowledge, skills, (performance), and attitudes and by doing so, meet the improvement and advancement of individuals, professionals, and organizations. The primary emphasis of this definition can be said to be the individual learner and his learning needs which are the difference between the current level and desired level of the learner's knowledge, skills, and attitude.

From the study, it was found that the longer one stayed in the service, the less one was induced to re-enter into further education. This is because the older tutors, according to the results, were not participating in higher education. It is widespread that the job performance declines with the increase in age and older workers are also perceived to be lacking flexibility and being resistant to new technology, this might be the reason why older tutors were not participating in higher education programs as the young adults are. To conclude, it was established from the study that most tutors embarked upon continuing education during the first 15 years of their service, however, the urge to pursue further studies seemed to wane with a length of service. It is however said by (Kerka 1986) that, no single factor appears to cause nonparticipation, however, individual student characteristics and life circumstances appear to have the greatest impact on participation.

Aside from the teaching experience of tutors, one other consideration in this study was to find out if the academic or professional backgrounds of tutors influenced the decision to participate in higher education. It can be stated that the various policies governing Colleges of Education are part of the factors influencing tutors' participation in higher education. From the data collected it was found out that all tutors who had second degrees were either having Masters of Philosophy, Masters of Art, or Masters in Education certificates and for those still pursuing higher education, they all had a first degree. In the teaching profession, academic qualification is crucial and with the current educational reforms on upgrading of Teacher Training College (TTC) into tertiary, this cannot be over-emphasized. Since 2007, students from the College of Education graduated with diploma certificates as opposed to the hitherto 3 year post-secondary certificates which they formally graduated with. This was done in accordance with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS) and National Council for Tertiary Education. This development called on tutors who had not upgraded themselves to the masters' level to do so by the year 2010 if they do not want to be relegated to the background. With the current development in the Colleges of Education, it can be said that tutors in these Colleges are pursuing higher education to equip themselves to teach in the college. Similarly, the principals of the Colleges were also pursuing higher education programmes to acquire Doctorate degrees just as their tutors were also upgrading themselves.

5.5 Rank or Grade of Respondents and its influence in participation in higher education

Employment prospects for graduates and the financial rewards expected from higher education qualifications will affect participation, particularly for those from disadvantaged groups. The fear of debt impacts these groups disproportionately and it is therefore important that they understand fully how higher education qualifications can improve their future employment prospects and earnings potential. The state of the economy, the labor market, and the earning rate may also be a factor in an individual's decision to enter higher education. Lawton (1981) stated that pre-service training alone is not sufficient to equip teachers for a whole career. He contends that in the past, the teacher was trained in basic principles of theory and practices to enable him to cope with the task of classroom management. Lawton's idea supports the findings on the rank or grade of respondents. It was revealed from the study that over fifty percent of respondents were Principal Superintendents with only a little above thirteen percent being Assistant Director I. This is to say that ranks in G.E.S. do not limit tutors from pursuing higher education since tutors in all ranks were seen pursuing higher education. Rather, the urge to get into one rank from another motivated tutor to participate in

higher education since most of the tutors who were participating in higher education were in the lower ranks. With the present change in the culture of schools and the development in science and technology, there is growing recognition for a continuing process of education and training throughout the career span of the tutor. Tutors who find themselves in the various ranks were into some form of education to improve on their academic and professional status so as to fit into the changing society otherwise they will be left out.

5.6 Marital Status of Respondents

Marriage is a respected and cherished institution in this part of the world. It calls for commitment and understanding between both partners so far as pursuing further education is concerned. Leaving a partner for further studies demands that the spouse supports the other partner and where such understanding and support are lacking, divorce or separation can set in. In this way, programs designed for short intervals or on-the-job in-service training rather than longer programs would seem to attract the tutor who is married. Full-time programs that would take the tutor away from the family for a long period of time may be unhealthy for the individual and the family. Higher education programs for tutors take a much longer time and there is the need for the individual tutor to have time to be able to complete the program successfully. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one factor for participation in continuing education is a social relationship. Getting established in a job and beginning a family can limit one's interest. The findings of the study indicated that married tutors were more than unmarried tutors which is contrary to Maslow's view. It was established that over 73 percent of tutors were married and only a little above two percent were single. This is contrary to the views of Azuntoba (1990), cited in Mensah (1996) which states that, the attitude of many women of singlehood and childlessness makes it such that most women with high academic status do not have their joy fulfilled so long as they lack spouses and children. This makes women stay at home to find husbands and make babies while they support their spouses to pursue higher education. As far as Azuntoba is concerned this also accounts for the reason why there were more males than females in higher education programs. According to Azuntoba, some would not even embark upon continuing education till they have their own husbands/wives and children. But the women who would be affected most were married and pursuing higher education.

Marriage comes with a lot of responsibilities such as having dependants and taking care of them. Dependents affect participation in higher education in many ways. Such dependents whether children, spouse, parents, or relatives create conditions against one's interest and need to participate in adult education programs (Puetz 1997). Different from Puetz's view is the case of tutors in the Colleges of Education. It was realized that the majority of tutors, both those with master's degrees and those pursuing higher education had not less than three dependants. When the Ghanaian teacher is saddled with many dependents, he could be restricted in the pursuit of continuing education. Leaving children and spouses for further studies can bring about serious repercussions but where there is the zeal, will, and ambition there can be away. It can be seen from the study that despite teachers having children/dependents they still embarked upon further studies, however, participation of these tutors was very much among those with fewer dependents. According to Holmberg, (1995) and Thompson and Melody (1998) the age range of distance learners are mostly between twenty and forty years of age, usually with a dependent or more.

5.7 Sources of income

The desire to participate in continuing education may be high but certain factors may limit the individual from re-entry into learning. Many authors such as Cross (1981); McClusky (1974); Knowles (1973), and Kelvin (1976) had written extensively on barriers towards participation. From the study, it was established that tutors even though they were participating in higher education had some difficulties with regard to finance but the workload on tutors made it impossible for them to get into other businesses to look for funds. It can be concluded that few respondents were into other jobs such as part-time tuition, farming, and small-scale businesses. All these activities were to support tutors in taking care of their families and to upgrade themselves in their careers. Robenson (1977) cited in Cross (1981) provides evidence that high financial cost makes the participation of an individual zero, but if the cost is free or minimal, interest to participation becomes high. The high cost of undertaking a course, and the GES's inability to reimburse monies used in pursuing such courses affect the level of participation. The issue of finance was also raised by some principals who believed that, though most tutors would have preferred engaging themselves in full-time programs on study leave with pay instead of sandwich programs, they are forced to do short causes and sandwich programs due to lack of funds and study leave with pay. Some of the respondents even had to engage themselves in extra tuition, farming, and small-scale businesses to help them earn extra income to support them in taking care of their varied needs.

6.0 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings of the study that demographic characteristics of tutors and Continuing Education had a significant influence on their participation in higher education. The evidence is that more females were participating in higher education than males, the majority of these tutors were married, tutors in their middle ages were also participating in higher education and above all, the majority of tutors had only one source of income but went to school with support from spouses. This is because, out of 47 female population in the colleges sampled, 76.6 percent were participating in higher education. With regard to age, there was a majority of participants in the years 35-45, with a mean age of 40.1 and a standard deviation of 5.5. Tutors in this age group support Havighurst in his developmental task theory which states that persons within the middle age tend to take advantage of available learning opportunities. Most people at that age are working to achieve their physiological needs and establish their families while at the same time learning to enhance their competencies for job security. Bearing in mind that the majority (92.1 percent) of the tutors sponsored their own education with help from family members which also confirms Maslow's theory of needs hierarchy on self-actualization.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that since the factors that motivated tutors to pursue higher education were to develop skills and become more influential, maintain prestige, be self-confident, earn promotion, become a good tutor, change jobs, and career improvement, these factors should be National Council for Tertiary Education as means to further motivate other tutors to advance themselves academically.

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