

AND EMPLOYERS' RECRUITMENT PRACTICES
BUSINESS SECONDARY EDUCATION:
AN EVALUATION OF GHANA'S EXPERIENCE

by

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ABSTRACT

The history, status, curricula, examinations, cost and staffing of business secondary schools are discussed together with an analysis of the structure of business education within the overall educational framework and its relationship to office work in the 'real' world. The concern of the study is with the working environment which school leavers are about to enter. It identifies and critically analyses the ideas and ideology with which office work is often associated. The study analyses Ghana's economic structural adjustment as it influences current thinking on the relationship between education, the employer and work. Further, the study explores employers' opinions and beliefs about the selection and recruitment of (vocationally-oriented) business secondary education school leavers. The employers' role is also examined as it embraces a set of transactions and experiences that must be included in any valid discussion of the vocationally-oriented education process. Important consideration is given to experiences from other countries that are tackling similar issues and/or share many economic and social problems with those of Ghana.

In using theories that attempt to explain the relationship between education and work, the study confronts important questions about the strengths and limitations of the system of vocational secondary education. Particular attention is given to human capital theory, the screening hypothesis and the correspondence principle.

The research methodology used for the fieldwork component of the study was the survey approach, with the emphasis placed on the use of questionnaires/interview schedules, analysis of documents and observation techniques. The following populations were sampled: teachers, headteachers, curriculum developers, teacher trainers and education officers, students, employees and employers.

The data are analysed in four chapters. Thereafter, employers' recruitment policies as well as policies for business curriculum practice as they exist today are investigated, with a view to offering suggestions for policy as regards the recruitment of school leavers with (vocationally-oriented) business secondary education. The conclusion re-examines the previously explored theoretical approaches in the light of the empirical investigation. It also advocates a linking of policy and curriculum developments in education and training to wider social and economic changes, together with a more co-operative approach between the employer, the student and the teacher in the context of a more successful management of the transition from school to work.

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CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of contents	4
Basic data	17
Abbreviations	20
INTRODUCTION	22
PART ONE FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS	24
CHAPTER 1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	25
1.1 Rationales for the research	25
1.2 Distinguishing between pre-vocational and vocational education	26
1.3 Perspectives on school to work theories and employers' hiring beliefs	28
PART TWO ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT	34
CHAPTER 2 BUSINESS SECONDARY EDUCATION: TEACHER, STUDENT AND CURRICULUM	35
2.0 Introduction	35
2.1 Ghana's pre-tertiary education system	35
2.1.1 Structural problems	38
2.1.2 Improving pre-tertiary education	39
2.2 Ghana's Business Secondary Schools (BSS)	43
2.2.1 Business teaching	48
2.2.2 The business student and curriculum	51
2.3 Conclusions	55

CHAPTER 3	THE MODERN SECTOR EMPLOYER, YOUTH AND WORK	57
3.0	Introduction	57
3.1	Working in the modern sector	57
3.1.1	Segmentation within the modern sector	58
3.1.2	From public enterprises to private initiatives	62
3.2	Youth labour force and modern sector employment	64
3.2.1	Population growth and the labour force	64
3.2.2	Employing school leavers	65
3.2.3	Redeploying labour and productivity	73
3.3	Understanding the work environment	76
3.3.1	The Ghanaian economy	77
3.3.2	On the road to recovery?	78
3.3.3	External assistance and the debt burden	80
3.4	Conclusions	84
CHAPTER 4	VOCATIONALLY-ORIENTED SECONDARY EDUCATION (VOSE): A FALLACY?	86
4.0	Introduction	86
4.1	Discussions about vocational education	86
4.1.1	An ongoing debate	86
4.1.2	Secondary school-based 'training'	88
4.2	Where does business secondary education fit in?	91
4.2.1	Business as a vocational subject	91
4.2.2	General or specific business skills?	94
4.2.3	Teaching and assessing business skills	98
4.2.4	Adapting business education to technological change	104
4.3	Employers' expectations vs students' aspirations	108
4.3.1	School and work: the widening gap	110
4.3.2	Employment-based training	113
4.3.3	The 'right' type of worker	116
4.4	Conclusions	121

PART THREE	EMPIRICAL FIELDWORK: VIEWS OF BUSINESS SECONDARY EDUCATION AND OFFICE WORK	124
CHAPTER 5	FIELDWORK SAMPLE AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS	125
5.0	Introduction	125
5.1	The sample survey and sampling procedures	125
5.1.1	Sampling the schools	127
5.1.2	Sampling participants in the business curriculum	128
5.1.3	Sampling business education students	128
5.1.4	Sampling office employees	129
5.1.5	Sampling employers of typists and accounts clerks	129
5.2	The research design and it's rationale	130
5.2.1	Questionnaires	130
5.2.2	Interviews	133
5.2.3	Documentary analysis	134
5.2.4	Observations	134
5.3	Administering the research instruments	134
5.3.1	Fieldwork data on participants in the business curriculum	135
5.3.2	Fieldwork data on business education students	135
5.3.3	Fieldwork data on office employees	136
5.3.4	Fieldwork data on employers of typists and accounts clerks	137
5.4	Report on field experience with the research instruments	138
5.4.1	The questionnaires/interviews and observations	138
5.4.2	The documents	139
5.5	Data analysis procedures	139
5.6	Conclusions	140
CHAPTER 6	THE CURRICULUM IN PRACTICE	141
6.0	Introduction	141
6.1	Business Secondary Schools: in context	142
6.1.1	Question 1.1	142
6.1.2	Question 1.2	144
6.1.3	Question 1.3	147
6.1.4	Question 1.4	151

	7	
6.2	The business teachers' role	153
6.2.1	Question 2.1	153
6.2.2	Question 2.2	155
6.2.3	Question 2.3	157
6.3	Opinions of headteachers on Business Secondary Schools	159
6.3.1	Question 3.1	160
6.3.2	Question 3.2	162
6.3.3	Question 3.3	164
6.4	Summary of findings	167
 CHAPTER 7 PREPARING FOR WORK		 169
7.0	Introduction	169
7.1	Business secondary students: a profile	170
7.1.1	Question 1.1	170
7.1.2	Question 1.2	173
7.1.3	Question 1.3	176
7.1.4	Question 1.4	178
7.2	Choosing the school	182
7.2.1	Question 2.1	182
7.2.2	Question 2.2	187
7.2.3	Question 2.3	188
7.3	To work or not to work	193
7.3.1	Question 3.1	193
7.3.2	Question 3.2	196
7.4	Making occupational choices	202
7.4.1	Question 7.4.1	203
7.4.2	Question 7.4.2	205
7.4.3	Question 7.4.3	206
7.4.4	Question 7.4.4	210
7.5	Summary of findings	215
 CHAPTER 8 WORKING IN AN OFFICE		 217
8.0	Introduction	217
8.1	The 'before' and 'after' events surrounding the employees' present job	218
8.1.1	Question 1.1	219

8.1.2	Question 1.2	221
8.1.3	Question 1.3	223
8.2	Opinions from employees about employers	225
8.2.1	Question 2.1	226
8.2.2	Question 2.2	230
8.2.3	Question 2.3	232
8.2.4	Question 2.4	236
8.3	Summary of findings	237
CHAPTER 9 TAKING ON TYPISTS AND ACCOUNTS CLERKS		240
9.0	Introduction	240
9.1	Characteristics of different firms	242
9.1.1	Question 1.1	242
9.1.2	Question 1.2	245
9.1.3	Question 1.3	247
9.2	Employers' selection of and opinions about Business Secondary School (BSS) leavers	249
9.2.1	Question 2.1	249
9.2.2	Question 2.2	252
9.2.3	Question 2.3	254
9.2.4	Question 2.4	257
9.3	Employers' considerations in hiring any school leaver	260
9.3.1	Question 3.1	261
9.3.2	Question 3.2	263
9.3.3	Question 3.3	265
9.3.4	Question 3.4	267
9.3.5	Question 3.5	272
9.4	Preferences of individual firms in recruiting staff for typing and clerical accounting jobs	277
9.4.1	Question 4.1	277
9.4.2	Question 4.2	280
9.4.3	Question 4.3	284
9.5	Policy guidelines for employers' recruitment of school leavers	287
9.5.1	Question 5.1	287
9.5.2	Question 5.2	289
9.6	Comments and opinions from small- and large-scale private employers	290
9.7	Summary of findings	295

CHAPTER 10	IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	298
10.1	Summary of main findings	298
10.2	Implications for theory	302
10.3	Implications for policy	304
10.4	Conclusions and recommendations	306

Bibliography		309
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List of Appendices

Appendix 2A	Summary table showing number of institutions by levels of student enrolment and teachers by status: 1984-1988	325
Appendix 2B	Structure of the establishment under the Director General of the Ghana Education Service - Phase I of Reorganisation 1981/82	326
Appendix 2C	Distribution of education budget (amount in thousand cedis)	327
Appendix 2D	Organizational chart of the Technical and Vocational Education Division of the Ghana Education Service	328
Appendix 3A	Supplementary tables	329
Appendix 5A	Categories RSTUVW identified in survey questionnaires	330
Appendix 6A	Sample of examination results by school and gender	332
Appendix 6B	Survey questions	341
Appendix 6C	Questionnaire/interview schedule for headteachers, principals and teachers; curriculum planners, inspectors, education officers and teacher trainers	342
Appendix 6D	Description of the curriculum in the schools surveyed	354
Appendix 6E	Photographs of students in the classroom	356
Appendix 7A	Supplementary tables	361
Appendix 7B	Survey questions	364
Appendix 7C	Questionnaire for BSS, business and secondary school students	366
Appendix 8A	Supplementary tables	375
Appendix 8B	Survey questions	377
Appendix 8C	Questionnaire/interview schedule for employees	378
Appendix 9A	Supplementary tables	383
Appendix 9B	Survey questions	388
Appendix 9C	Questionnaire/interview schedule for employers	390
Appendix 9D	Sample of typing job requirements from a state insurance company	396
Appendix 9E	Sample of clerical and typing job requirements from a bank in the state sector	398
Appendix 9F	Photographs of office workers in Ghanaian firms	399

Map

Map of Ghana	16
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List of Figures

Figure	2.1	The old structure of education	36
Figure	2.2	The new structure of education showing levels and exit points	41
Figure	4.1	Ideas on a basic strategy for business self-development	100
Figure	4.2	Elements governing vocational qualifications and examinations	102
Figure	4.3	Hypothetical 'preferential' factors influencing employers' hiring practices	109
Figure	5.1	The Survey Structure	126
Figure	7.1	Histogram to show Common Entrance examination aggregates obtained prior to entry into the six sample schools	175
Figure	7.2	Comparing parents' level of education with school choices made by students	190
Figure	7.3	Comparing parents' occupations with school choices made by students	192
Figure	9.1	Business outputs matrix	275
Figure	9.2	School outputs matrix	275

List of Boxes

Box	6.1	Occupation chosen if starting career again and reason for the choice	159
Box	8.1	Opinions on general and school leaver recruitment policies needed	237
Box	9.1	Reasons given for definition as 'modern' or 'intermediate'	243
Box	9.2	Factors considered by an interview panel	269

List of Photographs

Photograph	6E.1	Final year students in a private business school typewriting class	356
Photograph	6E.2	Second year students in a public Business Secondary School (BSS) typewriting class	356
Photograph	6E.3	Second year students in a private Business Secondary School (BSS) typewriting class	357
Photograph	6E.4	Final year students in a Government Secretarial School (GSS) shorthand class	357
Photograph	6E.5	Second year students in a public business school typewriting class	358
Photograph	6E.6	Second year students in a public business school accounts class	358
Photograph	6E.7	Final year students in a Government Secretarial School (GSS) typewriting class	359
Photograph	6E.8	Second year students in a private Business Secondary School (BSS) accounts class	359
Photograph	6E.9	Second year students in a private Business Secondary School (BSS) shorthand class	360
Photograph	6E.10	Final year students in a private business school shorthand class	360
Photograph	9F.1	Secretary from a private business school using an electric typewriter in a small firm	399
Photograph	9F.2	Private secretary from a government secretarial school using a manual typewriter in a large state firm	399

Photograph	9F.3	Accounts clerks from BSS and secondary school backgrounds using adding machines in a large private firm	400
Photograph	9F.4	Accounts clerks from BSS and secondary school backgrounds using adding machines in a large private firm	400

List of Tables

Table 2.1	Enrolment trends by levels, 1984-1988	37
Table 2.2	Ghana: 1985 Common Entrance Examination passes by grade from which examination taken (% of total successful candidates from each grade)	37
Table 2.3	Secondary schools offering business subjects by region, 1981	46
Table 3.1	Criteria for distinguishing four economic sectors in Ghana	59
Table 3.2	Number of unemployed persons in March 1980	66
Table 3.3	Estimated rates of open unemployment in total and among youth in Ghana, 1985 (percent)	66
Table 3.4	Open unemployment rates for Ghana, 1980-82 (percent)	66
Table 3.5	Open unemployment of youth as a proportion of total open unemployment in Ghana (aged up to 24 years), 1980-82 (percent)	67
Table 3.6	Number of public and youth employment centres, 1982	67
Table 3.7	Youth employment: number of registrations and placements, 1982 (thousand)	68
Table 3.8	Women in selected occupations, 1973	70
Table 3.9	Enrolment at three school levels by gender, 1973-74 and 1979-80	71
Table 3.10	Injections of foreign exchange through Ghana's Economic Recovery Programme	81
Table 3.11	Ghana's finance expenditure and debts outstanding for the years 1982-1986	83
Table 3A.1	Employment by sector in 1986	329
Table 3A.2	Gross official development assistance (ODA) (US\$mn)	329
Table 5.1	Matching the scheme of relationships (subject/source) with the indicators and instrument design	131
Table 6.1	Distribution of business teacher and headteacher sample by type of school	141
Table 6.2a	BSS Public teaching staff and student enrolment for the year 1987/88	154
Table 6.2b	BSS Private teaching staff and student enrolment for the year 1987/88	155
Table 6A.0	Distribution of school examination results by type of school and by gender	332
Table 6A.1a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: Typing	334
Table 6A.2a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: English	335
Table 6A.3a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: Maths	336
Table 6A.4a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: Business	337
Table 6A.5a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: Commerce	338
Table 6A.6a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: Accounts	339
Table 6A.7a,b	Distribution of sample examination results by type of school: Shorthand	340
Table 7.1	Distribution of student sample by year and by school	169
Table 7.2	Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by primary school attended	171
Table 7.3	Distribution of student sample by year, by gender and ethnic group	172
Table 7.4	Distribution of student sample by year and by religious affiliation	172
Table 7.5	Distribution of student sample by year and by the last Middle School Form attended	173

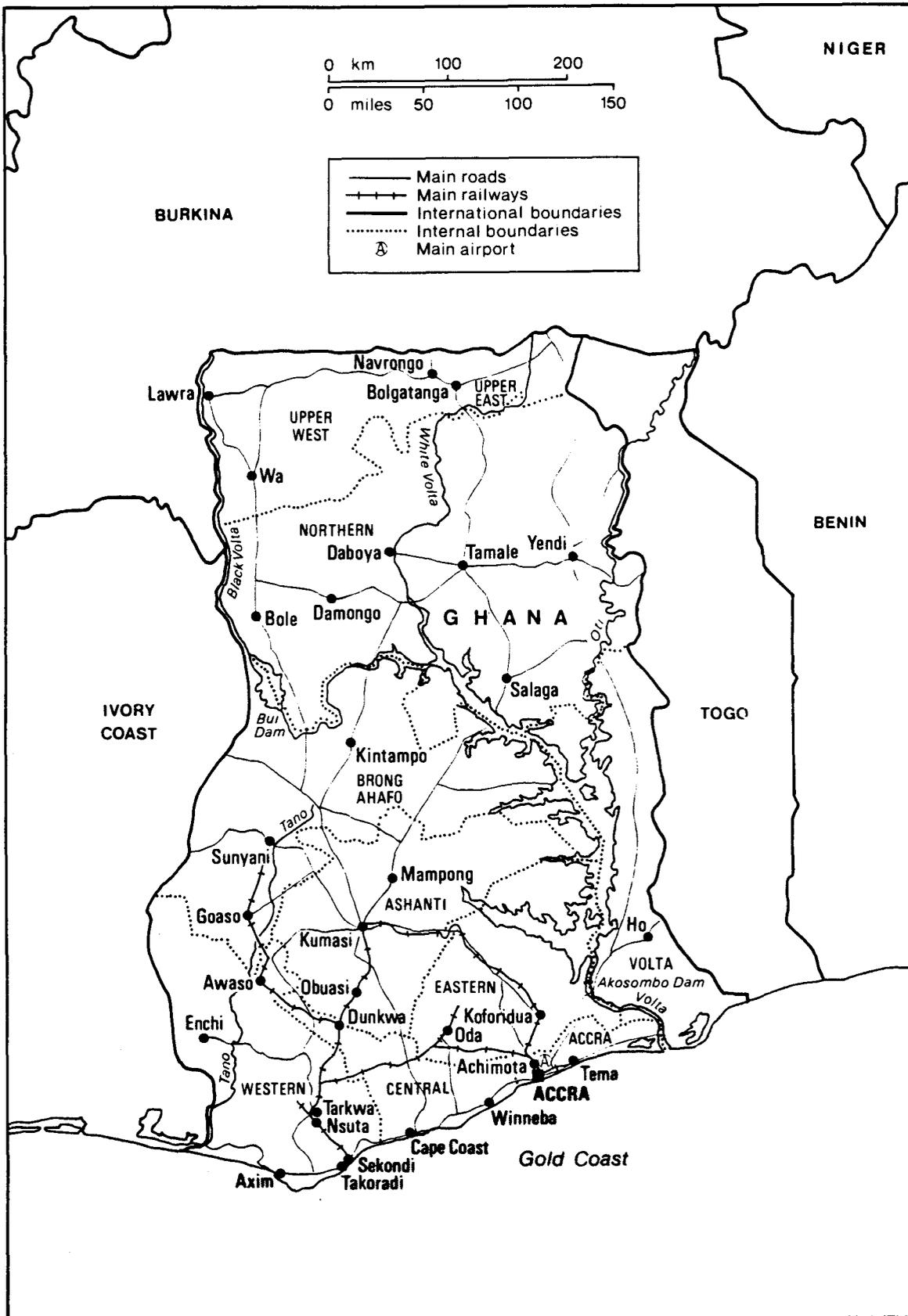
Table 7.6	Percentages of student sample who passed or failed the CEE or made no statement by year and by last Middle School Form attended	174
Table 7.7	Distribution of student sample by year and by gender	176
Table 7.8	Distribution of student sample by age and by year	177
Table 7.9	Percentages of student sample who pass/failed the CEE or made no statement by year, by gender and by age	178
Table 7.10	Parents' educational levels	179
Table 7.11	Types of employment among parents	180
Table 7.12	Percentage distribution of student sample by choice/reasons for choice and by school	183
Table 7.13	Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by school reconsidered	184
Table 7.14	Percentage distribution of student sample by choice, by CEE results and by school	186
Table 7.15	Distribution of percentage rate for pass and fail at the Common Entrance examination by school	187
Table 7.16	Location of sample schools by region	188
Table 7.17	Distribution of student sample by region of birth, by region of longest stay and by school	188
Table 7.18	'Work' (W) and 'Not Work' (NW) respondents by school and year, age and gender, each as a percentage of the total sample 334	193
Table 7.19	Respondents' opinions about going to Sixth Form, by school, age and gender, each as a percentage of the total sample (n = 334)	195
Table 7.20	Fifth year students' level of enjoyment of life at school by schools	196
Table 7.21	Fifth year students' responses regarding the 'quality' of the school	197
Table 7.22	Fifth year students' responses to whether the school curriculum helps to get jobs	198
Table 7.23	Fifth year students' responses to suggested reasons for looking for work immediately after school	199
Table 7.24	Persons or organisations providing fees or funds for students in school	200
Table 7.25	Students' confidence in their chances of going to Sixth Form by parents' level of education and type of occupation	201
Table 7.26	Fifth year job seekers' job preference (n = 125)	203
Table 7.27	Fifth year job seekers' long-term job expectations (n = 133)	204
Table 7.28	Fifth year job seekers' reasons for job preferences (n = 121)	204
Table 7.29	Fifth year job seekers' job preferences, by gender (n = 126)	205
Table 7.30	Fifth year students' grouped responses to factors most influencing choice of work organisation (n = 284)	206
Table 7.31	Fifth year students' responses to size of organisation as a factor influencing choice of job	207
Table 7.32	Fifth year students' responses to size of organisation as a factor influencing choice of job	207
Table 7.33	Fifth year students' responses to choice of size of organisation, by gender	208
Table 7.34	Fifth year students' grouped responses to factors most influencing choice of organisation (n = 157)	208
Table 7.35	Fifth year students' responses to physical and environmental factors as influences on choices of location of workplace	209
Table 7.36	Fifth year students' grouped responses on factors most influencing choice of location of workplace (n = 157)	210

Table 7.37	Fifth year students' sources of advice on job choice (n = 157)	211
Table 7.38	Fifth year students: Persons to whom applications for jobs were made	212
Table 7.39	Fifth year students: Advice received from parents according to their education level and occupation	213
Table 7.40	Fifth year students: Information provided on current activities of former students one year after leaving school	214
Table 7A.1	Comparison between school and middle school level at which students left	361
Table 7A.2	Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by gender	362
Table 7A.3	Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by age	363
Table 8.1a	Distribution of employee sample by sex and type of school attended	217
Table 8.1b	Distribution of employee sample by school attended and by firm (in scale and sector)	218
Table 8.2	Distribution of employee sample by type of job and type of school attended	219
Table 8.3	Cross-tabulation of employee sample by type of job and salary earned with the length of time spent with the firm	222
Table 8.4	Distribution of employee sample by school and source of advice received about jobs	224
Table 8.5	Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended and type of school to be chosen if given the chance to start again	226
Table 8.6	Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended and whether business should be taught across all secondary schools	227
Table 8.7	Distribution of employee sample by opinion on whether BSS leavers do better on the job than ordinary secondary school leavers	228
Table 8.8	Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended and their opinion on the importance of recommendations from school	233
Table 8.9	Distribution of employee sample by similarities between their background and that of their employer	233
Table 8.10	Distribution of employee sample by gender and by importance attached to gender in getting a job	234
Table 8A.1	Distribution of employee sample by type of firm in which recruited	375
Table 8A.2	Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended and by length of time with the firm	375
Table 8A.3	Distribution of employee sample by salary earned and by type of firm (scale and sector)	376
Table 8A.4	Distribution of employee sample by importance attached to gender in recruitment and by type of firm (scale and sector)	376
Table 9.1a	Distribution of employer sample by scale and by sector	240
Table 9.1b	Total employees by firm	241
Table 9.2	Distribution of employer sample by type of firm and by scale and sector (n = 61)	243
Table 9.3	Employers' perceived role in the economy by their own definition of economic status	244
Table 9.4	Type of office equipment used by firm scale and sector	245
Table 9.5	Comparing employers' perceptions of their role in the economy with the number of accounts clerks and typists they have recruited over the past year	248
Table 9.6	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by method of selection of typists and accounts clerks	250
Table 9.7	Distribution of total employer sample by contacts with BSSs	250

Table 9.8	Distribution of total employer sample by scale and sector and by source of information about Business Secondary Schools	251
Table 9.9	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by opinions on whether a BSS background is better suited to recruitment into firms than an academic background	254
Table 9.10	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by opinions on whether improvements are needed in Business Secondary Schools	255
Table 9.11	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by whether BSSs have an important function	258
Table 9.12	Distribution of employer sample by intention to recruit, or not recruit, BSS leavers	259
Table 9.13	Employers' opinions on BSS leavers' performance at work by firm scale and sector	260
Table 9.14	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by importance attached to recommendations from school	261
Table 9.15	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by the importance attached to recommendations from someone known to the employer	262
Table 9.16	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by whether employers have had any political pressure on recruitment and if any problems ensued from it	264
Table 9.17	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by whether politicians recommend people for jobs	265
Table 9.18	Distribution of employer sample by frequency of personal contacts for jobs	266
Table 9.19	Distribution of employer sample by factors influencing choice of employees	268
Table 9.20	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by gender preference	270
Table 9.21	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by subjects in the school certificate which employers find particularly relevant for them	274
Table 9.22	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by their use of selection tests	277
Table 9.23	Distribution of employer sample by methods used by employers to make schools and others aware of job openings	278
Table 9.24	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by factors selected in choosing between several 'good' job applicants	279
Table 9.25	Employers' preferred venue for teaching business skills, by scale and sector	281
Table 9.26	Cross-tabulation of employers' perception of the importance of recommendations from school with schools as the best place for teaching business skills	283
Table 9.27	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by desire to see, or not see, business subjects taught in all secondary schools in the country	283
Table 9.28	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by whether they have training schemes and how prospective trainees are selected for them	285
Table 9.29	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by school background of trainees, comparing BSS trainees with other trainees	286
Table 9.30	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by their perceived need for adjusting their recruitment policy	287

Table 9.31	Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by whether they should consider developing a recruitment policy for school leavers	288
Table 9A.1	Type of firm and employers' definition of economic status	383
Table 9A.2	Entry levels required for recruitment of typists and accounts clerks, by type of firm	384
Table 9A.3	Distribution of employer sample by scale, sector and by source of recruitment of first employees	384
Table 9A.4	Cross-tabulation of employers' perceived importance of recommendations from school and by the importance they attach to Business Secondary Schools	385
Table 9A.5	Employers' gender preferences by type of firm	385
Table 9A.6	Number of trainees in each firm by type of firm	386
Table 9A.7	Distribution of state and parastatal employer sample by scale and according to government regulations they are subjected to (n = 25)	386
Table 9A.8	Private sector employers' views on state and employees' influences on recruitment policy	387

Ghana



Source: EIU 1990

Basic Data

Official name	Republic of Ghana
Population	14.13 million (1988)
Population density	51 per sq. km. (1984)
Population growth (% p.a.)	3.4 (1980-87)
Urban population (%)	31.3 (1984)
Population of working age (15-64 years)	48.0% (1985)
Total employment	413,700 (1986)
Percentage of labour force in	
- Agriculture	9.5 (1986)
- Industry	26.6 (1986)
- Services	63.8 (1986)
Life expectancy	53.0 (1988)
Infant mortality rate (under 1)	89.0 (1988)
Crude death rate	13.0 (1988)
Child birth rate	44.0 (1988)
Ethnic groups (%)	By language group in north: Mole-Dagbane 14; Grusi 2; others 10. By language group in the south: Akan 44; Ewe 13; Ga Adangbe 8; Guan 4; Central Togo 1; others mostly British 4
Main religions (%)	Christianity 43; Islam 12; various indigenous 38; no religious affiliation 7
Capital	Accra
Official language	English
Other main languages	South: Twi, Fante, Ewe, Ga, Nzema. North: Dagbani, Gonja, Hausa
Administrative divisions	10 regions
Membership of international organisations	UN since 1957, Commonwealth since 1957, OAU since 1963
Foreign relations	Diplomatic and consular relations with 37 states. Representatives of 44 countries in Accra (1986)
Highest executive body	Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)
Growth indicators (% p.a.)	
GNP	2.5% (1984), 5.2% (1986) 6.2% (1988)
GDP per head	-1.4% (1984), 2.6% (1986) 3.5% (1988)
GDP by sector	
Agriculture	49.3 (1988)
Industry	16.2 (1988)
Services	35.0 (1988)

Foreign Trade in 1989	
Exports	US\$816 million
Imports	US\$-1,108 million
Balance	US\$-292 million
Main exports	Cocoa, tropical hardwoods, gold, diamonds, manganese, bauxite, aluminium, oil, electricity from the Lake Volta complex
Exchange rate	Cedi C337.84 - US\$1 (1990)
Foreign exchange reserves	US\$327.9million (1990)
Main imports	Oil, machinery and transportation equipment, manufactured products, foodstuffs
Main trading partners	
Exports (% in 1988)	USSR (6.2), US (19.8), UK (18.0), Japan (7.4), West Germany (14.0), Togo (4.1), Others (29.0)
Imports (% in 1988)	US (11.7), UK (22.6), Nigeria (13.9), West Germany (9.6), Japan (5.5) Others (42.0)
Foreign debt	US\$3,099 million (1988)
Total external debt as % of GNP	61.9 (1988)
Debt service ratio	62.8 (1988)
Foreign aid	US\$506.9 million (1988)
Education	
School system	Thirteen years (1983)
Primary school enrolment	71% of school-age children enrolled (1988)
Secondary school enrolment	39% of age-group enrolled (1988)
Tertiary education	2.0% of age-group enrolled (1988) - University of Ghana (Accra), University of Cape Coast, University of Science and Technology (Kumasi)
Adult literacy rate	54.0 (1985)
Economy	
GNP	US\$13.7 billion (1980)
GNP per capita	US\$390 (1987)
GDP	US\$1,058 billion (1988)
GDP per capita	US\$74,8 million (1988)
Budget (expenditure)	US\$915.3 million (1980)
Health/Education/Defence expenditure as % of state budget	8.0/24.0/7.0 (1987)
Minimum daily wage	Cedi C218 (March 1990)

The following data projections for Ghana 2000 were produced by Poptran, Cardiff University Population Centre, from United Nations Assessment Data published in 1980 and OECD Report 1989:

Total Population ('000)	20-22,346
Males ('000)	9-11,096
Females ('000)	9-11,250
Total fertility rate	5.73
Life expectancy (male)	56.3 years
Life expectancy (female)	60.0 years
Crude birth rate	42.1
Crude death rate	10.5
Annual growth rate of population	3.16%
Annual growth rate of labour	2.9%
Under 15s	45.98%
Over 65s	2.84%
Women aged 15-49	22.67%
Doubling time	22 years
Population density	94 per sq. km.
Urban population	51.2%

Sources: ABECOR (1988); World Bank (1988a and b); OECD (1989 and 1990); EIU (1990); UNICEF (1990); IMF (1991).

Abbreviations

ABECOR	Associated Banks of Europe Corporation
APEID	Asia and the Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development
ATTC	Advanced Teacher Training College, Kumasi
BEU	Business Education Unit
BSS	Business Secondary School
CDR	Council for the Defence of the Revolution
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMB	Cocoa Marketing Board
CUSO	Canadian University Service Overseas
DES	Department of Education and Science, UK
Ed. SAC	Education Sector Adjustment Credit
EFF	Extended Facility Fund
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
FEU	Further Education Unit
GBC	Ghana Business Certificate
GCB	Ghana Commercial Bank
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEA	Ghana Employers' Association
GEDC	Ghana Enterprises Development Commission
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNP	Gross National Product
GNTC	Ghana National Trading Corporation
GSS	Ghana Secretarial School
ICA	Institute of Chartered Accountants
ICS	Institute of Chartered Secretaries
IDA	International Development Association
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPS	Institute of Professional Studies
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LCC	London Chamber of Commerce
LRP	Labour Redeployment Programme
MORI	Market & Opinion Research Council
MSLC	Middle School Leaving Certificate
MUC	Manpower Utilisation Committee
NASMENT	Nigerian Association of Schools of Management Education and Training
NBSSI	National Board for Small-Scale Industries
NCWD	National Council on Women and Development
NVTI	National Vocational Training Institute
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCS	Office of the Head of the Civil Service

OU	Open University
PAMSCAD	Programme of Action to Mitigate against the Social Costs of Adjustment
PEP	Public Enterprise Project
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PSU	Private Schools Unit
QER	Quarterly Economic Review
RMC	Redeployment Management Committee
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SAF	Structural Adjustment Facility
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TEU	Technical Examinations Unit
TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, UK
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
URC	University Rationalisation Committee
VOSE	Vocationally-Oriented Secondary Education
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WASC	West African School Certificate
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

Introduction

The study is organised into three parts. Part One provides the overall framework of the analysis. Part Two presents an analysis of the context for the research and Part Three an analysis of the research findings.

Throughout the study, the employer dimension is pervasive since the overall direction is toward an analysis of employers' beliefs about the selection and recruitment of business secondary school leavers. Further, in an attempt to concretise discussions in the first part of the study, chapters 2, 3 and 4 include experiences from other countries. There are many similarities between their economic and social problems and those of Ghana. A sharp analysis of their impact on Ghana draws on these similarities. Included in this analysis are examples from Nigeria, Liberia, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Zambia. There is much, however, to learn from events not only in other parts of the continent but in foreign countries such as Canada, Japan, America, Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and Brazil which through the structure of the international economy influence, even today, decisions on education in Ghana.

Part One presents the rationales for this research. It delves extensively into an analysis of how business secondary education and office work are related (or indeed, not related) to the many perspectives on school to work theories (Chapter 1). Part Two analyses the history, status, curricula, examinations, cost and staffing of business secondary schools. The focus is on business education, its structure within the overall educational framework and its relationship to office work in the 'real' world (Chapter 2). It examines the ideas and ideology with which office work is associated. It is particularly concerned with the working environment which school leavers are about to enter; it defines the modern sector and discusses Ghana's economic structural adjustments as they influence current thinking on the relationship between education, the employer and work (Chapter 3). This section further examines the way in which vocationally-oriented education is implemented at the secondary level and considers the relationship between such patterns of implementation and some of the strengths and weaknesses of a vocationally-oriented ideology and discourse which emerge in the preceding chapters (Chapter 4).

Part Three pulls strands together and analyses findings from various contributors to this research. It presents the research design and methodology, describing the population, types and sources of data, instrumentation and its rationale, treatment of data and report of

field experience in using the instruments (Chapter 5). This section presents findings in respect of the context of business secondary education, input of human resources and materials into the business secondary curriculum (Chapter 6). The profiles of graduating business secondary students are presented with an analysis of constraints and facilitators to developing practical business secondary curricula aimed at preparing for office work (Chapter 7). The profiles of employees in secretarial and accounting jobs are presented with an analysis of employees' entry level qualifications and their attitude towards the job. The focus is on employee job satisfaction and future prospects (Chapter 8). Findings in respect of employers' main criteria for selection and recruitment of school leavers for secretarial and accounting jobs at the junior level are presented and analysed (Chapter 9). The final chapter presents the summary of the findings and conclusions arising from the whole enquiry.

Implications of these findings for improving the recruitment of business (vocationally-oriented) secondary school leavers are varied and complex but it is not the intention of this study to make confident assertions. However, it warns about recruitment policies and business secondary curricula which are narrow, unidimensional and shortsighted and makes recommendations which focus more on a co-operative approach. To this end, Part Three is a unified critique which assumes significant connections between the various elements examined in Part Two - student, curriculum, employer, school and work orientation.

*

PART ONE

FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS

Chapter 1 The Research Problem

1.1 Rationales for the Research

The study aims to show the extent to which vocationally-oriented secondary schools, in particular, Ghana's business secondary and commercial schools, may be able to meet modern sector employers' requirements, which are extremely varied and unclear. It investigates the broader problems of the relationship between school and work and the modern sector employers' hiring beliefs which may or may not go beyond the search for skills and attitudes to include criteria such as type of school, ascriptive and relational characteristics and type of job. The study also focuses on the question of whether employers' hiring beliefs depend on which type of modern sector firm they belong to, that is, whether the distinction between small- and large-scale modern sector businesses has any bearing at all on employers' preferences for any one type of school leaver. It is not suggested here, a priori, that size of employing organisations *will* affect employers' attitudes or hiring beliefs, but that it *might* do so given the myriad of factors which influence employers' thinking. Therefore, insofar as there is some uncertainty an exploration of as many of these factors as possible is necessary even if they offer only a minor, but nevertheless important, contribution to the study.

It is also likely that employers' recruitment behaviour stems from many sources, some of them highly elusive and almost impossible to identify, let alone to generalise about. Employers, like any other social category, are the product not only of many types of education but of different intellectual attributes, personalities, attitudes and experiences. Their own past experiences as students or employees may profoundly influence their thinking about school leaver recruitment. Their political and religious beliefs, moral values, aspirations and fears for the future of themselves and others may affect their recruitment policies.

None of these influences is denied in what follows. On the contrary, the study's concern with employers is an explicit acknowledgment of the employers', perhaps hidden, impact on schools. But while biographies of one or two employers might indicate their uniqueness, a study about school leaver recruitment as such has to deal more with what employers have in common, with their shared experiences, ideas and situations.

What binds together the experiences of every employer is the community of ideas and

discourse which the experiences generate and sustain. Employers from Accra and Kumasi can communicate without difficulty on professional matters by virtue of shared assumptions about the jobs they are both doing which each can take for granted. This suggests two requirements for a study which touches on employers' beliefs about school leaver recruitment. One is to explore the thinking, reasoning, assumptions, knowledge and beliefs which underlie recruitment or non-recruitment of school leavers. The second is to focus upon the three central shared areas of professional experience to which these ideas and acts relate: the modern sector, the modern enterprise, large or small, and the employers' own guidelines for recruitment. This study endeavours to meet both of these requirements.

Surprisingly, it is unusual for detailed consideration to be given to employers' hiring beliefs in studies supposedly about work oriented/vocational education. There are numerous books and reports about youth employment and transition from school to work which, whatever their qualities in other respects, barely mention the employer or restrict their commentary on it to a few worn cliches (World Bank 1981). Conversely, there are many discussions about attitudes and expectations of employers which examine the latter in their own terms, without exploring the appropriateness of what schools teach, how students are prepared for work, or at a deeper level, the consistency of a course's implied model of work with what actually happens in the work place (Gaskell 1986; Blackmore 1987; Noah and Eckstein 1988; Cumming 1988).

It appears that training for office work and employers' hiring beliefs, whatever the efforts of particular individuals and institutions, tend to occupy separate worlds. Conceptually, since the assumption is that training for office work is one of the shared experiences of employers, such training should feature prominently in any comprehensive discussion of business curricula and teaching. But it is not clear whether the character of the training process and of employers' wants are both regarded as problematic. Yet if there is ignorance among teachers and technical teacher trainers about the real world of office work, would there not equally be ignorance among employers about current practices in business education?

1.2 Distinguishing between pre-vocational and vocational education

Confusion is evident in much of the literature about vocationalism, what it means, why it is needed and how it is implemented (Lauglo 1983; Lauglo and Lillis 1988; Bowman 1988, 1990; Carnoy 1990). 'Vocationalism' is about both specialised vocational schools and practical courses in otherwise academically oriented secondary schools. While the former

lends itself more naturally to the term 'vocational education', as it is generally perceived, the latter form of vocationalism is readily viewed as 'pre-vocational education' given that the very broadly conceived vocational lines do not give a complete vocational education. The implication is that, as is the case in Sweden, 'responsibility for vocational education is increasingly being given to employers' (Lauglo 1983:298). In other words, pre-vocational education is not intended to impart a vocational training to the pupils but lead to related training. Vocational education, by contrast, is intended to lead directly to work. Bowman (1990:301) describes it as 'education and training that is specialised in its orientation to particular jobs or occupations'.

According to Fielding et al. (1986:204)

pre-vocational education aims to provide young people with opportunities (i) to assist their transition from school to adulthood by equipping them with basic skills, experience, attitudes, knowledge and personal and social competences required for adult life; (ii) for a personally relevant educational experience which encourages learning and achievement; (iii) for acquiring a qualification embodying national standards which will give recognition for their attainments; and (iv) for an accepted basis for progression to continued education, training and/or work.

Thus, pre-vocational education constitutes familiarisation with broad skills and materials related to a broad 'family' of occupations. Its subjects may be optional or compulsory forming a small part of the pupils' total curriculum, providing at most a technical foundation for on-the-job acquisition of specific skills rather than preparing students to take up clearly defined occupations (Blaug 1972).

A general secondary school with pre-vocational emphasis, therefore, does not aim at producing skilled graduates of industrial entry level. Rather, the content of pre-vocational studies is intended to enable pupils to have the opportunity of learning about vocations but not necessarily of acquiring professional skills in them. At the same time, pre-vocational education frequently represents an attempt to break away from the traditional academic bias in education, and to establish closer links between education and life and the world of work. It can also be seen as a response to the needs of students who would otherwise be rejected by a highly elitist system based on academic failure (Diyasena 1976; Fielding et al. 1986; Ishumi 1988).

However, these distinctions in practice are not clear-cut, especially in relation to the vocationally-oriented secondary schools like agricultural and technical schools in Tanzania and BSSs in Ghana. Ishumi (1988:165) describes the Tanzanian schools (like the Ghana BSSs) as organised along specific subject combinations 'judged' to lead to certain desired

vocational/occupational competencies, but suggests also that

they seek to integrate education with work, to de-emphasise elitist bookish knowledge, to immerse the scholars in practical application of classroom theoretical knowledge, to give the scholars a 'taste of the real world' as lived outside the school, and to orientate students' attitudes towards society, the community surrounding them and the world of work .

It is striking that the latter is also a fair description of pre-vocational intention. In this sense, a school-based vocationally-oriented curriculum can be perceived as either pre-vocational or vocational. As Lauglo and Narman (1988:236) have pointed out, '[such a curriculum] is generally regarded as incomplete and requiring further training on the job, therefore the distinction between pre-vocational and vocational education is not clear-cut'. The 'incompleteness' and need for further training on the job are under discussion in this study, which uses the umbrella term 'vocationally-oriented secondary education' to cover the overlapping concepts of pre-vocational and vocational education. The study is intended to contribute to an understanding of the characteristics of secondary schools which may inhibit or encourage the implementation of a vocationally-oriented education.

1.3 Perspectives on school to work theories and employers' hiring beliefs

Several theories have been put forward which attempt to explain the relationship between education and work. These include human capital theory, the job competition model, the screening hypothesis, correspondence theory and labour market segmentation which are well known (Schultz 1961; Berg 1970; Thurow and Lucas 1972; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977 and Carnoy 1977, 1980).

Labour market segmentation theory focuses on the 'segmentation' of the labour market into contrasting sectors of economic activity as well as the 'segmentation' of the labour force into contrasting categories of workers. Segmentation theorists like Edwards (1979) hypothesize that for different types of jobs in the labour market, there are distinct criteria for hiring and advancement, supervisory procedures, working conditions and wage levels, each attracting a distinct set of workers. But the theory focuses more on the issue of demand (labour market structure) versus supply (individual characteristics) effects on unemployment and wage/salary differentials, as the educated unemployed, at all skill levels, are seen as a means of keeping the cheap unskilled labour force under control, thereby putting a downward pressure on wages, increasing production and helping to play off one group of workers against the other who cannot resist for fear of dismissals.

Carnoy (1977:42), however, criticises this conventional view of the labour market when he asserts that 'if schooling remains an important selection criterion for jobs, its role in altering mobility is much more logical than its role in altering the rate of unemployment or the distribution of stable/unstable jobs within a given organisation of work.' He asserts, and rightly, that supply and demand are not measured in the same units because workers bring to employment a set of characteristics like drive, initiative, intelligence, docility and respect for authority, specific combinations of which the employer needs in order to maximise his outputs and profits (Carnoy 1980). This study explores these issues in terms of how selection criteria may affect employers' beliefs about school leaver recruitment. Insofar as they can help elucidate the research problem, human capital theory, the screening hypothesis and its variants, as well as the correspondence theory or 'principle', are the three main theoretical approaches which will help guide and illuminate the study.

The first, human capital theory, postulates that labour is the most important factor in the production process of goods or services and that labour itself varies in quality. Some employees are more productive than others, and those who are more productive tend to receive more remuneration. The essential principle is that investment in education and on-the-job training for the improvement of the quality of labour is economically profitable since the 'more schooled are by and large better enabled than the less schooled to undertake the more demanding jobs' (Deraniyagala et al. 1978:i). By imparting useful knowledge and skills, education or training raised the productivity of workers and hence increased their lifetime earnings as 'employers reward scarce skills and knowledge with income' (Woodhall 1985; Little 1986).

The screening hypothesis stipulates that education acts as a screening device, which enables employers to identify individuals who possess either superior innate ability or certain personal characteristics such as attitudes towards authority, punctuality, or motivation. Students with abilities and skills are identified by the school, particularly in the continuous process of examining and certification (Berg 1970; Wolpin 1977). However, this allocative function of schools, through competition, selection, examinations and certification, is also seen as destructive, with schools succumbing to the pressure exerted by competition for jobs (Berg 1970; Spence 1974; Dore 1976). Indeed one reason put forward as to 'why and with what justifications employers demand scholastic qualifications as pre-requisites to even considering people for employment' (Deraniyagala et al.1978:ii), is that

whilst the purpose is indeed to screen, [it is] simply because *some* means has to be found of selecting among large numbers of applicants and the use of educational qualifications is attractive because it is seen as a legitimate criterion - school achievement being the result of effort which deserves to be rewarded.

At the same time, according to this hypothesis, if employers are willing to pay more for people with higher levels of school certificate it is not because the school inculcated productive skills, but because the schooling process has served to identify and select those with 'essential' personal attributes such as higher intelligence, general ability, learning capacity, perseverance and so on (Clarke 1984). Little (1986:12) has termed this usage of the term 'hard' screening, that is,

schooling [that] does *nothing* to change the individual, only to select according to pre-existing skills, whether those skills be of a cognitive or attitudinal nature. Other screening theories were much *softer* and seemed to claim only that the school acts as a filter, without answering the more fundamental question of whether this expensive filter is simultaneously developing or investing in the person or simply selecting an already developed person.

Oxenham (1984) remarks on the high correspondence between the social background of a person and his position in salaried employment. In effect, the 'better off and more influential a person's family, the more likely he or she is to have a well-paid post in the managing or controlling echelons'. This recalls the argument that employers use schools to sort out appropriate social characteristics and not specific ability to undertake jobs, thereby 'legitimizing and reproducing a social class structure' (Deraniyagala et al. 1978:ii). This whole process of legitimation and reproduction means, therefore, that for a child to survive in the larger society he or she has to learn the three dimensions of normative systems, namely the learning of attitudes and behaviour such as punctuality, competitiveness and bureaucratic organisation (Fagerlind and Saha 1989).

In a similar vein, the correspondence principle holds that, in effect,

education prepares students to be workers through a correspondence between the social relations of production and the social relations of education. Like the division of labour in the capitalist enterprise, the educational system is a finely graded hierarchy of authority and control in which competition rather than co-operation governs the relations among participants and an external reward system - wages in the case of the economy and grades in the case of schools - holds sway'

(Bowles and Gintis 1988:17).

Yet, 'the irony is that many of those who argue that economic and technological factors determine the amount and quality of education, are the same who argue that the demand factors will change only when supply makes demands of the demand!' (Little 1986:13). The contradiction is retrospectively acknowledged by Bowles and Gintis (1988:19), thus:

By standing, in our approach, as the only structural link between education and economy, and by its character as an inherently *harmonious* link between the two, the correspondence principle forced us to adopt a narrow and inadequate appreciation of the *contradictions* involved in the articulation of the educational system within the social totality.

The three theoretical approaches (human capital, screening and correspondence) are not necessarily mutually exclusive but may represent differences of emphasis and perspective. However, some critics take a sterner view of the differences than others. Thurow and Lucas (1972) dismiss the idea implicit in the human capital theory that education contributes to productive work, claiming that the characteristics that workers supply, except trainability, are unimportant in determining their potential productivity. However, Carnoy (1980) notes disapprovingly that almost all economists who support the human capital theory say that the most important factors of productivity under modern technological conditions are cognitive skills, thus non-cognitive attributes like personality traits, values and modes of self-presentation are never incorporated in the human capital model. He disagrees, arguing that the concept of human capital 'must be extended to include activities which affect personal attributes as well as skills, and it must recognise that such activities increase workers' productivity in complex ways' (Woodhall 1985:2315). If schooling makes people more productive, it is not just in terms of imparting cognitive knowledge, but also in terms of socialising them in various ways, for example, in motivation and willingness to take orders and to accept responsibility (Blaug 1972). There is a point of contact here with the 'screening' hypothesis. Indeed Blaug, as cited by Woodhall (1985:850), in his review of research on investment in human capital, which he describes as a 'slightly jaundiced survey of the empirical status of human capital theory', predicts that

in time the screening hypothesis will be seen to have marked a turning point in 'the human investment revolution in economic thought', a turning point to a richer, still more comprehensive view of the sequential life cycle choices of individuals.

The screening hypothesis assumes that the employer asks for a school certificate for the purpose of identifying 'the cream' of the applicants in terms of their inherent abilities rather than in terms of the knowledge and skills which they have learnt at school. It is clear that

screening in this sense refers to more than mere 'screening by examination results' or the cognitive attributes for which examination performance is assumed to be a proxy. The use of these factors as criteria for recruitment into jobs is inevitable, 'because the social aspects of human capital or adequate preparation are not always so easy to separate from the educational' (Oxenham 1984).

Furthermore, as pointed out by Little (1990:6),

variation in [employers'] beliefs and practices ... may be attributed to the 'efforts, prejudices and habits of particular societies and sub-societies; the way in which particular occupations, industries and employers are organised; the relative scarcity both of modern sector employment generally and of particular jobs; the relative importance of a post to an employer; and the political climate'

(Oxenham, cited by Little 1990:6).

According to findings on modern sector labour markets in Mexico, Sri Lanka and Ghana (Little 1986:19) by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex research team:

there was some evidence that when qualifications were first attached to given jobs then a human capital rationale lay behind the link - a particular level of education was thought to indicate certain skills acquired in school - but thereafter the link was forgotten.

Evidently, screening models pose a challenge to the more traditional human capital model given that whereas the two models provide different explanations, the policy implications may significantly differ as 'it is now increasingly recognised that education affects attitudes, motivation and other personal characteristics, as well as providing knowledge and skills' (Woodhall 1985:2315). With so many coming out at the business secondary school level, is there not also the possibility that employers will look more at non-cognitive criteria, or would this only occur as a last resort?

The social screening hypothesis has a clear link with the correspondence principle although the two are by no means identical. The former relates to the behaviour of employers in sorting job applicants, the latter to the influence of social relations of production on school organisation, curriculum and ethos.

It is well to bear in mind, however, as Fagerlind and Saha (1989:90) rightly suggest, that

there are grounds for suggesting that these problematic aspects of the relationship between education and occupations may be somewhat exaggerated or oversimplified...It is inconceivable that schools in any modern or modernising society could dispense with at least minimum standards of orderly behaviour... All schools in every society are engaged in the process of socialisation of some kind: it is unlikely that education could ever take place in an attitudinal or cultural vacuum. The problem is not whether the skills, attitudes or values inculcated through schooling are consistent with a particular society's economic structure or ideology, but whether a particular kind of education is appropriate for a particular kind of social and economic structure.

Given the characteristics of the Ghanaian labour market, important questions are raised: how restricted are opportunities for entry to the modern sector as a whole and do the requirements and needs of the small-scale modern sector differ from the large-scale modern sector? Are business secondary school leavers readily accepted by employers and do products of such schools get the jobs they seek? Even more importantly is employers' acceptance of these school leavers based only on their qualifications or on other attributes?

There are three main rationales for the research, namely

- (a) to discover the nature and scope of employers' hiring beliefs with regard to Ghana's business secondary schools;
- (b) to find out if these beliefs and attitudes differ according to size of firm, i.e. large and small;
- (c) to determine what is the employers' 'role', if any, in the link between school and work.

Three theories, in particular, human capital theory, the screening hypothesis and the correspondence principle, are helpful in drawing out the complexities of the school to work relationship and in particular clarifying employers' varied requirements as they affect the recruitment or non-recruitment of business secondary school leavers.

The next three chapters in Part Two are concerned with analysing the two factors which are fundamental to the school to work transition; namely the school and the employer.

PART TWO

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT

Chapter 2 Business Secondary Education: Teacher, Student and Curriculum

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the way the Ghanaian government has sought to introduce and implement reforms in the education system. It takes as its focus business education, where a curriculum that has been in place since the turn of the century is coming increasingly under question because of the introduction of new skills into the office, increasing youth unemployment and the process of vocationalism in the school. The chapter also explores the way business teachers interact, or fail to interact, on matters of new curriculum ideas that will better meet the changing requirements of students who will enter the labour market.

2.1 Ghana's pre-tertiary education system

There are two systems of pre-tertiary education at present. There is the old system and the new one introduced in February 1974 designed to phase out the old. This chapter will therefore present an outline of both systems as this phasing-out process is still continuing. The system of pre-tertiary education until 1974 was divided into three levels: primary (grades 1-6); middle (grades 7-10) and secondary (grades 11-17). Figure 2.1 illustrates the old system of education and the various exit points.

At the primary level local district councils are largely responsible for the physical facilities, while at the secondary level various missionary organisations play an important role. Private schools play a significant role only at the primary level, enrolling about five percent of the relevant age group. Universities, churches and individuals also operate primary schools to supplement government efforts. These are private preparatory schools which offer six-year programmes consisting of the same subjects offered in the public elementary schools. At the second level, most private students are in private business/commercial schools. While the private schools have a wide margin of autonomy in administrative matters, they are regulated by the Ministry of Education in regard to policy, curriculum and academic standards (World Bank 1986; Ghana Country Paper 1989).

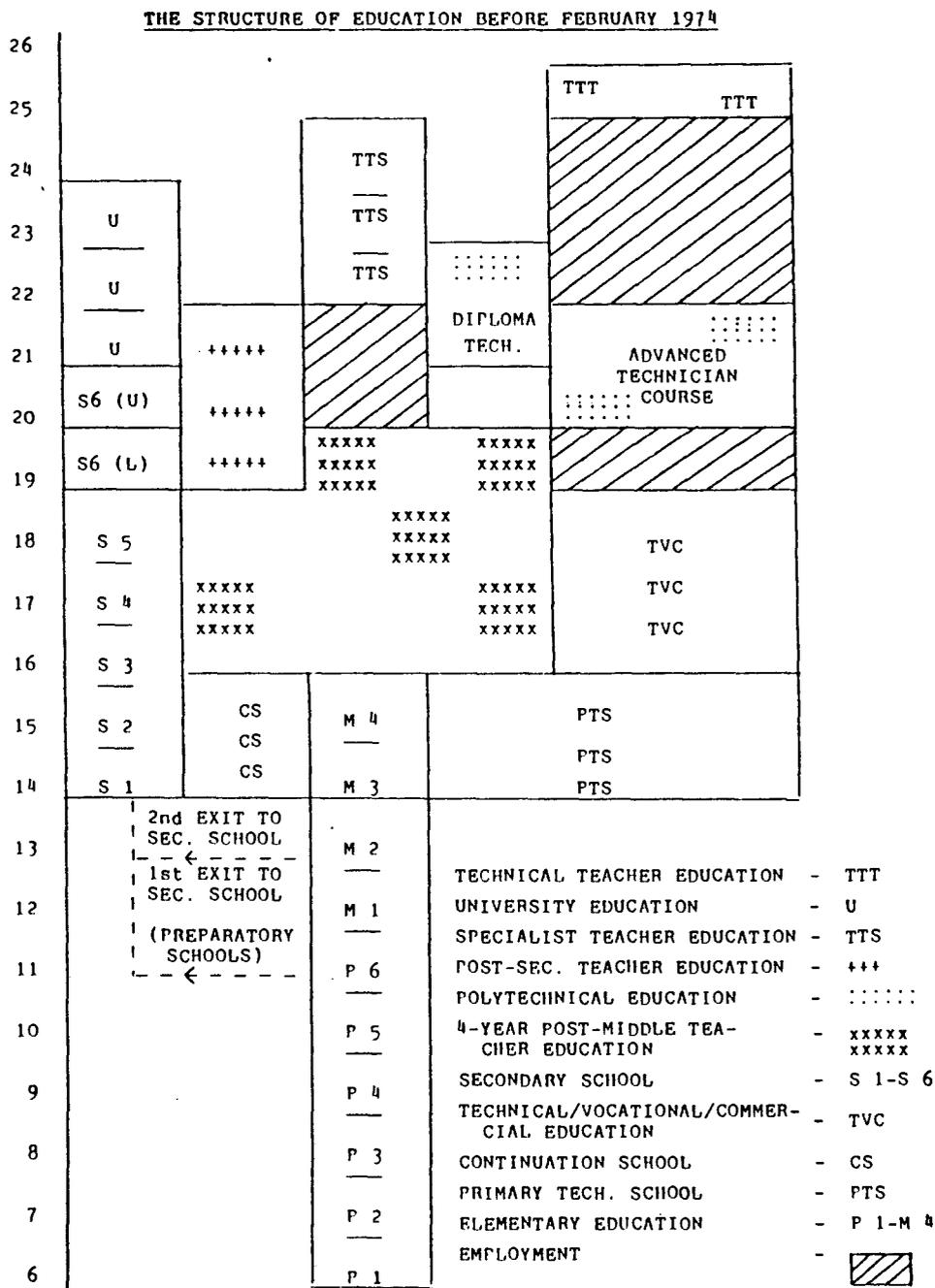


Figure 2.1 The old structure of education

Source: Ghana Education Service 1984

Historically, secondary level educational institutions have been concentrated in the more urbanised southern half of the country, particularly in the coastal and forest belts. From 1981/82 to 1984/85 growth of school enrolment did not keep pace with the growth of the school age population. Whereas school age population grew at 3.6 percent per year, enrolments grew by 1.5 percent for primary, 1.1 percent for middle and 1.5 percent for secondary levels (World Bank 1986). According to Ministry of Education statistics less than 7 percent of the relevant age group are in secondary schools, only 1.1 percent are in the sixth form (Ghana URC Report 1988). From 1984 to 1988 the distribution of students in two levels of public sector education was as is shown in table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1
Enrolment trends by levels, 1984-1988

Level	1984/85	1985/86	1985/86	1986/87
First	2,062,225	2,127,146	2,053,020	2,104,790
Second	163,134	168,189	173,402	182,669

Source: Ghana Country Paper, 1989.

A number of students, usually less than the number admitted to public institutions, are also absorbed by private secondary and technical/vocational/commercial schools (Unesco 1984). Most secondary schools have boarding facilities, which have sought to 'promote national unity and integration as students from diverse ethnic backgrounds live and study together' (Ghana URC Report 1988). However, because of the high cost of boarding schools the government is gradually reversing this policy (World Bank 1986).

Entrance into the first year of secondary schools is by the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) which is taken by pupils in grades 6-10. The following table shows the proportion of students entering secondary schools from each of these grades in 1985:

Table 2.2
Ghana: 1985 Common Entrance Examination Passes by
Grade from which Examination taken
(% of total successful candidates from each grade)

<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>	<u>Grade 9</u>	<u>Grade 10</u>
32.8	3.2	9.7	16.8	37.9

Source: World Bank (1986).

Thus, the majority of students enter from grade 10 and more than half (54.7 percent) had spent nine or more years in school. Only those able to pay for private education, or attend

better primary schools in the towns, manage to enter secondary school after primary school (Grade 6). Consequently, most students were in school for 17 years (more if they repeat a grade) before entering university.

There are a variety of technical and vocational schools at the second cycle level which are both government and privately sponsored. Admission is based on performance in the Common Entrance examination. These institutions provide a wide variety of full-time, part-time and apprenticeship programmes of study with some programmes leading to the certificate level of training. Whilst in the government schools tuition is free and boarding costs are shared with students on a one-third/two thirds basis, there are about 50 private technical, vocational and commercial/business schools with enrolment rates exceeding those in the government sponsored institutions (World Bank 1986).

2.1.1 Structural problems

Under the old system, secondary education was considered as almost uniquely reserved to the academically bright pupils. However, the broadening of the secondary school curriculum to include a range of new and practical courses is seen as essential in order that every child is afforded an opportunity to receive some education irrespective of what vocation he intends to pursue.

This has meant a considerable restructuring of the curriculum in the early stages of education which has remained narrow. Anim and Quansah (1978) noted that 'drop-out rates and the rate of repeaters in school are all related to interest in the curriculum to which pupils are exposed'. The curriculum throughout the school system emphasises memorisation at the expense of practical skills.

At the basic educational level the problem of untrained teachers prevents effective instruction: an estimated 48 percent of primary teachers and 36 percent of teachers at the middle school level have had no preparation for their profession (see Appendix 2A).

Pupil:teacher ratios at all levels of the formal school system were considerably lower than the norms that have been established by the government. For example, at the primary level the ratio is between 23:1 and 26:1 compared with the government norm of 40:1; at the secondary level between 14:1 and 17:1 compared with a norm of 22:1. These low ratios are a result of three factors:

- (a) re-absorption of teachers returning from neighbouring countries;
- (b) employment of untrained and unqualified personnel to meet social welfare objectives; and
- (c) poor personnel administration practices that have led to lack of control over the personnel rolls, with resulting abuses of the system.

(World Bank 1986).

Furthermore, over the past few years the majority of students and teachers have not even had access to textbooks or other instructional materials. Where schools are supposed to provide sciences and technical courses, many have equipment in need of repair and/or in short supply. In addition, school buildings are still poorly maintained and in terms of accessibility they are often badly located, with two or more schools concentrated in one area while another has none.

Foreign exchange has not been available to buy essential textbooks, equipment and other supplies. Virtually no resources have been available through government to construct, complete or maintain educational facilities. Despite significant reductions in educational unit costs in recent years, it has been difficult for the government to provide the necessary funding for an educational system with expanding access (African Concord 1988).

Furthermore, given the high indirect costs of secondary education (uniforms, books, boarding and miscellaneous fees) as well as the high opportunity costs (for example, foregone earnings), many able students from poor families do not continue their education due to the inordinate length of the pre-tertiary cycle.

2.1.2 Improving pre-tertiary education

The present government of Ghana has shown some initiative in introducing a programme of educational reforms which are aimed at:

correcting the negative consequences of a steady decline in the quality of education over the past decade due to inefficient management, and scarcity of educational materials and qualified personnel; and reorientation of the structure and content of education based on a careful assessment of the changing conditions and needs of the nation and the world at large.

(Ghana URC Report 1988:viii).

Nevertheless, how far these reforms can or will be carried forward faithfully and what contributions will be made from key bodies within the educational system still remains to be seen. Pronouncements have been made by educational officials and interested parties (in

the media, at seminars and in conference speeches) about the increasing number of teachers being trained, better supervision in schools and the ceasure of cut backs on the real amount of money spent by the government on education.

It is important, however, to take account of the fact that the persistent problem of an unacceptably high rate of dropping out of school, combined with the continuing mismatch between outputs from schools and labour market requirements, has yet to be evaluated. The persistence of this problem could very well be a sad commentary on the inadequacies of schools in Ghana both to meet students' expectations and to satisfy employers' requirements at the same time.

Ghana's 'New Content and Structure of Education', was first introduced in February 1974 upon the recommendations of the Amissah and Dzobo Committees on Education. The key elements of this reform include

- (a) the reduction of the inordinately long pre-tertiary cycle (17 years) to the international norm of 12 years: this would save about 9 percent of government yearly recurrent expenditure on education;
 - (b) the need to intensify time utilisation at the secondary level and move it from the current average 33 weeks programme per annum closer to the international norm of 36-42 weeks per annum;
 - (c) the need to move from an overall academic curriculum to a more vocationally and technically oriented one shifting emphasis from memorisation at the expense of practical skill acquisition;
 - (d) the need to vastly increase education equipment and textbooks in the system; and
 - (e) the need to rectify the position where 48 percent of the teachers at primary and 36 percent at the middle level are untrained, leading to ineffective instruction.
- (Ghana URC Report 1988:96).

These steps are designed to arrest the deterioration in and raise the quality of education overall, create access for more people and maximise the efficiency of national resources invested in education.

In the light of the structural problems and their consequences for the numbers graduating from the system, the quality of the output and the financing of the system, the government replaced, as from September 1987, the current pre-tertiary 6:4:5:2 system with a 6:3:3 system, in which primary education would last six years, secondary school six years, but divided into three years of junior and three years of senior secondary school. Terminal points in the new system would be at the end of the junior secondary school after nine years of basic education and of senior secondary school after another three years. Figure 2.2 shows the structure of the new education system (see also Appendix 2B).

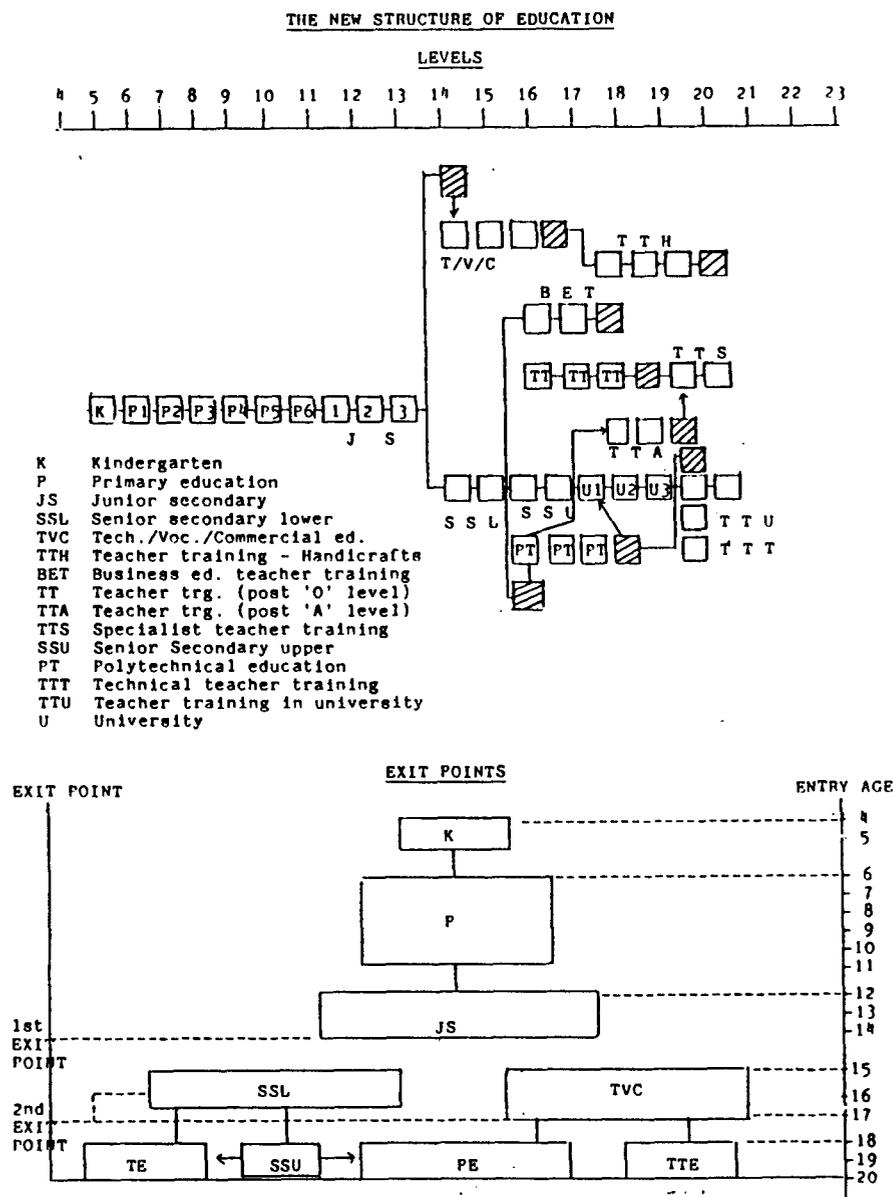


Figure 2.2 The new structure of education showing levels and exit points

Source: Ghana Education Service 1984

Developed as a first step in changing the structure of the education system and as an alternative to the traditional academic based curriculum of middle schools, the Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) offer a curriculum combining academic subjects with practical pre-vocational training. In 1987/88 all intakes to the grade 7 level went into schools with a JSS curriculum. There were no new middle school intakes in that year. It is further estimated that by 1990/91 there will no longer be any middle schools in the country and all intakes into secondary school will be from the third (final) year of the JSS (World Bank 1986).

As yet there has been no change at the secondary level. The system still provides a five-year course leading to the School Certificate/General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level examination. A further two years in the Sixth Form prepares pupils for the Advanced Level Certificate with which one can gain admission into university. The system therefore operates as a 6:5:2 pattern rather than the planned 6:3:3.

Secondary schools still provide courses in commercial and technical/vocational subjects as well as teaching the traditional grammar school subjects. This is another terminal point in the system. Whilst the graduates from this level can go to work or enter the universities they are encouraged to train for middle level professions in institutions available in the system, for example the polytechnics, specialist and teacher training colleges.

Secondary education as it now exists is due to start phasing out from September 1990 when pupils from the Junior Secondary School begin their second cycle education. It is due to be replaced by the Senior Secondary School (SSS), a three-year course at the end of which the students should be ready to embark on tertiary education or enter the labour market (Ghana Country Paper 1989).

Much of the preparatory work for launching the reform programme has been accomplished although the government's financial and foreign exchange shortages of recent years have resulted in an increase in the proportion of total costs met by parents. The government has started increasing various fees especially for the use of textbooks to cover the full costs of boarding and feeding at all levels of education. (West Africa 1989). However, in order to further reduce its recurrent cost burden the government is gradually de-emphasising secondary boarding schools by insisting that at least 30 percent of all new intakes be day students (Government of Ghana Report 1985; World Bank 1986). Also, the recruitment of additional non-teaching staff has been frozen in recent years throughout the government service.

Furthermore, the Education sector of the government's Economic Recovery Programme has attracted a \$45 million loan from Western donor countries and the World Bank for its structural adjustment programme. The Education Sector Adjustment Credit (Ed.SAC) loan is being utilised primarily for the purchase of essential educational outputs such as vehicles, basic Science equipment and other materials, procurement and printing of textbooks for the Ministry of Education mainly from overseas countries, training and re-training programmes for teachers of Junior Secondary Schools (see Appendix 2C).

Steps are being taken to improve Teacher Training colleges and attract more highly qualified people into teaching in all subjects in the Basic Education Curriculum. New texts and teachers guides for all major subjects for the first 9 grades of school are ready for mass production. However, the government realises that teaching is too dependent on text books so that there is not enough emphasis on learning activities relevant to the local environment. Hence, subjects will be selected for specific schools on the basis of the availability of local materials. Syllabuses have also been developed by the Ghana Education Service for primary and junior secondary schools to be used to impart the required knowledge and skills.

In line with the phasing out of middle schools, in 1987/89, pupils in Middle Forms 2, 3 and 4 only sat the Common Entrance examination of the West African Examinations Council. Hence whereas in 1987, 78,000 pupils sat for the CEE, only about 50,000 were registered for the examination in 1989. This consequently affected intake into secondary schools in that year, so that, despite the decrease in registration, the secondary schools could provide only 30,000 vacancies for successful candidates. It is expected however, that, given the opportunity, 50 percent of all those completing Junior Secondary School (JSS) will enter Senior Secondary School (SSS) which offers opportunities in basic academic subjects as well as technical, vocational and business subjects (Ghana Country Paper 1989).

At present, technical/vocational and business education still constitute a small proportion of total enrolment compared to the liberal arts. This could be explained by suggesting that there is embedded in the curriculum, the assumptions that 'occupational' work and 'school' work are irreconcilable (see Chapter 4).

2.2 Ghana's Business Secondary Schools (BSS)

While apprenticeship and on-the-job training pre-dated formal schooling in business education, 'elite' schools, such as Ghana's Achimota, Adisadel and Mfantsipim secondary

schools, offered commercial courses as far back as the 1930s, although an emphasis upon the 'academically respectable' subsequently wiped such courses from their curricula (Hanson 1971). Little or no attention was given to the expansion of facilities for technical/business education during the period. Such education was taken to represent last-ditch European efforts to block access to academic education and thus the prestige and the power of the coloniser (Ruddell 1979; Grubb 1985). It was later that the resulting gap in technical and business training was quickly filled by schools which were set up by private entrepreneurs in secondary, technical and business institutions, with 'arguments in one form or another having played a large role in justifying external assistance to diversified curriculum in the 1960s, including assistance from the World Bank' (Heyneman 1984: 2).

Just before Ghana's independence in 1957, the government realised the need to initiate a programme for the training of young men and women of this country to take over the managerial responsibilities in commerce and industry hitherto occupied by expatriates (Dankwah 1987). It was this need which led to the establishment of the Commerce Department of the then Kumasi College of Technology aimed at producing professional business executives such as Chartered Accountants, Secretaries and Administrators based upon external examinations conducted by professional bodies in the United Kingdom, such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and so on. This type of business education was very useful where the need arose for Ghanaians to man the various state, para-statal and private organisations, particularly at the higher levels. As Younger (1960:14) pointed out in a study regarding trained manpower problems:

In the past, colonial territories have all in varying degrees been administered by personnel drawn from the colonial power and they have come to rely, in their political and economic affairs upon the existence of a public service containing a substantial proportion of officials trained in modern administrative and technological methods. While the greater number of colonial public servants have at all times been a relatively small minority, they have been a minority occupying most of the higher administrative and professional posts and effectively controlling the service.

Between 1952 and 1958 the total number of senior officers increased by nearly 1,000 but the proportion of Overseas Officers dropped from approximately two-thirds to one-third. Even though the private sector cannot be said to have witnessed such rapid transformation within the same time frame, there was, nevertheless, a gradual movement from a situation where expatriate staff occupied administrative positions to a situation where they were replaced by Ghanaians. At any rate administrative responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of Ghanaians themselves. Certainly, the progress can be partly attributed to the

development of business education in the years immediately before and after independence (Tsikata 1986).

In 1962, the Manpower Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, requested the Ford Foundation to:

- (i) make a survey of the office education needs in Ghana;
- (ii) make a recommendation to improve the qualities of office education; and
- (iii) provide for the increasing number of students to be trained.

A report (the Atkinson Report, November 1962) submitted by Agnew and Atkinson of New York University was followed by a similar one prepared by a committee established by the Ministry of Education (January 1963) with three terms of reference:

- (i) examine the present facilities for business education in the and the Polytechnics;
- (ii) carry out a survey of the needs of private commercial firms and the government department for business education; and
- (iii) make any other recommendations.

Alongside higher institutions of learning, are Polytechnics, Government Secretarial Schools, Private Commercial Schools and the National Vocational Training Institute which concentrate on the training of personnel for the lower and middle level manpower requirements of commerce and industry and other state or para-statal organisations (Mensah 1986).

It was probably due to these two reports that the Ministry of Education in 1965, ruled that all secondary schools were to teach business/commercial subjects. And, following the 1966-67 Education Review Committee Report, the Ministry of Education took over and improved 13 private BSSs, amalgamating them and their approximately 2,000 pupils into the state system - in fact, four of these schools were returned the following year to the private sector, leaving only nine BSSs in the public sector, to date. These offer a predominantly business course which includes the following subjects:

1. *Business Studies* : Business Arithmetic, Bookkeeping, Shorthand, Business Principles, Office Practice, Commerce, Typing and Office Machines.
2. *General Studies* : English Language, History, Economics, Economic Geography, Physical and Health Education.

But due to the popular notion that it is only as a last resort that students should do business subjects, there has been little active encouragement by the Ministry of Education to expand business education at the secondary level over the years (Dankwah 1987), let alone 'extract valid, workable and detailed curricular specifications that would achieve the objectives of a [pre-vocational] programme' as was the case in a Sri Lankan experience (Wijemanna 1987). Evidence of this lack of interest can be seen in Ghana's case in table 2.3 below:

Table 2.3 *
Secondary schools offering business subjects by region, 1981

Name of Region	Number of Secondary schools	Number offering Business subjects	
		'O' level	'A' level
Greater Accra	22	16	1
Volta	28	11	-
Eastern	33	14	2
Central	20	9	-
Western	19	6	1
Ashanti	44	17	3
Brong Ahafo	18	7	1
Northern	9	3	1
Upper East and Upper West	11	3	1

*Drawn using 1980-1981 figures, compiled from the most current publication on educational statistics in Ghana.

However the Ministry of Education decided to offer assistance to several *private* business schools and colleges.

In August 1973, a Private Schools Unit (PSU) was established in the Ministry, having responsibility for registration of all private educational institutions in the country. There are now over fifty business schools with enrolment rates exceeding those in the government sponsored institutions.

But as the provision of secondary schooling has broadened, many new schools have opened whose 'quality' varies widely, sometimes even from year to year (Bibby and Peil 1974). Private schools have grown in response to the excess of demand for education beyond what the state has been able or willing to provide. It is generally argued that these schools can be seen as having six functions:

1. They are a measure of the excess of public demand over supply of school places and thus an indication to the government of where unmet needs are greatest.
2. They provide a safety valve which delays the articulation of demands for government action.

3. They may provide a channel of upward mobility, but in this appear to be inefficient.
4. By providing further education for middle school leavers, they lessen the number of unemployed or, on the other side of the coin, they slightly enhance the educational level of succeeding cohorts of wage labour aspirants.
5. They are agencies of urban socialisation; most of them are in large towns and cities, yet they cater mainly to rural pupils. A year or two at a school in the city may allow the migrant a chance to adjust and locate employment.
6. They may provide a 'cooling-out' process to cushion impending failures.

Evidence so far available indicates that the private schools are only marginally efficient in 'cooling-out' their students. Wastage from private schools might be expected because of disillusionment with what the schools provide and with lack of finances to continue. Furthermore, these schools are usually poorly housed, ill-equipped and badly staffed (Hanson 1971; Ruddell 1979).

In an indictment of private business schools, Hanson (1971:30) in particular, made comments which still hold true today:

Generally, these private schools are run in a manner which was designed to ensure profit to the proprietor rather than business education to students. In addition, the fees which the students or their parents pay to secure some of the most pitifully inadequate training constitutes one invisible portion of the iceberg of problems, since many of the students who come from the private system are as unemployable as when they first entered it. The fees which they paid are not indicative of any kind of useful investment. While the schools may boast of an extensive offering of business subjects, the production of large numbers of poorly qualified business secondary school graduates is of little use.

In an effort to remedy this, the 'best' schools were eventually 'promoted' to the state sector and some of the worst went out of business. However, the private schools still tend to be seen as offering courses to those who have failed to get into 'proper' secondary schools. Parents and students are then prepared to 'cut their losses' and go in for something which the business school owners persuaded them was at least within their reach. Hence business education has become an area in which private initiative has flourished (World Bank 1986).

There is also the matter of new teaching materials and equipment in government assisted and private business secondary schools. Textbooks especially are a major consideration if only because they are the most basic and the least expensive (Simmons 1980; Altbach

1983; Caillods and Postlethwaite 1988). By the beginning of 1970-71, thirty-two secondary schools had established business education departments and had been equipped with typewriters. But the expense of typewriters, other office equipment and the problem of inappropriate high technology have, to some extent, hampered more rapid development in Ghana's Business Secondary Schools.

On a bilateral basis, Canada, Japan, the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, the United Kingdom and West Germany continue to assist in the development of education and vocational education (Ghana Country Paper 1989). Notably, rehabilitation work on two Canadian Government assisted projects - Kumasi Technical Institute and Accra Technical Training Centre - which started in 1987 covers the Technical Advisory Service, curriculum and staff development, instructor training and equipment rehabilitation.

In addition, the Ministry of Education's Business Education Unit is responsible for preparing, approving and reviewing syllabi for the Accountancy and Secretarial courses in polytechnics and technical institutes (see Appendix 2D). Yet, whilst it maintains contacts with the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS), the universities, the N.V.T.I., the Technical Examinations Unit (TEU) and the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) regarding the development of courses and certification, a large gap still exists between current trends in business education in other less developed countries, and in Ghana. (See Chapter 4). There exists equally a discrepancy between the aspirations of education officials with regard to business education and actual accomplishments in areas such as:

- assessment of business education needs at the personal level;
- assessment of business education needs of Government, Industry and Commerce;
- assessment of student career interests and needs;
- curriculum planning and development to reflect societal needs and to keep up with change, particularly with office technology and automation;
- recognition given to business subjects vis-à-vis others in educational policy planning and implementation; and
- teacher education and continuous professional development.

(Tsikata 1986).

A number of problems thus attend business education as presently offered in Ghana. Several are directly or indirectly related to the problems of staffing and therefore merit attention here.

2.2.1 Business teaching

Although business subjects such as Shorthand, Typewriting, Office Practice and Secretarial Duties are studied at the public polytechnics, the bulk of office personnel for both the

government and private business organisations has come from the private business schools. The supply has been insufficient and at times inefficient (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1975). As the 1966-67 Education Review Committee rightly pointed out 'a great deal of time could be saved and inefficiency eliminated if a sufficient number of well-trained office personnel could be turned out from secondary schools'.

For the last decade of its existence, however, the BSSs have remained staffed by ill-qualified and inexperienced teachers. The 'status' associated with this type of vocational education in Ghana is low and the fact that business subjects are usually introduced initially by low-status non-graduate teachers with little prospect of promotion within the business school hierarchy does not help to raise it (Ruddell 1979).

Ghana is not alone in this situation as is evident, for instance, from Wright's (1986) assertion that staffing for diversification in Sierra Leonean schools has always suffered from an acute shortage of qualified and trained teachers in technical and commercial subjects. He attributes this not only to their lack of pedagogical and communication skills but also to the fact that 'such teachers see themselves as examples of the 'low-status' occupations towards which pupils have shown considerable antipathy and this has an important effect on the status of these teachers in the schools'. In the same way, Technical/Business teacher training in Ghana has been interwoven with the low prestige that society accords such subjects and neither the entry standards, nor the level of qualification is high (Ruddell 1979).

Estimates made in the Inspectorate suggest that when all assisted business courses are considered, some 75 percent of the teachers of business education subjects are untrained, i.e. they have not completed a formal course in teacher training. The majority possess only intermediate professional qualifications, i.e. Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Stage II and III qualifications (now known as Ghana Commercial Examinations, since the localisation of examinations in 1988).

The training of Business teachers takes place in four institutions in Ghana:

The Advanced Technical Teachers College (ATTC) in Kumasi
 The Advanced Teacher Training College (ATTC) in Winneba
 The University of Cape Coast
 The University of Ghana, School of Administration.

The programme in business teacher education was late in coming. The only Ghanaians teaching in this field, prior to the first output of Kumasi certificate holders, had been those who completed the private business secondary schools and then gained some experience in

business or government. Apart from the private proprietary business schools which need teachers the shortage of business teachers for the general secondary schools in the public system is, moreover, exacerbated by the need to staff nine business schools also operated by the government. Part of the problem lies in the lack of industrial experience of potential Ghanaian teachers.

Most teaching of business subjects in the secondary schools has in recent years been handled by volunteer teachers from abroad, where, notably in the case of a few technical institutions in the public system, the staff position has temporarily improved through personnel and equipment received from organisations in countries such as Canada (the Canadian University Service Overseas, CUSO), Britain (the British Council), the Soviet Union and the Republic of Germany (Ghana Country Paper 1987).

Canada had also assumed interest in localising the training of business teachers, and by 1969 six Ghanaians were receiving training in business education in Canada. The Kumasi Teacher Training College was originally staffed with aid from the United Kingdom and has recently received considerable staff support from Canada. This institution bears major responsibility for meeting needs which will be generated by policies favouring diversification of secondary school curricula along vocational and pre-vocational lines. It offers three programmes for the preparation of teachers. Present enrolments in two of these programmes would appear to fall considerably short of potential demand, (especially those in the programme in business education).

Furthermore, the qualitative aspects of training programmes for teachers in general have not yet received adequate attention. As early as 1977, the Ghana Five Year Development Plan aptly ascribed this primarily to

1. the continued shortage of qualified, trained and experienced teacher trainers;
2. lack of adequate shop-floor facilities for practical training;
3. lack of good teaching materials, equipment and library facilities;
4. the low level of basic education and training;
5. the unfavourable teacher-pupil ratio;
6. inadequate budgetary provision; and
7. lack of effective liaison between the employing establishments and the training institutes.

Although the College has suffered from lack of sufficient accommodation, securing and retaining a staff of suitably trained and experienced Ghanaian teacher educators promises to be its most serious problem. Unfortunately, although donor agencies can provide opportunities for overseas training of tutors, only Ghana can provide the conditions of service which will retain them at the college for it appears the educational system cannot

hold business educators trained abroad against the inducements of the private sector of the economy (Hanson 1971). Even with improved salary schedules for teachers, it is impossible to retain these teachers against the attractions of industry and many Ghanaians who have been sent for training as specialists in business education feel they have to return to Ghana's schools only because they are legally obliged to do so, and for as short a time as their obligations permit. Other Ghanaian business teachers, however, who study abroad privately have no incentive to return to Ghana at all but if they do return, they prefer to work in business or industry rather than in schools.

A final problem is that lecturers in teacher training colleges are not aided but rather hampered by the low status of teacher training institutions, with their poor quality staffing, limited involvement with schools and curricular development and slow adaptation to changes in school curricula (Odotei 1979). Solving the problems of adaptation and appropriateness may, in fact, be second only to solving the problems of providing and holding good teachers if the quality of education is to be enhanced.

2.2.2 The business student and curriculum

For the purpose of this study, business education has been defined as that part of the education system that prepares participants for the world of office work by considering the theory and practical applications of skills that are generic to large- and small-scale businesses. These range from simple manual tasks to advanced electronic methods such as word processing and databases.

With as many as 128 government assisted secondary schools and about 200 private business schools in Ghana, the whole approach to business education must be carefully restructured. For example, in Ghana's secondary schools, business subjects are normally studied from the fourth year whereas most others are taught from form one. When the time comes for students to choose their subjects at the end of form three, the weaker students are practically forced to do them; the more 'prestigious' ones being secured for the more capable students. The result of this practice is that often times the business students at the secondary level begin the courses, already feeling that they are failures and that it is only because they are incapable of doing the more academic subjects that they are pushed into the business/commercial area (Odotei 1979). Thus, the so-called 'capable' student who, given different circumstances, may consider offering a business subject for the 'O' level, ends up despising the subject and regarding it as inferior. This has led to relatively low enrolment figures for business subjects in the secondary schools, where business programmes exist (Tsikata 1986).

As a consequence, the shortage of competent secretaries and stenographers has constituted a deficiency in small-scale business and public administration. A career in business education requires people of various capabilities, not the left-overs of an academic-oriented education, for various job levels. In this regard, reports from Education Committees have emphasised the need for the Ministry of Education to draw up curricula and syllabuses for business studies with a view to raising their standards, at the same time gearing them to the needs of businesses in Ghana and making the most economic use of the few specialist teachers and equipment available. To some extent these recommendations have now been realised.

So far, the real increase in business school enrolment over the past years has been from the petty salariate: it is the teachers', local officials' and policemen's child whose numbers have increased sharply in the day schools (Ruddell 1979). This compares positively with Psacharopoulos' (1985; 1986) findings in Colombia showing that compared to control schools, INEM (Institutos Nacionales de Education Media) schools draw more students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Further, the average private business secondary school entrant is one who failed the Common Entrance Examination or had to leave a state school for academic or financial reasons (Bibby and Miller 1968; Ruddell 1979).

In general, it is also likely that the older the student at recruitment, the less likely he is to be in a school of his choice. Conversely, the less popular a school, the more older pupils it will have to take. Thus, the average age of a school's intake depends on a combination of factors: the status (and therefore the popularity of the school), the headmasters' attitude to 'old' students and the urban/rural status of the school (Ruddell 1979).

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) conducts the GCE 'O' and 'A' level examinations and standardises testing for Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia. It examines the following six business subjects for the General Certificate of Education (GCE):

- Bookkeeping and Accounts
- Shorthand
- Business Studies
- Principles of Office Practice
- Commerce
- Typewriting and Office Machines

Pupils are not limited to just one group of subjects but are guided to select subjects as their talents allow. English Language and Mathematics are compulsory for all pupils. BSS students generally have two options: secretarial or accounting. In the former, the student will take English, Business Mathematics, perhaps another non-business subject such as

French and a string of business subjects. Typewriting, shorthand, office practice and commerce would be a common combination. In the latter, the student would substitute accounting and commerce. The back-up subjects such as office practice are identical for the secretarial or accounting options.

As mentioned earlier, Business Education subjects are examined currently for the West African School Certificate (WASC) 'O' level in the same way as the conventional secondary subjects. The syllabus for business education is derived largely from that of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) but adapted somewhat to local circumstances. It is necessary, however, to describe the attempt that was made to introduce the Ghana Business Certificate (GBC), the reactions to it and why it failed.

In 1966, the Ghana Business Certificate (GBC) Examinations were introduced by only some Business Secondary Schools and Colleges, then in 1970 they were extended to all secondary schools. It was meant to parallel the WASC/GCE in business subjects in academic schools and to eliminate the need for foreign examinations like the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), and the London Chamber of Commerce (LCC) (Hanson 1971). However, according to Ruddell's (1979) findings, troubles began to beset the BSSs when the first GBC graduates emerged.

The GBC syllabuses were poor firstly because there was little attempt to adapt what were apparently Canadian syllabuses to the Ghanaian situation. Secondly, they were not uniform in standard and appeared not to take account of the non-availability of certain equipment. And thirdly, examination standards were erratic with great apparent variation between one subject and another. Questions were set, just as syllabuses had been devised, with little or no consultation (Ruddell 1979).

There were protests from the teachers and candidates about the papers and about the questions. The University of Ghana refused to recognise the GBC examinations as being equivalent to the School Certificate and as there was no record of there having been any contact with employers - for an examination which was to be 'recognised by employers as efficient and ideal for their purposes' - the GBC was scrapped in 1974 (Ghana Education Service 1982).

But this fiasco really does not tell us very much about the value of the prevailing WASC qualification in Business Studies from the employers' perspective. There is an assumption that the WASC is preferred by employers to the ill-fated GBC but no real evidence is provided. Some institutions offer programmes which continue to be geared to the

examinations of overseas bodies such as the Royal Society of Arts or the London Chamber of Commerce rather than to the West African Council Certificates of Education. It is hardly likely that Ghanaian employers are consulted by these bodies.

New technology is making the old WASC curriculum increasingly obsolete. For example, where typewriting, filing and shorthand used to be central, word processing, records management and micrographics are taking their place (Gaines 1986). This is also supported by the study's findings presented in Chapter 9. While Ghana may not yet be feeling the full effects, the Ministry of Education's Equipment, Materials and Development Unit, set up to ensure that equipment and facilities available for technical and vocational education are suitable, would do well to take note of the changes that are taking place in the business workplace.

If one were to go by the types of equipment in a typical Ghanaian classroom, then it could be surmised that the impact of technology on our teaching is near zero (Tsikata 1986). The impact of office technology and automation in Ghanaian offices is still a fairly recent phenomenon hence it may be argued that curricula and equipment have not had time to reflect the change (Wangwe 1984). Yet, quite a large number of organisations now work with electric typewriters, high-speed photocopiers, accounting machines, word processors and computers, but the classrooms are still equipped with, at best, a few manual typewriters and nineteenth century accounting machines.

Trained business skills or tools are essential if commerce and industry are to operate efficiently and enhance flexibility in order to achieve maximum results (Kaplinsky 1982; Mensah 1986). This is where business education comes in. We have to consider, in the light of changing trends in science and technology (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987), whether adequate emphasis or impetus is being placed on business education to produce efficient tools for commerce and industry.

For a long time, Ghana's curriculum planning and development practices have fallen very short of the ideal. Most, if not all business secondary schools, rely on outmoded and /or foreign syllabuses which have little bearing on the type of office procedures and processes that prevail in the country's offices (Tsikata 1986).

A review of the curriculum reveals that it has not been dynamic enough to meet the changing demands of the country with regard, for example, to the increasing advance of new technology and its effect on Ghana's socio-economic life. The secondary school syllabuses, textbooks and teaching aids that are being used today are the same as were used

at least 15 years ago in Typing, Shorthand and Commerce; other than the basic typewriters, there are no other equipment to train students on or even familiarise them with the types they may find in Ghana's modern offices (Tsikata 1986; Gaines 1986). The shape of the curriculum is ultimately determined by assumptions and evidence relating to what should be taught and how it should be taught, hence curricula that are better suited to Ghanaian society will be required.

2.3 Conclusions

This chapter has presented a brief picture of the two systems of pre-tertiary education as they operate in Ghana today. It has introduced some of the main structural problems in the old system of education such as the inordinately long pre-tertiary cycle of 17 years and the over-emphasis on academic-oriented schools.

The chapter has further reviewed the government's attempts at reforming the education system. Apart from dealing with the problems outlined above, increased efforts are being geared mainly towards:

- providing more textbooks and equipment; and
- providing better training for teachers and encouraging them to stay on.

Next, the chapter has given a detailed account of business secondary education in Ghana. It has highlighted four factors which have hampered its development.

The first is that a large portion of the work is offered in the private business secondary schools. There is little provision made for the inspection and supervision of these schools, with the consequence that old syllabuses are rarely reviewed and sometimes have little bearing on the Ghanaian world of work. The second factor is the lack of status for the business teacher and the lack of incentives or conditions of service which would attract and hold qualified people in business education. The inexperienced teacher has little chance for further professional development and is compelled to resort to the use of ineffective and outmoded teaching and learning strategies. The third factor is that the student is hardly given guidance on the choice of subjects, and his interests are not taken into account in the learning process. A fourth factor is lack of coordination. Inadequate and outmoded equipment curricula, unsuitable textbooks and teaching materials, testify to the fact that there are very few qualified Ghanaians available to administer or advise on programmes in business education.

The next chapter focuses on the working environment which the products of these business secondary schools are ostensibly prepared to enter.

Chapter 3 The Modern Sector Employer, Youth and Work

3.0 Introduction

It is to the modern sector of the Ghanaian labour market to which vocationally-oriented business secondary school leavers are most likely to aspire. Whether this strong bias is attributed to school leavers themselves, to schools, to parents and/or to others is not certain; nor is it certain why the students attend these schools in the first place. What is certain, however, is that the school through its emphasis on credentialism encourages the move towards looking for work in the modern sector. The question is, to what extent does the nature of work tasks in the modern sector provide the incentives for this kind of bias? Again, with the modern sector characterised by labour market segmentation where large-scale capital-intensive establishments co-exist with small-scale labour-intensive enterprises, it would be proper, in this study, to focus on the significance of these two segments in order to put into perspective and understand better the function and impact of the modern sector firms. Another point for discussion must be the status of these firms inasmuch as new developments in Ghana towards private business initiative rather than public enterprises will have some bearing on the employment aspirations of school leavers.

3.1 Working in the modern sector

The modern sector is characterised mainly by government services and large-scale industry, public institutions, commercial and administrative activities. It offers wages, salaries and working conditions which are, supposedly, 'comfortable and assured with long-term hopes of improvement and security in old age' (Iwuji 1972; Dore and Oxenham 1984).

To enter this sector, workers must of necessity produce educational qualifications in the form of certificates commensurate with the type of jobs. This substantiates the dilemma highlighted by Dore and Oxenham (1984:8) that

if schooling as currently practised is necessary and indispensable for the development of the modern sector, and if it is equally true that longer experience of schooling does fit people for more responsible functions, then it follows that using the schools to sort and select people is legitimate and sensible.

The implications of this statement for employing school leavers are analysed in the next

section. It is important to recognise, however, that people in modern sector jobs have in common traditions of training and education as opposed to those outside the sector. King (1980) provides an example of a carpenter in the modern sector, employed by a multinational company, who has more in common with a clerk or other middle range civil servant than with a carpenter working on his own in the informal sector of the economy. But, unlike carpentry, office work is a perfect example of types of jobs that fit unambiguously with the notion of modernity, where accounting and secretarial practice are commonly referred to as 'modern' or 'white-collar' jobs. Undoubtedly, no business enterprise can do without people who maintain the written records, send out letters, file written materials and deal with mail received. They service the bulk of the administrative, managerial, professional, technically skilled and supervisory occupations in both large and small firms.

It is important, therefore, to understand the context in which office work is carried out. That is, how and to what extent the size of firms in which office work takes place, makes a difference to the way employers recruit secretarial and clerical staff.

3.1.1 Segmentation within the modern sector

The modern sector is often equated with large-scale enterprises only (Steel 1976). The sector in Ghana is, admittedly, dominated by state owned enterprises with capitalist corporations and parastatal bureaucracies. Most of the sector's activities, the most obvious being office work, are conducted in the cities and towns and have a large share (38.9 per cent) of service employment, principally because of the importance of government services in Accra (Steel 1976; Thomi/Yankson 1984). Industrialisation has been a major development goal in virtually all sub-Saharan African countries in the immediate post-independence period. For the most part, this has meant an emphasis on large-scale firms, generally using the most modern technology with a high level of capital intensity and an import substitution focus (Ewing 1968). It has also been argued (Marder and Alderson 1979) that large firms and continuing growth in the size of firms will dominate the modern sector because larger firms

- (a) are more efficient;
- (b) provide more opportunities for division of labour;
- (c) can afford to buy expensive machines and equipment;
- (d) are able to attract more qualified staff not only because of higher salaries but also the prestige and power of responsible positions in a large organisation; and

- (e) are better able to raise money by borrowing and also to withstand the risks of business.

At this point, it is useful to note how Steel (1976) distinguishes four economic sectors in Ghana, in terms of wage, productivity, employment, capital, and size and technological organisation (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1
Criteria for Distinguishing four Economic Sectors in Ghana

Sector	Wage	Productivity	Employment	Capital	Size, technology, organisation
Modern	High (=min. wage)	High	Wage labour	Capital-intensive	Large, modern techniques; incorporated
Intermediate	Low (=MRP; determined in market)	Medium	Wage; apprentice; family; self-employed	Some fixed capital, but relatively labour-intensive	Small, but may have some employees; intermediate technology; fixed place of business
Informal	Low (=AP; income-sharing)	Low (MRP close to 0)	Self-employed family (non-wage)	No fixed capital; highly labour intensive	Very small (person or family); simple or traditional techniques; no formal business organisation
Un-employed	No earned income	Nil	Seeking a job (presumably modern)	N.A.	N.A.

Source: Steel (1976)

Note: MRP = Marginal Revenue Product

AP = Average Product

This study will not include the informal sector.

Steel makes a clear distinction between the intermediate sector and the modern sector, where the latter would require some basic educational qualifications at the very least. However, while he concedes that there are firms as small as 10 employees within the modern sector, he classifies small-scale firms, in principle, as belonging only to the intermediate sector. They correspond to a type of employment that is related to urbanisation and development and serve to bridge the gap between informal, single-person and capital intensive establishments. But this does not sufficiently reflect the economic significance of small-scale enterprises per se because the small-scale enterprises in the informal/intermediate sector are not like their counterparts (small firms) in the modern sector.

There are many similarities, however, between Steel's definition of intermediate small-scale enterprises and small firms in the modern sector which are studied in the present work. Firstly, Ghana's Industrial Statistics cover firms with 30 or more employees which is taken as the lower limit for the large-scale sector and Ghana's Labour Statistics cover firms with 10-29 employees as the upper limit for small-scale activities. This study will conform with those limits. Secondly, available evidence indicates that small-scale firms are a significant if not dominant component of Ghana's industrial sectors. Not only are the overwhelming majority of industrial establishments small, but they account for the vast bulk of industrial employment when small-scale firms generate more employment per unit of scarce capital than their large-scale counterparts (Liedholm and Mead 1986) and play a critical role in providing training experiences. And thirdly, small borrowers often find themselves at a disadvantage in access to foreign exchange. Obtaining an import licence often requires skills and contacts with government bureaucracies which small firms do not have. They find it difficult to get any assistance from the banks because banks ask for the type of collateral which most small-scale business owners can hardly provide. In the end, many have to resort to relatives, money lenders, their own savings or some other means. However, today the banks' position appears to be changing. The World Bank has stated that from early 1989, small and medium-scale enterprises can establish new businesses and expand old ones using a 30 million dollar soft loan to be administered by the Ghana Commercial Bank which offers loans for a wide range of projects in the small business sector. The Ghana Enterprises Development Commission will also assist small Ghanaian enterprises in the areas identified by the Commission or the government as priority in terms of their contribution to the 'economic and social development of the country' (Thomi and Yankson 1985).

Despite their similarities, however, small-scale intermediate and modern sector businesses have important differences. Firstly, in the intermediate sector, the chances of single person

businesses obtaining a loan would be higher if several such enterprises grouped and applied on the basis of their collective strength. Tailors, mechanics, watch-repairers and people affected by the redeployment exercise (see subsection 3.2.3) and interested in establishing enterprises qualify for assistance. In a few months they should be able to employ others and embark on expansion. In the modern sector, while the profit motive is strong in the small firms, many of these firms that remain small probably do either because their owners have no further ambitions or prefer the security of a small business to the risk of striving for expansion. Secondly, although 'small-scale' is defined by Steel and others as those establishments with less than 30 workers, within the modern sector such a limitation need not exclude the few foreign and Ghanaian-owned firms that carry many of the characteristics of the larger firms. Thirdly, the modern sector can include all categories of employment. Although Ho and Huddle (1975) argue that small firms are at such a disadvantage in a large market that they must either grow or disappear, the smallness of enterprises producing traditional goods is a major advantage in meeting specialised, individualised demand. In other words, the extent of the market or nature of the products they sell can dictate the size of firms. For instance, apart from a few small limited liability companies, partnerships and cooperatives, there are firms providing personal services - such as doctors' practices or firms of solicitors - which are small and local because they must be easily available to those who need them. And fourthly, in justification for the use of the term 'small firms' rather than 'intermediate small-scale' in this study, the latter does not necessarily require entrants to have educational qualifications, therefore owners of such enterprises have neither the capacity nor the need to recruit school leavers in search of jobs. On the other hand, the small firm in the modern sector, by the very nature of its services invariably requires employees with some office skills learnt at school. The difference between sizes of firms within the modern sector has enormous implications for the number and educational qualifications of the office staff they require. What employers look for will depend on the nature of their business.

In effect, the modern sector is not the preserve of large public enterprises only. If as Killick (1983:30) comments,

a large industrial public sector will contribute little to dynamic industrial growth, will tend to become a drain on public finances, will require a net inflow of resources to cover its capital requirements, and will discourage the growth of private industry,

then, while the study does analyse the recruitment practices of these large firms, small firms and private initiatives are also particularly significant. Furthermore, as Marder and

Alderson (1979:83) put it,

they do not only continue to make a useful contribution to production and employment but also help the economy in particular ways:

- (1) they provide a training ground for businessmen and managers who may later move on to larger concerns;
- (2) their competition can help to keep larger firms efficient and some small firms are themselves the large firms of the future;
- (3) in some industries smallness is itself an advantage from which the consumer benefits;
- (4) small firms are sometimes most suitable for experimenting with new ideas and techniques.

Such sentiments are reflected in the current move in Ghana towards more private ventures. Public sector enterprises and private sector entrepreneurs seem to be coming closer together, in theory, to promote economic development in Ghana, but are they in practice?

3.1.2 From public enterprises to private initiatives

Traditionally, in Ghana, the public sector rather than the private sector has been used by successive governments as a vehicle to promote rapid economic development and ostensibly to rectify social and regional imbalances in the country. They are generally noted for undertaking risky investments with high capital outlay and are believed to encourage investments with the highest development potential. Ideally, they are even intended to protect consumers from the more exploitative tendencies of private enterprises by regulating commodity prices (Ghana QER 1985).

However, problems in the management of the public enterprise sector have centred on a steadily declining trend in real wages over the years, combined with overstaffing, narrow wage differentials and depletion of skills (Home Front Ghanaian News and Views 1988). Moreover, operational autonomy of public enterprises cannot exist if every major decision has to be referred to or approved by the government. In brief, state enterprises are not known for efficiency. Any effort, then, on the part of Ghana's Structural Adjustment Programme (see subsection 3.3.2), to 'improve the programme and efficiency of state-owned enterprises in the country' has a hard task ahead.

With the state-owned enterprises using both more capital and labour than private companies for the same or even lower outputs - in Ghana, labour productivity in public enterprises was only 55 percent that of the private sector in 1970 and it has not improved since (Killick 1983) - what are the incentives to achieve desired outcomes in productivity? Are resources

used in such a way as to confer social benefits on the average citizen? And on what bases are the workers recruited? It appears, in response to this last question, that recruitment of personnel into most public enterprises is not based on merit but on social and political considerations (Ghana QER 1985). Thus, not only has the lack of well-defined manpower and recruitment policies undermined both management and supervisory functions in these enterprises but alongside low morale and low productivity in the civil service, 'it has prompted many to move to more remunerative private sector occupations within Ghana' (UNDP 1987:4).

With current discussions in Ghana centred on divesting the ownership of state enterprises to private investors, there is clearly a move by the Government to alleviate the burden of ever-widening budget deficits and evolve the measures necessary to attract a flow of private capital into the country. Meanwhile, government investment would concentrate on its 'traditional' role of providing economic and social infrastructure as well as mutually acceptable partnership arrangements with private enterprises engaged in productive activities (Home Front Ghanaian News and Views 1988). With almost no small enterprises in the public sector and the vast majority of private industrial establishments being small scale, the Ghana Government sees no real alternative other than to adopt a privatisation approach with a more restricted and complementary public sector role.

Private investors have already benefited from the macroeconomic and sectoral reforms introduced under the Economic Recovery Programme (see subsection 3.3.2) - notably in the liberalisation of imports and the licensing of foreign exchange bureaux. The hope is that the private sector would be able to absorb labour made redundant in the public sector. This has not happened yet, although 'industrial activity has picked up a little in recent years' (EIU 1990). Indeed, according to Jonah (1989:148) 'private companies have resorted to retrenchment of some of their own staff before they can maintain their profitability and position in industry or trade'. One is left wondering whether the private sector is immune to the problems of 'low productivity', 'lack of initiative' and 'shortage of skilled personnel' which are attributed to the public sector. Will they reappear in another guise?

The modern sector, whether public or private, comprising large or small firms, is highly complex. It is this complexity against which an analysis of the unique characteristics of the youth labour force can be explored and against which a coherent view of modern sector employment can be developed.

3.2 Youth labour force and modern sector employment

The fact that there is little formal sector employment for young people leads to the questioning of programmes that are supposed to prepare young people for employment. Related to this is the question of the labour force in general. Its implications for employment and unemployment are important for all countries, the economically active population is also growing at a fast rate. In Ghana where the rate of growth of the labour force was around 2.6 percent per annum from 1970-1984, aggravating the shrinkage of employment opportunities (Iwuji 1972), the implications for employers' recruitment practices cannot be minimised. Furthermore, given current efforts in Ghana to redeploy labour with the aim of increasing productivity, what are the implications for future school leavers?

3.2.1 Population growth and the labour force

An important issue today, notably in the less developed countries, is the problem of population growth. Ghana's population is currently estimated to be around 14 million, with the population growth rate estimated to increase at 3.2 percent per annum up to the year 2000. An increase to over 50 million by the year 2020 is to be expected (World Bank 1984).

Within the context of the rapid urbanisation process which third world countries have been going through since the 1950s, rural-urban migration has been increasing rapidly, which has created problems for the expanding cities and a drain on countryside human resources (Thomi and Yankson 1985).

However, it appears that intra-African and overseas migration is of greater magnitude than rural-urban migration. During recent years the exodus of people to neighbouring West African countries, as well as overseas countries, has resulted in a drain of manpower resources of the country. Large numbers of posts which have fallen vacant in many government offices, public organisations, universities and public sector undertakings indicate that a substantial number of professional, technical and semi-skilled personnel have joined in the exodus in search of better living conditions elsewhere such as in Nigeria during the oil boom in 1979 or during Cote d'Ivoire's agricultural expansion in the 1970s (Ghana Report 1985). It has been estimated that between 1974-75, when the major exodus began, and 1981 some 2 million Ghanaians had left for Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire alone (UNICEF 1984: 165-166). And when in February 1983, Nigeria expelled foreigners who were working in the country illegally, an estimated 1.2 million Ghanaians returned to their

country in the space of a couple of weeks. Another 150,000 were repatriated in April 1985 (Tabatabai, 1988). Yet none of these movements is reflected in Ghana's yearly estimates of population or its spatial distribution, or in labour force statistics for the period 1970-84. But there is, clearly, need for statistical data to indicate the number of emigrants, their levels of education, expertise or experience.

It is also significant that the proportion of youth under 15 years was about 47 percent in 1980. This figure has been increasing over the past two decades whilst the proportion of the population between ages 15 and 64, i.e. the labour force, has been decreasing (Azua 1984).

Furthermore, the growth of school enrolment from 1981/82 to 1984/85 did not keep pace with the growth of school age population. With the latter growing at 3.6 percent per year, enrolments for primary, middle (now junior) and secondary levels only grew by 1.5 percent, 1.1 percent and 1.5 percent respectively (World Bank 1986).

Current data on known employment and economic trends (as published by the government in June 1989, see Appendix 3A, table 3A.1) show that in 1986 413,700 people are actively seeking work but this figure does not include the many who are underemployed (EIU 1990). At the same time, the young and rapidly expanding population means increased demands on an already inadequate formal education system to improve the quality of the labour force. A study on the formal sector conducted by the World Bank and the government in 1988 indicated that the labour force will increase by about 250,000 yearly over the next few years, given the total labour force estimate of 3.4 million for 1983. But beset by slow economic growth, although presently undergoing rapid reform measures (see subsection 3.3.2), Ghana finds it impossible to supply job opportunities to all the new entrants into the labour market.

3.2.2 Employing school leavers

In March 1980, a registration exercise of unemployed persons in Ghana was conducted by the Ministry of Labour to find out the unemployment rate. The data presented in table 3.2 emerged from that investigation. A total of 198,500 persons was recorded as unemployed of whom 38.3 percent and 9.5 percent were in the adult age groups of 25-44 and 45-64 respectively. However, the youth unemployment rate of 52.2 for the age group 15-24 clearly surpasses that figure. Typically, the high rate is attributed, for the most part, to open unemployment where the most visibly unemployed tend to be better educated youths who aspire to wage employment:

Table 3.2
Number of Unemployed Persons in March 1980

Age group (years)	Number (thousand)	Percentage of total number
15-19	41.9	21.1
20-24	61.8	31.1
25-44	75.9	38.3
45-64	18.9	9.5
Total	198.5	100.0

Source: Economic Survey 1982, March 1985 Central Bureau Statistics, Accra, Ghana

A Commonwealth Expert Group (1987: 23-29) compiled three sets of data (adapted and reproduced in Tables 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 below) on youth unemployment rates in Ghana comparing them with the overall unemployment rate. The data reveal that youth have been experiencing unemployment at about double the rates applying to the labour force as a whole:

Table 3.3
Estimated rates of open unemployment
in total and among youth in Ghana, 1985 (percent)

	Total	Males	Females
Total unemployment	1	1	1
Youth unemployment	2	3	2

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat 1987 (based on ILO figures)

Note: total unemployment as percentage of total labour force, and youth unemployment as percentage of youth labour force (age group 20-24).

Table 3.4
Open unemployment rates for Ghana, 1980-82 (percent)

	1980	1982
Total	1.2	0.7
Male	1.5	0.9
Female	0.8	0.5

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat 1987 (based on ILO figures).

Low to moderate rates of total unemployment have been experienced and there appears to have been some further reduction of rates during the mid-1980s although youth comprise

the highest proportion of total unemployed:

Table 3.5
Open unemployment of youth as a proportion of total
open unemployment in Ghana (aged up to 24 years), 1980-82 (percent)

	1980	1982
Total	60.4	64.4
Male	59.7	60.4
Female	62.0	73.8

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat 1987 (based on ILO figures).

Note: The statistics relate to the mean of March, June, September and December

While this high proportion of open unemployment among the youth can be attributed to demographic factors combined with the long term nature of rural-urban drift, youth unemployment is also the result of deficiencies in the 'searching process' by which the youth make choices about the type of work they want to do (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987, Taylor 1974, Boakye 1980). By and large, the distribution of Labour Exchanges throughout Ghana is sparse.

Table 3.6
Number of Public and Youth Employment Centres, 1982

	Public Employment Centres	Youth Employment Centres
1976	58	4
1977	59	3
1978	60	5
1980	60	6
1981	61	6
1986	65	6

Source: Economic Survey 1982, March 1985 Central Bureau of Statistics, Accra, Ghana.

According to the Labour department of the Ministry of Mobilisation and Social Welfare, at the moment there are 65 employment centres in the country and out of this number, six centres concentrate on the youth (see Table 3.6 above). These centres are located in Tema, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Kumasi, Accra and Tamale. Given these figures, it is interesting to note how many placements were made out of the 126,100 youths registered during 1982 (see Table 3.7):

Table 3.7
Youth Employment: Number of
Registrations and Placements, 1982 (in thousands)

Region	Registrations			Placements		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Gt. Accra	44.1	15.6	59.6	0.9	0.1	1.0
Eastern	16.0	11.3	27.3	0.4	0.1	0.5
Central	6.3	3.8	10.1	0.3	0.1	0.4
Western	3.8	1.4	5.2	0.4	0.1	0.5
Ashanti	6.1	2.0	8.1	0.5	-	0.5
Brong-Ahafo	3.6	2.5	6.1	0.5	0.1	0.6
Northern	1.8	0.6	2.4	0.1	-	0.1
Upper East	1.5	0.4	1.9	0.1	-	0.1
Upper West	1.3	0.8	2.1	0.1	-	0.1
Volta	2.3	1.0	3.4	0.1	-	0.1

Source: Economic Survey 1982, March 1985 Central Bureau of Statistics, Accra, Ghana.

The Greater Accra Region alone recorded about 60 thousand registrations, followed by the Eastern with 27 thousand. Only about 4 thousand youths could be placed in employment representing 3 percent of the total registered. This low rate of placement was due to the prevailing economic crisis in the country (see subsection 3.3.1). Youth unemployment remained high during the year.

Whilst this is true, any faith, on the part of school leavers, in these employment centres is weakened when there is a tendency for youth to wait for particular types of jobs (particularly in the modern sector) to become available. The problem is that job seekers have no confidence in labour officers and prefer to make direct contact with employers using the official approach or an 'unofficial one where purely personal contacts are made with those who can influence the applicant's recruitment' (Boakye 1980:31). Furthermore, while in theory the Labour Office should be able to supply employers with workers having the skills needed, employers do not rely on the exchanges for the supply of labour, possibly because 'the lack of testing means that workers may claim more skill than they possess and many employers prefer to make their own choice from available applicants' (Peil 1972:79; Taylor 1974).

Another factor exacerbating the problem of youth unemployment is that the scarcity of wage labour in the rural areas may be such that youth tend to prolong their search for wage employment rather than remaining in, or returning to, the family farm (Ghana Youth 1986a). Yet if, as the Labour Department states, this problem may be attributed to the limited avenues open to them in the modern sector (Ghana Youth 1986b), then attention should be focussed not only on the number of persons employed but also on the extent and

efficiency of utilisation of human resources.

Evidence so far suggests that the modern sector engages only a minority of the labour force, rarely more than 25 percent, and is confined to cities and towns. Additionally, within this sector there is often a cleavage in income, status and prospects for advancement between manual and non-manual employees, the latter being more and more highly regarded (Simmons 1980; Boakye and Oxenham 1982). However, women are more likely than men to be unemployed, and, women tend to work fewer hours than men (Twum-Baah 1983).

Female workers are noteworthy for their influence in the marketplace and are mostly engaged in small-scale, low-productivity and low income earning activities (U.S. 1975; Ewusi 1982a). Fewer than 3 percent are in professional, clerical and related types of occupation so that even though the Government of Ghana promulgated a decree (National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) Decree 312) in April 1975 aimed at encouraging Ghanaian women to be at par with their men counterparts in all fields of endeavour; and even if in government employment women and men at the same rank have the same salaries, it remains a fact that not only are very few women actually employed as salary and wage earners (ILO 1970; Pellow and Chazan 1986) but in the formal sector women earn lower wages than men. Steel and Campbell (1982:239) suggest that 'in Ghana, men's wages are as much as 90 percent higher than women's, largely due to women's over-representation in low status work.'

This could be because employers tend to regard female workers as having inherently lower levels of productivity and job commitment than men. They tend to prefer to employ men even when a woman may have a higher level of education and training (Twum-Baah 1983). The latest available data showing males and females in selected occupations is given in Table 3.8. Women in the modern sector of the economy still lag behind men in certain key areas, notably high level professional categories and the skilled trades and craftsmen categories. Thus, as Table 3.8 clearly indicates, in 1973, in high level professional/technical occupations, only in the statistical and university lecturer categories were women found in significant numbers although even here they represent under one-fifth of employees. Among professionals, women are doctors (12.9 percent), lawyers (11.2 percent) and high-level administrators (4.9 percent). But the highest proportions are among teachers (29.4 percent) and nurses (73.0 percent). In the middle-level administrative category, their participation is quite high as they form 44.7 percent, 76.2 percent and 77.2 percent of typists, receptionists and punching machine operators respectively.

Table 3.8
Women in selected occupations, 1973

Occupation	male	female	females as % of total
High-Level Professional			
1. Chemists	53	5	8.6
2. Physicists	5	-	-
3. Physical scientists	45	1	2.1
4. Architects & town planners	102	7 (3)	6.4
5. Electrical engineers	324	-	0.0
6. Mechanical engineers	314	-	0.0
7. Chemical engineers	5	-	0.0
8. Metallurgical	10	-	0.0
9. Air pilots & navigators	44	-	0.0
10. Agronomists	478	32	6.2
11. Medical doctors	362	54 (5)	12.9
12. Veterinarians	37	-	0.0
13. Pharmacists	179	25 (2)	12.2
14. Statisticians	144	35	19.5
15. Economists	160	5	3.0
16. Accountants	1,780	99 (2)	5.2
17. Lawyers	237	30	11.2
18. University lecturers	189	40 (4)	17.4
19. Civil engineers	244	3 (3)	1.2
High-Level Administrative			
1. Government administrators	2,657	137	4.9
2. Managers i.e. sales etc	3,215	82	2.4
Middle-Level Professional			
1. Civil engineering	910	22	2.3
2. Technical engineering	1,126	1	0.08
3. Draughtsman	546	7	1.2
4. Teachers (Primary/Middle)	35,392	14,761	29.4
5. Nurses	965	2,628	73.0
6. Cashiers & accounts clerks	7,029	578	7.5
Middle-Level Administrative			
1. Sales & shop assistants	1,941	947	32.7
2. Policemen & detectives	14,525	801	5.2
3. Stenographers & typists	2,632	2,135	44.7
4. Executive officials	2,113	210	9.0
5. Correspondence clerks	10,415	1,807	14.7
6. Receptionists	464	1,234	72.6
7. Punching machine operators	78	267	77.2

() indicates non-Ghanaian. Source: Manpower Survey 1973-74, Accra.

The tendency for women to predominate in the lower echelons of the public areas and in a few areas which have been traditionally considered appropriate for women such as in education, health, social welfare administration, clerical and secretarial work, is regarded

by men, and even women themselves, to be perfectly natural. Indeed, it would be considered most unusual if that were not the case (U.S. 1975; Jackson and Gaskell 1987).

For example, the characteristics of employment in Ghana's Volta Aluminium Co. Ltd., relate closely to the jobs that are performed in the enterprise. Hence of the three categories of employees divided into 'Discomfort Areas', 'Production and Maintenance Areas' and 'Clerical and Technical Areas', female employees are evident in the latter. Females in this group are all nurses who work in the company's hospital. In justification of this, the company claims that female workers 'can hardly endure the physical strains associated with the highly technical manufacturing process of the company' (Botchie 1984: 65).

But even jobs normally associated with women such as office work, provide 'few opportunities in the modern sector, where in any case they have to compete to their disadvantage with men' (Greenstreet 1981: 15) more especially in the high-level professional occupations. Given the growing supply of qualified women willing to work away from home, it is likely that the selection process is a key factor in determining who is employed in modern establishments and in what jobs they are employed (Anker and Hein 1985). Attributing the under-representation of women in employment to the restricted supply of qualified women able to work in modern sector occupations, pays insufficient attention to the recruitment policy of employers.

Furthermore, although an increasing number of girls is receiving education (Greenstreet 1981), their position vis a vis boys in respect of the total number of places being taken up, has improved only at primary and middle schools compared to secondary schools which show a very wide disparity in enrolment as indicated in table 3.9 for the periods 1973-74 and 1979-80. At each level of the educational system, girls comprise a progressively lower percentage of the total number of students.

Table 3.9
Enrolment at three school levels by gender, 1973-74 and 1979-80

Level of education	1973-74		1979-80	
	Enrolment (%)		Enrolment (%)	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Primary	43.54	56.45	44.07	56.29
Middle	41.18	58.81	40.72	59.27
Secondary	27.67	72.31	30.71	69.28

Sources: Compiled from figures provided by the Ghana Teaching Service, 1974 and the Ghana Education Service, Planning Division, March 1983.

One implication is that the girls are compelled to compete with a greater number of boys in the job market.

At the same time, where girls are able to compete equally with boys in the job market, they both expect their educational status to guarantee them the jobs they aspire to. But while many of the Ghanaian youth who have very few marketable attributes engage in informal sector activities, and the highly educated find it relatively easy to obtain modern sector jobs (Twum-Baah 1983), what happens to the largest group in the middle, the school leavers?

It is said that there is 'no neat and universal explanation of what employers want from schools' (Oxenham 1988) so that while it may be true that employers are the key 'users' of vocationally-oriented education, how vocationally specific are the desired entry level skills? And in relation to business education at the secondary school level, are employers looking for good general education as a proxy for ability to learn, perseverance, and communication skills? Or are they looking for business-specific skills when they hire?

In the light of current efforts to establish links between school and industry, Ghana's Industrial Liaison and Careers Unit in the Ministry of Education purports to foster close liaison with industry through the preparation of education materials, management for industrial attachment and the organisation of lectures by professionals and experts in technical and vocational education. However, this type of promotional activity may be based on a misconception about employer decision-making. The efforts of the unit need to be better directed to the understanding of employer recruitment behaviour.

New applicants find they cannot get a job requiring experience nor can they gain experience without a job and evidence suggests that employers prefer candidates with the best examination results at each qualification level (Oxenham 1986; Twum-Baah 1983). This conforms to the general entry requirements of the modern sector which demands educational qualifications in the form of certificates or degrees commensurate with employers' decisions, the type of job and the mode of production in practice. But does this apply equally to both large and small firms? How employers decide what qualifications they require for particular jobs and for various types of organisations is not clear. For instance, would an employer prefer to recruit employees with few educational credentials because he would pay them much less than if they had more qualifications or because employees with few or no qualifications may be more inclined to stay and be satisfied with their posts?

These considerations are not unrealistic, however, given the current inability of Ghana to

generate sufficient productive employment. Dependable statistics required to depict changes in labour productivity are not available but the next section outlines broadly the unfavourable economic developments during the early 1980s which led to a decline in productivity and decrease in employment.

3.2.3 Redeploying labour and productivity

By the year 1982, the civil/public/education services had expanded by five times their size in terms of numbers, compared with the early seventies, but were still far less productive than they could have been at their 'normal' strength. Consequently, there arose problems of 'ghost' or 'phantom' workers; excessive bureaucratism, apathy to work, indifference to the protection of public funds and property and all round inefficiency in most governmental organisations (Ghana Supplement to People's Daily Graphic 1988).

In order to eliminate the problems, the Government initiated a Labour Redeployment Programme (LRP) whereby retrenchment would occur at three main levels - the state enterprises, the civil service and local government (Jonah 1989). According to the Redeployment Management Committee (RMC), the LRP has four main objectives:

1. the reduction of excess labour in the civil and public services so as to maintain the staff within an economically viable and justifiable level and improve management capabilities and productivity;
2. to enable government remunerate civil and public servants adequately to boost morale and to achieve motivation, which are essential for productivity and efficiency;
3. to re-allocate the available labour force rationally within the civil and public services and the private sector; and
4. to afford redeployed staff ample opportunities to discover their labour potentials and develop them to the optimum through training/ retraining for the benefit of the country and themselves.

(Ghana Supplement to People's Daily Graphic
1988).

An examination of these objectives reveals that each is, singularly, dominated by a concern to achieve high productivity in both the public and the private sector.

Realising these objectives has not been without some measure of frustration for those affected by the changes as 'workers, peasants and even business owners have each in

various ways suffered from the worst consequences of adjustment' (Jonah 1989:140). For example, the first objective has resulted in a strict ban on further recruitment into the civil service except for skilled positions which no current public service employee can fill (Ghana Report 1985). Instead, the main focus is on releasing 'unproductive' workers with compensation and six months' leave after which they would cease to be state employees.

But there is no clearly stated definition of 'productivity'. What we have is an idea about 'non-productivity' as can be gleaned from criteria used to identify potential redeployees. According to guidelines issued from the office of the head of the Civil Service (OHCS), workers will only be redeployed where

- (a) their work is negative;
- (b) their work is impaired by physical infirmity;
- (c) they are aged over and above approved schedules;
- (d) they are on secondment outside the Civil Service/Ghana Education Service;
- (e) their qualifications are proven to be false;
- (f) they are subject to the last-come-first-to-go yardstick on condition that the above measures fail to produce the target finally.

(Ghana Supplement to People's Daily Graphic, 1988).

How far workers can be deemed to be non-productive seems to be largely a matter of conjecture or even chance - very much given to subjectivity. Take, for instance, criterion (f) which can hardly be judged as a fair assessment of non-productivity. It merely serves as a convenient measure for satisfying statistical and budgetary requirements. These criteria are supposedly designed to eliminate partiality and victimisation but they could just as easily promote them.

The redeployment exercise is expected to affect 45,000 workers over a period of three years between 1987 and 1990 (Jonah 1989; EIU 1990). In furtherance of this, a report by the Management Services Division of the Civil Service Council for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR), prepared from a survey of public sector employment conducted by the Manpower Utilisation Committee (MUC) set up in December 1983, has identified excess labour in 'the non-critical areas of the civil service', envisaging a 10 percent cut in the population of messengers, cleaners, watchmen, labourers and clerks - a group of people that constitutes, as Jonah (1989:144) describes it, the 'poorer classes, the socially weak and politically least protected [that bear] the brunt of the work aspects of the adjustment programme.' Over the past four years, the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) has

already laid off and paid substantial benefits to 19,120 workers and the Ghana National Trading Corporation (GNTC) shed 1,200 workers with a further 1,450 workers due to retire (Government of Ghana 1984). In addition, the Government has retrenched about 11,000 workers (World Bank 1988) and about 29,000 jobs have been shed from the parastatals (EIU 1990). Retrenched workers are to be equipped with marketable skills for self-employment or more productive employment. This is where the Programme of Action to Mitigate against the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD) comes in. Having begun in 1988, after canvassing and securing US\$85million in quick disbursing international support for the programme (EIU 1990), PAMSCAD provides specific interventions to meet the basic needs of vulnerable groups, in addition to creating 40,000 jobs over a two year period and providing special programmes of compensation, counselling, retraining and resettlement for redeployees (New African 1980; Home Front Ghanaian News and Views 1988; EIU 1990).

As yet, there is no indication that the redeployment of up to five percent of the civil service employees per annum, has actually paid off or that it will do so in the future. Has there been any marked improvement in productivity in the government sector as a result of redeployment? Perhaps it is too early to say. There are indications that all is not well with the redeployees (Ghana Supplement to People's Daily Graphic 1988). Out of the total number of about 3,715 employees who have opted for retraining, 1,662 have indicated their desire to go into various fields of agriculture (Loxley 1988), but the National Mobilisation Committee, which is responsible for helping redundant workers to find other jobs in agricultural projects, has to contend with the fact that many workers are worried about the lack of opportunities for them. A number of institutions have been identified as capable of offering training in courses other than agriculture, such as carpentry, automechanics, dressmaking, catering, clerical and secretarial work. But incentives are non-existent when the generation of employment opportunities has been too slow or has not come up to expectations. Similarly, for those who lost their jobs as a result of labour retrenchment, albeit necessitated by the adjustment programmes, especially in the public sector (Home Front Ghanaian News and Views 1988), there is no certainty as to whether generous redundancy provisions have had the desired effect.

There have been efforts, started in 1983, to bring relief to a large number of people in the target groups. But after the redeployees have undergone training and acquired the necessary professional skills, it does not necessarily follow that they would eventually resettle in economic activities of their choice. PAMSCAD is supposed to facilitate their participation in productive activities in the informal sector: small-scale industries, agro-based industries and co-operative activities (including agricultural and informal

modern and formal sectors). Furthermore, it is expected that as many as 10,000 productive jobs will be created over a two year period as a result of the PEP project (funded by IDA \$10.6m) which will 'help cushion the effect of impending layoffs in the public sector' (World Bank 1988). The RMC, moreover, boldly claims to be able to determine availability of training in a 'chosen' vocation: but what are the real choices? The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP: see subsection 3.3.2) by its very nature, only offers a limited framework for the understanding of the work environment, work attributes and work potential which the school leaver needs.

The National Board for Small-Scale Industries (NBSS) has not claimed to tackle this challenge in the breadth implied above, but its assistance to private initiatives has meant the removal or modification of various official regulations, procedures and policies which directly and indirectly undermined such initiatives (Ghana Supplement to People's Daily Graphic 1988). The general belief is that a productive non-government sector will be able to absorb workers shifting out of the government sector and re-entering the labour market. Thus the Budget of 1989 has accentuated its aim to continue policy reform for employment growth in the private sector. On the other hand, and consistent with the arguments about prospects for employment growth above, the danger of relying on the non-government sector for taking on the redeployed workers is that unemployment is likely to grow as employers in the private sector follow the example of the government (Ghana Country Paper 1984). Ultimately, as the redeployment of excess staff gets underway in the public sector, it is questionable whether the private sector itself will be able to improve its efficiency quickly enough to cope with the changing macro-economic environment.

Many reform measures for economic growth in Ghana have contributed to the change. The task of the final subsection must be to consider the need for reform in the first place, its development, the problem of financing it and how these issues affect the lives of those employed and those entering the labour market.

3.3 Understanding the work environment

Understanding the work environment as a whole is a complex process. Hence, in this subsection, concentration is narrowed to an examination of three particular aspects of the Ghanaian economy: firstly, the economic situation just prior to the introduction of structural reforms; secondly, the impact of the economic recovery programme; and thirdly, the problems posed by external assistance and the debt burden.

3.3.1 The Ghanaian economy

Essentially agriculturally based, Ghana's economy depends, to a great extent, on cocoa farming as the single main source of economic growth notwithstanding progress in diversifying the economy. In terms of degree of market orientation, 32 percent of Ghana's industrial structure consists largely of food, beverages and textile industries. But despite a renewal of economic growth through cocoa earnings which accounted for over half of export revenues and a significant contribution to government receipts, total and per capita incomes remain low (ABECOR 1988).

Between 1980 and 1983 the economic crisis was at its worst when problems which had emerged over many years, finally came to a head. Declining average incomes, runaway inflation reaching three digits, the rise of the unofficial (black) market and chronic food shortages became part and parcel of the country's economic life. Contrary to the preceding decade, industry had performed below expectations in terms of (a) impact on the balance of payments, (b) forging intersectoral or intrasectoral linkages, (c) acquisition and development of skills and (d) development of technological capacity (Wangwe 1984).

Furthermore, whilst the Government budget shrank in real terms and was grossly imbalanced, efforts to maintain levels of imports in the face of drought in 1982, the expulsion of over one million Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983, and considerable deterioration in the country's terms of trade, resulted in steadily increasing foreign indebtedness during the 1980s. This led to even further economic and social deterioration.

Cedi prices of imported oil increased, foreign aid flows reduced, and increased numbers of children dropped out of school for reasons of cost or to supplement family income (Loxley 1988). At the same time, governments have been under continued pressure of demands for basic social services, and the rise in the debt service ratio has increased pressure on the government budgets. The pressure has been compounded by serious failures of government policy, namely, an overvalued exchange rate, excessive price controls, an inefficient state sector and a lack of incentives for most types of producers (Loxley 1988).

If the government lacks a strong enough political base to change such policies, then urban drift which results in rapidly growing unemployment and declining living standards will continue to lead to significant emigration, especially of more highly qualified Ghanaians mainly to Nigeria, Europe and North America, further reducing the country's capacity to manage and develop its resources. This in turn is likely to prompt two major reservations,

one about the country's capacity to administer and implement its reforms and the other about the way these are used to redirect development along the lines of a 'growth-oriented, competitive, efficient and integrated economy' (Ghana Report 1987a: i).

3.3.2 On the road to recovery?

A full critique of Ghana's economic reform is clearly beyond the scope of this study. However, some of the more familiar reservations can be recorded here. One relates to the whole process of the government's attempt at revamping the economy. Over the last five years, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) has worked vigorously towards this goal. By the early 1980s when the economic situation had deteriorated considerably, the government adopted an Economic Recovery Programme as a framework for drastic stabilisation measures under the tutelage of the IMF and the World Bank. Current evidence shows the programme to be the first serious attempt in two decades at addressing issues relating to the proper management of macro-economic and structural adjustment policies. Advocates of ERP see it as essentially aimed at:

arresting the continuing decline in (the country's)
national output, removing the obscene injustices
in the allocation of resources and the distribution of
income and restructuring the basic institution of
economic activity in a way as to lay a firm foundation
for balanced development.

(Ghana QER 1983: 7)

Such optimism can also be detected in the economic policy framework for 1989, which, in support of the continuing Structural Adjustment Programme, has two main objectives, namely:

- (i) to continue to make major advances in production through the growth and improved use of our domestic resources while upgrading the technological base, particularly the small-scale sector; and
- (ii) to distribute the gains in production through improved employment opportunities and higher remuneration for the most productive members of the society, while improving the access of all Ghanaians to key social services in housing, health and education.

These form part and parcel of the Government's two-pronged national development strategy with the ERP under Phase I covering the period 1984-86 and Phase II covering the period 1987-89 (Government of Ghana Reports 1987a, 1987b and 1987c). The first phase

aimed to:

- reverse the decline in production, especially in agriculture;
- control inflation;
- stimulate exports and curb the consumption of luxury imports;
- restore overseas confidence in Ghana;
- rehabilitate the ruined productive and social infrastructure; and
- mobilise both domestic and foreign resources to restore the living standards of Ghanaians

(Ghana Report 1987c: 3).

The second phase (reproduced here in more detail as it pertains closely to this study) aimed to:

- improve incentives for the mobilisation and efficient allocation of resources for increased production;
- introduce sectoral adjustments in key productive sectors through both policy reform and institutional and manpower strengthening;
- rehabilitate the nation's human capital through policy reforms in education and administration; and
- restructure the relative roles of the public and private sectors.

(UNDP 1987:4).

The second phase of the Programme places more emphasis than the first on sectoral reforms, the provision of social services and removing implementation constraints. Although this phase was designed to rehabilitate the economy and reverse the economic deterioration suffered over the decade, the policy package of economic reforms has severe limitations in the area of administration and implementation of key programmes.

There is no denying, however, that, overall, the Programme has achieved much. Ghana's economic activities in recent years have been noted internationally and been highly praised, especially in the light of increased production and because of a recovery in the manufacturing and construction sectors which resulted in export earnings rising by 44 percent between 1983 (when the reform began) and 1985; inflation falling from 123 percent in 1982 to a little over 10 percent in 1985; with GDP projected to be growing to 5.3 percent by 1991/1992 (UNDP 1987) whilst maintaining a rate of inflation of 5 percent by 1991 (Home Front Ghanaian News and Views 1989; ABECOR 1988).

Despite some measure of success, having attained, with the support of the IMF and World Bank funds, a renewal of economic growth and reduction in the budget deficit (EIU 1990), the problems of implementation still remain. The full potential of the economy to rebound from the depths reached in recent years has yet to be achieved. The process of correcting structural imbalances, rehabilitating the economy and paving the way for restoration of its impact, particularly on the welfare of the more vulnerable sections of the population is still not feasible (Tabatabai 1988). Many Ghanaians have migrated with the consequent drain of skilled labour and professionals (Loxley 1988; Pellow and Chazan 1986). Resorting to foreign aid is now the norm but what type of aid is Ghana receiving, and how can the country's debts be serviced without crippling the economy at the same time?

3.3.3 External assistance and the debt burden

The heavy reliance in the first three years of the programme on expensive, short-term, albeit necessary, IMF/World Bank Standby Credits coupled with other substantial donor support meant that the debt-servicing burden had risen to over 50 percent of annual export earnings by the end of 1985 and was anticipated to have approached 60 percent in 1988 (Ghana Report 1987d). Tables 3.10 below and 3A.2 (Appendix 3A) illustrate the massive injections of foreign exchange which the Economy Recovery Programme has achieved, attracting endorsements and support in the form of substantial aid commitments.

IDA and African World Bank facility credits were approved on April 1987, followed by an Extended Fund Facility (EFF) approved by the IMF in November 1987 and a loan under the Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) to be drawn over three years.

PAMSCAD is an example of a programme receiving aid which has encountered three characteristic difficulties (Loxley 1988):

- (a) overdependence on multilateral finance;
- (b) high debt-servicing ratios and
- (c) weak cocoa prices (particularly important because this is Ghana's major produce).

To what extent have reductions in controls and subsidies, realigned prices and the massive devaluation of the cedi and other policy changes under the new structural adjustment initiatives, helped to overcome these difficulties?

Table 3.10
 Injections of foreign exchange through Ghana's
 Economic Recovery Programme

	DONORS							
	IDA	ODA	Co- Financing	World Bank	EEF	SAF	Joint Financing*	Other Donors**
REFORMS								
Education	US\$34.5m							
ERP II		US\$633m						
Structural Adjustments	US\$100m			US\$126m				
Policy and institutional reforms			US\$55m-70m" US\$50m" US\$81m"					
Public enterprises	US\$10.5m							
Structural Adjustments					US\$24.5m	US\$130m	US\$35.5m	US\$85m
PAMSCAD***								

Sources: Home Front Ghanaian News (1988); ABECOR (1988); UNDP (1987).

Notes:

- * Japan, African Development Bank and African Facility respectively
- ** World Bank, UNDP, WFP, IFAD, ILO, WHO, CIDA and others
- *** Programme of Action to Mitigate against the Social Costs of Adjustment
- " Aid pledges anticipated

A distinct impression has been created by the World Bank that the recently negotiated Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and Structural Adjustment Facility (SAF) with the IMF, will somehow ensure that the 1988-90 targets are reached (Hutchful 1987). Given that the design of SAF-supported adjustment programmes in individual countries is based on a case-by-case approach that reflects the circumstances of the country (Bell and Sheehy 1987), this may well be so. But, if it holds true that growth and adjustment are mutually reinforcing, to what extent will the SAF be in a position to enable production and trade to expand to meet the demands and improve the living standards of Ghana's growing population? Again, even if the SAF pursues strong macro-economic and structural adjustment programmes and serves as a catalyst encouraging the flow of finances from other multilateral and bilateral sources (West Africa 1986; Bell and Sheehy 1987), there is no certainty that such aid will be forthcoming. And if it is, then these sources must ensure the inflow of the right kind of money.

Despite significant support from Canada (supporting technical teacher training); Britain (supplying science college equipment) and the German Democratic Republic (subsiding equipment for technical and vocational education as well as fellowships), the bilateral aid contribution, prior to ERP represented only an estimated 5 percent of total educational expenditure (World Bank 1984).

The World Bank is already overstretched in its lending to other developing countries and points to the need for forms of low cost provision but they are not specified (Clifton-Everest 1985). The EIU (1990) records pledges made of US\$2712 million between 1983 and 1989 in the course of five World Bank sponsored consultative group meetings. At the same time, bilateral donors are relatively slow in coming forward. Although there were increased commitments in 1988 from Canada, West Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom (see table 3A.2), neither Ghana nor the World Bank had unrealistic expectations about bilateral aid in drawing up the second phase of the ERP. Instead, the country is looking for quick disbursing balance of payments support (West Africa 1986; Loxley 1988; EIU 1990) which, to be properly effective, must be combined with realistic debt relief (Jonah 1989). Adequate external support and aid pledges should not only offer some respite from Ghana's weak international cocoa prices but also from its onerous foreign debt obligations.

Since the start of the recovery programme, a major factor that has compounded Ghana's need for expanded assistance on concessional terms is the heavy burden of servicing its debt. In 1988 (Table 3.11), debt outstanding amounted to US\$3099 million.

Table 3.11
Ghana's external debt for the years 1983 to 1988 (\$ mn)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Gross external liabilities	1,598	1,897	2,174	2,652	3,133	3,099
of which:						
long term debt ^a	1,177	1,144	1,290	1,686	2,158	2,270
short term debt	90	238	183	180	108	67
use of IMF credit	331	515	701	786	867	762
Public disbursed debt ^a	1,156	1,112	1,250	1,648	2,128	2,238
of which:						
official creditors	1,015	986	1,091	1,416	1,860	2,010
multilateral	372	402	539	795	1,152	1,318
bilateral	642	584	552	622	708	692
private creditors	142	127	159	232	269	228
commercial banks	-	-	-	75	102	63
Debt service	146	143	218	237	452	577
of which:						
principal	83	75	130	127	335	457
interest	63	68	88	110	118	120
Total external debt/GNP (%)	39.7	43.6	49.1	47.5	63.6	61.9
Debt service ratio (%)	30.5	23.3	32.2	28.9	49.9	62.8
Private debt/total external debt (%)	1.3	1.7	1.8	1.4	1.0	1.0
Short term debt/total external debt (%)	5.6	12.6	8.4	6.8	3.5	2.2
Concessional loans/total external debt (%)	51.4	43.5	42.9	45.3	20.2	56.1
Variable interest rate loans/total external debt (%)	1.3	1.7	1.8	4.5	4.7	3.7

a Maturity over one year.

Source: EIU (1990).

Out of this figure, US\$2010 million was owed to multilateral and bilateral creditors; short-term debt was recorded as US\$67 million at the end of the same year (EIU 1990). Debt service obligations in particular show major increases to 49.9 percent in 1987 and 62.8 in 1988. While the policy of the ERP itself aims at ensuring local resources are invested and used in a way that alleviates the higher rate of external debt servicing expected, particularly from 1987, meaningful debt relief is called for. It is especially important today when although 'many countries in Africa are [now] imposing their own debt servicing capacity on creditors, Ghana [is forced] to use as much as 40-60 per cent of its export earnings to service debts (Jonah 1989:151).

Reducing the fragmentation and compartmentalisation of aid with more donor co-financing and more reliance on joint project formulation and appraisal is seen as one way of relieving the burden of Government (UNDP 1987). So far, Canada and the United Kingdom have responded well to Ghana's efforts with the former doubling total disbursements, introducing limited balance of payments support, moving to a 100 percent grant formula and placing a moratorium on debt payments (Loxley 1988); and the latter has waived, from

April 1985, loan payments due each year under certain loans. This amounts to a relief of £51m in past debts (Ghana Commercial Bank QER 1985). And, between November 1989 and February 1990, combined total of US\$425 million in debt was cancelled by West Germany (US\$285 mn), the USA (US\$114 mn) and France (US\$26 mn) (EIU 1990).

'Sensitivity' and 'flexibility' in aid policies with 'less interest in the business opportunities which their aid creates for their home companies' (West Africa 1986), are a long way removed from the tight macro-economic conditionality that is often attached to aid. More frequent dialogue between the parties involved is essential. There has been some progress in aid co-ordination, one might say; but, this notwithstanding, inefficiency in the use and impact of aid flows to Ghana is evident particularly in the nature and type of aid given. Technical co-operation, for example, has been identified as a top priority by the Ghana government but this is not catered for adequately mainly because there is no regular provision by donors of data on their aid activities both ongoing and planned.

3.4 Conclusions

In this chapter focus has centred in some detail on what is defined as a 'modern' sector. It was important to draw upon the general concepts of what is considered 'modern' - the working and living conditions, security and promotion prospects are but a few. It also looked at the nature of work found in this sector, particularly clerical and secretarial 'white-collar' jobs.

Moreover, far from limiting the discussion to the modern sector per se, it redefined the sector in terms of two segments: large and small firms. Staying with the question of the modern sector, the chapter challenges the assumption that modern means large and gave examples to show that the role of small firms is equally important in the recruitment of school leavers.

The chapter then introduced the current trend in Ghana toward private business initiative. While it accepts that there is nothing wrong in this trend, there is need not to ignore the possibility of problems normally associated with the public sector, such as 'apathy to work' and 'inefficiency', reappearing in the private sector.

Next, the chapter looked closely at population and increasing labour force growth. It argued that while school enrolment from 1981/82 to 1984/85 did not keep pace with the growth of the school age population, the formal education system itself contributed little in terms of the quality of output. In that case, employers' recruitment behaviour is likely to

prove unpredictable, to say the least, especially where the modern sector employer rarely engages more than 25 percent of the labour force.

The chapter considered the problem of employing women, not only in jobs normally open to men but on terms equal to men. It further suggested that with the effects of the current programme of redeployment aimed principally at reducing excess labour, employment opportunities for *both* men and women are slow and not encouraging.

Finally, consideration was given to the vexed matter of 'reform': the accurate assessment of which is another pivotal element in coming to terms with how it affects the lives of those employed and those about to enter the labour market. The chapter has suggested that the process of correcting structural imbalances and rehabilitating the economy must at the same time bear in mind the repercussions they will have on many sections of the population. This raises a number of fundamental questions about the increased pressure Ghana's external debt servicing has on its budget giving some justification to the plea for more debt relief.

This chapter has had two objectives. First, the need to see the modern sector as having two main segments, rather than one as it is usually understood, when considering the types of employer and nature of work involved. In particular, it requires that we examine why there is so much emphasis in the school on credentialism, encouraging the search for work in that sector. The second objective has been to put in perspective issues concerning youth unemployment and prospects for their employment soon after leaving secondary school and this within the current work environment.

In the present chapter, it has been argued that the modern sector job is the key link between the school and the modern sector employer. But it is one of the study's contentions that much vocational education discourse and practice has tended to treat the school and the employer as mutually exclusive. In the next chapter, the role of the employer will be seen as embracing a set of various transactions and experiences which must be included in any valid discussion of the vocationally-oriented education process.

Chapter 4 Vocationally-Oriented Secondary Education (VOSE): A Fallacy?

4.0 Introduction

The concern of this chapter is with the relationship between the content of business subjects in secondary schools, and the skills and/or attitudes that are valued by employers. The literature in this field is extensive and this chapter endeavours to capture and reflect on some of the very interesting thoughts and findings which have come forth.

4.1 Discussions about vocational education

The chapter examines the general issue of vocationally-oriented education and, in particular, its implementation at the secondary level.

4.1.1 An ongoing debate

The objectives of the technical/vocational programme at the secondary level as stated in Ghana's Country Paper (1989) illustrate the importance attached to vocational education where the emphasis is on:

- (a) training skilled middle-level manpower for industry and commerce;
- (b) equipping students with productive skills and preparing them for self-employment; and
- (c) linking education with work.

Despite Foster's (1965) and similar critics' (Newbry and Martin 1972; Blaug 1972) contention that vocational schooling is a fallacy principally because leavers of these vocational schools do not always achieve the objective of such schools, there are three factors which are generally considered to enhance the 'vocalionalisation of education' image within the context of the relevance of skills and the consequent increase in the productivity of education (Meaders 1968; Bacchus 1986). Firstly, the execution of selected manual skills is related to vocations with an appropriate degree of proficiency. Secondly, there is some comprehension and knowledge of major vocations practised in the community together with an awareness that knowledge gained in other studies such as mathematics, science and social studies can be applied in studying about vocations (Mmari

1977). And thirdly, there is a feeling of confidence and pride in the ability to participate in the production of marketable goods or services. Furthermore, as many researchers point out, the relationship between development and technical/vocational education is difficult and confusing, in spite of governments' often very high expectations. Dodd (1969) rightly asserts that, vocationally oriented syllabi 'seek an educational solution to a problem that is not fundamentally educational' but 'bound up with intricate economic, technical and social variables' (Lillis and Hogan 1983:98; Alaezi 1985; Bacchus 1986). In other words, the interconnection of national development aspirations and the building and operating of technical and vocational education systems has proven to be extremely complex (Lillis and Hogan 1983; Lauglo 1985a and b; Psacharopoulos 1985 and 1987; Oxenham 1988; Middleton 1988).

The problem is exacerbated when the time allocated to vocational subjects on the time-table is limited, or else there is too heavy a concentration on academic subjects (Nwagwu 1976). Good technical teachers are difficult to recruit and hold in the face of competition for the private sector and other government agencies. There is also the matter of new teaching aids and equipment and the cost of training technical/vocational teachers (Bray 1986; Chisman 1987; Gallart 1988).

How can vocational programmes which are more costly than academic education be implemented under tight budgetary conditions? (Lauglo 1989; Gallart 1988; Middleton 1988; Lillis and Hogan 1983; Chin-Aleong 1988; Noah and Eckstein 1988). The cost of physical facilities such as home science blocks, carpentry sheds, workshops and other equipment is 'often more than twice as expensive as other subjects, per student period' and 'the constraints are such that even when finance is available and the commitment to implementation is strong, vocationalisation on a large scale and at a fast pace is unlikely to succeed' (Lauglo and Lillis 1988:23-24).

Looking at the problem from a developed country's perspective prior to the advent of Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), Kelly (1980:170) attributes the absence of overt pre-vocational education in England to two factors:

- (a) children not studying high-status subjects may be following interesting courses, but their post-school interests are not necessarily being fostered in ways which they can directly perceive, which may be the reason why many become disaffected; and
- (b) the economy is not being provided with a potential workforce which has already acquired some knowledge appropriate to their workplace. Employers complain about this and teachers respond that this is not the

school's purpose.

This is also true in Ghana's case. The country is struggling with the problem of providing vocational skills to children who wish to find jobs immediately on leaving school and at the same time keeping academic opportunities open for others who wish to pursue further studies. But Lillis and Hogan (1983:90) contend that

The diversified component is 'injected' into the existing curriculum as one option amongst many other academic options and made compulsory, but with no claim that the school has become vocational. The stress is not upon the production of job skills ... but is pre-vocational with an important attitudinal strand. The intention is to encourage attitudes and skills conducive to acquiring employment skills *after* leaving school.

However, if policy assumptions by governments are that 'general academic graduates have few, if any, employable skills but 'diversified' graduates would be able to find more niches into which they could slot at the end of their four years at secondary school' (King 1986:13-14), then the question of training at the secondary school level needs to be examined, not as in conflict with or separate from academic or general studies but as a viable option - albeit fraught with constraints and difficulties - offering a balanced mixture of general and vocational education.

4.1.2 Secondary School-based 'training'

To regard secondary education, as a means of access to university education and white-collar jobs with high status, is to ignore today's reality: with the substantial expansion of secondary education output, entrance to university has become much more competitive and the employment markets cannot absorb the number the system is producing. Yet 'to achieve a common acceptance of vocationally-oriented secondary education (VOSE) as a viable and desirable alternative is probably the most difficult task faced [by the educational authorities]' (Heger 1984:31).

Provision of VOSE has come in many forms. For example, there is the broad general curriculum which contains no specific vocationally oriented content in terms of designated subjects or activities, but whose content is infused with work-related concepts; the curriculum for all students which may include practical vocation-related subjects within a compulsory core curriculum; secondary-level training institutes specialising in vocationally oriented subject areas, favoured by some countries which consider it to be an efficient way of organising vocational skills provision (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987); and

specialised options, among which some or all students can choose.

Concentrating on this last form of provision, the observation is often made that, more often than not it is the academically weaker students who are guided into courses with a heavier vocational content, aimed to prepare them for entry to semi-skilled occupations or for skills training courses and apprenticeships (Nwagwu 1976; Tsikata 1986; Dougherty 1989). Further, selection in vocational courses takes place at an early age (14+) which, some have argued, 'does not give due consideration to vocational maturity' (Chin-Aleong 1988:297). In addition, there are pertinent questions about how secondary schools might, in a cost-effective manner, address important social objectives, and whether the general education benefits of these practical subjects merit the expense and development effort which they require (Middleton 1988; Lauglo and Narman 1988).

The notion that the concentration of resources for vocational programmes in separate vocational schools may be 'more cost-effective and efficient than vocational programmes which are an adjunct of the academic curriculum in secondary schools' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987:10), has been encouraged because 'the performance record of ... modified academic schools and of the new vocationally oriented secondary level training schools was burdened by disappointments and by shortfalls in earlier expectations'(Coombs 1985:115) and as 'research from evidence [in Columbia and Tanzania] indicates, the cost of these programmes are higher than general education while their benefits are comparable' (Psacharopoulos 1987:193).

Apart from these considerations of cost and financial resources, the disappointments were, and still are, also exacerbated by 'constraints on implementation, particularly (a) equipment, materials and facilities, including maintenance and servicing; (b) supply of vocational teachers (c) supervision and support services for vocational teachers; and (d) planning and management' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1988:26). Clearly, these constraints mean that the few resources that exist 'will (have to) be spread more thinly (and more expensively) than in specialised training institutions'(Lauglo 1989:13) and, in addition, 'hard choices must be made between introducing new programmes and improving the quality of existing ones' (Dougherty 1989:91). Problems of high unit costs, poor linkage with employers, low external effectiveness, and inadequate support systems for materials and maintenance must, necessarily, have enormous implications for, among other things, staff training, deployment and recruitment.

The fact that schools typically have the 'utmost difficulty in recruiting competent instructors' is evidenced by one Asian experience, summarised by Chandrakant and cited

by Dougherty (1989: 75):

an over-emphasis on academic qualifications, such as degrees, has brought into the teaching profession a large number of persons with little or no industrial experience. As a result, much of the learning in technician institutions is theoretical, out of text-books, and lacks adequate practical content and application.

Schools in the more developed nations such as Britain may not have fared better. Skilbeck (1984:61) is sceptical because

school curricula and teaching procedures are not producing skilled, articulate, adaptive and 'industry-minded' young workers and despite the specific nature of vocational and training initiatives, changes made or contemplated in school curricula may not be very far-reaching as they are unlikely to address the deeper structural problems of the economy.

Moreover, it is especially difficult to keep the technical expertise of instructors up-to-date when the amount of academic content in the general curriculum leaves comparatively little room for vocational elements (Heger 1984). Lauglo (1989:13) provides one explanation for this:

with VOSE under an administrative structure (the Ministry of Education) that is primarily focused on general education, training may not receive the special attention and resources required, and therefore is also likely to have lower visibility to employers, than training in specialised institutions.

This adds impetus to Blaug's assertion that 'schools are simply not equipped to fit people neatly into jobs that require specialised skills or to assist in alleviating the unemployment problems by creating self-employment' (Blaug cited by Chin-Aleong 1988:297).

It is such statements which have led to the World Bank and its borrowers moving away from the secondary mode, at least in terms of new investment (Middleton 1988). And Blaug would probably agree with Dougherty (1989:74) when he states that 'there are rigidities in schools which are not found in other forms of training and which make them appear 'notoriously resistant to change' and that, in effect, 'the lengths of courses are determined by the lockstep of the school year, rather than by actual training needs, and the school setting impedes the modularisation and individualisation of training'.

At the same time, Middleton (1988:31) observes that

in strong economies with continuing demand for skilled workers in the modern sector, a variety of training modes can be effective - including secondary institutions which, in such circumstances, become less like the traditional secondary schools.

In weaker economies, such as that of Brazil's, however, Gallart (1988) found that the vocationalisation of academic schools was difficult to implement and ran into opposition from their clientele largely because of the low status problem, a view also shared by Grubb (1985: 540):

since vocational programs prepare students for occupations of lower stature and pay than academic programs, the vocational ethic of schooling has given vocational training the stigma of a second-class education.

Nevertheless, given that training in diversified secondary schools sometimes overcomes the status problem, as, for example, in Industrial Education subjects in Kenyan academic secondary schools (Lauglo 1985), the issue of low status has become less significant. Instead, it is the efforts directed at reforming and rehabilitating secondary vocational schools which have become the paramount concern. Such efforts must be 'fundamentally grounded in the labour market realities they confront' (Middleton 1988:31), whilst evidence is also accumulating that a curriculum which has practical relevance may be popular if it reinforces, rather than detracts, from the process of gaining a good general education (Vulliamy 1981; Lauglo 1985a and b; Heyneman 1987).

4.2 Where does *business* secondary education fit in?

This section places the business subject within the context of vocational education. It examines the nature of business skills as may be taught at the secondary level of schooling and discusses the problems and complexities involved in terms of matching the technological needs of businesses with their provision in business secondary schools.

4.2.1 Business as a vocational subject

While vocational subjects are seen, generally, as limited to manual skills and traditional occupations such as fishing and agriculture, business education acquires completely different connotations. In other words, business education would not be seen as 'truly' vocational in the sense described above. For example, it is interesting that Foster (1965) talks about the relative advantage, compared with other employees, of clerical employees since their jobs were, and still are, closely related to the 'academic' rather than the

'vocational' (i.e. notion of manual work). Hence the appeal of business subjects. But since these subjects are oriented towards office work and/or later secretarial or accountancy training, they are, by definition, part and parcel of vocationally oriented secondary education. As such, the contention that VOSE, normally associated with manual work, is fallacious is somewhat weakened.

Admittedly, however, the fact that business vocational education has a more natural association with academic subjects and that 'many of the characteristics of vocationalism as it is traditionally understood do not apply to commercial [business] education' (Jackson and Gaskell 1987) means next to nothing when, as Ruddell (1979) asserts, the target population of students in business education in Ghana is made up of 'failures' in the academic selection process.

Furthermore, in most discussions of VOSE, the business education sector is often given limited consideration. Yet, it is easy to forget the importance of business elements in other areas of vocational education. For example, vocational preparation in technical, agricultural and domestic science fields normally includes business concepts with particular relevance to their future occupations. In countries such as Ghana with a strong co-operative movement, an introduction to the functions and working of a co-operative society, its marketing, retailing and payment procedures is desirable. Skills in simple accounting and costing, including asset valuation and depreciation, are essential to the self-employed farmer or artisans. Likewise home economics courses often include elements of household budgeting, effective buying practices, banking and insurance. In general, curricula for these courses do not provide for a separate business subject - such as agricultural accounting or consumer economics - but rather incorporate business content into technical units of instruction (Heger 1984).

But despite the obvious importance of business education, its absence in the analytical process and in the development of education raises two major questions. The first concerns the nature and content of business education and the second centres on the type of equipment and materials used in these subjects as compared to other vocational subjects where the acquisition of agricultural and technically-related skills tends to demand much more in terms of input of equipment, space, time and physical resources (Foster 1965, 1974; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985; Chisman 1987). Looking in more detail at the nature and content of business skill training (such as recording, selling or typewriting) and the development of 'occupational intelligence', i.e. the ability to use these skills in a business environment and the acquisition of a working knowledge of those aspects of business and economics relevant to every member of society, are the two different

purposes of business education today (Heger 1984). Where business secondary schools are primarily oriented towards vocational objectives, it is natural to expect courses in business areas to be based on a distinct job oriented curriculum prepared in co-operation with commerce and industry.

However, regrettably, according to Mensah (1986), industry and commerce in Ghana do not feel disposed to consider financial assistance for the purchase of equipment like typewriters, textbooks and teaching aids for business education purposes. He adds further, that there is no provision made for periodic attachment of students to business houses for in-service training where they could familiarise themselves with what will be required of them when they finally complete their courses and take up permanent jobs. Nevertheless, in a period of economic decline, not only has the business sector increasingly become the main area of major employment and the only sector which can still afford to pay lucrative salaries, but it is also possible that some business skills, for example, secretarial, bookkeeping are ideally suited to self-employment and that job creation is a possible outcome of teaching such skills. Moreover, many students who have had agricultural and technical education have abandoned the occupation for which they were trained and gone into alternative, white-collar office jobs (Foster 1966), whilst others with business subject qualifications, see significant advantages in pursuing further professional courses in accountancy or banking. Lauglo (1983:300), for instance, acknowledges that although high school based vocational education in the United States has come under increasing criticism because

it is taken seriously neither by its clientele nor by employers, the one area of success that stands out is in business and office programmes and female graduates of such courses consistently fare better in the labour market than female graduates of the general track.

In further confirmation of the increasing importance of business subjects at the secondary level, Wright's (1988:131) findings in Sierra Leone also show that

business secondary subjects are now very popular, eagerly chosen and enthusiastically pursued by an increasing number of secondary pupils - a phenomenal change from the situation 10 or 15 years ago when pupils with "low academic ability" were being channelled to commercial streams where they studied business and secretarial subjects.

Wright attributes this change in students' perceptions of business subjects to changes in the economy, employment opportunities and earning patterns, concluding that, in general 'it is simply not true that students have a negative attitude to practical subjects'.

4.2.2 General or specific business skills?

General education normally refers to the sequence of schooling prior to the exercise of options for specialised vocational areas (Commonwealth Secretariat 1984). But in the event that school leavers look for employment immediately after school, much will depend on the balance between general education and vocational subjects in a curriculum. Training that occurs prior to employment, at the secondary level, will both provide entry level skills and include a substantial general education component so as to keep open the possibility of access to further academic study or higher education (Lauglo 1989). What this means is that the actual skills imparted in schools, apart from advanced literacy and numeracy, may be less important than the creation of attitudes and cognitive abilities which enable individuals to adjust to frequently changing job situations (Fägerlind and Saha 1983; Blaug 1984; Lauglo 1989).

The popular contention is that broadly based vocational training which avoids early and narrow specialisation is preferable to more narrowly specialised training on the grounds that the former will be a better preparation for a career whose specifics cannot be predicted. There are also arguments that a more general form of vocational education is warranted when (a) there is rapid technological change and (b) there is a loose connection between training and related job opportunities (Coombs 1985; Lauglo 1989; Blaug 1984). The point is that technology changes are rapidly taking place, and it would seem that learning periods for specific trades are becoming shorter while the modus operandi of various technology generally has the tendency to lessen skills required for contemporary jobs (Blaug and Rumberger 1984).

As societies grow more advanced, there is an increased need for new technologies. Therefore, in economies undergoing structural and technological change, it is important that training should be broad enough to prepare for changing technology. (Blaug 1984; Lauglo and Lillis 1988). The belief is that 'specific occupational skills taught in secondary schools are likely to become obsolete, or at least to require substantial supplementing when the school leavers enter the world of work' (Coombs 1985:172). For this reason, the The World Bank (1988:64) Policy Study on Education in Sub-Saharan Africa warns that 'training provided in schools is generally less useful (that is, the market demand for it is less strong) than training provided on the job or in specialised training centres'. What is more, 'not only do specific jobs and the nature of work itself keep changing, but, more than ever before, people keep changing jobs' (Coombs 1985:172).

Clearly, then, workers with low levels of schooling and those with work experience limited to a specific skill are at a disadvantage in the labour market when they are displaced

(Blaug and Rumberger 1984). Little (1986:17) suggests that 'establishing a greater correspondence between specific skills and jobs is not necessarily a good thing because one possible implication of this is the encouragement of a static and immobile work force'. She further cites Hallak and Caillods who note that:

The crux of the debate concerns the criteria for developing a modern work force and comes down to the question of whether it is enough simply to increase the correspondence between training and work ... or whether on the contrary one should maximise the choices and the individual's on a very wide general training.

But where developments in the past decade have become increasingly aware, perhaps overly so, of the need to establish in the education system a qualified manpower capacity for economic growth, labour market relevance will still be the hidden agenda of vocationalisation so long as the context is one of widespread school leaver unemployment.

Vocationally oriented education is therefore construed as educational activities designed to equip learners with knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for entry to further training or the world of work either as skilled or semi-skilled craftsmen or as trainees (Commonwealth Secretariat 1989). This formal process is regarded as distinct from training that refers to programmes which aim at the acquisition of specific occupational skills at practitioner level (Commonwealth Secretariat 1984). This distinction, however, appears to be very weak for it might well be that skills gained under VOSE may be comparable to those from technical/vocational institutes in the sense that they do satisfy differing *entry-level* requirements. Indeed, as Wilms and Hansell (1982:57) see it, 'to the extent that vocational education [in the U.S.] has an economic payoff, it seems to be limited to training for lower-status occupations.' At the same time, Blaug (1973: 83) argues, in referring to the vocationalisation of secondary curricula, that 'it is impossible to foresee accurately the requirements for specific skills in the economy two to three years hence; for that reason, vocational training on a full-time basis must necessarily impart general skills, at which point it ceases to be 'vocational' in the sense in which that term is usually understood'. But imparting general skills should not imply that training is any less vocational. Indeed, as Williams (1981:4) remarks:

much that goes on in schools in the areas of communication, language learning, computational skills, mathematics etc., is highly vocational. We should distrust the idea that the

only preparation for work is done in vocational ... subjects.
 ... Through general education in school children learn a great deal that is going to be useful in employment; for example habits of punctuality, an awareness of time, and discipline.

It is said that good vocational training geared towards a specific target occupation produces important transferable values, attitudes and skills so that, ironically, specialised training is a kind of general education (De Moura Castro 1988; Caillois 1980).

It is increasingly argued, however, that with more and more jobs requiring greater specialisation there is a distinct *shift away from general education*. Schramm (1980:121), in looking at this issue from an international perspective, attributes this state of affairs to a process whereby

the gradual emergence of new occupations as the process of office automation gets under way is accompanied by a trend towards specialisation, which is itself an outcome of the increase in the number of office employees and the general level of economic development.

This situation contradicts earlier movements during years of rapid economic growth and enrolment, in the 1960s, when 'school leavers were easily absorbed into the labour market in most countries and there was an international trend in favour of a more 'general' kind of vocational training which was the mainstream of the 'OECD recommendation' (Lauglo 1989).

However, specialisation, as Lauglo (1989:8) suggests raises important questions about

- (a) specific contexts of skill application such as how well training prepares for the occupation concerned; whether it leads to these occupations; how much it improves the productivity of persons who have been trained; and
- (b) effectiveness training received where an assessment is made by trainees and their employers of strengths and weaknesses in the training; evaluation of the actual utilisation of skills acquired; the rate of labour force absorption after training; the correspondence between the type of training and the type of work obtained, and measures of productivity.

At the secondary level, any attempts to use such external indicators to find out how well vocational training/education realises its goals are practically non-existent. In skill subjects, such as Typing and Shorthand, there is evidence from a number of countries that vocational preparation, to an increasing extent, fails to provide the employment sector with

employees capable of undertaking a job at beginner's level without further introductory training. In developing countries especially, where the structure of secretarial courses - adopted from overseas systems - is generally based on a language proficiency of a native speaker of a metropolitan language, shorthand training at too early a stage of secondary or vocational education has proved to be inadequate for the requirements of the job (Heger 1984).

A survey conducted in one Southern African country in 1979 revealed that among the secretaries and senior secretaries, less than one in three uses shorthand more than sporadically and many indicated that they had lost proficiency in skills needed in their present jobs because they had acquired them several years ago and used them rarely or not at all in their previous jobs (ILO 1981). Similarly in Ghana, commerce and industry do not indicate clearly the exact tools they require from business education and, even when that is provided, proper utilisation is not made of the tools (Mensah 1986).

An ad hoc survey in a number of developing countries has shown that 'employers and departmental chiefs in the public sector demand shorthand when hiring a secretary; the grading and promotion of a secretary in a public service depend upon possession of certain shorthand speeds even if in practice these aptitudes are rarely used' (Schramm 1980). A report of the study group of the Royal Society of Arts Examination Council also acknowledges that shorthand is 'being used as a diagnostic indicator of students' abilities rather than a skill subsequently to be used in employment and suggests a review of the timetable allocation for shorthand training within the office teaching curriculum' (RSA Council cited by Heger 1984:17). It seems that shorthand skills today are mainly required only in advanced positions such as senior secretary or personal assistant. Therefore, as Heger (1984), suggests 'shorthand training, which absorbs considerable resources if introduced on a broad basis, can more effectively be organised by in-service training of selected office employees at a later stage of their career'.

Thus, the structure and content of business education needs to be based firmly on the tasks carried out in the environment of the modern office. There are a whole range of complex issues involved as the link between common process skills and specialist business knowledge will vary according to employment requirements. Heger (1984:17) and Schramm (1980:122), respectively, focus a little differently but both are pointing in the same direction:

... for clerks, secretaries and office managers, essentially similar competencies are involved in much of their work, whatever organisational type or business sector is involved, but accountants, marketing managers and the like, obviously require certain competencies which are specific to their function;

and in terms of

the business secondary level, and entry-level skills required, the call for specialism is much less important. What would be of more value here is a study of the typist and accounts clerk not just at the national but at the organisational or enterprise level. [Hence], how would the tasks and functions of a typist/accounts clerk in one establishment differ from those of a typist/accounts clerk in another?

In other words, common areas of competence are concerned with business processes, which are common to different contexts.

4.2.3 Teaching and assessing business skills

As mentioned earlier, competent teachers with relevant experience from industry are difficult to recruit, train and keep. Although pay and other incentives are major factors for attracting and keeping the teachers, good vocational teachers have clear alternative employment possibilities in the trades they teach (Lauglo 1989; Dove 1986; Commonwealth Secretariat 1988). Yet, ironically, the 'easier it is for the trainees to find relevant work, the harder it is also to keep the vocational teachers from leaving to take up better paid alternative employment' (Heger 1984). In one Unesco study it was revealed that, 'in most of the countries, the technically qualified are few in number to begin with and are much sought after by business and industry where salaries are such that the education system can rarely compete for the services of these people' (cited by Dougherty 1989:76). In fact, 'management of teaching staff is critical because it is the most expensive element' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1988:44). Schramm (1980) asserts further, and correctly, that business teachers must have practical experience if business education is to provide a proper preparation for working life. Tied in with this is the notion that a 'very broad theoretical knowledge going beyond the strict bounds of a given job has to be related to the performance of practical tasks' (Lauglo and Lillis 1988:22).

It is interesting and significant that in looking at the British Columbian schools, Gaskell (1986:426) recognises, perceptively, that

- (a) business courses are described quite openly and universally as a 'dumping ground' for students with 'no place else to go';
- (b) business courses are subject to much less scrutiny by the authorities than are the academic courses; and
- (c) teachers must ensure that their courses remain popular with students so they will continue to get enough enrolment to justify their existence.

Certainly, each of these has consequences for how teachers decide what will go in the classroom, especially when most teaching of business subjects skills and presentation of content are lacking in imaginative approach (Taylor 1984; OU 1989). The skills required are also so distinct from the general 'academic background' which teachers of other school subjects have, that most practical subjects cannot easily be covered by teachers who are not trained in the subjects (Lauglo and Lillis 1988:22).

The teaching of typewriting and clerical accounting, for example, is expected to cover a number of skills: imparting knowledge about the typewriting room, objectives in typewriting, introducing the keyboard, teaching machine parts, drills in typewriting, analysis of typewriting errors and composition at the machine. Teaching clerical accounting could in turn range from lessons on fundamentals of bookkeeping, fixed assets and depreciation, and accounting systems to data processing techniques (Anderson 1978). Schramm (1980) also believes that in order to achieve an acceptable level of written and oral communication, the teaching of language skills must be included in any business education course, especially where common process skills and common areas of competence appear significantly in typewriting and clerical accounting. In this context, the role of the business teacher takes on several dimensions.

Ideally, the basic components of business teacher education are broad general education, theoretical and practical studies in business subjects, employment experience and pedagogical training, including a period of supervised teaching practice, but few countries have been able to establish a comprehensive system which adequately reflects all these components (Heger 1984). However, on the importance of having sufficient properly trained and educated staff available in the future, Stainton-Skinn (1982:9), in the British context, offers the suggestion that a 'staff development programme should be established so that the teaching of office skills subjects and business studies acquire the requisite skills and knowledge to enable teachers to modify their teaching to meet the new demands which they will be facing'. The strategic dimensions which make up the staff-development programme are shown in Figure 4.1. above. These have been adapted, for the purposes of this study, from Light's (1972) 'Ideas on a Basic Strategy for Staff Development'.

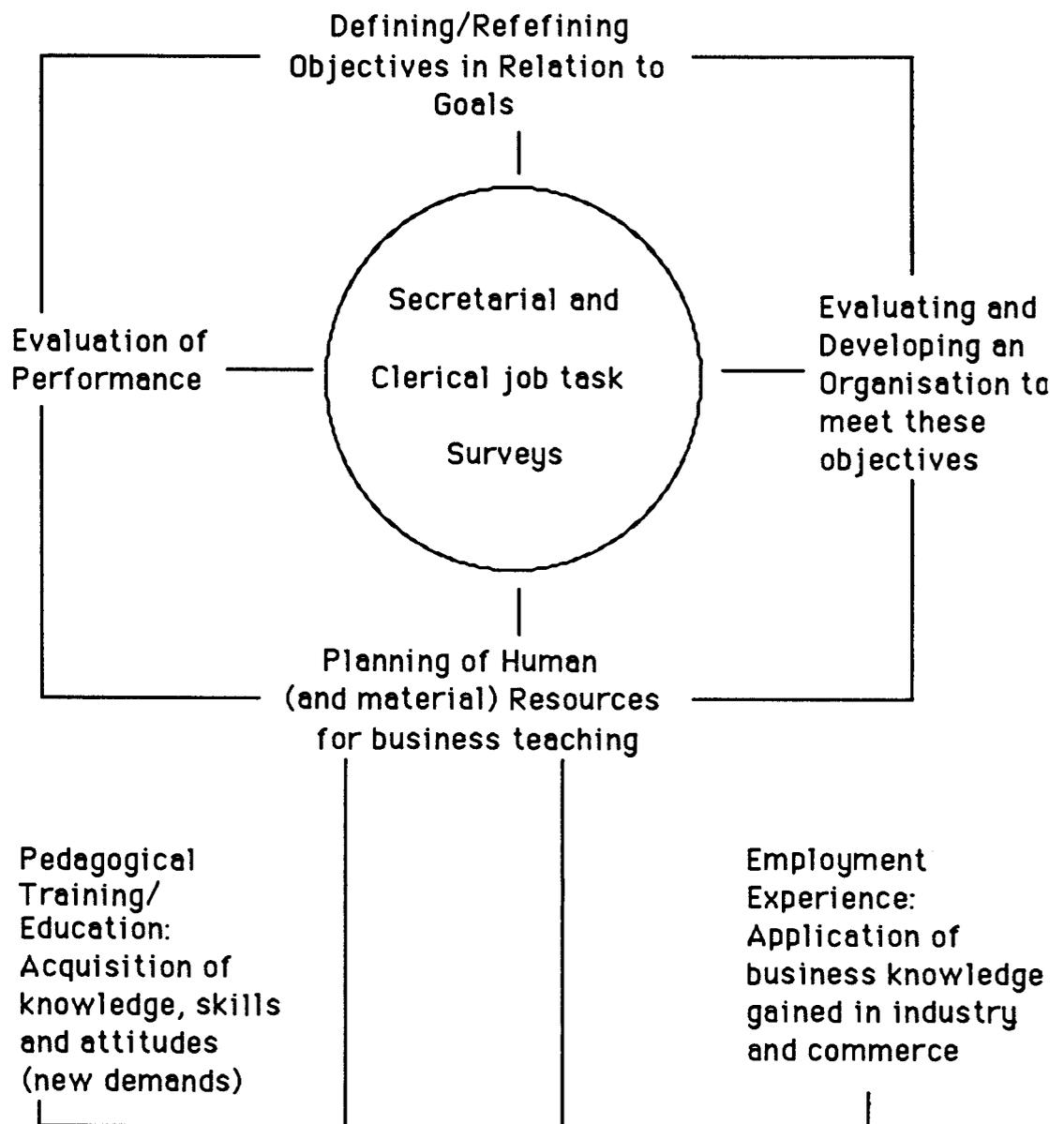


Figure 4.1 Ideas on a Basic Strategy for Business Staff Development

Source: Adapted from Light (1972).

There are three points to make about the use of such a framework. First, whilst the role of private secretaries, typists, accounts clerks or bookkeepers trained by the lower institutions of learning are much appreciated by commerce and industry, it is sometimes alleged that their performance is not always up to the standard required (Heger 1984). This leads to a need for evaluating the performance of teachers in these lower institutions of learning. Second, in the light of increasing budgetary constraints, departments responsible for the planning of human and physical resources for business teaching are bound to take a closer look at the present course structures in relation to the type and level of knowledge and skills required for certain careers. In this regard secretarial and clerical job task surveys can provide information as a basis for discussion on bringing service schemes and training requirements into line with the skills necessary for actual job performance, which links up with the third point that this approach appears to be of particular importance to countries which are in the process of revising/expanding business education elements within the secondary curriculum (Heger 1984) with the aim of 'equipping young people with the knowledge and skills required for the world of work' (OU 1989:19). Such a process must have implications for business examinations.

As Little (1984:225-6) suggests 'examinations and other forms of assessment are an integral part of meritocratic and economic organisation whether that organisation be of a 'capitalist' or 'socialist' form. Perhaps the radical reform of the examination system itself is the most we can hope for, if we wish to change the quality of education'. She also comments that 'examinations have the potential to reinforce and contradict curricula. Curriculum reforms not reinforced by exam reform will have little chance of survival' (1986:23). This is true for technical and vocational qualifications as well as academic qualifications and as true for non-formal as well as formal education.

The essential difference between vocational examinations and academic ones is that the former have to meet the needs of employment. This involves both the content of the examination syllabus and the recognition of the qualification as is acceptable in terms of a job to be done (Commonwealth Secretariat 1980b). These distinctions are all the more important considering the reasons given for the scrapping of the Ghana Business Certificate (See Chapter 2 p. 51).

The Commonwealth Secretariat Report (1980b) identifies four essential elements which should be present in any system of vocational qualifications and examinations:

- (a) identification of the needs of employment;
- (b) an examination syllabus;

- (c) measurement of attainment;
- (d) award of a qualification; 'with perhaps an additional element for validation'.

These elements are shown diagrammatically as follows:

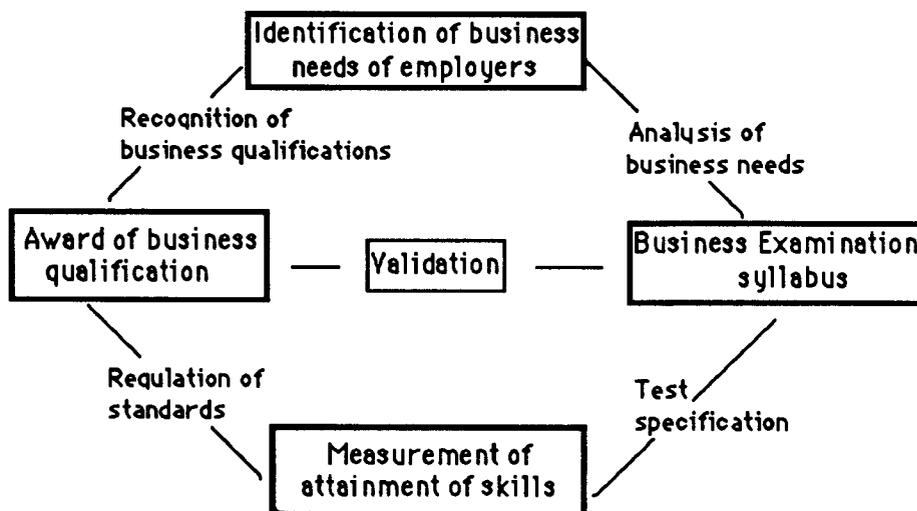


Figure 4.2 Elements governing vocational qualifications and examinations.

Industrial and commercial requirements put additional emphasis on the acceptability of, and accountability for, standards of qualification, on the validity of syllabuses and the avoidance of harmful side effects (which could, for example, affect industrial performance) without reducing the need for validity and reliability of testing fairness and comparability when awarding qualifications. Yet, inasmuch as the needs of employers may be met, the fact that there is little employment for young people leads to a good deal of questioning of educational programmes and examinations that are supposed to prepare young people for employment (Gaskell 1986). And certainly, any serious attempt to introduce examination reforms is justified when 'teachers [tend to] focus attention on the content and skill areas emphasised by the selection examinations which control access to further education and employment' (Little 1990:7).

It would be of value, then, to ascertain how far instructional materials, specific methods of teaching typewriting and bookkeeping, miscellaneous problems in teaching the two subjects and evaluation in typewriting and clerical accounting are or can be taken into account when preparing students for occupations that purport to demand certain fixed criteria of productivity (Gaskell 1986). For example, in some skill-based examinations such as typing, a mastery of clearly stated objectives is required which uses a *criterion referenced* standard; that is, a typist either can or cannot type accurately at 90 words per

minute. However, there are many factors which make the introduction of completely criterion referenced standards extremely difficult, for example the comparative quality of the typewriters available, or the number of errors considered acceptable. Hence the 'criterion itself has to be related to the requirements or expectations of an employer' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1980b:11).

While one school of thought blames the teachers of business education, another school of thought blames the managers in commerce and industry for not making right use of the trained manpower - the common example cited is the shorthand typist or stenographer secretary whose shorthand skill is not fully utilised by management and therefore left to rust in course of time, as noted in subsection 4.2.2 above. Normally, the teacher readily believes that his job is best performed by 'identifying with the employer and trying to get students to do the same.' (Gaskell 1986). But identifying with the employers, as seen in subsection 4.3.1 below, would be an impossible task. There would be as many needs and requirements as there are employers, thus making redundant efforts by teachers to 'try to get students to identify with the employer'.

Another factor which complicates further the teacher's task is the new educational materials and equipment which have changed and continue to change the role and function of the commercial teacher in many ways. Although the situation differs considerably from country to country, there appears to be a growing global need for in-service training in the use of new techniques and media (Heger 1984). In business, some firms may be using computers or word processors, while others still rely on very ancient typewriters (Commonwealth Secretariat 1980b:23).

At this point it is appropriate to make mention of an important consideration not dissimilar to the situation in Ghana which Taylor (1984) highlighted in an Australian case: many of the currently used textbooks are revised editions of the textbooks published in the 1950s in the USA and some of the content which has been included seems to be quite outdated. Clearly, where basic instructional material such as textbooks are still lagging behind in terms of taking an innovative approach to the teaching of business skills, it would become almost impossible to deal and work with technological change (De Moura Castro 1988). How far can the content of typewriting and clerical accounting adjust themselves to the changes that will undoubtedly occur? Again, if in answer to this we were to say that with more adaptability and flexibility of business education, greater stress should be laid on continuous training, of what value would BSSs be in terms of the immediacy with which they could produce graduates to 'fit' the job market?

4.2.4 Adapting business education to technological change

Vocational subjects are invariably more expensive than those academic subjects which at a minimum can be taught on a purely chalk-and-talk basis, partly because of the cost connected with equipment, workshops and materials equipments, and partly because they usually need to be taught in smaller classes. Their facilities, equipment and materials also pose greater demands in terms of managing logistic requirements and the initial establishment of these subjects (Lauglo and Narman 1988; Cumming 1988). Although there is need to take account of the availability of equipment, it is worth considering that contrary to other vocational subjects such as metal work and electrical technology, typewriting and clerical accounting/bookkeeping are far less costly. Accountancy, for example, stands out as the one subject which has cheap and simple technology at the same time as it gains from perceived association with attractive life chances in the modern economic sector (Heger 1984). It is therefore more easily implemented on a large scale throughout an education system, than are the equipment-intensive subjects, or subjects suffering from association with low status work (Lauglo and Lillis 1988:24).

Furthermore, the technology of business education is relatively easy to accommodate in a school - though some special equipment is needed. Nevertheless, with the already great strain on Ghana's resources, it appears that even these subjects encounter numerous problems. Chisman (1987) correctly perceives that equipment such as computers, typewriters and calculators in many developing countries have to be imported. Furthermore, the supply of local materials does not necessarily guarantee the users will be happy with them because of the association of imported goods with prestige - this implies an unnecessarily expensive syllabus that requires schools to buy costly equipment. Another problem is that the diversity of equipment which exists indicates the difficulty of choosing suitable equipment for teaching purposes; also it is often found that equipment is designed for the business rather than the educational users (Stainton-Skinn 1982).

However, contrary to evidence in some developed countries, much of the equipment is used extensively in educational establishments. Several million pupils in the USA have already been exposed to working with a computer, 10,000 of them at kindergarten and elementary level, beginning at the age of five to six years. In the Federal Republic of Germany, the curriculum for 'Industriekaufmann' (Commercial apprentice - manufacturing) provides for a data processing element within the accountancy syllabus, covering approximately 30 contact hours (Heger 1984).

However, in many developing countries such as Ghana, a great deal depends on the

individual school headmaster and on extraneous factors such as the number of typewriters (manual) available (Ruddell 1979). These typewriters are costly to buy and to maintain. Given that there is difficulty in maintaining these manual typewriters, what will happen later when the schools will need to re-equip constantly with increasingly complex, costly and rapidly changing machines?

Other cost implications would have to include those arising from transportation especially for the rural school such as that in Tamale (Ghana); spare parts would need to be made available for equipment with provision made for maintenance. It is proven, as in the Sierra Leonian case, that there are many schools which have some capacity for utilising equipment and materials effectively but they have always been constrained by inadequacies of such resources and the recurrent cost-burden of maintaining equipment (Wright 1988). For instance, there are many cases of

capital investment lying idle, either mothballed because the technicians to install it or the power supplies to activate it are still awaited, or because it is too precious to entrust to students' unskilled hands. In other cases repair services are lacking and spare parts missing
(Commonwealth Secretariat 1987:16).

Yet another significant point is that, while the need for administrators and specialist support staff cannot be discounted, it is probably fair to say that the costs involved in employing them would be relatively much less for business subjects than for, say, metalwork or electronic technology. At the same time, because of the cost of hardware and software, service and instructor training, teacher training institutions cannot be expected to equip themselves with the full range of machines and systems now in business use. Like business schools, teacher training will have to rely on general purpose systems for teaching principles rather than operating specific devices (Heger 1984). Teachers are not experts in the new technology. This makes it very difficult if not near impossible for teachers to constantly update the curriculum and quickly translate the curriculum into a real set of practices (Gaskell 1986).

A Further Education Unit (DES, UK 1985) document on the modern business curriculum indicates aims and objectives which may also be applicable at the secondary level. It advocates that a basic curriculum for vocational education for the office requires a broad set of aims if it is to be adaptable to technological change. It should enable students to:

- (a) develop a broad understanding of business activities, the structure and functions of business and institutions and their relationships;

- i. from the point of view of the business organisation within its overall environment;
 - ii. as a system of integrated activities;
 - iii. as a dynamic activity in which one of the major elements of change is technology;
- (b) develop the competencies necessary for the performance of information processing tasks;
 - (c) understand and apply the underlying business principles and processes which are common to different types of organisations employing different technologies;
 - (d) develop competencies which are common to a wide range of office occupations through their application to specific business contexts, and acquire the foundation on to which specialist competences can be built;
 - (e) develop personal qualities which will assist them to adjust to the changing demands of society and of employment in business.

These aims would appear to be most idealistic and any curriculum would be hard pressed to attempt to do justice to all of these aims. What matters most here is that the structure and content of typewriting and clerical accounting, specifically, need to be focussed more firmly in the typical tasks carried out in the environment of the modern office, tasks which not only require skills in microtechnology but also 'basic skills in reading and understanding, or in being able to find something ... quickly and efficiently' (Torbe 1981:11). For instance, with the increasing convergence of computing and micro-electronic applications, how far can general business education with communications, language skills and numeracy skills be combined with specific business applications such as clerical accounting? In typewriting, problems specific to this subject emerge where the necessary equipment - typewriters - need to be placed in each classroom or workshop if students are to get the practice that would make them 'reasonably' competent.

According to Gaskell (1986), the increasing doubts about the appropriateness of the business curriculum seems to hinge on the fact that so many changes have taken place in the workplace. New office technology is reorganising the nature of the skills in use in the office so that where typing, filing and shorthand used to be central, work processing, records management and micrographics are taking their place (Jamieson and Tasker 1988). As a research paper published in 1981 by the German Federal Institute of Vocational Education indicates, the Federal Republic of Germany is already equipped with large computers to a 70 percent 'degree of saturation', but has considerable growth potential when it comes to distributing wordprocessors, office computers and terminal installations (Heger 1984).

In general, the reorganisation of office work in the more developed countries, as can be

seen in the examples above, using new methods, procedures and technology has led to a further sub-division of clerical labour and to the standardisation of clerical tasks. But the implementation pace of new office technologies has been slow in developing countries, and, although changes are being observed, the attitudes of office staff and clients towards the so-called 'office of the future' remains conservative (Wernecke 1983).

This is hardly surprising given the many accounts of outdated equipment which 'far from preparing students for tomorrow's technology is not even acquainting them with today's: rather it introduces them to yesterday's, now obsolete, techniques' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987:16). Electronic technology is, as a rule, outdated after two years since modern technologies are changing all the time. What is happening in schools, then, is that they can in no way keep up with the constant improvement in undertakings, let alone 'be able to be constantly shifting from one machine to a newer one, from one method to another' when they enter the labour market (Schramm 1980; Wangwe 1984; De Moura Castro 1988). This becomes crucial when, as new and more powerful electronic equipment is increasingly introduced into offices, more attention should be paid in education to the understanding of the processes being served by this equipment, so that when the equipment changes, more fundamental skills associated with information processing and interpretation, remain useful (OECD 1982; FEU 1983). A Unesco report of a Technical Workshop on Business and Commercial subjects in Bangkok warns 'it is felt that modern technology is to be reflected in the present business curriculum, otherwise developing countries will soon find themselves in the technology gap in the sense that the skills of the trained commercial manpower will be outmoded' (Unesco/APEID cited by Heger 1984:31).

Yet, as Schramm (1980:120) points out, 'reproducing the world of work in the business school is complicated and makes considerable organisational and financial demands', and although schools seem to be preparing for a situation which is 'at least ten years out of date' (Taylor 1984) less developed countries cannot ignore, at least not for some time yet, the need for routine skilled office work.

Nevertheless, the 'challenge of changing technology demands the ability to identify it and act upon it' (OU 1989:36), and what is certain as Schramm (1980:121) again observes is that

although the rationalisation of office work is making much more hesitant progress in the economically less developed regions, one can still be sure that the tide of the micro-electronics revolution will one day engulf the Southern hemisphere as well.

4.3 Employers' expectations vs students' aspirations

There are major implications to be considered for the skills required both now and in the future. One needs to find out how the 'target jobs' are filled, the process of recruitment to the occupations concerned and what employers are looking for. In some conditions, employers are not 'looking for skills', it may rather be a matter of whether candidates to whom an employer has some kind of obligation can meet the necessary minimum requirements. Employers' needs could be of paramount importance in the sense that it is their requirements which ultimately determine the placements of school leavers in the job market. It then becomes essential for the school to maintain a viable role in allocating and preparing young workers in the face of these subtle but real difficulties.

Careful consideration should be given to such issues as the balance required between general, broad-based curriculum and a more specific skills-based vocational curriculum: What skills are employers seeking from school leavers? Does the evidence show that employers prefer skills to be acquired in school or for skills training to be deferred to the post-school level? How far do the jobs being offered match students aspirations? Furthermore, given resource constraints can schools realistically hope to meet technological challenges and equip leavers to cope with technical and scientific change in the work place? Does training lead to the intended type of work, and how well are the skills acquired utilised in related work?

So far, traditional office training has prepared office employees for occupations which require only a limited range of skills. But the question is, will multi-skilled office employees be available who possess a variety of inter-related office skills, such as administrative, clerical, secretarial and computer skills? Will not employers be looking for young office workers with a more broad based business education? How will business go about getting the skilled workers they need, i.e. how will the skill market operate?

Figure 4.3 is based on the hypothesis that (a) an employer's knowledge of a school leaver is subject to 'filtration' and 'signal interference'; (b) employers, depending on the scale of their firm, recruit school leavers in accordance with their own specific requirements; (c) these requirements, even when considerable formal information is available, cannot really

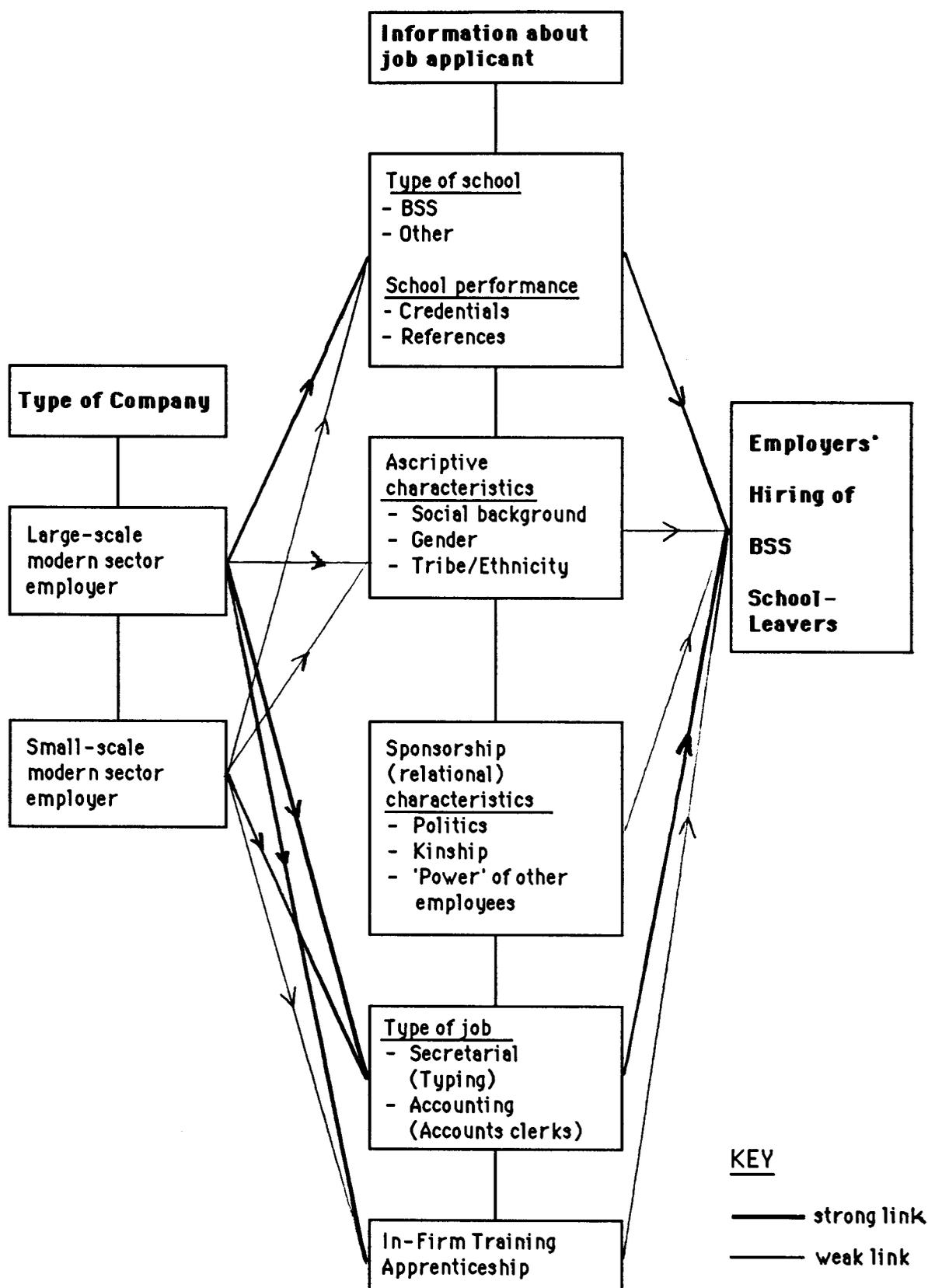


Figure 4.3 Hypothetical 'preferential' factors influencing employers' hiring practices

be claimed to be either objective or absolute. Although, it is recognised that BSS subjects may not in themselves 'create' jobs, could they, at least, be 'adjusted' or 'adapted' to satisfy various employers' needs at the same time? Or, could it be said that the framework of BSS subjects taught does not matter if employers are going to consider 'preferential' factors anyway? These are complex and speculative issues which this section will focus on in some detail.

4.3.1 School and work: the widening gap

The quality of school-based training suffers from the difficulty of exposing the students to realistic work experience. This adversely affects both the relevance of the training and motivation of the trainees (Dougherty 1989). However, lack of motivation on the part of students can also be attributed to *socio-economic* factors such as the 'severe lags in industrial development and consequent failure to create adequate job opportunities' which imply a reduction in job prospects because of

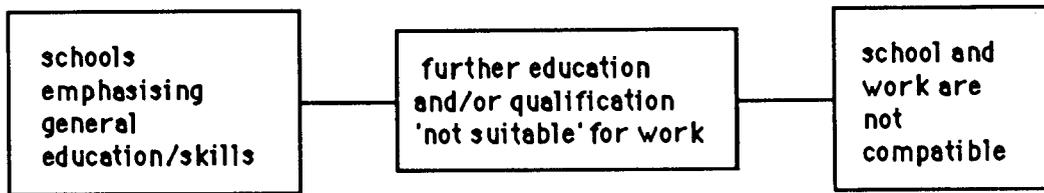
- (a) the students' inadequate preparation;
- (b) their theoretical knowledge acquired at the expense of practical skills and experience;
- (c) their unacceptable attitudes in relation to occupational ethics and requirements; and
- (d) the consequential low likelihood of their being employed in their specialisms and the resulting 'backwash' effect causing high dropout rates and absenteeism

(Lillis and Hogan 1983:95-96).

Hence, the underlying question is: of what specific use are the skills acquired while studying? If, as Bray et al. (1986:45) point out,

the existing differences in income and status of modern and traditional sector employment [means that] pupils will aspire to the former and [therefore that] attempts to use the curriculum to orient them towards the latter are unlikely to have much effect,

then the so-called vocational curriculum cannot be sufficiently relevant to employers' needs. The school's emphasis on general education, its linkage to further education or the unsuitability of qualifications received may be pulling the school and workplace further apart:



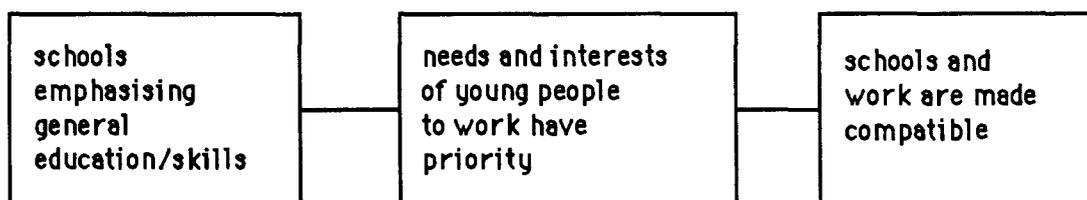
Pupils value highly those aspects of schooling which they perceive as contributing to the possibilities for high earnings or high status in the future (Dore 1980; Wilms and Hansell 1982). Conversely, pupils will pay little attention to aspects of schooling which they regard as detracting from such possibilities. Thus, if pupils regard subjects such as 'woodwork and metal work as leading to low-status and low-earning occupations, it should hardly be surprising if they do not take such subjects seriously' (Wright 1988:131). On the other hand, there is some confidence in the ability of vocational education to have a 'cooling out' effect on the demand for formal education although Dougherty (1982:92) believes that the curriculum 'exerts a negligible effect on aspirations by comparison with social and family values and information about career prospects'. In the case of Britain, for example, 'careers education appears to have remained a 'Cinderella' curriculum' (Gleeson 1987).

Indeed, what is most significant about pupils' career aspirations is its 'long term horizon', implying a prolonged period of formal education before starting a career. As evidenced in the Sierra Leone situation (Wright 1988), most pupils' career aspirations (idealistic or realistic) are such that they entail some form of post-secondary education as a prerequisite for job entry. Since there tends to be an intimate link between pupils' career aspirations and their expectations of what can be got out of schooling, the predominant perception amongst pupils is that secondary schools serve to prepare them for *post-secondary* education rather than for the job market. This is borne out by the fact that, in some countries secondary technical schools produce hardly any technicians, the majority of the graduates proceeding sooner or later to enrol in universities or other post-secondary institutions (Dougherty 1989). Indeed, it is a common impression that 'many of the American high school students guided into technical and practical courses have no particular job in mind, and receive little training for it if they have' (Grant 1976:141).

At the same time, it is further suggested that the failure of the school system may not, in fact, be attributed to its vocational orientations but to its fundamental education function of teaching the young to read, write, compute, think analytically and act responsibly as workers, neighbours and community-oriented citizens (OECD 1982; Chin-Aleong 1988).

Business interests in Germany claim, for instance, that reforms in both the organisation and content of secondary schooling have led to a deterioration in general education; the needs of employers and the demands of the work-place are ignored and vocational schooling is disparaged (Noah and Eckstein 1988). According to one German industrialist, this is a result of the 'poor education of teachers who are all too often unable to relate their teaching to practical experience and reality' (Goebel, cited by Noah and Eckstein 1988:46).

This becomes problematic when as pupils get nearer to leaving school, their focus of interest becomes what the school can do to prepare them for earning a living. The fact that this becomes a need and interest to young people is justification enough why teachers should include the 'world of work' in their teaching (Gardner 1981; OU 1989). Thus in emphasising general education in schools, there may be a more direct linkage through awarding priority to these needs and interests and bridging the gap between school and the workplace:



Naturally, a curriculum which ignores pupils' aspirations, anticipations, hopes and fears about their future lives, would be without interest and relevance to them. The role of teachers, therefore, should be to help school leavers make decisions about their future work on a realistic basis and choose elective subjects which may be of vocational relevance to them (OECD 1982; Dove 1986; Cumming 1987).

Furthermore, findings reported by Wright (1988) support the view that students' career aspirations operate at a realistic level which is often not revealed on initial questioning: that is, in making a second choice of job most pupils were realistic enough to accept a downward shift in their original career aspirations (e.g. from accountant to office clerk). And considering also the fact that 'exposure to vocational subjects increases students' interests in related "practical/technical" work' (Lauglo and Lillis 1988), there is, certainly, something to be said for their introduction in schools.

However, there is some truth in the notion that what is taught will probably 'diverge from

the daily preoccupations of the workplace, and that a gap between school and work may arise' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987:4); in which case, a vocational curriculum would have to relate itself to what is 'needed' in terms of the structures of school and workplace as well as the ideology that links school and the workplace (OECD 1982; Gaskell 1986).

At the same time, given that employers hold the balance of power as regards part of the unemployment problem, they should be able to articulate their stipulations as regards required work qualifications. Although the importance of credentials for access to jobs will also depend on how sharp the competition is, it is of no help to the student to find, as reported by Lauglo and Narman (1987) in Kenya, that 'doing well in school (or even passing as compared to failing examinations) conferred no particular advantage in the quest for jobs among lower secondary school leavers'. As Nairn (1985:203) rightly asserts

there is a responsibility as well on the work place to adjust the rhythm and pattern and organisation of work to the type of people coming from the school system because only then will some kind of bridge be built between school and work.

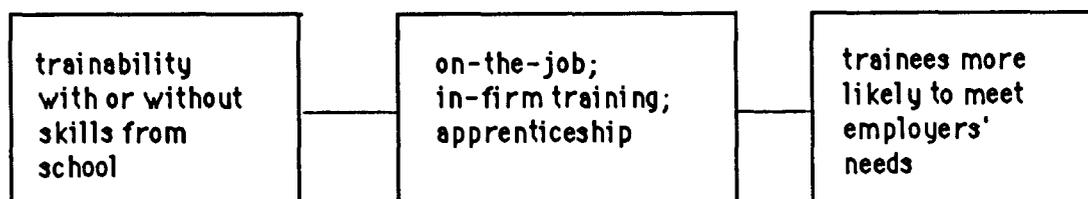
Furthermore, granted that vocational education cannot create new jobs, it can nevertheless 'provide a useful medium for enhancing the abilities of young people so that they will be qualified once jobs again become available' (Heger 1984:18).

4.3.2 Employment-based training

There are severe lags in Ghana's industrial development and commercial enterprises which reduce job prospects. This makes it even more discouraging for students when they discover that 'employers prefer to take on youngsters with general education at lower wages and train them on the job in specific skills rather than hire the outputs of (vocational) schools' (Harbison 1973).

These sentiments are echoed by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce declaration that 'Industry prefers to manage the provision of training itself and sees the job of schools as providing a foundation on which training can be based, supplying trainable, but not trained, recruits' (Association of British Chambers of Commerce, cited by Noah and Eckstein 1988:131). With regard to the curriculum, British employers are primarily concerned with basics as conventionally defined (Noah and Eckstein 1988). At the other end of the spectrum of development, a survey in Honduras found that employers' opinions could be summarised as 'give me someone who can read and write, who is

motivated, who understands the meaning of work, and I can train him or her myself' (Kelly et al., cited by Dougherty 1989:83). In other words, being trainable rather than having already acquired skills makes it easier to meet employers' needs:



Employers have a direct interest in ensuring that training meets their needs both in terms of scale and quality of training since they train their own staff (Lauglo 1989). They also have a direct interest in efficiency since they bear the cost. One argument in favour of apprenticeship is that it is cost saving to government - though governments sometimes subsidise apprentice schemes though tax credits to employers who take part. It is also likely that total costs are lower than for school or centre-based training, because time and training resources are saved when training coincides with production. For some years, economists have emphasised this advantage (Zymelman, 1976; Metcalf, 1985). A number of recent studies have also confirmed this conclusion. Ziderman's (1988) research in Israel, for example, in accordance with earlier findings in that country, shows apprenticeship to be much cheaper than vocational school but equally effective in terms of the trainee's later income.

Small-scale employers especially tend to give priority to apprentices who are recommended to them through personal networks, and they are loath to sign contracts with unknown quantities. Mabawonku (1979) writes about Nigeria that recruitment of apprentices in small-scale industries is often undertaken through informal discussions between the proprietor and their neighbours, customers or relatives. There are similar constraints in industrially advanced countries where apprenticeship can become a 'closed shop' for those with inside connection in the trades concerned with the result that recruitment is not sufficiently open to competition among applicants (Naoh and Middleton 1988). A French report (Assemblée Permanente des Chambres de Metiers, 1981) notes, however, that 'few employers take on apprentices, despite pressures from various groups' (Lauglo, 1989:18); and in Britain the apprenticeship system has very markedly shrunk in recent years (Commonwealth Secretariat 1987:7).

Compared to school-based training, apprenticeship tends to be more specialised with the

advantage that 'there will clearly be transferable skills between kindred occupations whose specific requirements overlap' (Lauglo 1989:17). But, at the same time, because job training under apprenticeships can often be very unstructured, 'employers may exploit apprentices and not give them very wide experience, having some interest in the immobility of their labour' (Williams 1981:4).

In-firm training is highly organised in large firms which have a special training centre and job rotation for trainees. And, in contrast to apprenticeship schemes, company centres will train staff with a view to future work within the particular company. Such training, however, may seek to build identification with the company rather than with an occupational community (Lauglo 1989).

In any job, there is also on-the-job training of the 'informal' kind which is incidental to the work without separately organised deliberate instruction. The training value of 'learning the ropes' will vary greatly, depending on the range of skills required. But as Lauglo (1989:4) points out 'the question is how such skills are best transmitted and in such a way that they are utilised. To leave all such specifics to employers and training on-the-job is a romantic view of the training potential of the workplace'.

Excessively narrow specialisation, therefore, is a point of criticism against employment-based training because this approach deprives the young person of broader knowledge and skills applicable to a wider range of occupations (Heger 1984; Grubb 1985). In other words, apart from teaching skills, vocational training must transmit values, attitudes and generalisable skills which are valuable in any occupation (Lauglo 1989; Gaskell 1986).

Even if it can be argued that the best way to train people for a job is usually on the job itself, Ruddell (1980:36) is justified in his claim that

most Third World civil services and industries are not at present equipped to do this efficiently either for beginners or to upgrade existing employees ... Most of the specialised skills ... are being learned outside the immediate job situation. If these can be combined with academic education ... it would appear to be a sensible form of investment.

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that

students who dislike or are not doing well in academic courses find vocational programs attractive. They compare the dreariness and remotiveness of their academic work with the potential benefits of their vocational courses. It is thus easy to see how academic and vocational programs are set against one another.

(Lazerson, et. al., 1985:58).

4.3.3 The 'right' type of worker

Most employers are willing to point out that the problems faced in work situations are not technical (Grubb and Lazerson 1975; O'Toole 1979; Torbe 1981). Rather these problems are

complex, interdependent and have more to do with whether or not people are able to work with each other co-operatively and ethically. School principals have reported that this is the identical feedback they normally get from employers in Trinidad and Tobago
(Chin-Aleong 1988:324).

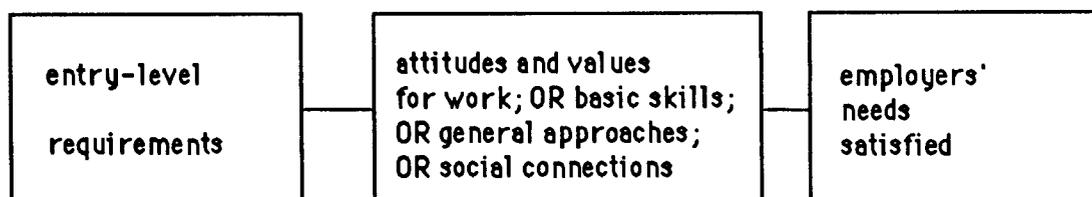
But which aspect of 'general education' actually makes people more trainable? The answer may be gleaned from research on employers' opinions. Some examples of these opinions are cited below.

British employers especially have complained that

schools do not inculcate in school leavers positive attitudes towards business/industry, but instead even promote negative attitudes to authority, entrepreneurial activity and the fundamental concept of a market-driven, profit-oriented economic system

(Confederation of British Industry, cited by Noah and Eckstein 1988:47).

It appears that the conditions for satisfying entry-level requirements depend so much on a variety or combination of factors:



Employers' requirements are always stated in the language of attitudes (Wellington 1986). But it is difficult to measure changes in attitudes and values and therefore it becomes problematic to decide whether a vocationally oriented study course is working and even if, as Ruddell (1980:34) suggests, 'the attitudes and expectations of the clients (should) be heeded and encompassed in the plans (in order that) they might have far more chances of success', employers are inclined to value more highly than schools skills which depend primarily on practice, such as computational need. For students who are not entering technical occupations, employers see a greater need than schools for a knowledge of basic applied science or 'technological literacy' (Lynton, cited by Dougherty 1989:84). In Panama, where the literacy rate is 90 percent, a survey of employers found, nevertheless, that the complaint most frequently cited by them with regard to their workers was the basic education of the latter, which 'inhibited their ability to absorb new technical concepts and skills' (Cuervo, cited by Dougherty 1989:83).

In Britain, France and Germany, as in the United States, the most frequent criticism voiced is that schools provide an inadequate and inappropriate preparation:

the standard of schools leavers' literacy and numeracy is well below what it should be. When pressed to be more specific about standards of literacy, employers point to illegible writing, limitations of vocabulary, weakness of grammar and syntax and poor presentation. Lack of facility in mathematical skills means that many without remedial education are unable to cope with craft training and this gives widespread cause for concern
(British Manpower Services Commission, cited by Noah and Eckstein 1988:45).

And businesses in the private sector report that they want people with 'a broader technical background than a vocational education provides' (Chapman and Windham, cited by Dougherty 1989:84). In a memorandum submitted by the Confederation of British Industry to a House of Commons Education and Arts Subcommittee in 1981, these views were expressed:

Employers ... strongly support the case for vocational elements within the school curriculum particularly in the later years of education. By this we do not mean specific vocational courses as an entry to particular trades but a general vocational approach leading to an orientation across the whole of school life which encourages the development of attitude, skills and knowledge of relevance to adult society

(Confederation of British Industry, cited by Noah and Eckstein 1988:47)

The employer who finds a school leaver unable to cope with office procedures may complain of the curriculum and the school experience of the students in preparing for his (the employer's) needs. The criticisms are numerous; they are specific and they are based upon individual experience with a number of cases (Kravetz 1974:8-9). They are often of such a nature as:

- (a) students cannot write or spell the mother tongue;
- (b) they cannot compose a letter or follow directions, written or oral;
- (c) they cannot understand job-oriented oral communication and cannot articulate well enough on the job;
- (d) they are lacking in sufficient arithmetic skills;
- (e) they have not learned necessary motor skills and physical dexterity to handle simple equipment;
- (f) they do not have sufficient experience or maturity to bring common sense to their work or face its problems;
- (g) they do not have the interest or the motivation necessary to pursue the interests of the employers as if they were their own.

Such complaints lead employers to call for changes in curriculum which should, according to them, produce a more 'accomplished' graduate. The emphasis is not just on what the school leavers have learnt but on the acquisition of skills that will enable them to be open to training and ready to adapt to the demands of employment.

Japanese employers attach even greater importance to general education. A recent survey reports:

major employers have no interest in vocational education attainments. As a result the school system does not expect to concentrate on vocational education. The purpose of education is clear-cut. It is regarded as socially, politically and economically efficient and not as an appropriate provider of anything looking like training. Vocational education is now provided half-heartedly, for those unable to compete academically ... The emphasis in education is towards even greater generalisation, rather than specialisation

(Hayes, Anderson and Fonda, cited by Dougherty 1989:82).

In the UK, employers' concern about standards and numeracy and literacy among school-leavers (Freedman 1979; Torbe 1981) indicates that they are losing confidence in the assessment procedures in schools. According to Freedman, an employer is more likely to be favourably inclined towards qualifications if he knows more about them and is involved in creating syllabuses and examinations.

The bulk of employers appear not to have any well-tested means of relating educational qualifications to job functions. Instead, the impression is that the process of determining educational requirements is very particularistic: each employer has his own rule of thumb (Oxenham 1988). Furthermore, 'the greater the competition for employment, the greater the importance of social connections in addition to social background and education for access to jobs' (Oxenham 1984).

Similarly, the fact that doing well across all school subjects gave no immediate advantage in the search for jobs after leaving school in Kenya (Lauglo and Narman 1987), raises general questions about the role of schools in selection to jobs and

one suspects that when faced with an abundant supply of school-leavers for the few jobs available, employers resort more to other criteria than credentials from school. It is likely that personal connections through kinship networks, home district and other sources or prior acquaintance become increasingly important instead.

(Lauglo and Lillis 1988:13).

Furthermore, in Britain the inappropriateness of the timing of examination results has meant that they were not available for use by employers when they needed them so that examinations were simply not used in selection procedures (Freedman 1979). Employers can discriminate against 'overeducated' or 'overqualified' applicants. Oxenham (1984) refers to the Finniston Report of 1980 which showed for Britain that many employers, particularly smaller ones, may in fact be prejudiced against the more educated applicants. This is one reason why the chance of finding jobs in Ghana seems to be more related to contacts through family and friends rather than to 'O' level results (Boyd and French 1973; and see Chapter 7).

It appears from the evidence surveyed above that Oxenham's (1988:77) conclusion is warranted:

there is no neat and universal explanation of what employers want from school and university education. Still less is there any firm connection between scholastic qualifications and job functions. Any expectation of consistency within large organisations which try to be rational is disappointed

(Oxenham 1988:77).

A study of British employers by Brunel University in 1984 also concluded that there was

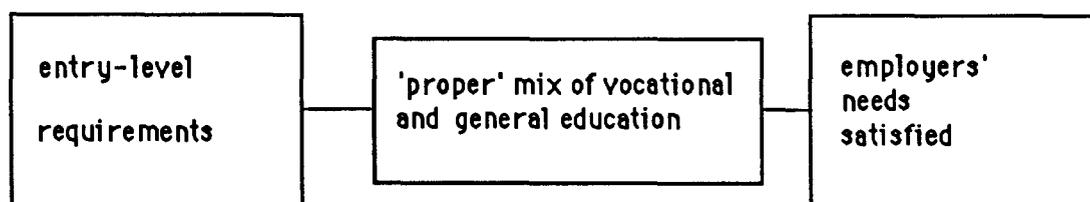
nothing that could be called 'an employer's view' (Kogan 1984) which suggests that employers really do not know what they actually get from education and are left with no alternative but to 'take what is on offer at prices they can afford' (Oxenham 1988).

Employers agree, however, that there must be some schooling for employment in the modern sector and express similar views regarding what needs to be done in the realm of secondary education. At the same time, it would be inexcusable if students were purposely and deliberately directed to activities which were aimed purely at employers' wishes which are themselves extremely varied, hence unreliable, indicators of the knowledge and skills essential to the overall development of the students (Hallak and Verluis 1978; Nairn 1985; Oxenham 1988).

One tends to find two seemingly contradictory arguments about education for the world of work. Lauglo (1983:300) puts them well:

On the one hand, there is a call for firmer guidance, that young people have often unrealistic job expectations and need to knuckle down earlier to the realities of work. On the other hand, there is the argument that a broader preparation is needed, that young people should be trained for adaptability; that vocational education should enable them to see the work they choose in a wider perspective and to change their occupation without undue chagrin if need be. School-based vocational education is seen as the answer for that.

In other words, a more successful linkage between school and work would focus on attaining a mix of general education and vocational education in secondary schools in a way that would not only permit a significant proportion of graduates to continue on to higher education, but at the same time furnish most of them with the skills necessary to compete in the labour market (Gallart 1988):



Blaug (1973:22) is not far wrong when he says, with reference to vocationalising secondary school curricula, that

to ask schools to prepare students to take up clearly defined occupations is to ask them to do what is literally impossible. The most schools can do is to provide a broad technical foundation for on-the-job acquisition of specific skills.

The search, then, is for a 'diluted form of vocational education which would enhance employability and serve as a complement to, rather than attempt to substitute for, on-the-job and in-firm training' (Dougherty 1989:84). As employers see it, overproduction of the wrong type of school leaver is leading to the wrong type of worker but striking the right balance between academic excellence and vocational competence in order to have the so-called 'right' type of worker is going to prove extremely hard, and justifiably so where there is little collaboration between the school on the one hand, and employing institutions on the other (Torbe 1981; Cumming 1988). According to a recent survey on employers throughout Britain (MORI 1990:3),

although employers are generally satisfied with the basic literacy and numeracy of young people, and their educational qualifications, they feel that the education system is failing to prepare students for work adequately and strongly agree that educationalists and employers should be working together more closely to prepare young people for employment.

And Grubb (1985:548), sees that partnership between employers and educationalists working only if both parties

understand the causes and consequences of vocationalism [and are thereby able to] distinguish between those reforms that are possible through the schools and those that require reaching outside the schools to the larger institutions of a country.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter has argued the need to seek correspondence between school and work, outlined the various forms of vocationally-oriented secondary education (VOSE) and constraints on implementation of VOSE, and compared the strengths and weaknesses of the 'vocational school fallacy' debate.

The chapter then considered the place of business subjects within the overall vocational education framework, showing the paradox of its link with the 'academic' but its absence in serious discussions on developments in education. It, however, argued that with evidence showing how changes in the economy, employment opportunities and earnings

can be advantageous to business students, the prospects of 'skills gained under VOSE may be comparable to those from vocational institutes in the sense that they do satisfy differing *entry-level* requirements'.

Next, the chapter considered the ingredients of business/vocational staff training and the recruitment of competent business teachers. It drew attention to the following characteristics which have distinct resonances in the business teaching profession: the continuous evaluation of performance and the consequent adaptation of teachers to new materials and changing demands of industry; the acquisition of commercial (employment) experience and, in particular, the importance of business job task surveys for their role in providing new and relevant information.

The chapter also presented an insight into assessments of business skills and centred the discussion around four elements which make up technical and vocational examinations, namely (a) identification of the needs of employment; (b) the examination syllabus; (c) how attainment is measured; and (d) the award of the qualification.

The focus of the chapter then moved to the problem of matching the technological needs of business with their provision in business secondary schools. It emphasised that while business equipment and materials are generally less costly than other vocational subjects, they still suffer from inadequate resources and the recurrent cost-burden of maintaining equipment. It, therefore, acknowledges the importance of focussing more firmly on the typical tasks carried out in the local environment of the modern office, whilst bearing in mind the need to 'move with the times' and adapt to new technologies.

Finally, the chapter discussed the assumption put forward by the study that employers' knowledge of the school leaver is a key factor not only in determining whether he is recruited but also whether he satisfies his own particular (personal) requirements. To understand what may be involved in the recruitment process, as it relates specifically to business school leavers, it is suggested that one needs to consider firstly, why and what has caused this distance between school and work; secondly, the place of employment-based training as compared with school-based training; and thirdly, why employers hold the opinions they do. The general impression given is that employers require both general education and basic, but essential, skills at the entry-level point of recruitment. While, in theory, this requirement sounds plausible, there are many 'forces' which come into play that render such a proposition almost unworkable.

In Part Three, findings will be presented from fieldwork data in respect of teachers, students, employees and employers in terms of the nature of input into business secondary schools; preparation of for office work; attitudes to work and reasons, open or hidden, for criteria used in the selection and recruitment of business secondary school leavers, respectively. Hopefully, this will make for a more comprehensive analysis, and where there are clear relationships between strengths and weaknesses of training and practice as has been discussed, we can postulate on the way that employers and the system of vocationally-oriented education at the secondary level can better serve each other's needs.

PART THREE

**EMPIRICAL FIELDWORK: VIEWS OF
BUSINESS SECONDARY EDUCATION
AND OFFICE WORK**

Chapter 5 Fieldwork Sample and Methods of Analysis

5.0 Introduction

Since the study is dealing with business secondary education and the manner in which students with that background were recruited by firms, the focus of the survey carried out was on business teachers and educationists, business students, employees in office jobs and employers who recruited people with a business background. A period of six months - July to December in 1988 - was spent in Ghana, collecting data from the seven groups of respondents and this chapter describes the composition of the sample survey and methods used in obtaining the data to serve as a background to the subsequent chapters.

5.1 The sample survey and sampling procedures

The sample survey included 457 respondents. This was made up of the following groups:

- (a) 18 BSS, Business and Secondary School heads and teachers.
- (b) 334 BSS, Business and Secondary School first and final year students.
- (c) 37 modern formal sector firm employees.
- (d) 61 modern formal sector firm employers.
- (e) 7 Ministry of Education officials, West African Examination Council representatives and university college teacher trainers.

For consideration of the particular way in which this survey was structured it may be of use to refer to Figure 5.1. below. The centre column represents work carried out within the schools described in sections 5.1.1 and 2 below. Items to the left and right are concerned with information drawn from other sources. Boxes bounded by hard lines show the mainstream of the work, with soft lines denoting 'support information'.

This 'support' information was thought to be essential to confirm findings of the main part of the study, and to act as a back up for the credibility of any remarks made resulting from an analysis of the information.

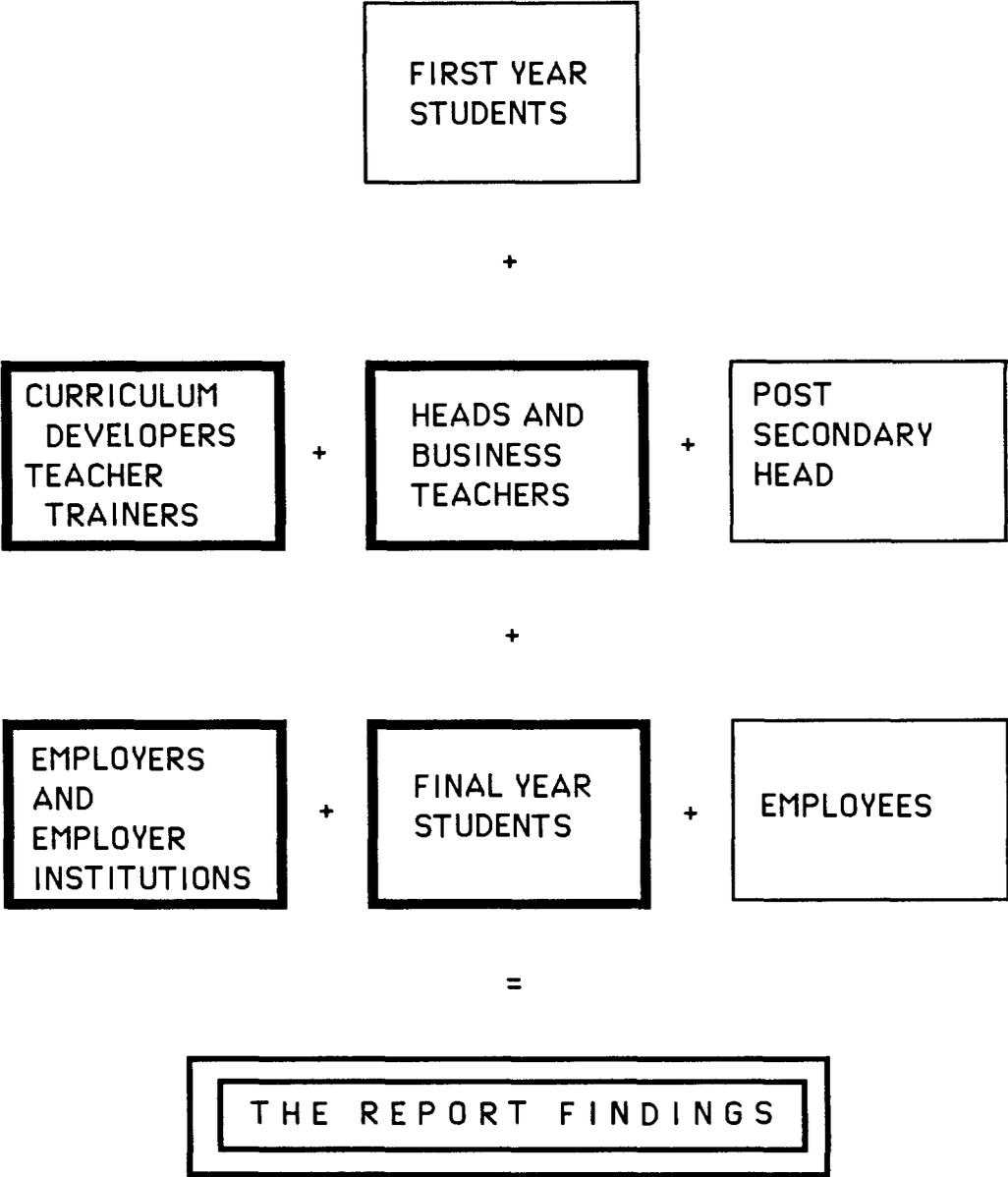


Figure 5.1 The Survey Structure

5.1.1 Sampling the schools

With a small-scale survey such as this one, it is not possible to generalise beyond the sample in question, hence the use of non-probability samples is inevitable. However, this has its advantages because as Cohen and Manion (1985: 99) put it,

despite the disadvantages that arise from their non-representativeness, [non-probability samples] are far less complicated to set up, they are considerably less expensive, and can prove perfectly adequate where the researcher does not intend to generalise beyond the sample in question.

From this standpoint then, it was decided that two BSSs, two Business and two Secondary schools would be selected according to the principle of purposive sampling where the schools are chosen on the basis of their special position in the context of the problem being investigated. Given the distances and other problems involved in social research and as highlighted by Cohen and Manion (1985) above, it was thought best to attempt to reach more of the (four) schools in the Greater Accra Region, with one school each in the Central and Eastern Regions of Ghana, respectively. The hope was that, whatever the difficulties, a reasonable number of heads, business teachers and students (see subsections 5.1.2 and 3 below) would in fact be reached to give their views on certain aspects of business education curriculum practice.

The sample BSSs, Business and Secondary schools represent different categories of business education as carried out in schools:

- 'BSS' means both private business schools that the government took over to become business secondary schools and secondary schools, already in existence, which have a strong business/commercial bias.
- 'Business' means schools taking *only business* subjects.
- 'Secondary' means schools taking *mainly academic subjects* with one or two business options, namely typewriting and principles of accounts.

One Government Secretarial School (GSS) was included in the survey since it is specially sponsored by the government to prepare secretaries for the civil service and the public sector, an aspect of training very pertinent to this study. All the schools were considered in the researcher's judgment to be typical of Ghanaian schools that take business subjects in the ways described.

5.1.2 Sampling participants in the business curriculum

Of the teacher population, those considered in this study were eleven teachers in business subjects. Again, following the same sampling procedure as that for the schools, the selection of heads and business teachers spring naturally from the fact that they were part and parcel of the same sample schools and it therefore followed that their views and opinions must be pertinent to this study. Given that fact then, (five) heads and (seven) business teachers were drawn from the sample schools in the Greater Accra Region and (two) heads and (four) business teachers from the sample schools in the Central and Eastern Region of Ghana. Only one headteacher was female, the rest of the heads and all the business teachers were male. There was no teacher from the Government Secretarial School since the focus was mainly on *secondary* level business teachers and the Government Secretarial School is post-secondary. (Table 6.1 in Chapter 6 shows the composition of the sample of business teachers and headteachers by type of school.).

The Ministry of Education and its departments, notably those of Business Education and Curriculum Research and Development, were also significant in this research for they are responsible for formally developing and designing the business syllabus. The business teacher trainers are responsible for teaching the practice of business teaching to all students of the Business Education Departments in the Universities and the Technical Teacher Training Colleges. The seven education officials represented here therefore constitute an important population group for this investigation.

5.1.3 Sampling business education students

The effectiveness of business education at the secondary level was explored for different groups of 177 first and 157 final year students in each of the six types of school attended. Table 7.1 in Chapter 7 presents the distribution of the sample by year and by the type of school attended. It has to be recognised that whilst this survey structure was thought to give as full a picture as possible, the students involved come from two different cohorts. The time scale of this research has meant that all the information gathering events have had to take place within twelve months. For ease of investigation, therefore, a decision was made to concentrate on only the first and final year (1988) Business subjects students. The reasons for selecting students at the end of their compulsory schooling are obvious given the focus of this study but the decision to include first year students was based on the premise that students in their first year may well be the product of more enlightened, or indeed restricted, attitudes towards business studies and other subjects, than were their counterparts four years ahead of them in the system.

5.1.4 Sampling office employees

The third group of data relate to employees in offices, working as typists and accounts clerks. (Table 8.1 in Chapter 8 shows the distribution of the employee sample by the type of school previously attended and by gender).

The selection of the employee sample was based on the principle of convenience (or accidental) sampling where their selection was made within the same employer firms already selected because it made common-sense to compare views and opinions of employees working with the sample employers (see next section on the employer sample). It was decided to restrict the number of employees to fifty, two in each firm so that selection was made for only the first twenty-five sample firms. The personnel managers or those of equivalent status were asked to nominate two employees, namely one typist and one accounts clerk (male and female, where relevant) and the selection should be made irrespective of the employees' educational background.

5.1.5 Sampling employers of typists and accounts clerks

The employers were drawn from the Greater Accra region of Ghana; use was made of a list of Ghanaian employers provided by the Ghana Employers' Association (GEA). The list provided information on approximately 300 employers and it was decided that given the short time available to the researcher, 110 employers from the list would be a suitable number. The list was divided into 12 groups of industries, for example, banking, manufacturing, publishing and so on and then following the principle of systematic sampling, it was decided to select the first ten from each group, the first firm from each group being selected at random. In some cases there were not as many as ten employers in a group in which case, purposive sampling was employed in order to include in the sample a suitable number of firms which varied sufficiently in terms of scale (large/small) and sector (state/parastatal/private).

To that end, more than ten firms were selected for some groups to reflect, in the researcher's view, a balanced distribution (in terms of scale and sector) of business firms which are known to recruit secondary school leavers with a business background or are likely to do so. The resultant sample gives firms which, consistent with current trends in Ghana, were mainly involved in some form of manufacturing although several were in the service sector and ranged in size of personnel from just a few employees to several with over two thousand. (Tables 9.1a and b in Chapter 9 show the different types of firms surveyed and categorises the respondents in terms of the type of scale and sector of firms).

5.2 The research design and it's rationale

As mentioned earlier, a number of research tools have been used to inquire into the business secondary education curriculum and the recruitment practices of employers in taking on leavers with that background. These tools are

- (a) Questionnaires;
- (b) Interviews;
- (c) Documentary analysis; and
- (d) Observations.

The central questions in the investigation are whether the graduates from BSSs, business schools or general secondary schools teaching business subjects, are being recruited by employers. A multitude of variables such as the interpretation of business education for work by teacher trainers, the educational qualifications and professional orientation of both heads and teachers, availability or otherwise of necessary equipment and materials, interest and active involvement on the part of the employer, determine to what extent business education can prepare students for work. In addition to these variables, vocational outcomes can be influenced by the type of teaching students receive as well as the teacher's interpretation of business education in the context of work. It was felt that these research tools would be appropriate for the needs and characteristics of this study.

5.2.1 Questionnaires

Although the number of items in each questionnaire instrument differs, they were all designed to tap the same dimensions of the research problem and so focused on respondents' interpretation of business secondary education and its key elements, as well as their views on what constrains or facilitates its implementation.

Both open-ended and closed questions were included in the questionnaire with the former included to provide wide opportunity for free expression of independent views. Table 5.1 below presents the categories as indicators which match the scheme of relationships with the instrument design:

Table 5.1
Matching the scheme of relationships (subject/source)
with the indicators and instrument design

Subject/ Source	I N D I C A T O R S					
	R	S	T	U	V	W
Employers	Y, X	Y, E	Y, E, Z	Y, E	Y, X	Y, X
Heads/Teachers	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X
Curriculum Planners, Inspectors, Officers & Teacher Trainers	Y, X	Y, X		Y, X	Y, X	Y, X
Business Secondary Education Students	X, Y			X, Y	X, Y	X, Y
Employees	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X	Y, X
Classrooms				Z		
Offices				Z		
History of Business Education	E			E		E
School enrolment/ graduation	E					E
Student records	E			E		E
Labour force surveys	E		E	E		E

MODES

Y = Interviews

X = Questionnaires

E = Documents

Z = Observation

These categories are labelled R to W, and are identified in the questionnaires for the seven respondents in Appendix 5A. The questionnaire specimens also appear as Appendices 6C, 7C, 8C and 9C. Altogether, the items on the questionnaires fell into six categories, namely

- (a) Importance of schooling generally for preparing students for entry into the job market. This includes perceptions of the importance/value (or lack of such) of a BSS background. (Category R)
- (b) Beliefs on proper method of recruitment given both information that employers already have and other information they may wish to have. (Category S)
- (c) Actual recruitment behaviour (examining of labour market sectors). (Category T)
- (d) Opinions and stated policies on skills and qualities needed to do jobs of the kind that BSSs purport to prepare (different) entry level skills. (Category U)
- (e) Opinions on the role of ascriptive and relational characteristics in recruitment i.e. on the role these should play and the role they play in reality. (Category V)
- (f) Value attached to the job in terms of need for a 'very' well qualified applicant, possibly implying also that employers would rather take on 'their own'. (Category W)

In analysing the information gained from the research data, categories R - W were then re-presented as section headings, as shown in chapters six to nine, which focus on the major findings of the survey (see Appendices 6B to 9B).

Bearing in mind that it is 'extremely difficult to formulate a series of questions whose meanings are crystal-clear to every reader because a significantly different interpretation can be made of working or meanings of terms by the respondent' (Ary et al., 1985), individuals known to the researcher were used for pretesting the employer and employee questionnaire. For the teacher and student sample the researcher had prior discussions with the first and was present with the second, at the time the questionnaires were being completed. It is hoped that those discussions will have helped to achieve some degree of reliability and validity in question wording. In all cases, the questionnaires were administered and collected personally.

Follow-ups were made in the case of employers, but except for two non-respondents, limitation of time prevented the researcher from interviewing non-respondents for the purpose of obtaining their responses which is regrettable since it might have been useful to learn something of their characteristics as well.

5.2.2 Interviews

As a distinctive research technique, the interview may serve three purposes. First, it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives ... Second, it may be used to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones; or as an explanatory device to help identify variables and relationships. And third, the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. In this connection, Kerlinger [1970] suggests that it might be used to follow up unexpected results, for example, or to validate other methods, or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do.

(Cohen and Manion, 1985:292-3)

It was with these points in mind that, in addition to the questionnaire, heads, education officials and employers were interviewed. However, it should be noted that the schedule used for the interviews were formatted in the same way as the questionnaires. The only obvious difference and, in some cases, advantage was that respondents were able to comment more freely rather than be limited by the necessary restrictions imposed by a questionnaire.

The advantage with using the same format is the structured checklist quality of the questionnaire given to the interviewing process which as Bell (1987) correctly perceived, makes the technique of interviewing somewhat easier for the first-time researcher. The interview also served as a crosscheck on data from the questionnaires, having the added usefulness of the researcher being able to 'press for additional information where responses were unclear or imprecise' (Best et al., 1983; Cates, 1985).

The interview schedules were again personally developed and were very flexible in terms of method and time. The student interview lasted for three to five minutes while that of the heads ran for some 15 to 20 minutes. Most of the items were again open-ended.

Methods of interviewing consisted of questioning, discussing, exchanging, probing and responding. The employee interview lasted for ten to fifteen minutes while that of the heads and employers ran for some forty-five minutes to an hour. A complete and accurate recording of the respondents' answers were made by using a tape-recorder (discussed further in subsection 5.4.1).

5.2.3 Documentary analysis

Understanding the diverse assessments made of business secondary education could only be achieved through a thorough analysis of government policy, international publications and other related documents. Analysis of the literature on education and how it prepares for work, or does not do so, made possible the identification of the issues pertinent to work-oriented business secondary education.

Much use made of 'inadvertent sources', i.e. sources which are used by the researcher for some purpose other than that for which they were originally intended (Duffy, 1987). Primary sources other than government departments includes school handbooks and prospectuses; examination papers; personal files; bulletins; letters and newspapers, all of which were examined and critically analysed.

These documents were particularly useful in supplementing information obtained by the questionnaires and interviews and as Johnson (1984: 23) rightly asserts, 'the documentary analysis of educational files can prove to be an extremely valuable source of data'.

5.2.4 Observations

The use of observations in this study was not concerned with analysing verbal interaction, as for example in the Observational System for Instructional Analysis (OSIA), or describing the behaviour of individuals in groups as in the Interaction-Process Analysis, devised by R.F. Bates (1950), two commonly used instruments of classroom observation. The object of the observations as defined in this study was to focus, through the medium of the camera, on factors such as class size and its organisation as these relate to the social climate and teaching outcomes. Similarly, observation of employing organisations presents the ambiance in which school leavers will be going to work. This way of observing enabled the researcher to record 'on the spot in an orderly way so that after the event, analysis is quick and easy' (Bell, 1987). The photographs that came out from these observations appear in Appendices 6E and 9F.

5.3 Administering the research instruments

The issue of the appropriateness and harmony of measures was again given consideration at the point of administering the instruments and effort made to ensure that administration occurred under the best possible conditions. The researcher had the task, most of the time rewarding, of judging the best time and establishing a relaxed interpersonal relationship that

would ensure that the instruments would be well-received.

5.3.1 Fieldwork data on participants in the business curriculum

Information about school organisation in both the public and private sector as well as school policies and course content was obtained through interviews with headteachers and questionnaires for the teachers.

Teachers' questionnaires were hand-delivered to each of them and interviews were conducted with the heads. All the heads, at the time the schedules were delivered to them, were briefed on the content of the interview and asked if they had any qualms about the nature of questions that would be posed to them. There were none and the interviews were conducted with responses to the interview questions being tape-recorded. Of the twelve questionnaires distributed to two business teachers for each of the six sample schools, eleven were received back properly completed by participants on the same days as the interviews were held with the heads of the respective schools.

Questions concerning role, educational philosophy, qualifications and experience were included. Particular attention was paid to what resources the school had for business teaching, the allocation of teachers to classes and teacher involvement in decision-making. Additionally, support for this section comes from information supplied through six tape-recorded interviews and one questionnaire from seven education officials, namely three curriculum planners, two education officers and two teacher trainers about their responsibilities and philosophy of education.

In line with the principle of purposive sampling it was not necessary to subject all the members of each population group to all research instruments. For example, while all the 18 heads and teachers from six schools received interview schedules and questionnaires, only four schools and one post-secondary institution had their classes observed.

5.3.2 Fieldwork data on business education students

The findings reported in Chapter 7 were from questionnaires completed by students in the first term of the academic year. These were administered to the first and final year groups of business students in their separate years and subject groups about one month after the beginning of the first (Autumn) term of 1988. By this time, students were generally settled in and the atmosphere in the school was generally relaxed. As regards periods in the

teaching day, it was decided that the first period or a period before the lunch break, when it was almost certain that there would be few, if any students absent, were ideal for making extra demands on students and staff alike. With this background knowledge of the context, the researcher approached the heads of the respective schools and requested to be allowed to use one of the morning periods to administer student questionnaires. The requests were all granted and the questionnaires were personally administered to the students in class situations and collected at the end. This was useful where, as happened in a few cases, students were allowed to ask the researcher to explain any questions they did not understand. All of the 334 questionnaires distributed on the six separate occasions were received back properly completed.

Data gathering techniques included classroom observation because of the necessity for comparability between classes in each school. Classroom observations of students in business classes were all personally undertaken during the normal school period with the assistance of a photographer. It was not the intention of the researcher to take photos of first year secondary students since most of those schools do not offer business subjects at this early stage, hence photographs show business classes for second years and above. The procedure in the actual observation was to visit a classroom with prior notice but although efforts were made to take photographs unobtrusively, the event proved somewhat exciting to the students who, in some cases, endeavoured to pose for the camera. At least two or three pictures were taken of each group in order to make sure of a good final selection for inclusion in the study. Finally, analysis of documentary evidence relating to school prospectuses, the timetable, business courses, students' personal files and records of Middle School Leaving Certificate and the Common Entrance examinations of the first year students was undertaken in each school, as well as an analysis of the previous year's students' final examination records (GCE/WASC and final term scores).

5.3.3 Fieldwork data on office employees

Because of the interest in identifying *which* factors make some schools or classes more effective than others in preparing leavers for work, a wide variety of information about the (fifty) employees' previous school, their experience and what, now they are working, they felt they had gained, or not gained, from the school, was obtained through interviews and questionnaires. Questionnaires were given to the employer to be distributed by him/her to 33 employees but collected by the researcher as soon as they were completed which varied from between 48 hours to one week later. Interviews were held with 17 employees during working hours by the researcher.

Of the total of 33 questionnaires distributed on separate occasions and over a period of one month, 20 questionnaires were received back properly completed. This shows a total percentage return of 60.6. At the same time, although the resulting focus is only on a total of 37 employees, it at least provides firm-specific influences on job attitudes.

5.3.4 Fieldwork data on employers of typists and accounts clerks

The main emphasis of the fieldwork is the relationship between the business education school leavers and their achievements and the attitudes and requirements of the employers. The stance of the latter is covered by obtaining information from concerns known to have employed or to need students with such a background, as mentioned earlier. Basic skills are important, but other areas - including aspects of non-cognitive development such as attitudes, behaviour and background - are also a focus of attention. A study such as this must consider these two measures of outcomes as they affect employers' decisions for recruitment, thereby giving a balanced and just view of school effects.

Eighty-six questionnaires were distributed to employers of which 37 were returned (43 percent). If the tape-recorded interviews are included, this means a total response rate of 55 percent was achieved. However, although the figures cannot be seen as generalising to the whole population, it is worth mentioning that (out of the total of 61 respondents) a few of the 37 worthwhile returns and 24 structured interviews gave information relating to employers' own experience in previous firms where they had worked before. In the study, they explored employers' recruitment behaviour, investigating how they related to the wide variety of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes of business education. The person contacted was either a personnel/training manager, a company director, the managing director or another relevant member of the company concerned. Where possible, detailed information of recruitment policies and related documents were collected. Thus, although the percentage rate was not particularly high, the responses themselves covered a fair range and variety of needs.

In addition, the workplaces were observed using a camera in order to compare how they functioned, according to the scale and sector of the firms sampled. The same procedure that applied in classroom observations was followed in the observation of firms and its employees. The focus of the observation was on the office equipment in use and the conditions of the workplace.

5.4 Report on field experience with the research instruments

This section underlines some of the results achieved after using the various research instruments, giving both a brief account of the problems encountered as well as an insight into how or, indeed, whether these could have been avoided.

5.4.1 The Questionnaires/Interviews and Observations

The questionnaires clearly did not elicit as high a completion rate as the interview. The problem resulting from that was not so much that limiting of the generalisability of the results of a such a questionnaire study, since that is already a factor because of the sample size, but the tendency to lay aside questionnaires or simply forget to complete and return them is frustrating to any researcher.

There was a high level of agreement between questionnaire and interview responses from those members of the study populations who knew beforehand that they were to be interviewed (that is, they had been presented with the schedule, and had time to study it and prepare for the interview). This contrasted with responses from those who were interviewed on the spot, either because it suited them or was as a result of a follow-up made by the researcher. As Moser and Kalton (quoted by Bell 1987:67) point out, 'non-response is a problem because of the likelihood -repeatedly confirmed in practice - that people who do not return questionnaires differ from those who do'. The outcome of such interviews was surprisingly positive which underscores the need for some flexibility in approach to the interview situation and the unpredictability of the interviewee.

In respect to the tape-recording of the interviews, many of the advantages already perceived by other researchers such as freedom from excessive note-taking, interviewer participation in the dialogue, ability to record accurate statements and tease out further responses were borne out in this study too. However, again as has already been pointed by other researchers, not all would feel at ease. In (only) two cases, the respondents felt uncomfortable about having their answers taped. Happily, many did not appear to feel inhibited or become excessively cautious about what they had to say, as is so often the case (Ary, et al., 1985), although the researcher had to be alert for what may be deliberate attempts to make misleading statements whenever it suited the respondent to do so. The one aspect of tape-recording that does militate against its use, especially if time is limited, is the transcription of the tape-recordings when approximately 7-8 hours was spent for each 45 minutes to one hour recorded.

Turning to the use of the camera in observations, experience of this research shows that at times the advantages of using it can be severely reduced as the camera can be very distracting. The result was that a great deal of spontaneity was lost when the respondents attempted to pose for the camera. Many of the business students, in particular, became instantly self-conscious and excited at the same time upon seeing the camera so that some pictures had to be retaken after they had settled down and become used to it. The implication here is that as long as cameras are used with the minimum of distraction, they can be useful as a research tool.

5.4.2 The Documents

Virtually all the official documents for this research were readily accessible through the libraries and various resource centres in and outside London. However, problems of access to some key documents while in Ghana generally went beyond the limitations imposed by official censorship. It was found that although central and issuing agencies for key documents disseminate them through appropriate channels such as the local ministries, officials at these centres were not always willing to put them at the disposal of the researcher. In this situation, status and connection become important to the researcher and when some documents were made available, data could still be of doubtful validity. Many non-official documents such as personal records of staff and students, for example, or information on details relating to finance and budgetary requirements needed to be used with great caution. Quite a number were found to contain contradictory information and were therefore of doubtful validity. The search for objective data had therefore to rely very much on the use of varied instruments for purposes of cross-checking information.

5.5 Data Analysis Procedures

The purpose of this small-scale survey research was to generate information that can be used to improve the effort at implementing the business education curriculum at the same time as meeting the needs of the employer. In order to serve this purpose, research data have to be described and analysed, care being taken not to confuse *responses* with *facts* (Bell 1987; Cates 1985).

To this end, in analysing information gained from investigations of a limited nature, such as this one, it was thought best to use descriptive statistical methods that provide 'pictures' of the group under investigation. These are mainly in two forms. Firstly, the data tables summarise the distribution and variation of responses to questions of ranges of classified cases following the patterns described in a given proposition. And secondly, different

kinds of charts and figures are used to present information diagrammatically.

For each of the respondents, the responses were read and the categories which emerged were used as a basis for comparing and analysing subsequent responses. The categories were formulated to be exhaustive. At the same time it was essential to bear in mind that 'with small groups it is important not to carry these comparisons [and, indeed, analyses] too far' (Goulding, 1987: 109).

5.6 Conclusions

This short chapter has briefly described the general make-up and characteristics of the seven groups of respondents in the sample. As concerns the employer sample in particular, it is clearly a huge task to identify the 'needs' of employers in terms of the skills which they require of school leavers. But this chapter has shown how the survey was conducted to identify the 'needs' of employers in terms of the skills which they require of school leavers and it can be expected that being a small-scale study, findings will be more illuminative rather than generalisable.

The questionnaires used in this study aim to provide honest information. Allowing for the problems associated with non-responses, the study hopes to have attained an acceptable degree of validity, reliability and relevance based on the constant cross-checking of responses, observations and examination of documents. Significantly, all the respondents showed an active interest in this study, and many expressed concern that the results would be made use of and not left to gather dust. Thus, not only is the study intended to be free of bias but to provide the platform for policy consideration and further study.

Finally, it is hoped that the background information given here may help in understanding the subsequent chapters, beginning with that on business teachers, headteachers and educationists.

Chapter 6 Business Curriculum in Practice

6.0 Introduction

The chapter focuses on business teachers and headteachers from two business secondary schools, two ordinary (academic) secondary schools, two business schools and one 'special' post-secondary business school (see table 6.1) used for purposes of comparison. It includes comments and opinions from selected Ghanaian educationists insofar as they explain and expand on comments made by teachers and heads of schools.

The sample consists of 11 business teachers and 7 headteachers who completed questionnaires (see Appendix 6C).

Table 6.1 presents the distribution of the business teacher and headteacher sample by school:

Table 6.1
Distribution of business teacher and headteacher sample by type of school

Number of business teachers and heads		
Type of School	Business Teachers	Headteachers
	n	n
BSS, Public	1	1
BSS, Private	2	1
Business, Public	2	1
Business, Private	2	1
Secondary, Public	2	1
Secondary, Private	2	1
Government Secretarial*	-	1
Total	11	7

* The Government Secretarial school (GSS) is specially sponsored by the government to prepare secretaries for the civil service and the public sector.

The results of this study will be looked at in the following ways:

- 6.1 the place of business education as seen by business teachers and headteachers and the relation between this and other variables;
- 6.2 the role(s) played by business teachers at the secondary level and the relation between this and expectations for improvements in technical teacher training programmes; and
- 6.3 the 'status' implications of business education for headteachers in terms of the

support they receive in enhancing business subjects at the secondary level.

The three following sections are subdivided according to questionnaires completed by the respondents. Each section analyses the responses by sets of questions which focus on the major findings of the survey.

6.1 Business Secondary Education: in context

In this subsection both teachers and headteachers are asked to comment on various aspects of their school. The importance of examination results for employers is questioned along with an analysis of the reasons why business subjects taught at the secondary level may be advantageous to students and to employers.

6.1.1 *Question 1.1*

How do business teachers and headteachers see the function of their school in terms of their objectives, curriculum, performance and the problems the school faces?

The sample of teachers and headteachers gave similar views but contradicted themselves when asked to focus on the objectives and performance of the schools as they saw them.

Nine teachers responded with three out of the seven headteachers mentioning the objective as that of 'meeting the needs of students and society'. The Government Secretarial school head is, understandably, especially specific, because he sees the school as geared deliberately for the job market:

The objectives are to cater for the secretarial needs of the civil and public services but it is our policy to extend this to the private sector in the very near future. This is because a great majority of the tax payers come from the private sector so they must benefit from whatever we do. Many private sector employers have requested help but since we have not started the exercise it is difficult to help.

(Government Secretarial headteacher).

With regard to their views on the business curriculum, seven of the eleven teachers surveyed only listed subjects they taught, without offering any views on them. The other four placed strong emphasis on business subjects that are directly relevant to work in the offices. The headteacher of the private BSS obviously sees his school as 'functional'. The private business school headteacher further explains the school's low quality intake in some detail:

The curriculum for each department has been so planned as to suit the training that we wish to give to the student. We sometimes find it difficult though to complete the course since things do not go very well because of the *standards* of the feeding schools. The standards are too low and mixed, especially in the middle school so you have to sort things carefully which usually brings about some impediments which do not augur well for our progress.

(Business private headteacher).

The respondents were asked to rate their schools' performance so far. Most of the school heads and teachers sampled rate the performance of their school as very high. This was expected with respect to the Government Secretarial School, in particular, where the head regards the school as the only one able to engage post secondary school leavers and train them in one year to acquire office skills. There are some differences between teachers and headteachers of the BSSs with their ratings ranging from 'very high' to 'performing well'. The business school responses are more consistent, however. The heads from both the public and private sectors agree that despite the few resources on hand, their schools perform better in all spheres of competition, both in academic and extra-curricular activities. The private business school also highlights the fact that holiday and Saturday classes are used to raise the standards of their final year students.

In terms of the problems perceived many, as expected, pinpoint the few, poor quality physical and human resources they have, some adding further:

Being a private school, we cannot always depend on the government to second teachers to us, therefore we have a problem of getting qualified teachers. In addition, with the economic situation at the moment, tutors are trying to take up jobs in other schools which leads to inefficiency in the long run as they become so tired and cannot give of their best.

(Business private head).

The public business school teacher also alludes to the timetable in which not enough periods are allocated to typewriting and shorthand which make it difficult for students to pass exams.

6.1.2 Question 1.2

How far do business teachers and headteachers feel that great importance is attached to examination results by employers and is this sentiment reflected in the resources the school has or in their method of teaching business subjects?

Before finding out what teachers and headteachers think about employers' opinions on examination results, an idea of their own views about the external examinations would be useful.

Many are not happy with results achieved in these examinations primarily because performance is hampered by lack of typewriters, they should be reviewed often to be more effective and examinations such as those conducted by the Government Secretarial School are limited to typing, and GCEs are too academic, whilst the National Vocational Training examinations come out on top. The secondary heads and teachers, in particular, give the overall impression that the examinations are of a very high standard, they are 'doing the job' and views seem to be that these examinations are good because they are tough and international.

These views are shared, naturally, by the West African Examinations Council, though only in terms of its own examinations, and by one Ministry of Education official:

The West African Examinations Council has been well established. They have the personnel, the facilities, the experience of organising and administering examinations. There is a lot of duplication going in the other examining bodies. I feel we should leave the certification and the examination to the WAEC.

(Assistant Director, Business
Education, Ministry of Education).

The private business headteacher, however, makes more objective and wide ranging comments on them:

Government secretarial examinations test only typing which is not enough for training of a secretary. They must teach other business subjects like office practice or business methods; also a little knowledge of commerce, maybe even economics. But the National Vocational Training Institute exams are doing something worthy of note because they examine all these subjects including English Language. The GCE/WASC exams are too academic and tend not to emphasise practice, going beyond the syllabus, and experiencing many problems of leakages.

(Business private headteacher).

Turning now to the issue of respondents' ratings of the importance they feel employers attach to examination results in recruitment procedures, heads and teachers agree, with the exception of one private business school teacher, that they are at least important to employers. Of the eighteen respondents, thirteen believed it to be considerable with first class importance being placed on the results because employers base their salaries on these. It is basic to entry requirements and once you pass it, it is assumed that you have thorough knowledge of it so greater emphasis is given to it. It is only after you are recruited that employers are able to see your practical skills. The private business head adds other points:

Employers demand results because that is the only indication of efficiency. They always want to see certificates to show that the person has actually undertaken the course and has qualified. They emphasise it very much and this is also helping the schools because the students know that without good results they will not be employed.

(Business private head).

Three of the education officials surveyed, namely those from the West African Examinations Council and the Business Education Unit, reiterated some of the above comments:

Once employers have confirmation of exam results from this institution, they feel happier. We have a good reputation and we try to keep it. Most Business/commercial schools have their own Diploma but nobody takes much notice. GSS and NVTI certificates are well respected and especially ours.

(Head, Testing Department; and
Assistant Registrar Vocational
Education WAEC).

However, both public business and secondary school teachers as well as the public BSS and private secondary school heads have some reservations since as they see it many employers believe in competence rather than examination results. Examination results per se do not prove your ability since ability to do the job depends on skills. And, although according to one curriculum developer and research officer, employers rather want assurance that students have pursued a course of study leading to an examination, the teachers sampled also believe that employers are more particular about the practical aspects of what the employee can offer which can be better determined through interviews and selection tests. In addition, for some employers contacts play a big part in determining whether the candidate will be recruited or not so that, as the private business school teacher stresses, results are not important to employers at all because they only employ people that

they know.

Appendix 6A provides a summary of an analysis of GCE grades and final year class test scores from results of final year examinations. The summary aims at assessing and comparing the schools surveyed in terms of the quality of the skills attained by school leavers and their preparedness for the job market.

The second part of the question concerns the matter of resources and teaching methods. This was dealt with, in the survey questionnaire, in terms of (a) general resources; (b) adequacy of classrooms; (c) number and quality of typewriters; (d) existence and use of teachers' guides; and (e) views on textbooks used.

- (a) For all respondents 'general resources' (this refers to equipment in place) include typewriters and textbooks. Duplicating machines and overhead projectors are also mentioned by the private BSS and private business school headteachers, though nothing was said about them.
- (b) Heads and teachers generally agree that the norm is one large typing room with no special room for accounting classes. The only exception is the private business school which boasts of two large typing rooms. (Photograph 6E.1, Appendix 6E gives an example of one of these rooms).
- (c) All but one of the headteachers feel they had enough typewriters. Some teachers, also, feel no more is needed and the public schools in particular appear to be a little better off:

Luckily the government has given us about 35 new typewriters (manual). We took delivery about a month ago. Because of that it has created a lot of interest among the students. Before, most of the typewriters were not working well.

(BSS public head).

This is evidenced by the photograph in Appendix 6E (6E.2) which shows a second year typewriting class in a public BSS using new Olivetti and Olympia manual typewriters.

In fact, the Ministry of Education had been able to get some typewriters for some of their institutions and had made estimates for about 6000 manual typewriters that were sent to the secondary schools. They further had about 300 donated by West Germany of which two were electronic but as was expected all the Polytechnics could boast of brand new typewriters while the government does not provide anything for the private schools. (This

is also evidenced in the photograph in Appendix 6E (6E.3) where second year students in a private BSS typewriting class are using old Olivetti manual typewriters). The 'reason' that Polytechnics are seemingly so well favoured is mainly because:

Computers enhance efficiency of work in the offices but the manpower to man these things is a problem. We need a higher calibre of personnel to be able to man this equipment and certainly, many of the business/commercial schools cannot handle this type of equipment. The best place is the Polytechnics.

(Head, Testing Dept; and Assistant Registrar Vocational Education, WAEC).

- (d) Just over half the business teachers and four out of the seven headteachers admit they have no teachers' guides. Where they do exist, in the private secondary, the public business and the Government Secretarial schools, they are hardly consulted or only and as often as they feel is needed. This is principally because they are outdated and a little behind the times.

There aren't any. We are in trouble, that is why we need to form an association of business/commercial teachers. There is nothing like that. After the seminar three years ago (Pitman 2000), we tried but they need someone chasing them to do it. I do not have the transport to do this.

(Assistant Director, Business education, Ministry of Education).

For the RSA syllabus, yes. But the GCE syllabuses do not provide teachers' guides. Also it is thought that if WAEC were to issue materials like that we would be competing with publishers. People will naturally come for our materials, because, after all, they want to pass their examinations.

(Head, Testing Dept, WAEC).

6.1.3 Question 1.3

Do business teachers and headteachers see any advantage in teaching business subjects at the secondary level and how successful are they in helping students find jobs?

In the first part of this question, the teaching of business subjects *at the secondary level* is considered. In contrast with secondary schools, the head of the Government Secretarial school, as a *post*-secondary institution, sees the acquisition of specific skills by students from the Government Secretarial school as of immediate importance. The photograph of a group of final year students in such a school shows them in a shorthand class. They already look like secretaries, evidently much more mature than the secondary school

counterparts (Appendix 6E, photograph 6E.4). Jobs are always available for this school which trains students according to the number of vacancies existing at the moment. Their type of training helps students to gain employment immediately after they leave.

But staff at business schools also shared similar sentiments adding further that secondary schools do not give as thorough a training as they do. Business subjects are not taught properly resulting in school leavers walking the streets doing nothing. In addition secondary school students look down on business subjects anyway and so pay less attention. However, not all business school teachers are as scathing about business subjects at the secondary level because firstly, such subjects give them the fundamental skills in typing and accounting which they can perfect after leaving school; secondly, the secondary school leaver will not only have been exposed to other areas apart from business subjects, but these subjects help them in finding jobs or serve as a stepping stone for higher positions later.

The secondary schools themselves offered a mixed bag of responses. Some believe they are in a position to cater to employers' needs because they produce better stenographers and bookkeepers in terms of their overall performance than the business schools. The private BSS head, on the other hand, offers reasons for teaching business subjects at this level which are not directly in the interest of the employer but plead on the side of his humane qualities:

Not all students can undertake further studies so there is a need to give them skills with which they could be employed in at this level. Only a few of them are able to continue up to Polytechnic and advanced courses but those who cannot, continue to seek employment in typing so it is necessary to give them such skills at this level.

(BSS private head).

One secondary school business head, however, believes that training students for employment immediately after school is a lost cause given that most school leavers stand little chance of finding jobs when they want them.

Not surprisingly, then, both business school teachers and one headteacher advocate specialised schools, a category of schools to which they believe they belong; at least more so than BSSs and secondary schools:

Specialised schools are better. Looking at our economy at the moment there is equipment that we need for the effective teaching of business subjects and the government cannot provide this in all schools if business subjects are taught there so if the subjects were concentrated in a few schools, the government would be better able to provide the equipment.
(Business public headteacher).

The head of department of the Advanced Technical Teacher Training College agrees with this and gives substantial reasons why (emphases added):

The Polytechnics and the few (government assisted) secondary schools are best. This is because they have *better facilities*; staff have the *right business orientation*; *ample contact hours* allotted; Polytechnic headteachers promote business studies and do not just pay lip-service. Students are *more mature* and take their preparation for the world of work more seriously.

He adds further:

Employers that think it is better to train on the job may be justified. The schools lack a model office which would have assisted profoundly in *bridging the gap between theory and practice*. Equipment for training is either not available or is obsolescent.

(Head of department, Teacher Trainer, Kumasi ATTC; emphases added).

Also, the idea of on the job training *along with* specialised business education is mooted by the private secondary school headteacher. The purely business schools are better than the business secondary schools because they concentrate on selected business subjects. And if employers would be less interested in the profit motive and adopt a system of on the job training it would be of much help to students. However, comments from the business teacher trainer and the curriculum and research officer, respectively, convey the notion that while specialist and further training will probably be necessary *later*, there is need for some basic, employable business and general skills first:

General knowledge is vital. But if the person is to be a copy typist only then he or she can be trained on the job. It is different with accounting where the person must know commerce, mathematics, bookkeeping and so on. Therefore, formal education is necessary.

(Curriculum Developer and Research Officer, Ministry of Education).

You need some basic skills to enter business and then you can develop and progress from there. It is also cheap to teach accounting in schools because there is no equipment needed. On the secretarial side, no one can go to the job to start learning. Business education must be pre-employment training. At the moment we have to deal with problems of lack of facilities and teachers.

(Teacher Trainer, Business Education, University of Cape Coast).

Indeed, even the Government Secretarial school headteacher, despite being a 'specialised', post-secondary school, also advocates the inclusion of business subjects in secondary schools. And the problems perceived by the secondary school and BSS teachers notwithstanding, they still believe that business subjects should be taught in *all* secondary schools mainly because, as was mentioned earlier, not all of the students can go to university and so they can branch into other things where business subjects are useful. The problem is worsened when the subjects are not studied in sufficient detail as to be beneficial with the consequent plea from the private BSS headteacher that 'if the business subjects are not done well, then they should not be done at all'.

This last comment touches on some of the earlier findings and issues related in the literature (Wright 1988; Schramm 1980; Lauglo and Lillis 1988).

Helping to find jobs for students is not the norm for any of the schools surveyed except for the Government Secretarial school and the private business school. The private business headteacher gives detailed comments on how such arrangements are made:

We sometimes contact some employers and we also give out questionnaires to students to complete. If after 5 months they have no job, we begin to make contacts for them, for e.g. GNTC, Kingsway, the Ministries and state corporations. Private sector employers are sometimes difficult because they often are a little selective and try to employ those related to them. But large private firms like VALCO do contact us whilst we [encounter] many problems with private Ghanaian firms, for example we ask if they want a secretary and they say no yet they have vacancies but, sometimes, if a student from this school happens to be related to such an employer, then that student is taken on; this is especially the case for pharmaceutical firms and those who have small, retail shops.

(Business private headteacher).

His last point is also felt to be true by the public business headteacher. He again reaffirms that fact that before any leaver can be recruited in a firm, he or she would probably need to

know someone who works there - contacts are important.

The respondents were further asked if there had been any success in their arrangements for helping students to find jobs. The private business headteacher responded to this, ascribing the school's lack of success in recent times to Ghana's economic situation. He rightly perceives the government's laying off of many workers as a major problem, reducing employment prospects for all new entrants to the labour market.

6.1.4 *Question 1.4*

Do business teachers and headteachers believe employers to be more in favour of students with a business background and, at the same time, how far is it true to say that employers do look at other criteria than students' educational background?

Before moving to the main substance of the above question, findings showed differences of opinion among teachers and education officials as to what extent employers are fully aware of what happens in business education. Arguments put forward by the private BSS head suggest, on the one hand, that they are very much aware because most of the jobs that are done in offices are all skills acquired from business education courses, namely accounting, typewriting and office practice. And, according to the assistant director for Business Education on the other hand, sometimes when drawing up the syllabus representatives from private business (commercial) schools, employers' associations and so on are invited.

However, the business private headteacher has doubts about the extent to which employers are really involved:

Very little, except those employers who have passed through a business school. They show some interest and know what is going on and from the way some of them comment on the suitability of our students, I see that they have some knowledge. Some even give advice but the majority of employers know nothing about the skills; they just sit down there and if they need someone they look around. They do not know our needs nor give us any advice.

(Business private headteacher).

From the teachers' and heads' opinions on whether employers prefer students with a business background, it is their general belief that employers show preference for students with a business education background. It is possible however, given the above comments, that employers simply accept that a business course has been undertaken, without being fully aware of *how it is taught*, or of the *problems* schools face in teaching these subjects,

especially in terms of both staff needs and equipment. At the same time, from the reasons given for opinions held by teachers and headteachers on employers' preferences, it is true that performance on the job appears to be a determinant of what and, to some extent, how they learnt their subject at school. The BSS teachers feel that their school fits more closely with the need of the employers but one private business teacher saw his type of school functioning at a very limited level because, in his opinion, employers feel that *any school leaver* with a basic qualification could do the job if given on the job training; this conflicts with some of the earlier remarks on the advantages of the business school which, supposedly, prepares students at a more intensive level.

This view is not shared by either the assistant director of business education or the head of the Kumasi ATTC. If the person is qualified, tested, interviewed and they find the person suitable then they employ him or her. Although employers expect secondary schools offering business courses to produce young people with some knowledge and skills to be developed further on the job, employers give preference to products of Polytechnics (who are post-secondary students), if they can afford higher salaries and better conditions of employment.

All the business teachers and headteachers surveyed believed employers looked at things other than qualifications. General comportment, appearance and personal qualities are the most mentioned, with experience only mentioned twice. This differs markedly from findings in relation to this question put directly to the sample employers (See Chapter 9).

It could be argued that since the subject of the discussion is the school leaver, most of the sample business teachers and headteachers did not believe that employers took experience into account, since school leavers could not be expected to have it. Hence a comment such as this was typical:

They look at character, so they insist on testimonials or, more often confidential reports. This shows that they are looking at other things since they have already shown their certificates and results slip. They believe that punctuality, good character and diligence are important since a person could be lazy and so on but still pass exams.

(Business private headteacher).

The assistant director of business education was clear about what employers wanted: skills with experience:

Employers will not take on people who have done GCE only, immediately. People with an RSA background are more up to date and standard because they have employable skills. They look at experience. Even if you have degrees or whatever, they want someone with experience.

However,

someone has to sacrifice, to take on someone, train the person for him to get experience. In addition, they would prefer to take on someone who went to the same school as they did rather than someone they do not know.

Nevertheless, both WAEC representatives, not surprisingly, believe qualifications take priority over all other considerations, certainly initially, in recruitment. They do look at comportment and other qualities such as ability to interact with colleagues but that will take only a small part of the general assessment because they have to have educational qualifications before they are even selected for the interview. The business teacher trainer from the University of Cape Coast even went further in believing that criteria other than qualifications are not considered in the selection process *at all*.

6.2 The business teachers' role

The educational background of teachers of business subjects is compared across the schools. In addition, with teachers having first hand knowledge of what happens in the classroom, their involvement, if they are involved, assumes some importance in this study. The role teachers should play in developing the business curriculum is examined and their own past experience is explored insofar as it, along with other factors, may influence students' chances when they enter the labour market. Finally, bearing in mind that teachers have themselves undergone business training, this subsection analyses their views on it and any improvements they envisage.

6.2.1 *Question 2.1*

What type of business subjects do the teachers take and do they vary between the different types of schools surveyed?

Almost all the teachers surveyed were responsible for covering more than one business subject, usually either accounts, commerce or shorthand and typing. Others, private BSS teachers for example, did considerably more subjects than others with combinations of subjects including accounts, shorthand, commerce, typing and business methods. A résumé was asked for from the headteachers of the schools to find out total staff number and to indicate whether they were trained or not. Only the BSS public and private

headteachers responded sufficiently for any constructive analysis to be made. This, however, does not affect, essentially, the overall sample as it shows to some extent the teaching situation for most schools involved with business subjects, teaching an average of 20-30 periods per week. Table 6.2a presents the results for the Business Secondary School (BSS) in the public sector.

The table shows that there are altogether 1,120 business and secondary students enrolled, 18 graduate teachers and 32 specialist teachers and 5 untrained teachers (all five teaching the *secondary* students):

Table 6.2a
BSS Public teaching staff and student enrolment for the year 1987/88

Type of Course	Sex	Student Enrolment	TEACHING STAFF		
			Graduate	Specialist	Other *
Business/ Commercial	M	132	—	6	—
	F	128	—	2	—
Secondary	M	452	13	14	4
	F	408	5	10	1

*untrained

In addition, although the number of specialist teaching staff compared to the number of Business/Commercial students enrolled is relatively the same as for that between specialist teaching staff, the same cannot be said for the number of graduate teachers compared to the two types of student enrolment where the secondary students are better off by far.

In the private sector, table 6.2b shows a different picture:

Table 6.2b
BSS Private teaching staff and student enrolment for the year 1987/88

Type of Course	Sex	Student Enrolment	TEACHING STAFF		
			Graduate	Specialist	Other*
Business/ Commercial	M	29	2	3	1
	F	74	—	—	—
Secondary	M	386	3	3	6
	F	367	1	1	—

*untrained

Total enrolment for business and secondary students is 856. In addition, there were the 426 general science students. There are 6 graduate teachers, 7 specialist teachers and 7 untrained teachers (six of whom teach *secondary* students). The large number of untrained is not surprising given difficulties private schools face in getting trained teachers.

An investigation into the sampled business teachers' educational background shows that for the highest educational qualifications the sample respondents had achieved, the Diplomas were a clear favourite followed by University degrees.

Finally, in terms of the teachers' years of business teaching experience, the number of schools they have taught in and months or years with their present school, at the time of the survey, all the teachers had had at least one year's business teaching experience. Of the 11 teachers surveyed, eight have had between 5-10 years experience; six had taught in two to four schools; and 3 had taught in their present school for a year.

6.2.2 Question 2.2

What do the business teachers feel are the reasons for the popularity or non-popularity of typing and accounts especially in terms of their facilitating prospects for getting jobs?

All the teachers found typing and accounts to be the most popular of the business subjects, principally because of 'ready employment for such students' and as preparation for 'higher

courses elsewhere'.

However, the secondary and business teachers in the public sector believe accounts or bookkeeping is more popular than typing. There are three reasons for this:

- (a) Most students in Ghana see better prospects, in terms of employment opportunities, in bookkeeping.
- (b) While many think typing is for the below-average students, they believe bookkeeping can help you become an accountant or a manager.
- (c) There is a lack of interest in typing, especially with insufficient typewriters for practice and poor exam results. This is not the case for bookkeeping for which there are sufficient books.

Under section (c), photographs 6E.5 and 6 (Appendix 6E) shows a public business school with fairly spacious classrooms. In the first photograph, a male teacher conducts a typewriting class using manual typewriters. In the second photograph, the boys participate in a very popular accounts class. Opinion was evenly divided on the question of whether BSS leavers compare more favourably than the ordinary school leavers. According to all four teachers from the ordinary secondary school, once someone gets the qualification it does not matter where it was obtained. What is important is that he must have English and Mathematics in addition to business subjects. Two of the four Business teachers agree: most employers do not pay much attention to individual subjects apart from English and Mathematics.

But, as expected, all the BSS teachers believe they have better chances. One private BSS teacher put it this way:

Students who take business subjects at 'O' level in general secondary schools are at less of an advantage in finding jobs because these students take business subjects just to get good grades in the school certificate/GCE exams, whereas BSS and business students study the subjects in depth before presenting them in their final exams. They therefore perform better when employed by firms.
(BSS private teacher).

And a public business teacher agrees, commenting that non-business areas do not permit students to concentrate on the business side and so they are therefore unable to pass well in their examinations.

Given these comments about some of the disadvantages of the inclusion of business subjects in ordinary schools, it was interesting to find out what difficulties, according to teachers, ordinary secondary school leavers would face, were they to look for a job immediately after leaving.

The ordinary secondary teachers readily admit that their schools are not sufficiently vocational. In effect, that is the strong message which comes across: firstly, the schools do not prepare students for jobs, and thirdly, such schools are geared, in principle, towards leading students to further and higher education. The subjects are taught as part of general education with the objective being to have all round knowledge whereas accounting and typing, in particular, require precise skills.

The comment has already been made that accounts is easy to teach in the classroom, but the very nature of the subject also makes it akin to many of the more 'academic', secondary subjects. In other words, the material for bookkeeping and accounts is much more readily available and students can prepare for jobs at the very junior level, despite the fact that the subject was studied in a *secondary* school. Teaching typing is different since it is not so easy to accommodate, in terms of equipment, expense and effort.

6.2.3 *Question 2.3*

Has the business teachers' past business work experience, if any, been an advantage to them in their teaching of business subjects; and what do they feel could be improved on in the teacher training programme? Also how satisfied are they with their 'profession'?

Seven teachers had had no previous work experience in firms. Four had worked in business firms before. Two (1 private secondary and 1 private business) teachers did occasional administrative work for the school, such as helping to keep accounts and typing up letters.

With regard to visiting firms as part of the school programme, eight teachers stated that there were no such visits but three (one public BSS and two private BSS) teachers had been on a visit once, in 1988. They were able to 'see practical work in the offices' (BSS public) and 'it makes teaching of office skills more effective' (BSS private). This was needed especially as eight teachers further claimed that there were no office settings provided in the classroom. And although the BSS private teachers mentioned 'introducing office machines for demonstration purposes' and 'arranging for sophisticated office machines', they all agreed that the assimilation of the classroom to the office environment was not satisfactory.

In addition, with four of the eleven business teachers now heads of their respective departments in the BSS private, Business public, Secondary public and private schools, the question was asked: 'How far are business teachers involved in the design of the business curriculum and syllabus?'. The curriculum developer and research officer as well as the assistant director of business education, both of the Ministry of Education, offered similar responses. They stated the obvious fact that teachers are in the classroom, involved in teaching, hence they have the advantage in meeting the students, employers, parents and others. In other words they are involved throughout and are the final users of the business curriculum. But they do not say anything about how teachers are involved in the design of the business curriculum.

The teachers themselves were invited to comment on any changes they felt were needed in teacher training programmes and to suggest what courses they would like to have.

The changes are clearly in line with dissatisfactions already expressed. For example, the need for practical training and provision of attachment to firms reflect the lack of experience and probably confidence of some business teachers in the classroom. At the same time, more teacher involvement especially with the review of the teacher training syllabus would probably not go amiss. According to one teacher trainer little has been done in that direction:

There has been no guidance to help teachers prepare students for jobs. The only one was the workshop held in 1985 (Pitman 2000)[which looked at the teacher training curriculum]. Also, the Ministry has no resources. We only teach students to pass examinations. There is very little guidance and counselling in the proper sense.
(Head of Department, Teacher Trainer, ATTC, Kumasi).

With all these problems, six teachers declared that they were satisfied with their 'profession', but five were not. However, when asked if they would still be teaching in ten years' time responses varied. Five of the eleven business teachers did not expect to be teaching in 10 years time, another did not know and another five did not intend to remain in teaching although they might do so. The reasons for staying in the profession reflect the notion that teaching was perceived, granted only by a few, as an enjoyable vocation. Most expressed concern about the lack of opportunities both financial and vocational inherent in the teaching profession. Hence, box 6.1 shows professions these teachers would rather go in for, if they could start their career all over again:

 Box 6.1: Occupation chosen if starting career again and reason for the choice

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1. Work as a pastor	To reform people
2. Business	More rewarding and better prospects
3. Cost accounting work	Can do better for society
4. Same job (teaching)	Enjoy job but more money should be put in
5. Education	Can still put skills and knowledge to practice
6. Teaching or banking	Can still put skills and knowledge to practice
7. Storekeeper	You do less talking
8. Professional accountant	More lucrative and challenging
9. Trading	More lucrative

Most striking is that only two professed the intention of choosing the same occupation although one adds the proviso for better salaries. They are, of course, the same two who said they enjoy teaching. The others emphasised the lucrateness and better prospects afforded with different jobs. Certainly, officers in the Ministry of Education are not unaware of the problems teachers are facing and are very concerned about the danger of losing teachers and putting off others from joining the profession:

At the moment teacher frustration is very high, with poor conditions of service, low pay and lack of facilities. It is very demoralising. Efforts are being made to improve the type and level of training of teachers more so when after qualifying they do not go back to teaching.

(Assistant Director, Business
Education, Ministry of Education).

6.3 Opinions of headteachers on Business Secondary Schools

Support given to schools, as well as any influence that headteachers might bring to the curriculum development of their school are examined. The more difficult problem of having developers of syllabuses consider meaningfully the question of labour market issues is discussed in the light of headteachers' assessment of the business subjects taught and the attempts they might make to send teachers to firms on attachment. Again, in this subsection as in the previous one, the question of teacher training programmes is raised, specifically in terms of their helping teachers to prepare for the job market.

6.3.1 *Question 3.1*

How do the headteachers rate their schools as compared to others and how much support are they given in terms of staffing, financing and general development?

All the headteachers were asked to rate their school according to whether they were 'Above average', 'Average' and 'Below Average'.

The secondary school headteachers and the public business headteachers see their school as only average. In the first case, this rating is attributed to the process of deboardinising that the school is currently undergoing which, according to her, makes it very difficult for these children to study at home. For example, she cites conditions at home as not being conducive to studying, a lot of families having to live in one house, there not being enough lighting and some parents frequently sending their children on errands. In the second case, although the accountancy section is very encouraging, the secretarial side often falls below the mark.

However, the private business and Government Secretarial headteachers had more favourable comments to make about their schools. They cite employers' positive opinions about their schools, both claiming that they are able to train students to reach an appreciable standard in secretarial skills. (The photograph, 6E.7, Appendix 6E has final year GSS students in a typewriting class. The room shows nothing to denote a model office, although it may generally be likened to a bank's typing pool.) The private business school head is particularly praising of his school because although they have no electronic typewriters they send their final year students to firms for practical work where they become acquainted with new typewriters and computers.

All the headteachers, with the exception of the Government Secretarial School head, feel they have enough staff. The level and training of their staff is felt to be satisfactory although the public business headteachers would like to have post-O level graduate teachers from the University of Cape Coast. There is room for a lot of improvements and comments made by the respective headteachers explain the context for these suggestions. For the business private headteacher:

Firstly, bring the teachers up to date as many things are changing. For example, the way of addressing letters and so on. That is why they have to attend seminars. But many tutors feel this is a waste of time. That attitude must be changed because they will help a lot. Secondly, the marking of exercises is not done properly, due to laziness.
(Business private headteacher).

The secondary public headteacher emphasises adapting to change:

From time to time someone from outside should come to a secondary school like this and talk to our business teachers because business studies is not a static subject. Those old teachers who have been here a long time should be informed about new developments.
(Secondary public headteacher).

When the discussion was extended to the question of fees, headteachers' responses reflected obvious differences depending on whether the school is public or private. For instance, the private business school charges fees which compare less favourably with the secondary and business public schools. It should be noted also that the fees cited by the private business headteacher are not charged according to courses but according to morning and afternoon sessions. Those coming in the afternoon sessions pay less (C 1700) because they do not have enough periods; the others pay more (C 2200). Private schools are self-financing, depending only on school fees, their own funds or donations. The private business school, for example, received C 6000 from a firm to purchase textbooks. Public schools, on the other hand, depend solely on government assistance with some nominal fees, as in the C 1200 - C 2000 per term, charged by the secondary and business public schools. The public secondary sometimes can only depend on contributions from PTAs which help to buy books, repair broken desks and so on.

There is, in general, very little outside help. Parents are mentioned by all the school headteachers as offering some assistance where possible. Contributions from the Old Boys' Association are also mentioned by the BSS and Business public headteachers. Support from teacher training colleges and universities is limited, for the most part, to activities related to teaching practice and providing qualified teachers for schools.

Only three schools in the public sector (BSS, Business and Secondary) had received help from the Curriculum Development Unit and the Business Education Unit, both of which are under the Ministry of Education. The two latter described the help given as that of trying to find out the causes of failures in subject areas and organising courses for teachers to help them improve upon the work they are doing. This was done much more when the facilities were available but things have gone downhill and schools are only visited occasionally. Private schools also go to the Ministry when they need teachers and books but they cannot be helped.

However, all the schools have received some support from the Inspectorate with the most recent visit being only two weeks and the longest being eight years ago. This research

survey was in progress between July and December 1988 and the schools were visited in September/October of that year (see Chapter 5), therefore the periods mentioned revolved around that time.

The visits have been very sporadic and it appears that even what takes place during these visits is not satisfactory:

The last visit was just last October (1987) but they did not carry out a full inspection. They observed a few things and asked us to complete a questionnaire. That was all. The last really thorough inspection (i.e. looking in files, observing teaching) was in 1978. (Business private headteacher).

The general impression created from these findings is that more could be done, and it is not just a question of a lack of resources but the effort to manage and organise them that seems to be severely lacking.

Practical examinations are also normally costly to run (Chisman, 1987) and for the private BSS, business and secondary schools which offer not only the WASC and the RSA but also other examinations such as the Government Secretarial and National Vocational Training Institute examinations, shorthand and typed transcriptions must require relatively high expenditures. The public schools only offer the West African School Certificate and the GCE, whilst the Government Secretarial School runs its own examinations.

6.3.2 *Question 3.2*

How much effort do headteachers put into considering labour market issues when implementing prescribed syllabuses for business subjects?

According to the Government Secretarial school headteacher, the school is clearly 'geared directly towards preparing for jobs'. For three other headteachers, it is presumed that the syllabus would already have considered jobs available and so they unquestioningly teach to the syllabus. The private business headteacher, however, is more involved in terms of assessing what is needed in the labour market. In consulting the Curriculum for Development Unit as well as the various examining bodies to see if they have made changes in the syllabuses, the head feels able to design the syllabus by picking out, as he puts it, 'the very important things that should be completed' and grading the syllabus for examination purposes.

The business school headteachers did not believe syllabuses really matched job opportunities. This was also the opinion of the BSS and public secondary headteachers.

Indeed, they state that curriculum developers, planners and so on sit together to find out the correct syllabus that should be sent to schools. They consider the job opportunities but although they wish they could help, jobs are just not there.

The response to the question posed earlier under subsection 2.3, was similar in relation to any initiatives teachers and even headteachers have in the construction of the syllabus. Four headteachers state that they and their teachers do have initiatives in the development of courses. This is not the case for the public business headteacher or the secondary headteachers who state that this is left to WAEC only because, in effect, syllabuses are imposed on teachers.

The Government Secretarial school, on the other hand, together with the private business school tell a different story. In 1976, the Government Secretarial School started a Basic Business Management course because they perceived a need for shop assistants, sales girls and boys and accounts clerks. And the private business school is presently thinking of running shorter courses in secretarial practice for the working offices, especially in business communication and human relations for just about six weeks.

It is apparent from the evidence from these two schools that there is some kind of watch on what is needed in the job market, a need to find out what employers are looking for, yet when asked if there was any survey conducted on employers' requirement, any advice from or links with employers, this was not the case for all but one of the schools: the private business school. Sometimes a survey was conducted by the school when the students are sent out on practical attachment courses. The employers are given a questionnaire to complete on the standard of the students and what they observed wanting which should be done by the school. Advice was also sought where possible from those who are 'knowledgeable'. By this the head means that not all the employers are aware of what schools are doing, so those who take the bulk of the students are often consulted by the school for advice on what aspects should be emphasised. The advantage is that some form of links are formed if only with *selected* employers:

There is a semi-link, not a solid one because we exchange ideas only informally. When it is time, for instance, to send the students for practical work we contact the employers and look at what things they feel the students should do. But this is only with employers we are very familiar with.

(Business private headteacher).

Where schools did not undertake any surveys, nor create any links with employers, their

responses were particularly revealing. With the exception of the private BSS, the suggestion that there should be such surveys and links was laudable and important despite the reluctance, it is felt, for employers to co-operate. The private BSS headteacher is particularly unenthusiastic in view of the considerable lack of essential equipment, of which employers, inevitably, are going to require that students have some knowledge:

There is no point in seeking advice from employers to expand since facilities are very limited. You may talk to employers about what they want but you will not be able to produce what they want when equipment and other aids are not there. Anyway, we keep in touch with what is happening. For example, sometimes employers complain about the inadequacy of the knowledge of shorthand typists and that some of the students are not capable so there is a need for us to retrain them. So now we are devising a way of improving our methods of teaching shorthand to be able to give them enough background. We are also hoping to get more electric typewriters (apart from the one we now have) when funds are here.

(BSS private headteacher).

Clearly, the solution to this myriad of problems does not rest only with teachers and educationists but employers as well. And there should be a co-operative link between them. From the sentiments expressed by education officials and teachers, employers only see what is happening when they either need someone or a job applicant goes there with his qualifications or the employers need to write for verification. Even though employers have their association and they go to meetings, most of them are only interested in how much they can get out of the products that come out of these schools. They do not address themselves to what goes into producing the students.

6.3.3 *Question 3.3*

Are any attempts made to send teachers on attachment to various firms for experience and how far do the headteachers see business education as benefiting from the input of resources in their school?

None of the teachers has been sent on attachment to firms. Although the BSS public headteacher believes that the setting up of such attachments would be advantageous, the secondary public headteacher expresses reservations about the possibility of such a process. At the same time, the BSS private headteacher feels the feasibility of setting up such attachments would depend on needs. For instance, even though it would be beneficial when teachers have no experience at all, at times the practical aspects of accounting in offices can be done well in classrooms too.

Mention was made of having had guest speakers in the past from the Ministry of Education, insurance companies and banks (BSS private). In addition teachers' helping students was seen in terms of 'encouraging students to do accounting as one of the subjects because employers will like to see a certificate with accounting on it' (BSS private). Others, for example the public secondary head, rely on the schools' guidance counsellor who talks to students leaving Form 5 and Upper Sixth about the work they would like to do and finds out from each of them where he thinks he would fit in rather than just going to work anyhow. All the teachers agreed that a guidance counsellor is important to have in a school, not in terms of helping to find jobs directly but in other, very general, ways.

In question 23 of the Questionnaire, headteachers were asked if they agreed with the statement that: 'A great deal of money has been spent to establish and fund Business Secondary Schools. Some people think it would have been of greater benefit to secondary education if these resources could have been used to strengthen or introduce other subjects.' All disagreed with the statement.

The secondary public headteacher felt that combining business and general subjects would be difficult because of lack of space, but at least the establishment of Business Secondary schools (BSSs) opens the students to a vocation before they complete their five-year course. The business school headteachers are also very much in favour as today people are coming to realise that attention must be concentrated on business subjects. They see that academic school leavers have no skills and therefore no jobs, except those few who go to Sixth Form and then university. The head of the Testing Department at the West African Examinations Council adds further:

Being a doctor is still a prestigious occupation. But others who did business subjects are now head of institutions and are better off than some of us who are doctors or lawyers etc. These are some of the things students have observed.

The headteachers have also perceived this change in attitude, for example, one headteacher sees advantages in teaching business subjects at the secondary level in terms already mentioned, namely that not all students will be able to proceed to further education and so they should be taught subjects that will enable them to take up employment after they leave.

One teacher trainer, however, disagrees with the statement because as he sees it the grammar type of secondary school is not the institution to teach business studies. Yet, it is

just this kind of thinking which prompts others to disregard school leavers with that kind of academic background. As the assistant director of business education rightly points out:

Some people are very good with their hands or have other talents and the earlier you start training them the better. Through a number of private schools many have been able to better themselves and get jobs. Most of the 'big' men started in these schools and by and by they rose up to a senior level. So I feel we should encourage them.

The future developments of the schools were discussed from two points: (a) the continuing role of these schools; and (b) the introduction and effects of new technology in the office and in schools.

Firstly, the place of the schools in the future for all the education officials interviewed is certain. The success of the business/commercial schools lies in the fact that they provide manpower for our industries and the private sector of Ghana's economy so there is a demand for them. Indeed, some private schools have started organising courses for computer studies but the government has not done anything and there is need for them to do so. Clearly, the general consensus of opinion is that these private schools fill the vacuum where students in the state system can go and improve on their skills. They should continue to exist but they should be improved with better buildings, teachers, books and equipment. Unfortunately, some private individuals find it hard as the profit motive is uppermost in their mind. With regard to the BSSs, one teacher trainer made the point, quite correctly from the evidence above, that most departments of business studies attached to ordinary secondary schools have failed. He suggests that as far as possible, these should be headed by graduates in business studies, economics, management or secretarial studies.

Secondly, given current economic constraints, there is, understandably, need to make do with what one has and adapt where possible. More modern equipment is not used in schools because of the expense and maintenance necessary.

Nevertheless, there is the general feeling that there is no escaping the advance of new technology. In fact, it should be welcomed, 'we should move with the times because the world will not stand and wait for us. The earlier we get ourselves involved the better'. (Assistant Director, Business Education).

6.4 Summary of findings

From the evidence presented above, there can be little doubt that business education at the secondary level encounters many problems but it appears that they are surmountable. Almost all the teachers believed their schools were performing at an average to high level even though in many cases lack of equipment made success in examinations difficult. Also, there was little doubt the examination results were very important to employers, if only because they served as the main *starting point* in the selection process. All teachers, headteachers and education officials surveyed shared in this belief but a few others did not ignore the potentials of interviews, experience, personal attributes, contacts and general ability 'to do the job' as deciding factors in the final recruitment of applicants for jobs.

For the further question of the best place to teach business subjects, education officials joined some of the teachers and headteachers in considering that at least the ordinary secondary school provided basic, general skills upon which to specialise later if that was desired. This type of school exposed students to other subjects and offered opportunities for further and higher education.

Notably, headteachers' discontent with secondary schools, and their preference for on the job training or the more specialised schools, was based on what they felt were employers' preference for students who had studied business subjects in depth and therefore were better able to acquire new knowledge easily.

While business subjects were popular because they were perceived to offer better employment prospects, none of the respondents discounted the difficulties which ordinary secondary leavers, in particular, faced after leaving such schools because

- they did not prepare for jobs
- they were aimed principally at providing general knowledge
- they led more to further and higher education rather than directly into employment.

These schools were also not unaware of their own inadequacies in preparing students for the job market. With the sole exception of the private business headteacher, no survey had been carried out by the teachers or headteachers on employers' requirements, no advice received from employers nor any links with them. They admitted, however, that much could be achieved in establishing such contacts with employers, especially if the latter were also more co-operative.

Similarly, it was felt, contrary to evidence from education officials, that there was not

much teacher involvement in the design of the business curriculum. They simply followed it, with official support limited, for the most part, to visits from inspectors which were generally few and far between. Teachers' guides were mostly non-existent and where they did exist, not much use was made of them - a situation not uncommon in many other developing countries (Caillods and Postlethwaite 1988). Although textbooks were generally regarded as 'good' or 'adequate', they were not only expensive or unavailable but out of date as well.

In effect, the business curriculum in practice was defective. Improvements were envisaged in terms of reviewing the business curriculum syllabus, providing for attachment of teachers to firms, where it would be advantageous to do so, providing more facilities, and equally importantly, updating teachers' business knowledge.

But, having said that, there was on the part of teachers and headteachers, a change in attitude, also perceived by education officials, in terms of the important advantage provided by business education at the secondary level: business subjects provide equal opportunities either to enter the job market immediately after leaving school or to pursue further education.

The next chapter will examine whether business secondary school leavers believe they have that advantage.

Chapter 7 Preparing for Work

7.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with first year students and fifth year students from six secondary schools located in the Greater Accra, Eastern and Central regions of Ghana. It shows their backgrounds, the type of school they are in, their desire to continue their education or to look for work immediately after Form 5, the type of jobs they look for, and why. It is hoped that the findings from this section may throw some light on the information from the employed respondents, and that implications for employers' school leaver recruitment policy, to be discussed in the last chapter, may emerge.

The group being discussed is composed of youth between the ages of 10 and 25. The sample consists of 177 first year students and 157 fifth form school students who completed questionnaires (see Appendix 7C).

Table 7.1 presents the distribution of the student sample by schools:

Table 7.1
Distribution of student sample by year and by school

Type of school and sector	Students			
	1st Year		5th Year	
	n	%	n	%
BSS Public	31	(17.5)	30	(19.1)
BSS Private	26	(14.7)	29	(18.5)
Business Public	31	(17.5)	30	(19.1)
Business Private	31	(17.5)	26	(16.6)
Secondary Public	29	(16.4)	17	(10.8)
Secondary Private	29	(16.4)	25	(15.9)
Total	177	(100.0)	157	(100.0)

Note: BSS stands for Business Secondary School. It is abbreviated in this way in order to avoid confusing it with the Business and Secondary schools which are quite different.

The results of this study will be looked at in the following ways:

- 7.1 the educational background of the students and the relation between this and other variables;

- 7.2 the reasons why students chose their present school and the significance, if any, these may have for their future job aspirations;
- 7.3 the relation between the students' desire to work and their need to continue education; and;
- 7.4 the relation between the expectations and aspirations of the students in terms of the occupational choices they make whilst still at school.

Attention is focussed on boys and girls from two BSSs, two Business schools and two Secondary schools. The school curricula are not considered here.

The four following sections are subdivided according to the questionnaires completed by the respondents. Each section analyses the responses by sets of questions which focus on the major findings of the survey.

7.1 Business secondary students: a profile

This section presents the various backgrounds of the students. It considers the types of school they are in now together with an analysis of their performance in Ghana's Common Entrance Examination, considering also factors, as they may explain their performance in the examination, such as gender and age. The section then compares similarities and differences amongst the students with their parents' educational background and socio-economic status.

7.1.1 *Question 1.1*

Where do the students come from and how similar or different are they in terms of (a) the type of primary school they attended, (b) their ethnic group and (c) their religious affiliation?

The breakdown of the sample according to those who attended government, mission or international/private primary schools is presented in table 7.2. The distribution across the nine cells is nearly equal with the largest group of students coming from government primary schools (159), the next group coming from international/private schools (129) and the smallest group, the mission primary school (46).

As can be expected, many of the students from government primary schools attended corresponding BSSs, Business and Secondary schools in the public system. The same trend was seen with respect to most of the students from the international/private primary schools who went on to schools in the private system. Out of a total of 334 students, there

was an almost even distribution of those going to the BSSs (34.5 percent), the Business schools (35.2 percent) and the Secondary schools (30.3 percent).

Table 7.2
Distribution of student sample by year
by school and by primary school attended

Present School	Year	No. of Students	Primary School					
			Government		Mission		International	
			n	%	n	%	n	%
BSS, Public	1st	31	13	42.0	5	16.0	13	42.0
	5th	30	17	56.7	5	16.6	8	26.7
BSS, Private	1st	26	5	19.2	2	7.7	19	73.1
	5th	29	10	34.5	6	20.7	13	44.8
Business, Public	1st	31	19	61.3	9	29.0	3	9.7
	5th	30	21	70.0	5	17.0	4	13.0
Business, Private	1st	31	12	39.0	7	22.0	12	39.0
	5th	26	12	46.0	1	4.0	13	50.0
Secondary, Public	1st	29	25	86.3	1	3.4	3	10.3
	5th	17	9	53.0	-	-	8	47.0
Secondary, Private	1st	29	8	27.6	-	-	21	72.4
	5th	25	8	32.0	5	20.0	12	48.0
Sub-total	1st	177	82	46.9	24	13.7	71	39.4
	5th	157	77	49.7	22	14.2	58	36.1
TOTAL		334	159	48.2	46	13.9	129	37.9

Ethnic groups were evenly distributed among the six types of schools without any preferential relationships emerging. This was most probably because schools tended to recruit only from local district and regions.

Furthermore, female enrolments surpassed male enrolments as shown in table 7.3 below.

Table 7.3
Distribution of sample by year, by gender and ethnic group

Gender	Year	No. of Students	Ethnic group						
			Akan~	Ashanti	Fanti	Ga	Ewe	Twi	Other*
Male	1st	71	% 40.0	% 36.4	% 63.6	% 27.8	% 26.3	% 58.3	% 33.3
Female		98	60.0	63.6	36.4	72.2	68.4	41.7	66.7
Male	5th	65	61.3	16.7	63.2	22.2	45.8	40.0	35.9
Female		82	38.7	83.3	36.8	77.8	54.2	60.0	64.1

~ The Fanti and Twi tribes are members of the Akan group but this is shown separately as some respondents did not distinguish between Fanti and Twi.

* Groups coming mostly from the Northern region.

This may be attributed to the facts that there were no boys in one of the schools and more girls than boys take business-related subjects.

The question of students' religious affiliation is very simple. The overwhelming majority were Christians with table 7.4 showing that more than half the 1st and 5th year students were Anglicans or Presbyterians.

Table 7.4
Distribution of student sample by year and by religious affiliation

Religious Denomination	Year of Student			
	1st		5th	
	n	%	n	%
Roman Catholic	39	(23.2)	18	(12.6)
Anglican/Presbyterian	84	(50.0)	73	(51.0)
Pentecostal	35	(20.8)	45	(31.5)
Muslim	8	(4.8)	6	(4.2)
Other or None	2	(1.2)	1	(0.7)
Total	168	(100.0)	143	(100.0)

This is to be expected in view of the fact that most schools, both primary and secondary are owned and managed by missions and churches. Further, there were no striking features in the very even distribution of Christian affiliations across the six schools.

7.1.2 Question 1.2

Of those who left middle school early (i.e. in Form Two) or later (i.e. in Form Four), what school are they in now and how did they perform in the Common Entrance examination?

The distribution of students who left Middle School either in Form Two, Form Three or Form Four is presented in the table below:

Table 7.5
Distribution of student sample by year and by the last Middle School Form attended

Last Middle School Form	Year of Student			
	n	1st %	n	5th %
Form Two	22	(20.4)	15	(15.8)
Form Three	20	(18.5)	18	(18.9)
Form Four	66	(61.1)	62	(65.3)
Total	108	(100.0)	95	(100.0)

Substantial proportions of the sample first and fifth year students left in Form Four but this does not take into account the fact that only 203 students responded to this item out of a total research sample of 334. At each of the Middle Form levels, however, the students were equally distributed across the six schools with the exception of Secondary public which has the majority of its entrants coming from Middle Form Two (Table 7A.1 Appendix 7A). Of the 203 respondents only 15 left Form Four to proceed to Secondary schools, whilst 44 entered BSSs and as many as 69 went on to Business schools. It would appear that the students who left Middle School early, that is to say, in Form Two or Form Three rather than in Form Four are necessarily brighter academically. The findings confirmed this.

Before proceeding to second cycle institutions in Ghana, the Common Entrance examination (CEE) is taken. Table 7.6 which includes separate data for 'not stated' responses by students, showed that a high percentage of Form Two and Form Three leavers passed the CEE. Form Four leavers, on the other hand, had not performed so well.

Table 7.6
Percentages of student sample who passed or failed the CEE or
made no statement by year and by last Middle School Form attended

Last Middle School Form attended	Year	Pass	Fail	'Not stated'	Total Number
Form Two	(1st)	63.6	18.2	18.2	(22)
	(5th)	66.6	6.7	26.7	(15)
Form Three	(1st)	65.0	20.0	15.0	(20)
	(5th)	72.2	-	27.8	(18)
Form Four	(1st)	27.9	14.7	57.4	(68)
	(5th)	50.0	1.6	48.4	(62)
'Not stated'	(1st)	26.8	9.0	64.2	(67)
	(5th)	64.5	6.5	29.0	(62)
Sub-total	(1st)	36.1	13.6	50.3	(177)
	(5th)	59.9	3.8	36.3	(157)
TOTAL		47.3	9.0	43.7	(334)

In addition, it is very likely that students who did not respond, that is, those in the 'not stated' category, were students who failed or did not sit the CEE. Form Four leavers made up the highest proportion within that category even when taking into account the fact that they were larger in number (130) as against Form Two (37) and Form Three (38) leavers.

It is also evident from table 7A.1 (Appendix 7A) that the Secondary schools hardly admitted any students from Form Four. It was decided by the Government in 1968 that as from 1970, it would become the practice to have pupils take the Common Entrance examination at the end of the eighth year of elementary education (i.e. Middle School Form Two). Hence, today it is the common practice among Secondary schools in Ghana, still regarded as among the top echelons of second cycle education, to recruit only Form Two leavers.

Equally interesting is the pattern of the histogram in Figure 7.1 which illustrates the distribution of the students by Common Entrance examination aggregates across and within the schools. An aggregate of less than 215 is equivalent to failure at the examination and the 'not stated' category corresponds here to students who either failed the examination or

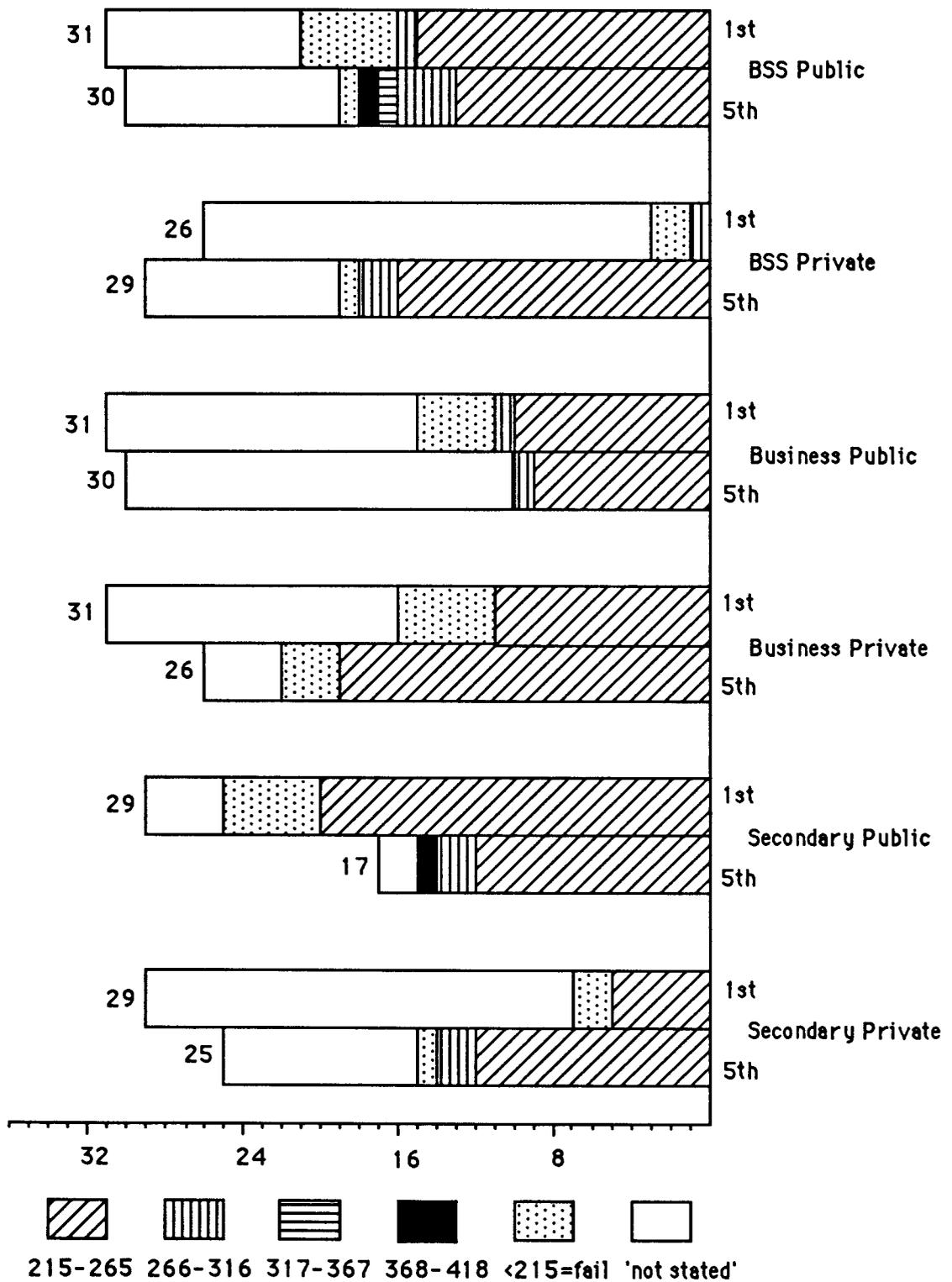


Figure 7.1 Histogram to show Common Entrance examination aggregates obtained prior to entry into the six schools

did not sit it. A great number of students fell within that category. The Secondary public, however, showed an intake of only 13.8 percent and 11.8 percent of 'not stated' students in the first and fifth years respectively.

Furthermore, not only were there substantial numbers of students within the 'not stated' category but on average, aggregates of between 215 and 265 were very common. Only one student in two of the schools (BSS public and Secondary public) obtained the highest aggregates of between 368 and 418. That these schools were in the public sector tends to confirm the higher level of performance in the BSS and Secondary public schools as compared to the often 'poorer' schools in the private sector. Given the state of schools in the private sector, it is not surprising that they were so ready to admit students with very low aggregates or none at all, although Business public schools also admitted large numbers of 'not stated' students.

7.1.3 Question 1.3

How important are the student's gender and age in terms of performance in the Common Entrance examination?

An important factor which determines secondary school admission in Ghana is the age of the student. Ages of pupils admitted to the first year in post-primary/elementary schools vary from 10 to 20 years.

Tables 7.7 and 7.8 below present the gender and age distributions of the student sample. Details of these distributions by school are given in tables 7A.2 and 7A.3 (Appendix 7A).

Table 7.7
Distribution of student sample by year and by gender

Gender	Year of Student			
	1st		5th	
	n	%	n	%
Boys	78	(44.1)	67	(42.7)
Girls	99	(55.9)	90	(57.3)
Total	177	(100.0)	157	(100.0)

Table 7.8
Distribution of student sample by age and by year

Age	Year of Student					
	n	1st	%	n	5th	%
10-13	51		(28.8)	-		(-)
14-17	93		(52.6)	38		(24.1)
18-21	33		(18.6)	116		(74.0)
22-25	-		(-)	3		(1.9)
Total	177		(100.0)	157		(100.0)

Table 7.7 shows the uneven distribution of boys and girls represented in the schools, as aforementioned, with the girls forming a clear majority. However, it is well to note that, as shown in table 7A.2 (Appendix 7A), the girls were slightly under-represented in two schools, BSS private with 41.8 percent (23) girls as against 58.2 percent (32) boys and Business public with an even greater percentage difference between boys and girls at 75.4 percent (46) and 24.6 percent (15) respectively. The average age was clearly higher than is usual in Britain, for example, especially as two-thirds of the students were at the intermediate level by the time they reached Form Five. Two factors accounted for this: duration of schooling and delays by parents in sending their children to school. Length of schooling ranged from 12 to 17 years with a mean of 14 years.

A look at students' gender and age in terms of their performance at the Common Entrance examination may clarify whether there is anything to be said for leaving Middle School early or late and whether the gender issue is, in fact, significant at all. Table 7.9 presents percentages for CEE results, reports separate data for each sex and gives figures for all age-groups.

The table shows that in the 10-13 age group there were no fifth year students at all and boys and girls achieved exactly the same percentage rates of CEE passes and failures. The majority of boys and girls within the 14-17 age group were in their first year. This group saw little difference in boys and girls performance at the CEE, but in the fifth year there was a significant increase in the numbers of girls who passed (42.1 percent) as against the boys (18.4 percent). This was probably due to the greater number of girls in the research sample.

Table 7.9
Percentages of student sample who passed/failed
the CEE or made no statement by year, by gender and by age

Age	Year	Gender						n
		Pass	Boys Fail	Not stated	Pass	Girls Fail	Not stated	
10-13	(1st)	13.7	5.9	37.3	13.7	5.9	23.5	(51)
	(5th)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(-)
14-17	(1st)	18.3	5.4	22.6	19.3	7.5	26.9	(93)
	(5th)	18.4	2.6	10.5	42.1	5.3	21.1	(38)
18-21	(1st)	12.1	-	6.1	30.3	15.1	36.4	(33)
	(5th)	26.7	-	20.0	32.7	2.5	18.1	(116)
22-25	(1st)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(-)
	(5th)	-	-	33.3	66.7	-	-	(3)
Sub- total	(1st)	15.8	4.5	23.7	19.8	8.5	27.7	(177)
	(5th)	24.2	0.6	17.8	35.7	3.2	18.5	(157)
TOTAL		19.8	2.7	21.0	27.2	6.0	23.3	(334)

Whilst it is true that, on the whole the 'bulk of the 'over-aged' pupils from the public elementary schools enter the less well-endowed secondary schools' (Addae-Mensah et al., 1973) and that 'most private pupils in Ghana start school later than public pupils because they have greater obstacles to surmount as they pursue their education' (Bibby and Miller, 1968), there are other factors which need to be considered.

7.1.4 Question 1.4

How different or homogeneous are the students in terms of the level of education the parents received and in terms of their socio-economic status?

While Boakye and Oxenham's study (1982) of parents' educational levels showed that 11 percent of their sample (n=127) had more than an elementary 10-year education, the present sample contained four times that proportion. All six groups of parents in table 7.10 exceeded that parameter, with even the least schooled, represented in Business public, exhibiting twice, while the most schooled, represented in BSS public, had 5.5 times the proportion. Evidently, the better-than-average educated parent was disproportionately represented in the post Middle school/elementary stage of education in this sample.

At the other end of the spectrum, while 57 percent of the parents in the 1982 sample had had no schooling, this was true of only 2.8 percent of the parents in the sample; the unschooled were under-represented. This was most evident with parents of children in the BSSs and the Secondary public. In Business private and Secondary private, the unschooled were represented proportionately. A *prima facie* case could be made then that, children of less educated parents are more likely to be found in Business schools and Secondary private schools.

Table 7.10
Parents' Educational Levels

Level of Education	Total	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Secondary Private
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Primary	2.7	2.5	-	6.5	2.6	1.1	2.8
Middle/ Elementary	26.8	23.0	19.1	24.6	34.8	26.1	33.3
Sub-total	29.5	25.5	19.1	31.1	37.4	27.2	36.1
Secondary Business/ Commercial Technical/ Vocational T. Training	29.6 2.7 2.1 1.6	38.0 5.0 2.5 -	37.0 1.0 - 1.0	14.7 0.8 1.6 5.0	29.6 0.9 4.3 1.7	33.7 1.1 1.1 -	26.0 7.4 2.8 1.8
University/ Polytechnic	11.7	15.0	15.5	5.0	6.1	15.2	14.8
Sub-total	47.7	60.5	54.5	27.1	42.6	51.1	52.8
No schooling Not stated	2.8 20.0	- 14.0	- 26.4	7.4 34.4	4.3 15.7	- 21.7	4.6 6.5
Total (%)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (n)	668	121	110	122	115	92	108

In 1970 and 1979 some 12 percent of the Ghanaian labour force were estimated to be in Recorded Employment in concerns with 10 or more employees. A further 12 percent or so were in other forms of wage employment making a total of some 25 percent in some forms of wage and salary employment (Aryee 1976). The overall sample of parents in table 7.11 was approximately that parameter at 26.6 percent although BSS private was well below it at only 15.9 percent. Accordingly, the students in this school are more likely to have parents who are self-employed (64.5 percent) than in salary and wage employment.

Table 7.11
Types of employment among parents

Type of Job	Total	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Secondary Private
	(%)	%	%	%	%	%	%
Salary/Wage Employment							
Typist/Accounts Clerk							
	4.2	4.4	1.9	2.3	5.3	6.5	5.3
	(100.0)	(18.9)	(7.0)	(11.0)	(21.0)	(21.1)	(21.0)
Civil servants							
	6.1	3.5	2.8	0.7	7.1	10.7	13.3
	(100.0)	(9.8)	(7.3)	(2.4)	(19.5)	(24.4)	(36.6)
Teachers							
	8.4	15.0	6.5	9.3	7.1	4.3	7.1
	(100.0)	(30.4)	(12.5)	(21.4)	(14.3)	(7.1)	(14.3)
Nurses							
	3.4	3.5	1.9	1.6	5.3	5.4	3.5
	(100.0)	(17.4)	(8.7)	(8.7)	(26.1)	(21.7)	(17.4)
Uniformed Services							
	4.5	2.7	2.8	7.0	4.4	3.2	6.2
	(100.0)	(10.0)	(10.0)	(30.0)	(16.7)	(10.0)	(23.3)
Sub-total							
	26.6	29.1	15.9	20.9	29.2	30.1	35.4
	(100.0)	(18.5)	(9.6)	(15.2)	(18.5)	(15.7)	(22.5)
Farmers							
	8.8	8.1	8.4	18.5	2.7	3.2	9.7
	(100.0)	(15.2)	(15.2)	(41.0)	(5.0)	(5.0)	(18.6)
Self-employed							
	42.0	36.3	64.5	32.6	39.1	35.5	44.3
	(100.0)	(14.7)	(24.7)	(15.0)	(15.8)	(11.8)	(18.0)
Not stated							
	22.6	26.5	11.2	28.0	29.0	31.2	10.6
	(100.0)	(19.7)	(7.9)	(23.7)	(21.7)	(19.1)	(7.9)
Total %							
		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total n							
	668	113	107	129	113	93	113

Note: row percentages are in parentheses

In the data set, parents' jobs are classified into six major categories: professional/managerial, lower professional, services, and clerical. The choice of occupational groupings in the table above has a social rather than an economic significance where Typist/Accounts Clerks, Civil Servants, Teachers, Nurses and the Uniformed Services cover semi-professional, administrative and white-collar workers. Farmers include the wealthy and non-wealthy who would normally live in the rural areas of Ghana. The self-employed include storekeepers, market women, small traders and some craftsmen such as electricians and mechanics. These categories do not relate neatly to the career objectives of the business-related educational streams in table 7.10 but it does seem reasonable to predict that children of parents in clerical type jobs would be somewhat more likely to be in BSSs or Business schools than in Secondary schools. This is confirmed in

table 7.11 where, although the total sample of parents in clerical type jobs was only 28/668 or 4.2 percent, the distribution across the six schools showed only 42 percent of the respondents in Secondary schools and 58 percent in BSSs and Business schools. Parents at the professional/managerial level (i.e. Officers) contrasted this with 61 percent represented in Secondary schools and 39 percent in BSSs and Business schools.

Significant also were the 42 percent (279/668) of parents who were self-employed. To include the total percentage of farmers at 9 percent (59/668) would mean that, overall, twice the number of parents were self-employed. Of the six schools, the one with the highest percentage of children whose parents were self-employed was BSS private (24.7 percent). The school with the smallest percentage (11.8 percent) - much smaller than any other type of school - was, expectedly, Secondary public. Although the evidence is not conclusive, the pattern of what type of work parents do does support the contention that the children of parents who are salaried or are self-employed are more likely to be found in Secondary and BSS/Business schools respectively.

Furthermore, tables 7.10 and 7.11 suggest that almost all the parents with more than secondary education were in salaried jobs but considerable proportions with up to secondary education were in self-employment. A legitimate expectation would be that, while higher education might still be strongly associated with modern sector/salaried employment, secondary education would remain the minimum qualification for entry into that sector. A student from the Business-oriented school is three times as likely as a student from a Secondary school to come from an agrarian background and it is three times more probable that his parents have had no schooling. Conversely, a Secondary school student is twice as likely as BSS or Business school student to be the child of a member of the higher professions. The assumption from this is that parents of a Secondary school student would most probably have attended Secondary school and /or University but, while table 7.10 bears this out, it also shows how much the BSSs are 'at par' with the more academically-oriented Secondary schools (in both the public and private sectors). These measures of parents' level of education and type of occupation indicate only superficial differences between boys and girls who attend different types of schools. It would be simple to link a typical BSS or Business school student with illiterate or agrarian parents and yet, as the two tables suggest, the aspirations for modern sector jobs are common to all students be they from educated or illiterate homes, from elite or agrarian background.

7.2 Choosing the school

This section sets out and analyses the choices made by the students when selecting BSSs, Business and Secondary schools. It seeks to establish whether the Common Entrance examination (CEE) results they obtained did play a part in their selection and indeed whether the schools freely chose from among the academically promising candidates or were obliged to accept poor students from lower levels in the CEE rankings.

The section then looks into the location of these schools with relation to the regions in Ghana where the students have lived or stayed the longest. The aim is to be able to assess whether choices made reflected any geographical movements to the schools or whether the schools were just 'there' and easily accessible.

Finally, the section will assess whether the future of students may be determined as much by the particular secondary they attend as it is by the parents' level of academic achievement and socio-economic status.

7.2.1 *Question 2.1*

What went into the choice of any particular school and could there be a link between the choice students made and the Common Entrance examination results obtained?

The students were asked to state the order of preference they gave for their present school and the reasons why. The results are shown in table 7.12. The 'not stated' category records those respondents who declined to indicate any choice at all or give any reasons for choosing the school. The relatively high 'not stated' responses, 63 percent, is an interesting reflection of the students' seeming reluctance to make choices especially if they were uncertain upon what criteria they could base these choices.

Table 7.12
Percentage distribution of student sample by choice/reasons for choice and by school

Type of Job	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Secondary Private	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Choice							
First	39 (30)	4 (3)	30 (23)	24 (17)	44 (25)	4 (2)	24 (100)
Second	12 (33)	-	10 (29)	2 (5)	13 (29)	2 (5)	6 (100)
Third	2 (4)	-	7 (17)	26 (63)	9 (17)	-	7 (100)
Not stated	48 (14)	96 (25)	54 (16)	49 (13)	35 (8)	94 (24)	63 (100)
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Reasons for Choice							
I like the subjects	85 (25)	38 (10)	70 (21)	95 (26)	52 (12)	20 (5)	61 (100)
Was the only school to take me	6 (8)	15 (16)	12 (14)	2 (2)	22 (20)	35 (39)	15 (100)
Parents wanted me to come	5 (4)	46 (35)	15 (13)	2 (1)	26 (17)	39 (30)	21 (100)
Not stated	3 (22)	2 (11)	3 (22)	2 (11)	-	6 (33)	3 (100)
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total n	61	55	61	57	46	54	334

Note: row percentages are in parentheses

The two schools, BSS private and Secondary private showed the highest percentages within and across each school, 96 (25 percent) and 94 (24 percent) respectively, of students having made no choice. Looking at the lower part of the table these same schools

showed similar high percentages with the responses 'It was the only school to take me' and

'Parents/relatives wanted me to come here'.

The BSS public and Secondary public were clear first and second choice schools and as may be expected, the response 'I like the subjects' received correspondingly high percentages. At the same time, Business public and private showed remarkably high proportions (71 percent and 95 percent respectively) with students happy about the subjects. Yet, the bulk of the students did not choose those schools.

Table 7.13 below shows the schools the students would have chosen if they had the chance to do so again. The difference between first and fifth formers is clear where the latter have had five years to 'assess' the schools and give more 'thought out' responses. For example, out of the first year group in Business schools, 31 percent would have opted for the same school whereas none of the fifth year group would choose them again. Of this group, 93 percent would have chosen a BSS. In Secondary schools, most of the first year group would choose the same school again (64 percent) but again, the fifth year group, notably from the private sector, opted for BSSs (57 percent).

Table 7.13
Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by school reconsidered

	BSS		Business		Secondary		Technical		not stated		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BSS												
1st	37	65	-	-	17	30	2	3	1	2	57	100
5th	45	76	-	-	13	22	-	-	1	2	59	100
Business												
1st	37	60	19	31	3	5	2	3	1	2	62	100
5th	52	93	-	-	3	5	1	2	-	-	56	100
Secondary												
1st	12	21	-	-	37	64	9	15	-	-	58	100
5th	24	57	-	-	17	41	1	2	-	-	42	100
Sub-total												
1st	86	49	19	11	57	32	13	7	2	1	177	100
5th	121	77	-	-	33	21	2	1	1	1	157	100
Total	207	62	19	6	90	27	15	4	3	1	334	100

The shift in choice may be better explained in the light of comments made by the students about why they went to the Secondary school in first place. For example, according to one

private secondary student, his father had been transferred from another region to work in Greater Accra, where this school happens to be located and for another student from the same school, his father who was paying his fees died and he was told to come and stay with his brother who lives near the school.

The only schools which seemed to show some consistency for both the first and fifth year groups were the BSSs, and not surprisingly. Account must be taken, however, of the fact that the Secondary school would also have been a 'good' alternative. Whether this may be as a result of parents' or friends' influence or a personal choice is hard to say. But what is certain is that right across the three types of schools, the BSSs were the most popular choice. Many regarded it as one of the best business schools in Ghana. Reasons for that belief as put forward by the BSS students were mainly that there are good opportunities in the country for business students from such schools, they have a good record of examination passes and they provide you with basic employable skills. This confirms previous research findings in Ghana that there is growing enthusiasm for BSSs because students believe they would provide a skill to live by, whereas the general secondary schools only deliver academic education (Ruddell, 1979).

Another factor which may or may not play a part in the choice of and selection into schools is performance at the Common Entrance examination (CEE). Table 7.14 suggests that among the students who had taken the Common Entrance examination, a candidate who scored a good aggregate stood a very good chance of getting into a school of first choice. But a candidate who scored low at the CEE also stood an equal chance of getting into the school of his choice, as he did for getting into a school he had not chosen. This therefore suggests that the students' choice of a school is not necessarily linked to his performance at the CEE. This seems to be more pronounced among BSS private, Business private and Secondary private schools. Secondary public showed a fairly positive link between performance at the CEE and the selection of candidates. Very few who failed the CEE gained entry to these schools whilst this was not the case with the private schools.

Table 7.14
Percentage distribution of student sample by choice, by CEE results and by school

First Choice CEE Aggregates	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Secondary Private
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<215 (fail)	8	-	-	8	-	-
215-265	71	-	56	92	85	50
266-316	13	-	-	-	10	50
368-418	8	-	-	-	5	-
not stated	-	100	44	-	-	-
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
n	24	2	18	13	20	2
Second Choice						
<215 (fail)	29	-	17	-	33	-
215-265	71	-	17	100	67	100
266-316	-	-	16	-	-	-
not stated	-	-	50	-	-	-
Total %	100	-	100	100	100	100
n	7	-	6	1	6	1
Third Choice						
<215 (fail)	100	-	50	7	25	-
215-265	-	-	50	93	75	-
Total %	100	-	100	100	100	-
n	1	-	4	15	4	-
No choice stated						
<215 (fail)	7	3	3	21	13	6
215-265	21	34	10	57	38	29
266-316	-	4	-	-	6	2
not stated	72	59	87	22	43	63
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total n	29	53	33	28	16	51
Total n	61	55	61	57	46	54

A look back at table 7.12 shows that the response 'it was the only school that would take me' was made by only 20 percent of students from Secondary public.

For the purposes of this study, the evidence of failure at the CEE is in two categories:

- (1) those who clearly stated that they failed i.e. obtained less than 215 in aggregate; and
- (2) those who did not state anything and therefore, by definition failed or did not sit the examination at all.

Given these categories, table 7.15 presents a summary of sample pass and failure percentage rates for each school:

Table 7.15
Distribution of percentage rate for pass and fail at the Common Entrance examination by school

	Pass		Fail		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. BSS, Public	33	(54)	28	(46)	61	(100)
2. BSS, Private	20	(36)	35	(64)	55	(100)
3. Business, Public	17	(28)	44	(72)	61	(100)
4. Business, Private	43	(75)	14	(25)	57	(100)
5. Secondary, Public	34	(74)	12	(26)	46	(100)
6. Secondary, Private	19	(35)	35	(65)	54	(100)

According to this study's analysis, schools no.4, 5 and 1 can be classified among the 'good' schools whilst those listed no 3, 6 and 2 do not appear to be up to 'standard'. The second group of schools are all known to have poor facilities, whilst the first group are known to have some of the best facilities available for business/secondary education in Ghana.

7.2.2 Question 2.2

Does the school the student is in reflect his region of birth or the region in which he has stayed the longest?

The location of the six schools attended is shown in table 7.16 below.

The study has already ascertained that the actual allocation of candidates among individual schools is the result of two major factors. The first is the candidate's overall standing in the ranked examination lists. The second is the choice of secondary schools as expressed by the students when they apply for entry to the examination. However, although regional disparities in secondary school provision are large - over two-thirds of those lie in the extreme southern zone and BSSs are generally situated away from major city centres such

Table 7.16
Location of sample schools by region

School	Location (Region)
BSS, Public	Eastern
BSS, Private	Greater Accra
Business, Public	Central
Business, Private	Greater Accra
Secondary, Public	Greater Accra
Secondary, Private	Greater Accra

as Accra and Kumasi (Ruddell 1979) - students are permitted to nominate a school at great distances from their home rather than one in closer proximity. Whether this happens or not is another matter.

Table 7.17 compares the region in which the students were born and /or stayed longest with the schools they attended. The sample schools are located in three regions therefore the distribution of the student sample reflects movements within those three regions only.

Table 7.17
Distribution of student sample by
region of birth, by region of longest stay and by school

School	Greater Accra Birth Stay		Central Birth Stay		Eastern Birth Stay		Total N Birth Stay	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	n
BSS, Public	9	12	4	2	<u>45</u>	<u>60</u>	51	55
BSS, Private	23	20	6	2	12	12	39	45
Business, Public	4	4	<u>69</u>	<u>81</u>	15	12	55	56
Business, Private	<u>31</u>	<u>26</u>	-	2	8	8	42	53
Secondary, Public	15	18	7	2	13	6	32	38
Secondary, Private	19	18	15	12	8	4	37	43
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100		
Total n	114	186	55	52	87	52	256	290

Almost all the students in the sample population came from the southern part of Ghana which is far more developed than the Northern territories. As might be expected urban areas contribute a more than proportionate share. Thus, of the 334 students, 256 (77 percent) were born in the Greater Accra, Central or Eastern regions whilst 290 (87 percent)

stayed there the longest. Only 23 (13 percent) of the student sample came from the other six regions of Ghana.

At a glance, the table shows that it was the students who lived or were born in the three regions that went to the schools within the same region. Thus, BSS public (Eastern region) had 45 percent and 60 percent of its students born and/or living in that region, respectively. Business public (Central region) had 69 percent and a very high 81 percent of its students born and/or living in that region. The remaining four schools, all situated in Accra, reflected a proportionate distribution of the student sample with Business private having a slightly higher intake than the other schools.

Geographical mobility was rather low, and the pattern of where the students had lived the longest does answer positively the question of whether students are more likely to go to schools located in regions in which they have lived the longest or in which they were born.

7.2.3 Question 2.3

Did the choices students made for attending their school reflect in any way the type of education their parents received or the type of work their parents do?

There seems to be no rational basis to argue that the schools students choose or wish to go to necessarily reflect the education parents received or the type of work they do. The illustration of parents' level of education distributed among the student sample and choice of school is given in Figure 7.2 below. The figure shows that the students in first choice BSSs, Business and Secondary schools tended to have parents who had reached the secondary level of education. Parents with business education were negligible. A few had not received any schooling at all.

Interestingly, however, BSSs showed a larger proportion of parents with University or Polytechnic education than Secondary schools, even if only by a slight margin.

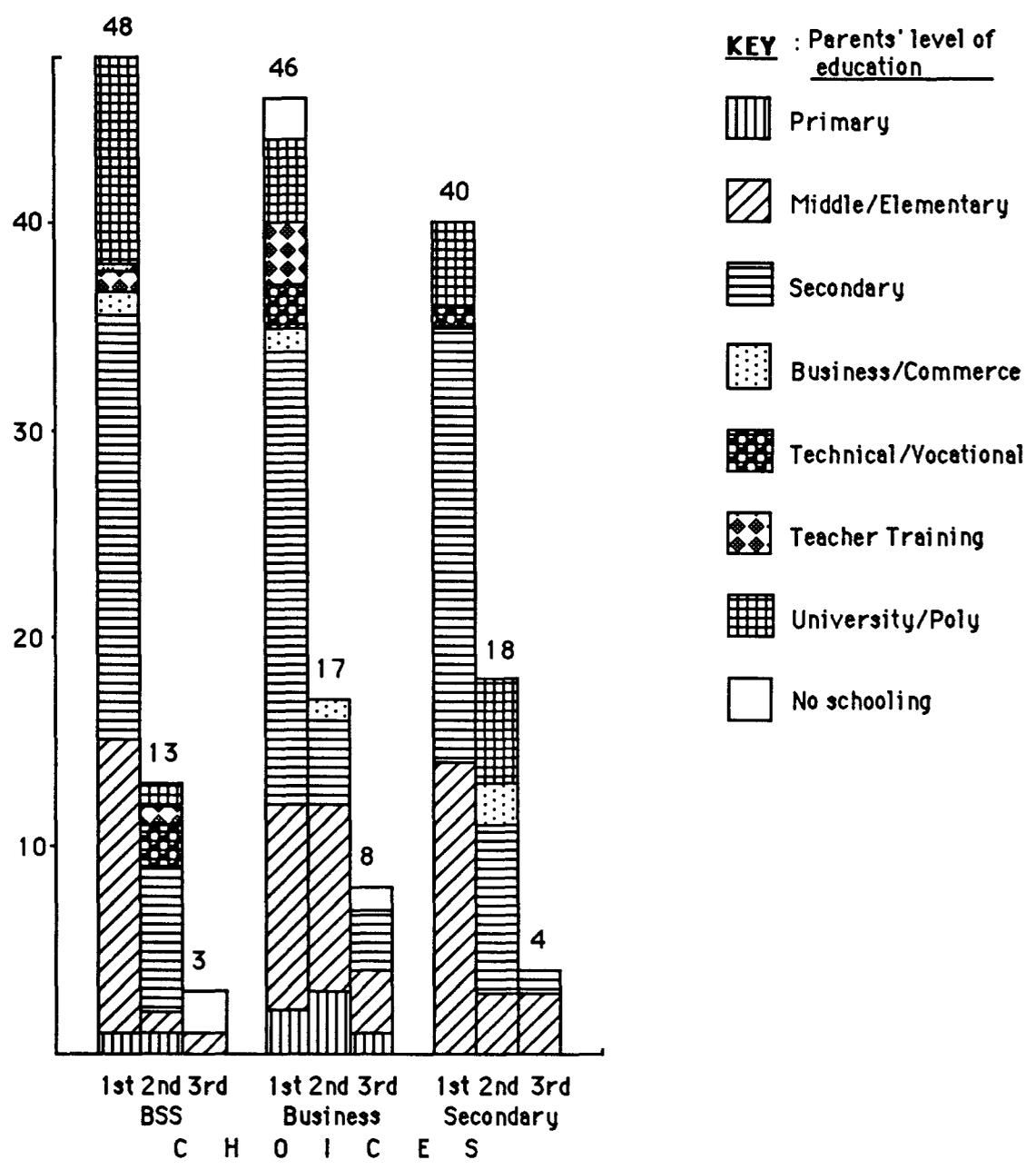


Figure 7.2 Comparing parents' level of education with school choices made by students

According to these findings, the students, whether deliberately or unintentionally, were not greatly influenced by their parents' educational background. Table 7.12 shows that about two-thirds of the students are more interested in what subjects are taught in schools rather than whether their parents want them to go to a particular school. Thus, it is likely that the facilities and academic record of a school and not parents' educational background determine, to a much larger extent, school choices or non-choices.

Nevertheless, an examination of parents' occupation by students' choice of school offers more food for thought. Shiman (cited by Addae-Mensah et al. 1973:107) in his work 'Selection for secondary schools in Ghana: The problem of choosing the most capable' concluded that children from the higher socio-economic groups, whose fathers had professional, administrative or other white-collar occupations, were considerably over-represented in secondary schools. Almost 20 years later and with both parents considered, the picture is no different. Figure 7.3 below shows that of the Secondary school parents, 53 percent were in white-collar jobs, whereas the comparable proportions were only 36 percent and 32 percent in BSSs and Business schools respectively.

Almost two-thirds of the students were drawn from occupational groups representing the farmers and the self-employed. As regards the higher occupational grades, professional and commercial, it has to be noted that they included very few of the actual top layers of society. Of the 38 in first choice BSSs, only one is a high ranking civil servant, of the 54 in first choice Business schools, only four are Officers (higher than the Teachers level) and of the 35 in first choice Secondary schools, only six are personnel and regional officers or directors of companies. Farmers constituted the smallest proportion in first choice Secondary schools (6 percent) compared to first choice BSSs (10 percent) and first choice Business schools (20 percent). Finally the largest group among the remainder are the self-employed, varying proportions of which are shown in all the schools under 1st, 2nd and 3rd choice.

Figure 7.3 shows that students of 'white-collar' parents were more likely to choose Secondary schools, especially making them their first choice. At the same time, they demonstrated just as much interest in business subjects as their counterparts in BSSs and Business schools, so that perhaps the question is not whether students' choices reflect parents' educational background or their type of work but whether they see these schools as the most capable in helping them obtain office work or, failing that, pursue further education.

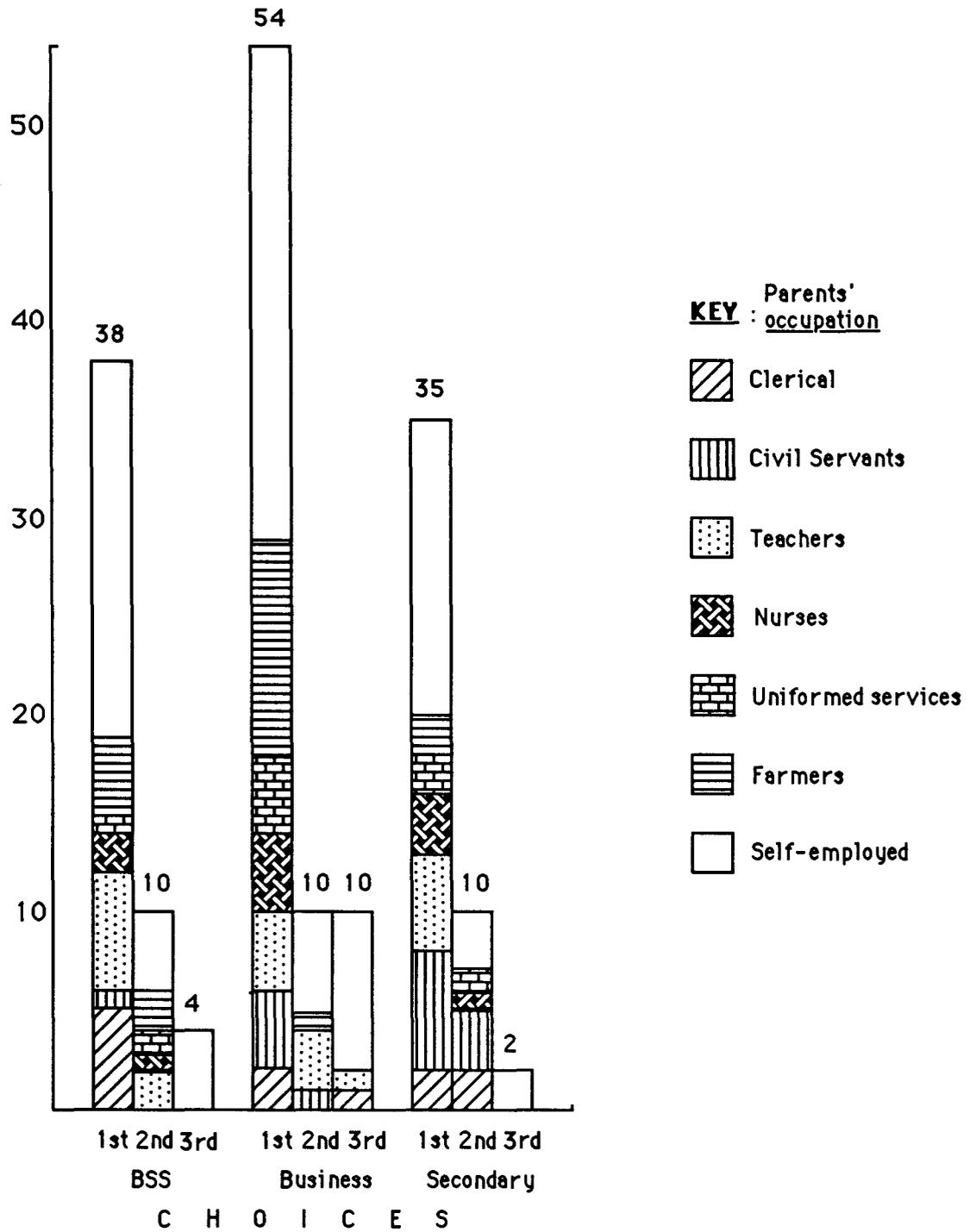


Figure 7.3 Comparing parents' occupations with school choices made by students

7.3 To work or not to work

To understand better the motives of school leavers who wish to look for jobs immediately after school, the reasons for those who would rather continue their education are also relevant. The data consists of a comparison between two subgroups of those aiming to find work immediately after school and those aiming to further their education. The subgroups are abbreviated as W (Work) and NW (Not Work) throughout this section.

7.3.1 *Question 3.1*

What do the students want to do immediately after school?

The distribution of the two subgroups between the six schools, by gender, age and student year is given in table 7.18 together with the proportional size of the groups in relation to the whole sample.

Table 7.18
'Work'(W) and 'Not Work'(NW) respondents by school and year,
age and gender, each as a proportion of the total sample of 334

	BSS		Business		Secondary		Total		% of total sample	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Year										
1st	53	4	46	16	48	10	147	30	44	9
5th	4	55	20	36	11	31	35	122	10	37
Age										
10-13	1	3	2	2	26	5	29	10	9	3
14-17	24	13	37	16	22	19	83	48	25	14
18-21	32	42	27	32	11	17	70	91	21	27
22-25	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	3	-	1
Gender										
Boys	17	26	13	34	34	21	64	81	19	24
Girls	40	33	53	18	25	20	118	71	35	22
Total	57	59	66	52	59	41	182	152	54	46

The fact that job opportunities are more likely to be better in the capital, where four of the schools are located, than in the other regions of Ghana, might account for the higher percentage of respondents from BSS private, Business private, Secondary public and Secondary Private expecting to leave in search of jobs after Form 5. In addition, the age range of those deciding to leave was not in the 18-21 group or even in the 22-25 group but was, surprisingly, in the 14-17 group which represented one quarter of the total sample.

The question of what the students thought of their chances of going to Sixth Form, if they so desired, was put to both the first and fifth year groups. Table 7.19 gives a breakdown on respondents' confidence in their chances of going to Sixth Form. Thirty one percent of the respondents felt they had a very good chance of going to Sixth Form but 57 percent were not so confident: they were more likely to opt for work after school.

In the middle of the table, the high percentage of the 18-21 age group of respondents (67 percent) who felt they had very little chance of going further (and this includes the 'not stated' category) is regrettable. However, the responses in table 7.18 show that only 27 percent did not expect to go to work and, one suspects, in the light of subsequent responses, that they had hopes of further education other than in the Sixth Form.

The bottom part of the table portrays a predictable picture of academic aspirations among boys and girls. The picture is not encouraging. Those who are probably able, but about to reject further education, are predominantly the girls: 68 percent of the girls did not expect to go to Sixth Form as against 46 percent of the boys. Notwithstanding the fact that there were fewer boys in the total sample than girls, a greater number of boys (54 percent) than girls (32 percent) saw themselves as having at least a good chance of going to Sixth Form.

Table 7.19
 Respondents' opinions about going to Sixth Form,
 by school, age and gender, each as a percentage of the total sample (n=334)

	Very Good	Good	Not easy	Poor	not stated	Total
Schools	%	%	%	%	%	%
BSS Public	21 (13)	7 (4)	20 (12)	3 (2)	49 (30)	100 (61)
BSS Private	95 (52)	2 (1)	-	-	3 (2)	100 (55)
Business Public	7 (4)	18 (11)	41 (25)	-	34 (21)	100 (61)
Business Private	2 (1)	2 (1)	12 (7)	2 (1)	82 (27)	100 (57)
Secondary Public	50 (23)	9 (4)	28 (13)	-	13 (6)	100 (46)
Secondary Private	22 (12)	30 (16)	37 (20)	4 (2)	7 (4)	100 (54)
TOTALS	31 (105)	11 (37)	23 (77)	1 (1)	33 (33)	100 (334)
Age						
10-13	52 (30)	16 (9)	15 (9)	-	17 (10)	100 (58)
14-17	33 (42)	11 (14)	26 (33)	1 (2)	29 (37)	100 (128)
18-21	23 (33)	10 (15)	25 (36)	1 (2)	41 (59)	100 (145)
22-25	-	-	66 (2)	-	33 (1)	100 (3)
TOTALS	31 (105)	12 (38)	24 (80)	1 (4)	32 (107)	100 (334)
Gender						
Boys	39 (57)	15 (22)	29 (42)	-	17 (25)	100 (146)
Girls	24 (46)	8 (16)	19 (35)	2 (4)	47 (87)	100 (188)
TOTALS	30 (103)	12 (38)	23 (77)	1 (4)	34 (112)	100 (334)

Note: total numbers are in parentheses

Suffice it to say that this adds weight to existing evidence which suggests that men are higher achievers than women (Blackstone, 1980; Reid and Wormald, 1982).

This section now seeks to establish whether or not the respondents who wish to leave

school are identifiable as a group and what characteristics, if any, distinguish them from their peers who wish to proceed to further education.

7.3.2 Question 3.2

Do the schools and/or do parents encourage students to stay on or to leave and look for jobs immediately after school?

The fifth year respondents were asked whether they enjoyed life at school or whether they wished to leave the school environment as soon as possible. The dichotomy was offered with a neutral 'no strong feelings' alternative. Results are shown in Table 7.20.

Table 7.20
Fifth year students' level of enjoyment of life at school by schools

Type of School	Enjoying life		Want to leave		No strong feelings		Not stated		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BSS Public	19	(63)	6	(20)	4	(14)	1	(3)	30	(100)
BSS Private	14	(48)	10	(35)	4	(14)	1	(3)	29	(100)
Business Public	9	(30)	6	(20)	6	(20)	9	(30)	30	(100)
Business Private	13	(50)	3	(11)	8	(31)	2	(8)	26	(100)
Secondary Public	10	(59)	6	(35)	-	-	1	(6)	17	(100)
Secondary Private	13	(52)	6	(24)	4	(16)	2	(8)	25	(100)
Totals	78	(49)	37	(24)	26	(17)	16	(10)	157	(100)

As a measure of commitment to a decision to continue in, or leave, full time education, the table has two interesting characteristics which confirm the study's previous findings. The first was a lack of interest on the part of some students in working immediately after school (cf Table 7.18) as the table shows that the proportion enjoying life at school was as high as 49 percent. The other characteristic is the proportion of those who wanted to leave as soon as possible - the same for four out of the six sample schools at just six percent. Although one might have expected the Business private school to have a greater number wanting to leave as soon as possible given the high proportion committed to looking for jobs, many students across all the schools were enjoying life at school and therefore, it would be reasonable to assume, were more likely to want to stay on. The assumption is supported by comments from the students expressing the desire to further their course in order to get a good job (Business private), or facing what they believe to be a fact that it will not be possible to find a job after Form 5 but only after university (BSS public) and another

student is very firm in his intention not to even look for a job (Business public).

It is possible to argue that the majority of those wishing to leave school as soon as possible are likely to be those who are adult already and are very much aware of it. Conversely, it could be argued that for many enjoying life at school, adulthood may still be a problem for tomorrow. But these findings do not reflect that. Further analysis of the sample shows that 35 percent of BSS private wanted to leave school quickly (is this a symptom of the greater maturity of 'private' students?) and 35 percent of Secondary public schools wanted to leave school. The only other high figure in this category was again from a private school (Secondary, with 24 percent). This appears to be a random mixture and serves to highlight the very substantial proportion of those students who, although adult, or almost so, were enjoying life in the fifth form.

Fifth year students had been asked what they felt was good or bad about the school they were in. The question was open-ended but responses have been categorised for the sake of clarity. Results are shown in table 7.21.

Table 7.21
Fifth year students' responses regarding the 'quality' of the school

A. <u>Good Points</u>			B. <u>Bad Points</u>		
	n	%		n	%
Teachers	89	57	Teachers	10	6
Equipment			Facilities		
materials	11	7	access	38	24
Subjects	7	4	Textbooks	28	17
Employment/			Subjects:		
prospects	6	4	business	27	17
Academic work	12	8	general	5	3
Discipline	9	5	Discipline	11	7
not stated	23	15	not stated	38	24
Totals	157	100		157	100

Sentiments in praise of business teachers and subjects were quite common. But a few (6 percent) felt dissatisfied with the staffing situation in the schools, given what appears to be for most cases, a lack of permanent shorthand and typewriting tutors which as one student put it 'makes learning difficult' (Business private). Over a quarter of fifth formers were seen as not happy with what textbooks they did not have (or did have), and felt a little uneasy about the lack of business-oriented subjects. Even more disturbing was the 24 percent who were shown as disappointed with facilities provided and lack of access to the

few that existed. For these students not only were classrooms very few but the period allowed for typing is very limited (BSS public; Business private).

Interest shown by the students in the academic success of the school is not as strong (only 7 percent) as their confidence in the teachers but it does indicate how much the academic reputation of a school is, rightly or wrongly, based on its success academically rather than vocationally. Indeed, any attempt at preparing for work was seen as more realistic after further education and not at this early stage because it would then be easier to obtain a job as a business student (Secondary public). On the other hand, 4 percent see themselves as preparing for work because it is easy to get a job after school (BSS public), which is a response in complete contrast to that made by the secondary school student.

Table 7.22 shows yes/no responses to the question of whether the school curriculum, in the students' opinion, could help to get jobs immediately after school.

Table 7.22
Fifth year students' responses to whether the school curriculum helps to get jobs

School	Yes		No		not stated		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
BSS public	30	(100)	-	-	-	-	30	(100)
BSS private	25	(86)	4	(14)	-	-	29	(100)
Business public	28	(93)	2	(7)	-	-	30	(100)
Business private	25	(96)	1	(4)	-	-	26	(100)
Secondary public	14	(82)	1	(4)	2	(12)	17	(100)
Secondary private	11	(44)	-	-	14	(56)	25	(100)
Totals	133	(85)	8	(5)	16	(10)	157	(100)

Data from the survey supports the idea of contentment with schooling amongst the students. When asked how good a job they thought schools had been doing in preparing them for work, the general response was favourable to schools. Well over three quarters (85 percent) said that the school curriculum could help them get jobs, only 5 percent saying the schools could not help. The findings so far suggest a preference for further education rather than for finding a job. Yet the very low 'No' percentage, even with the addition of 'not stated' responses of 10 percent does not indicate a great threat to the legitimacy of business education at the school level. Similarly, although respondents from Secondary private were slightly less positive about the school curriculum, they were not emphatically negative either but gave the impression that the 'general' rather than the 'business' aspect

of the curriculum would help get a job. The majority, however, had great hopes in their business education first and foremost because it would help get a job quickly mainly because there are many establishments in need of typists and accounts clerks. The point constantly emphasised by the students across all the schools was that having taken business subjects would definitely enhance employment prospects everywhere. Every employer or office needs people with some business knowledge and this the school provides.

Further data were concerned with the degree of importance attached to various factors, academic and personal, which would lead to students having to look for jobs. There were both closed and open-ended questions. The former category presented respondents with four possible reasons for having to find work immediately after school instead of continuing their education. In their responses several students gave more than one answer since the alternatives were not mutually exclusive and therefore a number of combinations are shown. Results are shown in Table 7.23:

Table 7.23
Fifth year students' responses to suggested
reasons for looking for work immediately after school

Reasons for looking for work	Very Important		Fairly Important		Not Important		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No hope of going to Sixth Form	19	(44)	7	(16)	17	(40)	43	(100)
Pressure from parents	12	(29)	19	(45)	11	(26)	42	(100)
Want to leave school quickly	7	(21)	4	(12)	23	(67)	34	(100)
Cannot afford the school fees	28	(46)	7	(12)	25	(42)	60	(100)
Totals	66	(37)	37	(21)	76	(42)	179	(100)

Table 7.23 shows two very positive results. The first is the importance attached to the notion that respondents would leave if they had no hopes of continuing to Sixth Form (44 percent). This ties in with the responses reported in table 7.19 where 58 percent were not so confident about going to Sixth Form and therefore were much more likely to look for work immediately after school. The second is if they could not afford the school fees (46 percent).

Pursuing the second of these, respondents were asked to indicate who paid their fees or if they were on scholarship, to state the funding body. Results are shown in table 7.24.

The table reveals that half the respondents had the fees paid by the father with a quarter being catered for by the mother. Only 9 students were on scholarship (six from BSS public, two from BSS private and one from Business private) indicating that very few were given scholarships.

Table 7.24
Persons or organisations providing fees or funds for students in school

	n	%
Fees paid by:		
Father	81	52
Mother	40	25
Uncle	12	8
Brother	12	8
Scholarship	9	5
not stated	3	2
Total	157	100
Scholarship funded by:		
Cocoa Marketing Board	5	56
Local Authority	3	33
Scholarships Secretariat	1	11
Total	157	100

Looking back at table 7.23 it is interesting, and perhaps gratifying that 67 percent of the respondents had no desire to leave school (again this confirms responses recorded in table 7.20). However, the problem of pressure from parents seemed to carry some weight with 73 percent of the respondents which prompts further analysis. As an indicator of the nature of pressure parents could exert on their children, parents' level of education and the type of occupation they were in were compared with students' confidence in their chances of going to Sixth Form. For the purposes of analysis, these opinions are categorised into non-work and work responses where, 'Very Good' and 'Good' are taken to represent students not interested in looking for work (NW) and 'Not easy' 'Poor' and 'not stated' represent those looking for work (W). The results are shown in table 7.25:

Table 7.25
Students' confidence in their chances of going
to Sixth Form by parents' level of education and type of occupation

	NW			W			Total		
	n	%	(%)	n	%	(%)	n	%	(%)
A. Parents' level of education									
Primary	3	3	(30)	7	3	(70)	10	3	(100)
Middle/Elementary	26	22	(34)	50	25	(66)	76	24	(100)
Secondary	34	29	(34)	67	33	(66)	101	32	(100)
Business	10	9	(62)	6	3	(38)	16	5	(100)
Technical	7	6	(70)	3	2	(30)	10	3	(100)
Teacher Training	3	3	(33)	6	4	(67)	9	3	(100)
University/Polytechnic	15	13	(54)	13	6	(46)	28	9	(100)
No schooling	-	-	-	1	0	(0)	1	0	(100)
not stated	19	15	(28)	48	24	(72)	67	21	(100)
Totals %		100			100			100	
Totals n		117			201			318	
B. Parents' type of occupation									
Salary/Wage									
Employment:									
Typist/Acct's clerk	7	6	(54)	6	3	(46)	13	4	(100)
Civil Servants	6	5	(32)	13	7	(68)	19	6	(100)
Teachers	5	4	(16)	27	14	(84)	32	10	(100)
Nurses	4	3	(35)	7	4	(64)	11	4	(100)
Uniformed services	6	5	(38)	10	5	(62)	16	5	(100)
Self-employed	55	48	(43)	75	37	(57)	130	41	(100)
not stated	32	29	(34)	61	30	(66)	93	30	(100)
Totals %		100			100			100	
Totals n		115			199			314	

Table 7.25A reveals absolutely no difference between the two groups in the proportions of parents with middle/elementary and secondary education. The same is true for those who received teacher training. For these three groups of students, the desire to look for work is greater. It is also interesting to observe what is a predictable trend: 8 percent more students with university or polytechnic educated parents wanted to pursue further education. For these students, their parents were examples of a better social and economic status in society. And this trend is also true, less predictably, of the Business and Technical educated parents.

Table 7.25B shows the type of jobs engaged in by both parents within the sample (N = 314). The table reveals that only 23 percent of the NW subgroup (compared to 33 percent for the W subgroup) had professional occupations. Proportions for category Typist/Accounts clerks were roughly the same but in the Civil Servants, Nurses and Uniformed services categories, the proportions with students preferring to look for work were well over twice as high as the figures for those intending to continue their education. The figures are even more startling for the Teachers category which showed the W subgroup as five times as high as the NW subgroup.

Almost half (48 percent) of the NW subgroup had parents who were self-employed. In this case, the students did not reflect the parents' occupational background which would appear to encourage students to leave sooner rather than later, but was a clear result of career choice which firmly places the NW subgroup in the 'white-collar' sector with a heavy emphasis on clerical and non-managerial roles.

There were no farmers represented in the table. This is itself cause for some comment since the total figures for the 'self-employed' and 'not stated' categories were very high: whilst these figures are higher in the W subgroup than in the NW subgroup, it would be logical to assume that some students may wish to join their father (or mother) in a going concern. The same may be said of small traders and storekeepers who may want their children to help them.

The research demonstrates that the subgroup hoping to proceed to further education had a slightly higher proportion of parents with some post-secondary education. However, it does not follow that the parents of that subgroup were more likely to be in 'white-collar' administrative jobs. The converse is equally true. For example, parents in the Civil Servants category represented 68 percent of the W subgroup compared to only 32 percent in the NW subgroup. In other words, although the W subgroup had a higher proportion of parents with only middle and secondary education, the children of parents in 'white-collar' jobs were just as likely to opt for seeking work immediately after school rather than proceeding further with their education.

7.4 Making occupational choices

A number of questions sought to establish reasons for the jobs selected - whether the type of jobs sought, size and location of organisations the students hope to work in, parents' occupation and other factors influenced the choosing of a career.

Tables in this last section set out the responses to these questions from data gathered from the fifth year student sample.

7.4.1 Question 4.1

What type of job is desired and why?

Table 7.26 reveals that there are two broad types of response - those who clearly had a professional career in mind: banking, accounting and secretarial occupations i.e. 68 percent of the group, and the remaining 32 percent who were more vague about their intentions but assumed that they would do some work or other.

Table 7.26
Fifth year job seekers' job preferences (n = 125)

	n	%
Banking and accounting (accounts clerk)	36	29
Secretarial (typist)	49	39
Business services	11	9
Any job/self-employment	2	2
Uniformed services*	7	5
Teaching	12	10
Other**	8	6
Totals	125	100

* Examples given by respondents were the police, the army and the air force

** Examples given by respondents were tailoring, hairdressing, air hostess and trading

Two other questions for this subgroup were also relevant here: those concerning how students saw their long-term job prospects (table 7.27) and the reasons why the job was preferred to any other (table 7.28). The first table shows an increase of 7 percent in those choosing banking and accounting (accounts clerks) and a decrease in those choosing secretarial work (typists). In the second table, the primary reason given for jobs selected by students was that they were 'preparing for it at school'. This is hardly surprising: the preparation of the students for work in the office is supposed to be the *raison d'être* of four of the six sample schools.

Table 7.27
Fifth year job seekers' long-term job expectations (n = 133)

	n	%
Banking and accounting (accounts clerk)	48	36
Secretarial (typist)	41	31
Business services	11	8
Any job/self-employment	1	1
Uniformed services*	8	6
Teaching	12	9
Other**	12	9
Totals	133	100

* as in Table 7.26

** as in Table 7.26

Table 7.28
Fifth year job seekers' reasons for job preferences (n = 121)

	n	%
Preparing for it at school	43	36
Interested in the job	16	13
To support myself and family*	26	21
I will be respected	5	4
It is an important job	8	7
Help country to develop	12	10
Useful whilst awaiting exam results	7	6
Not qualified for other jobs	4	3
Totals	121	100

* includes parents and relatives

The discussion which follows gives examples of open ended responses to this item of the questionnaire. A great many of the 121 responses were saying the same thing. Responses are grouped under the two main jobs selected by the students: banking and accounting (accounts clerk) and secretarial (typist).

Examples of the first group were: 'The salary is enough to cater for anyone who works there' (BSS public); 'You gain more experience' (BSS public); 'When you are in a bank you always appear neat and smart' (BSS public); 'I envy people who do such a job and in addition pressure from parents' (BSS public); 'The Managing Director told me that after Form 5 I could come there and later they will have some exams and I will be promoted' (Secondary private). All but one of those respondents were from the BSSs, the majority of whose contemporaries saw banking and accounting as a very respectable and well paid occupation for the future.

The second group comprised those who saw secretarial work as a 'good' job, an easy job or as something to do while waiting for something better: 'The job of a secretary is needed in almost all the organisations in the country' (Business private); 'It is the only job that I am interested in and many firms are looking for a secretary' (BSS public); 'I have knowledge in that job' (Business private); 'It is in great demand everywhere' (Business private): 'That is the easiest work I can get' (Secondary private); 'I will do it for a short time while waiting for my exam results' (BSS public): Two examples demonstrate unfortunate instances of wrong advice: 'I have no qualifications and I think that is the right job at the moment' (Business private); and 'I have no qualifications for any other job' (Business private). These extracts demonstrate two types of respondents - those who were probably right in their assumption that they were capable of doing the job they were interested in and those who appeared to lack confidence rather than ability.

7.4.2 Question 4.2

Do the boys and girls choose jobs typically associated with their gender and do these jobs reflect their parents' occupation?

Focussing on those who intend to look for jobs, the research shows that there is a clear gender difference in terms of type of work chosen. Table 7.29 shows the most frequently mentioned occupations:

Table 7.29
Fifth year job seekers' job preferences, by gender(n = 126)

	Boys		Girls		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Banking and accounting (accounts clerk)	19	(51)	18	(49)	37	(100)
Secretarial (typist)	9	(18)	40	(82)	49	(100)
Business services	6	(55)	5	(45)	11	(100)
Any job/self-employment	1	(50)	1	(50)	2	(100)
Uniformed services*	6	(86)	1	(14)	7	(100)
Teaching	7	(58)	5	(42)	12	(100)
Other**	4	(50)	4	(50)	8	(100)
Totals	52	(41)	74	(59)	126	(100)

* same as Table 7.26

** same as Table 7.26

It is clear from the above table that banking and accounting were almost equally favoured

by boys (51 percent) and girls (49 percent). Girls, however, showed a heavy bias towards secretarial work (82 percent).

Another possible source of information concerning job choices according to student's gender is the occupational experiences of parents. In terms of *specific* job choices, however, the jobs of parents did not seem to be very important. Table 7.30 shows girls with their mothers' occupations and boys with their fathers' occupations.

Table 7.30
Fifth year students' job preferences by parents' occupations, and gender

A. <u>Mothers' occupation</u>	Girls		B. <u>Fathers' occupation</u>	Boys	
	n	%		n	%
Typist/Accounts clerk	5	5	Typist/Accounts clerk	3	4
Teachers	7	8	Civil Servants	4	6
Nurses	8	9	Teachers	7	10
Self-employment	38	43	Uniformed services	10	15
not stated	31	35	Farmers	21	31
			Self-employed	12	18
			not stated	11	16
Totals	89	100		68	100

Only 7 percent of girls and 9 percent of boys said they wanted a job which was almost identical to the jobs of their mother or father. Parents' occupations direct children into broad categories of work rather than into specific occupations. In this study almost all the students with parents in self-employment hoped to take up white-collar salaried work. None of the students with parents in white-collar, administrative jobs expected to be self-employed or in non-manual occupations.

7.4.3 Question 4.3

Do the students have any idea about where and what type of organisation they would like to go to?

Clearly the most important factor is the perceived suitability of the organisation they wish to work in. But for many of the respondents the choice of type of job was not sufficient and given this, secondary factors must then be considered. Question 16 on the Questionnaire suggested a list of factors which might influence students most in deciding which type of

organisation to go to. Most respondents listed two or three. Responses were grouped into nine fields and frequencies are set out in Table 7.31.

Table 7.31
Fifth year students' grouped responses to factors most influencing choice of work organisation (n=284)

	n	%
Good facilities/nice place	79	28
Interesting job	58	20
Distance from home	43	15
Reputation of organisation	43	15
Teachers' recommendations	30	11
Friends working there	10	4
Employers are known	9	3
Family connections	7	2
Other*	5	2
Totals	284	100

* Time for recreation, good salary, nature of work involved.

The top priority is 'good facilities/nice place', followed by 'interesting job'. There were no significant differences between the responses to this option from the six sample schools. The same can be said of their views on the size of the organisations (table 7.32).

Table 7.32
Fifth year students' responses to size of organisation as a factor influencing choice of job

	n	%
Large firm	104	66
Small firm	13	8
Makes no difference	7	5
not stated	33	21
Totals	157	100

However, as anticipated, there was a difference between boys and girls in their responses to choice of size of organisation (table 7.33).

Table 7.33
Fifth year students' responses to choice of size of organisation, by gender

	Boys		Girls		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Large firm	46	(44)	58	(56)	104	(100)
Small firm	5	(38)	8	(62)	13	(100)
Makes no difference	4	(50)	4	(50)	8	(100)
not stated	13	(41)	19	(59)	32	(100)
Totals	68	(43)	89	(57)	157	(100)

The large proportion of no responses (32 percent) must be dismissive but it was interesting that almost all of those who did not respond were from the Secondary schools, implying that they were not anticipating looking for work immediately after school. Although, at first glance, the figure for girls is much higher than that for boys (56 percent compared to 44 percent), a separate analysis of the schools shows that of the 23 boys and girls who responded to this question from BSS public, 15 boys (i.e. 65 percent) opted for large firms and from Business public 18 boys (90 percent) also opted for large firms.

Respondents were then asked to give reasons why they chose large or small firms. It was an open-ended question but responses have been regrouped and frequencies set out in table 7.34. A sizable positive response was recorded against the importance attached to salaries and facilities:

Table 7.34
Fifth year students' grouped responses to
factors most influencing choice of organisation (n = 157)

A. <u>Choosing large firms</u>			B. <u>Choosing small firms</u>		
	n	%		n	%
More advantages/salaries	32	(20)	Easy personal contact	4	(3)
Good facilities	29	(18)	To acquire ability for		
Acquire more knowledge	15	(10)	advancement	3	(2)
Work is easier/more activity	7	(4)	Wages are high	2	(1)
Well established	6	(4)	Better chance to do well	1	(1)
Relatives/friends work there	5	(3)			
Prestigious/has a good name	4	(3)			
To be popular/know more people	3	(2)			
Totals	101	(6)		10	(7)

Note: The 'not stated' category is not included.

Clearly, large firms are highly regarded by almost all the students although the response to this item was generally low. The majority of the comments for this item in the questionnaire were made mainly by respondents from the public BSSs with only a few from the private BSS and secondary schools. What is most striking about the preference for large firms, is the association of such firms with higher pay, a better environment with good facilities and advancing in one's career. A student from the private BSS mentions learning skills, and the assumption the researcher makes here is that the student is concerned about new skills, skills that were not learnt at school.

Whilst it is true that over two-thirds of the sample that responded to this item are in favour of large firms, there are a few who opt for small firms. But there is some overlapping in the reasons given with those for large firms. Yet, there were one or two exceptions as, for example, one private BSS student, a little idealistically, envisages using skills learnt from school to expand the small firm. Where the response was one of indifference, the most popular reason was that it is very difficult to get jobs so any organisation (large or small) would be acceptable to them.

Respondents' attitudes towards the physical work environment were reviewed. Three conditions were given and respondents asked to pick what would be important to them in choosing a location of the work place. The results are shown in Table 7.35.

Table 7.35
Fifth year students' responses to physical and
environmental factors as influences on choices of location of workplace

	n	%
Very close to the town/city centre	102	65
Isolated or on the outskirts of town	10	6
Have no strong feelings	21	12
not stated	24	15
Total	157	100

The levels of response to this question were high, 65 percent of students chose the city centre and only 12 percent made no choice at all. Table 7.36 shows a breakdown of the positive responses as a percentage of the total fifth year student sample.

Table 7.36
Fifth year students' grouped responses on factors
most influencing choice of location of workplace (n = 157)

<u>A. Choosing town/city centre</u>		<u>B. Choosing outskirts</u>			
	n	%		n	%
Not be late for work	36	23	Not be late for work	2	1
Access to recreational facilities	19	12	Access to rec. facilities	2	1
To be near home	13	8			
Better job opportunities	12	8			
More activity/busy	10	6			
Totals	90	57		4	2

A majority of the respondents considered not being late for work as an important factor influencing choice. This proved more popular than access to recreational facilities, and being near home more important than being in a busy environment. Mistaken impressions however, are evident where, for example one student from the public BSS believes that in the city 'good' jobs are always available. Some students show much more maturity in the decisions they make, they see the city as 'a quicker means of getting to my part-time classes' (Business private), for example. And others who have no strong feelings were willing to go anywhere (6 percent) in the belief that there were job opportunities everywhere anyway (8 percent).

With a reasonable response rate to this question, and very strong support for 'good facilities' and 'closeness to the city centre', environmental factors are an important secondary consideration for many students in choosing their future workplace.

7.4.4 Question 4.4

What information or advice have students received about getting jobs?

The study provides some information on how school leavers see their way to getting jobs by assessing the relative importance of the family, friends and teachers. Table 7.37 shows that the ranking influence on this issue were the parents, then friends and advertisements being joint sources of advice, followed by the teachers as the least important source of advice.

Table 7.37
Fifth year students' sources of advice on job choice (n = 157)

	n	%
Parents	70	(45)
Friends	15	(10)
Advertisements	15	(10)
Teachers	8	(5)
No-one	13	(8)
not stated	36	(22)
Totals	157	(100)

That the teachers rank so low in the students' estimation of what advice they give them is not surprising. The teachers would not be the most capable to advise students especially as they have not received any training in careers counselling. Indeed, when the time came for students to leave the final year of school, there was no indication that teachers saw the students off to the next stage of life, be it in furthering their education or looking for jobs. It seemed to be understood that after leaving school, the leavers would somehow find their own way. There was no interaction with a careers service or with careers teachers because they did not exist in the schools although students often mentioned teachers' general comments and advice they received: In building up hopes, 'A master in my school told me that if I do well I can get employment in any of the reputable organisations' (Business private); and a very vague 'I get information from teachers' (BSS public). Often students mention how helpful teachers' advice was but the nature of the advice seems somewhat trivial. The counsel of teachers and verbal advice available in schools are eagerly sought but it is promises of jobs and help from those outside the school *and working* that students seem to hanker after most.

Encouragement and support from friends outside the school takes the form of comments such as 'My friend is a clerk at the National Savings and Credit Bank in Accra and he gave me advice' (BSS public). But it is not clear what the nature of the advice was or how much importance he attached to that advice. The table shows that when advice was sought, the peer group was not considered to be of major importance as percentage figures bear out. Similarly, written information and advertisements in the daily newspapers share the same low percentage indicating that these were not perceived to be major significant influences on student choices: 'I read the Daily Graphic newspaper advertising for employment but not asking for Form 5 leavers' (BSS public); and one student stated that he got 'information through the Daily Graphic, the Ghanaian Times and through *personal contacts* (emphasis is mine)' (Business public) so that advertisements alone are not very

helpful. That the school leavers are unlikely to depend on advertisements for getting jobs seems evident when 60 percent of the fifth year student sample made no response to the question of who they would apply to for jobs.

Personal contacts are more likely, where applicants for jobs visit employers or firms. But table 7.38 shows only 35 percent looking to Heads of organisations and Personnel Managers, classic recruitment officers, giving the impression that the majority show a lack of confidence in approaching them.

Table 7.38
Fifth year students: Persons to whom applications for jobs were made

	n	%
Personnel Department/Head	17	11
Manager/Director	26	16
Bank Manager	12	8
Family	3	2
Anyone in charge	5	3
not stated	94	60
Totals	157	100

The low 2 percent in favour of the family really does not reflect their role in advising students as was evident in table 7.37. They may not be able to offer work but their influence is strong. Previous research in Ghana supports this study's findings where 14 out of a sample of 55 employed school leavers (26 percent) received information concerning their jobs or introduction to it through a member of their family (Boyd and French 1973). Relatives (brothers, sisters and uncles) proved to have significant influence on school leavers' hopes of finding work in terms of the advice they received from them. In all the examples of advice received, the relatives mentioned were working, usually either in a bank or other similar institution. In one instance, the relative did more than give advice: 'My uncle informed me of getting a job as a typist at his place of work' (Business private).

However, parents were found to be the most strongly supportive of their children's quest for jobs. The sample shown in table 7.39 was strongly biased towards middle/elementary and secondary educated parents.

Table 7.39
Fifth year students: Advice received from parents
according to their education level and occupation

<u>Parents' education</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Parents' occupation</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
Primary	3	2	Typists/Accounts clerks	5	4
Middle/Elementary	35	26	Civil Servants	21	15
Secondary	52	38	Teachers	6	4
Business/Commercial	4	3	Nurses	7	5
Technical/Vocational	2	1	Uniformed services	7	5
Teacher Training	4	3	Farmers	6	4
University/Polytechnic	13	10	Self-employed	51	36
No schooling	1	1	not stated	39	27
not stated	24	18			
Totals	137	100		142	100

Only 10 percent had a father or mother who was a graduate, and 15 percent had parents in administrative/professional occupations. Nevertheless, the degree of support was uniformly high. Sometimes parents purposely advised their children to choose business subjects because it would help them find a job afterwards. For one particular student (from a public business school), the parents' advise was a little more dramatic:

My parents advise me to search for a job so that
we will get something to eat
(Business public).

Others see jobs at this time only as a means to further their education:

My mother advised me that while I'm in the house
waiting for my exam results, I should be working
to get money for the continuation of my schooling
(BSS public)

a comment which is highly significant in the light of the discussion that follows.

The fifth year students were asked to provide information on previous school leavers: whether they had found jobs, were continuing their schooling or were unemployed. Table 7.40 summarises the information received:

Table 7.40
Fifth year students': Information provided on current
activities of former students one year after leaving school

	n	%
Studying*	73	47
Working		
Typists	18	12
Accounts clerks	1	0
Teaching	6	4
Other**	17	11
Self-employed		
Automechanic	3	2
Trading	11	7
Other~	3	2
Unemployed ---	23	15
Totals	155	100

* includes an apprentice in a fitting shop

** includes a houseboy and a hairdresser; the rest are not identified

~ not identified

--- includes three who are actively looking for work

Of the 155 who left school, almost half (47 percent) carried on with their education, whereas 38 percent found work. Differences emerged between the types of work found where the largest group was concentrated in white-collar occupations (27 percent) such as typing and teaching. It is interesting that out of this group, there was only one accounts clerk but this does confirm what was said earlier: post-secondary skills are definitely required for such jobs. Also interesting is the numbers who were teaching. They had not received any teacher training - yet as pupil teachers they were part of the teaching profession. Eleven percent were self-employed or most probably helping their families one way or another with 15 percent still unemployed, relatively low for one year out of school.

Although information provided by the students was very limited, it does offer some insight into the realism of students' expectations about what they wanted to do when they left school. What happened to the students once they left school did differ between the schools in the study. The Secondary private recorded fourteen unemployed and seven working; the Secondary public recorded nine in further education; the Business private recorded four working and five teaching but it was the BSS private which recorded twelve typists, nine in trading and an overwhelming forty-three in further education.

The trend shows that the majority did not expect to continue their education after Form 5. Those who wanted a job usually ended up doing work which they had not prepared for

while in school i.e. trading, automechanics and even teaching. Furthermore, from the percentage of unemployed, it is evident that it was extremely difficult to find a job immediately after school, at least not white-collar work, and many had to wait longer than a few months.

What stands out most from this finding is that hopes for the future are strongly related to opting mainly for continuing education. However, it is not certain whether students did so because they wished to or were forced into it because they could not find any jobs. Regardless of who gave the students advice however, the general tenor of it was to find work; such advice being mediated by the level of qualifications obtained by the students.

7.5 Summary of findings

The results of the study seem to indicate that respondents from BSSs, Business and Secondary schools in the private sector are those who had had low aggregates in the Common Entrance examination (CEE) or had failed it. Performance in the CEE depends very much on the level at which the students leave Middle school and differences in results obtained were marginal between boys and girls. Further, students' school choices are not found to be linked to performance at the CEE unless the schools are in the public sector.

Children of salaried parents are found more in the public sector Secondary and BSS but there is no link between that and the choices students made. The students are more interested in facilities such as typewriters and textbooks, the academic performance of the school and, essentially, what the school could give them. The study finds that parents' level of education and type of occupation are only superficial measures of differences between boys and girls represented in the six sample schools. Aspirations for office work (and similar white-collar occupations) are common to all students irrespective of their background.

In terms of aspirations for further education, the respondents almost unanimously feel uncertain about their ability to proceed to Sixth Form, especially the girls, although they express the desire to embark on some form of further education or training.

On the other hand, an overwhelming majority have confidence in obtaining jobs as a direct result of what they studied at school. Implicit in this belief is that teachers can help students achieve success (and hence find jobs appropriate to their studies), although very few actively seek advice from them. Broadly corroborating the comments made by the students, more faith is put into help provided by family and friends in finding jobs.

Accordingly, the students are aware that schools in themselves do not provide guarantees of salaried work.

If the responses of the students and the inferences are anything to go by, the implications for the students should be that

- the majority of students see working in the office as accounts clerks or typists as their primary goal;
- parents' occupations are not seen as markers for students' own aspirations;
- the students view their future place of work as large firms in the city centre with 'good' salaries and 'nice facilities';
- while in school, the students expect teachers to provide the professional support they need and generally believe that they receive such support.

By and large the students are quite realistic about their chances outside the classroom. In fact many of their comments reveal how much they are aware of the possibilities of unemployment and long waiting periods before they can get any work. And, according to information on former students, jobs that are found immediately after school are usually in clerical (typing), trading and teaching where chances of finding a job seem to depend very much on personal contacts. This is not too far from what was found in the study by Boyd and French (1973) and Ruddell (1979) in Ghana. But the recruitment of school leavers for secretarial and accounting jobs at the junior level may ultimately depend on policies that employers have when recruiting at that level, irrespective of roles that personal contacts may play. This possibility will be examined when the employed are reached in the next chapter.

Chapter 8 Working in an Office

8.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with employees recruited in a variety of firms in the Accra region of Ghana (see Chapter 5). It outlines factors which have led to the recruitment of the employee sample and indicates to what extent the type of school they attended and/or their social background may have contributed to their recruitment into these firms.

The sample is made up of 37 employees with varying educational backgrounds. Table 8.1a presents the distribution of the employee sample by sex and type of school attended prior to recruitment:

Table 8.1a
Distribution of employee sample
by sex and type of school attended

Employees			
Type of School attended	Male	Female	Total
	n	n	n
BSS, Public	2	1	3
BSS, Private	3	1	4
Business, Public	2	-	2
Business, Private	7	5	12
Secondary, Public	4	4	8
Government Secretarial	-	3	3
Polytechnic	-	5	5
Total	18	19	37

Table 8.1b shows the distribution of the employee sample by the type of school attended and by firm (in scale and sector) and table 8A.1 (Appendix A) shows the nature of the services provided by the firms they came from.

Table 8.1b
Distribution of employee sample by
school attended and by firm (in scale and sector)

Type of School attended	Type of Firm			Total
	Large State	Large Private	Small Private	
	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	1	2	-	3
BSS, Private	1	1	2	4
Business, Public	-	2	-	2
Business, Private	3	9	-	12
Secondary, Public	4	4	-	8
Government Secretarial	3	-	-	3
Polytechnic	-	3	2	5
Total	12	21	4	37

The results of this study will be looked at in the following ways:

- 8.1 the type of school the employees attended and the relation between this and other variables; and
- 8.2 employees' opinions about their employers in the context of criteria they believe employers used in their own recruitment, their present job satisfaction together with future aspirations and the way they perceive policies for recruitment of school leavers.

The two following subsections are further subdivided according to the questionnaires completed by the employees. Each section investigates the employees' responses by sets of questions which seek to determine reasons why they were selected from among other job applicants. It should be noted that in these questions the pronoun 'he' stands for both genders.

8.1 The 'before' and 'after' events surrounding the employees' present job

This section focuses on the type of jobs employees were doing, the number of applications they made and the factors which they felt best helped them in obtaining their present jobs.

8.1.1 *Question 1.1*

Is the type of school the employee attended and any job he may have done before this one reflected in the job he is doing now?

Table 8.2 shows the types of job distributed by type of school attended:

Table 8.2
Distributions of employee sample
by type of job and type of school attended

Type of Job	Type of School attended							Total
	BSS Public	BSS Private	Sec Public	Bus Public	Bus Private	Polytech	Govt Sect	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Typist	1	-	2	-	8	1	1	13
Accounts clerk	1	2	3	2	2	-	-	10
Grade 1 officer	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Senior accounts clerk	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	4
Assistant accounts clerk	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Stenographer	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4
Receptionist/Secretary	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	3
Trainee accountant	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	3	4	8	2	12	5	3	37

From this table it may be observed that the majority of employees are typists, followed in descending order by accounts clerks, senior accounts clerks/stenographers, and receptionist/secretaries. Most of the typists come from the private business school which caters primarily for the typing profession. Stenographers come not from secondary schools but from post-secondary Polytechnics or specialist schools, namely the Government Secretarial school.

The employees were asked whether the school helped in finding jobs and where comments from employees are quoted, items in brackets denote the type of school, type of job and type of firm in scale and sector.

For 62 percent of the sample from every type of school background, help is not given.

The school does not help so they contact those who left before them and now have a job. Thirty-eight percent, however, were inclined to believe the opposite:

The school helps because it has everything to enable you perform well when taking your exams and, as a result, you get a good job.

(Business private, typist;
large, private).

Help is also given in terms of advice received about writing applications, information provided by the teacher, advice regarding the selection of subjects in Form 4 and tutors giving addresses of firms. However, in terms of the *type* of school being of help in getting jobs, 31 employees give a positive response (8 of whom were from the Business private school), with 6 responding negatively. In addition, general comments made about the schools offer some insight into the way the employee sample perceive the value of what and how they were taught.

Only nine out of thirty-seven employees make no comments about their school, whilst, not surprisingly perhaps, the Government Secretarial schools and Polytechnics receive the most favourable comments. The other schools are supported, but they also receive comments which suggest that problems will surely be encountered in the search for jobs.

To the specific question whether employers are concerned about school performance when recruiting for jobs, two-thirds of the sample respond affirmatively. Employees from private business and public secondary schools, in particular, make up most of this proportion. In addition, testimonials help although previous experience and selections are also important, as pointed out notably from employees with a private business background. Others do not know if employers placed any weight on school performance before they were offered the job.

Proceeding to the question of particular problems school leavers faced, unemployment, for example, is mentioned by 17 employees, with 5 mentioning lack of work experience. Those with a Polytechnic background believe that every school should have a Sixth Form although they acknowledge that the chances of finding a job are only enhanced after attending a Polytechnic where there is a better concentration of non-academic subjects. Furthermore, it's much more difficult to find a job today, as opposed to the 1960s - it *takes time* especially if you are only a typist and not a stenographer. This is compounded by the fact that school leavers who are not ready to take secretarial/receptionist jobs are stuck because employers prefer to *combine the two to save money*. This opinion is much in line with that held by both the typists and accounts clerks from BSS and business

school backgrounds. For them, not having had work experience is a problem because most employers do not like to take people *fresh* from school since they lack *practical knowledge* as obtained in organisations. As such, they spend their early years unemployed.

Employees were further asked if they had worked before, whether during the long vacation or any full time job. Only nine mention that they worked part-time or during the long vacation. Of this number, six worked in typing and accounting related jobs and had attended the BSSs, the Business schools and the Polytechnics. All six believe that having worked before helped them in getting their present job. The other three, having worked on a factory or farm, do not believe it helped them at all.

Although only 49 percent of the sample mention the Greater Accra region as their home town, as many as 70 percent looked for work in this region and 89 percent now live and work in the region. Certainly, this is understandable to the extent that the survey of employees was conducted only in the Greater Accra region. However, it is notable that there is still a heavy migration from the regions to the city in search of jobs.

8.1.2 Question 1.2

How many applications did the employee make before getting this job and why is he with this particular firm?

Having discussed whether the type of school background had helped in finding jobs and whether in the employees' opinion employers were concerned about their school performance at the point of recruitment, this subsection considers how long, in terms of applications made, it took for the employees, to get their present job. Seventeen employees made less than five previous applications, with twelve having got their job at the first application. Ten percent made from ten up to more than twenty applications.

In terms of the *ways* the employees obtained their jobs, it appears that the writing of formal application letters, sometimes followed by interviews and selection tests, are the most frequently mentioned by employees from all types of schools. Just over half the sample mention these. Only one employee looked to the labour office whilst the rest relied on personal contacts, notably relatives and friends.

Respondents were further asked to state why they wanted to work with their particular firm. Fourteen out of the employee sample are in their present job because they were recruited, another six because they liked the place. Seventeen wanted the experience.

What was perhaps a more useful exercise was to explore the relation between the length of time spent in the job and the type of school attended as well as the salary earned. Tables 8A.2 and 8A.3 (Appendix 8A) distribute the employee sample among the three variables. The first table shows that 38 percent of the sample (fourteen employees) have spent two to five years in their jobs, more usually with the private firms. In the second table, the two highest salaries came from the small private firms.

It is, therefore, interesting to cross-tabulate, in table 8.3 below, type of job and salary earned with the length of time employees have spent with their firm.

Table 8.3
Cross-tabulation of employee sample by type of job
and salary earned with the length of time spent with the firm

Length of time with firm					
	Up to 1 year	2-5 years	6-10 years	more than 10 years	Total
Type of Job					
Typist	2	8	-	3	13
Accounts clerk	2	-	5	3	10
Grade 1 officer	-	-	-	1	1
Senior accounts clerk	-	2	2	-	4
Asst accounts clerk	-	1	-	-	1
Stenographer	2	2	-	-	4
Receptionist/Secretary	1	-	-	2	3
Trainee accountant	-	1	-	-	1
Salary earned in C '000s					
70-79	-	2	-	-	2
80-89	1	1	-	1	3
90-99	2	4	2	1	9
100-109	3	4	-	-	7
110-119	-	3	-	1	4
120-129	-	-	1	-	1
130-139	-	-	1	1	2
140-149	1	-	1	1	3
150-159	-	-	-	-	-
160-169	-	-	-	1	1
170-179	-	-	1	-	1
over 200	-	-	1	-	1
not stated	-	-	-	3	3
Total n	7	14	7	9	37
Total (%)	(19)	(38)	(19)	(24)	(100)

The table shows three important features. First, for positions to be attained above that of typist or accounts clerk, but with the exception of stenographer, at least one year's service with the firm is required. The likelihood, then, is that the post of senior accounts clerk, for example, is filled by promotion.

Secondly, whilst it is acceptable that those with one year's service or less earn less than 110,000 cedis a year (with the exception of one employee, in a large state firm, earning between 140-149,000 cedis a year), some employees are still earning the same rates who have worked from six to more than ten years with their firms. Such employees have not moved up from simple 'typist' or 'accounts clerk' status. Thirdly, although the sample is small the evidence from the three tables (8A.2, 8A.3 and 8.3) is that the combination of type of school attended, length of service with the firm and the type of firm determined the salary paid. It did not follow, however, that longer service would mean higher salary as mentioned earlier. For example, a typist with a polytechnic training, in a large private firm and with only 2 years service, earns only 70-79,000 cedis per annum. But another typist with a business school background in a large state firm having worked for only one year was earning 100-109,000 cedis per annum. On the other hand, there is no guarantee that a rise in job status will ensure a rise in salary. This issue is raised later in the light of findings on employees' job satisfaction.

8.1.3 *Question 1.3*

What advice, if any, did the employee receive and what does he feel best helped him in getting the job he has now?

Table 8.4 distributes the sample by type of school attended and sources of advice received concerning the job search. The figures show the several responses each employee made:

Table 8.4
Distribution of employee sample by school
and source of advice received about jobs

Type of School attended	Source of advice									
	Parents		Relatives		Working Friends		Family Friends		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	1	2	-	3	2	1	-	3	3	9
BSS, Private	-	4	1	3	2	2	-	4	3	13
Business, Public	1	1	-	2	-	2	-	2	1	7
Business, Private	3	9	1	11	6	6	2	10	12	36
Secondary Public Government	2	6	1	7	1	7	1	7	5	27
Secretarial	1	2	-	3	-	3	-	2	1	10
Polytechnic	3	2	1	4	1	4	-	5	5	15
Total n	11	26	4	33	12	25	3	33	30	117

From the table, it is seen just how insignificant the sources of advice really are with only 30 responses indicating the types of sources from which advice was received as against 117 responses failing to acknowledge any of the sources.

Nevertheless, where employees found the advice *generally* helpful, this was in terms of (a) how to apply for jobs (b) methods of writing application letters and (c) ways to improve appearance, comportment and presentation at the interview.

Employees were further asked what they felt best helped them get their job. Ten made no response. Fifteen misunderstood the question. The remaining twelve, four of whom came from the private business school, state many factors, most of which related to having performed well at the interview and in the selection test, having the right attitudes such as humility and diligence, or having a good testimonial and an application letter which was 'neatly presented'. Only one employee mentions the influence of a neighbour and another that having no marital responsibilities and living quite close to the office were important considerations.

Twenty nine out of the thirty seven employees feel the subjects they did helped them in their present job. Several comments from employees throw more light on how the subjects helped. They stress the *usefulness* of particular subjects. For example, for both accounts clerks with a public secondary and private business school background, the

accounts subject helped them understand the various financial transactions they encountered in the office, and believe that they have been able to understand the job quickly, more so than if they had been science students. For the stenographer with a Polytechnic background, the accuracy and speed test in typing and shorthand that was required, made her very much aware of what would be expected of her in the office so she worked towards it.

Others see the subjects in their entirety, that is, they are seen as generally having made them aware of how to deal with normal office work. But not all are pleased with what they feel was not directly related to what they are now doing. As one employee puts it:

The school never prepared me for my present job (on the computer) but very well in the business subjects because of my understanding of commerce.

(BSS private, accounts clerk;
large, private).

Or, the *business* subjects taken did not confer any particular advantages for prospective employees:

I cannot say if business subjects helped because there are employees here with *science* subjects, *not business*, and they were taken on just the same.

(Secondary public, assistant
accounts clerk; large, state).

Twenty nine employees are happy with the job they are doing. One typist would have preferred to be in the import-export business, another wanted to be a secretary in a private firm and another (with a secondary school background) wanted to go to university but did not do well enough in Sixth Form so had to find a job.

8.2 Opinions from employees about employers

The final questions put to respondents were related to ways in which they perceived their school to have prepared them for their job. The questions teased out views they had about the employer-school relationship, revealing criteria which they believed were significant in entitling them to the modern sector jobs. Their evaluation of the recruitment process as they experienced it, is related to their job satisfaction as seen in their desire to remain or leave, and why.

8.2.1 Question 2.1

Does the employee believe his school had prepared him adequately for meeting his employer's needs or would changes in what and how business subjects are taught be justified?

Table 8.5 below presents findings in respect to choices employees would make if they were choosing schools again.

Most employees would choose the Business Secondary School if they had the chance (cf findings in Chapter 7) yet, only seven out of the total sample who opted for this school had gone there originally:

Table 8.5
Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended
and type of school to be chosen if given the chance to start again

Type of School attended	New school choice				Total
	BSS	Ordinary Secondary	Technical Secondary	Other*	
	n	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	3	-	-	-	3
BSS, Private	4	-	-	-	4
Business, Public	1	1	-	-	2
Business, Private	8	2	1	1	12
Secondary, Public	3	3	1	1	8
Government Secretarial	1	-	-	2	3
Polytechnic	5	-	-	-	5
Total n	25	6	2	4	37
Total (%)	(68)	(16)	(5)	(11)	(100)

*Vocational secondary -catering (1 secondary public employee)
Government Secretarial (2 government secretarial employees)
Business school (1 business private employee)

This table clearly indicates the esteem in which BSSs are held. They see the function of these schools as not only making it easier to get a job but widening their knowledge. Skills that are acquired there can be improved on after recruitment whereas the secondary school only offers general academic subjects. The six proponents of the general secondary school, however, argue, that the secondary school offers the chance to move into streams. Business or Technical schools are too restricting. At the age you enter the school you may not have made up your mind about what you want to do.

And in two cases, the technical school offered better prospects, in terms of enabling

students to learn practical skills like electronics, engineering, carpentry, bricklaying and so on. However, when it came to whether business subjects should be taught in all secondary schools an even greater majority were clearly in favour (table 8.6):

Table 8.6
Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended
and whether business should be taught across all secondary schools

Across all secondary schools				
Type of School attended	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total
	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	2	-	1	3
BSS, Private	3	1	-	4
Business, Public	2	-	-	2
Business, Private	11	1	-	12
Secondary, Public	7	1	-	8
Government Secretarial	3	-	-	3
Polytechnic	5	-	-	5
Total n	33	3	1	37
Total (%)	(89)	(8)	(3)	(100)

The majority gave many diverse reasons, most underlining the advantage business subjects have in enabling leavers to find a job, especially when the student is unable to pursue advanced education. Hence, the emphasis is on the possibilities of increased diversification where students can broaden their knowledge in *both* business and academic subjects. Furthermore in allowing for choices through diversifying school subjects, people are not forced to do a particular subject because they are in one type of school or another.

Seven employees however did not believe it would be helpful to include business subjects in the school curriculum, preferring on the job training. Of these, two came from a BSS, three from a business, one from a secondary and one from a polytechnic background, respectively. They feel that school leavers come out with little or no practical knowledge. On the other hand, with on the job training one gains actual practical experience. In addition, employers want the employee to be familiar or be able to cope with the job he will be assigned, especially where the employee will be confronted with new, sophisticated techniques and equipment not available in schools.

Two employees believe in combining the two, as one of them puts it:

Training on the job is good because they get to know the job very well and how to go about their work but employers should also give the school leavers a chance to gain some experience.

(Business private, typist; large, private; BSS private, accounts clerk; large, private).

Others do not agree with on the job training on its own at all. To begin with not all firms will have the capacity to do so and even if they did, it would better serve both the employees' and employers' needs in the long run if the school leaver were to have the basic general knowledge as can be gained from school. Experience comes later, after years at work. They should employ secondary school leavers because they have, if nothing else, a broad mind to adapt to things easily and quickly.

Employees with a BSS background were asked what they felt the aims of these schools were or should be. Others who did not have that background also responded to this item in the questionnaire and are included in this analysis. Most of the employees expressed sentiments aimed at bridging the gap between theory and practicals by offering students the opportunity to occasionally work with business firms as part of their training whilst at school. The objective should be not only to teach business subjects, but to train students to suit (general) employment demands.

Table 8.7
Distribution of employee sample by opinion on whether
BSS leavers do better on the job than ordinary secondary leavers

Type of School attended	BSS leavers do better than ordinary secondary leavers				Total
	Yes	No	Depends ¹	not stated	
	n	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	3	-	-	-	3
BSS, Private	2	-	1	1	4
Business, Public	2	-	-	-	2
Business, Private	8	1	2	1	12
Secondary, Public	1	1	-	6	8
Government Secretarial	-	-	-	3	3
Polytechnic	1	-	-	4	5
Total n	17	2	3	15	37
Total (%)	(46)	(5)	(8)	(41)	(100)

¹ See Employees' comments

In line with these comments, table 8.7 above pursues the question further by comparing whether BSS leavers learn new skills more quickly or perform better at work than ordinary school leavers. Although 41 percent of the sample did not respond, 46 percent believe BSS leavers to be better than their academic counterparts. According to three employees, both BSSs and ordinary secondary leavers do well depending on individual abilities since some (irrespective of where they come from) are able to learn faster than others.

As to whether employees felt BSS leavers had a better chance of *finding jobs*, this also depended on a number of factors. For instance, it makes no difference whether you do typing in a business school or in a secondary stream when there are jobs which specifically want GCEs irrespective of the type of school you come from. At the same time, whilst secondary school leavers are suitable for general work (Business private background), those from Polytechnics know more and so are preferable. Also, though BSS leavers have better chances of employment, ultimately, it depends on the examination results you get in subjects, whether you come from a BSS or a general secondary school (Accounts clerk; public secondary background).

Others are more categorical in their assertion that *BSS* leavers are better. They are equal to business schools in the work output and what they do in the schools. Typists and accounts clerks from such schools are better equipped to do their job. Employees from an ordinary academic secondary school have not that advantage. Although they can do a number of clerical jobs they have no real practical skills. The BSS leaver, on the other hand, has studied in more detail than the general school leaver, he or she has already acquired a skill that can be improved on when employed and any training on the job that they might have to undergo will be for a short duration. Clearly, there is the general consensus amongst the employee sample that knowing the theory and putting it into practice gives you an advantage with subjects like business methods, accounts and economics.

A few others believe, however, that Ghanaian employers do not look for BSS or business school leavers to fill their vacancies. They look for ordinary secondary school leavers with *some* knowledge in accounting or typing so that recruitment is determined by qualifications with BSS or secondary school leavers being given equal chances.

Another employee responds negatively but for reasons that have more to do with contacts than that the candidate is considered 'worthy':

Parents of leavers from ordinary secondary schools occupy very good positions in offices and by virtue of their positions make it easy for them to help their wards or their wards' school mates.

(Business private, typist;
large, private).

But, whilst employees' impressions of business subjects are generally complimentary, twelve employees, of which five came from a public secondary background, do not feel they are sufficiently related to the practical work experience. For example, this brief comment, notably from a former BSS student, was not untypical:

Topics taught are only those from textbooks without applying it in practical situations.

(BSS public, trainee accountant;
large, private).

As expected, improvements in business subjects, suggested by the employees, are mostly in terms of more modern equipment, up to date textbooks and better quality teachers (mentioned by thirteen employees). Concerning what employees would have liked to have seen in the classroom, almost all of them mention office related material ranging from filing cabinets, modern typewriters, typing material and calculators to computers. At the same time better teaching and a need to practice what has been learnt are also important, not only having the materials and equipment. Spending periods at a time out of school on attachment with firms, encouraging more qualified personnel in business subjects to teach in the schools, making business subjects more relevant to what is done in business organisations and offices, and ensuring that office skills taught in school do not come from only one source (the teacher), but from other sources too, as is the case in the real office environment.

8.2.2 *Question 2.2*

What are the employees' views concerning employers' ability to help promote business education at the secondary level?

In an attempt to answer this question, employers' ability to help promote business education at the secondary level is seen in terms of (a) whether employers should be aware of business education; (b) whether employers should tell schools what is required of them; (c) whether employers should have a say in the content of business education; and (d) whether employers should help with money.

Nineteen employees (over half the sample) agree that employers should be made aware of what is happening in business education. At the same time, two employees feel they are already aware but three do not agree it is essential for them to be aware anyway. As far as whether employers should tell schools what they should do is concerned, twenty employees (fifty-nine percent) are in favour.

That there should be a large proportion in agreement with that statement is seemingly obvious, for two reasons. Firstly, if employers were to indicate their skill requirements to schools, the schools would adapt to the changing needs of the business world, in other words, they would produce school leavers with the adequate skills needed by employers. And, secondly, with the right skills, school leavers would also feel more secure in the knowledge that they would be better equipped to be able to get into jobs more easily. Perceptively, one employee goes back to the basics in referring to the importance of schools leavers being literate and understanding what employers want from work (Accounts clerk, former public secondary school leaver).

But two employees only partly agree that employers should be involved. One looks at it from the point of view that with so many students coming out of schools, and therefore, it is very likely that not all will get jobs, then there is really no advantage in employers getting involved. Another, a former Government Secretarial school leaver, offers an even more important dilemma, that such involvement on the part of employers would only really be viable if the schools have the necessary materials with which to teach.

Five employees did not agree at all, but for other reasons. General education is adequate to meet the immediate needs of the job, with more specific skills being acquired later. And, furthermore, that idea is not practicable for employers but is the responsibility of educationalists. Since employers advertise in the newspapers, they are invited to meetings held by educational organisations and so forth, then educationalists should take note. At the same time, as was previously mentioned, not all school leavers will be able to get a job straight away and not all will stay in Ghana.

The notion of employers having a say in the content of education evoked almost the same responses as for the previous statement. The main difference in the responses made is that there are more who did not know what to make of this statement, with fewer agreeing with it. Nevertheless, with twenty employees (53 percent) in favour and six employees (16 percent) an unknown factor since they did not voice any opinion, comments from the employees reveal a need on their part for more certainty about what is required of them at the time of leaving school. This item elicited responses which are very similar to those

concerning whether employers should tell the schools what to do. These will therefore not be repeated here.

The question of whether employers should help with money was easily answered. Sixty seven percent were wholly in favour, with polytechnics already off to a head start:

This would be a very good practice. My employers are even about to start this at my former school. They have already started recruiting leavers each year.
(Polytechnic, stenographer; small, private).

Help provided in the form of money was seen as essential for providing equipment. This would not only go a long way in training students in equipment they will use when employed, but would also enable most students to become familiar with some office equipment *before* they start work (Secretary/Receptionist, former polytechnic leaver; and Accounts clerk, former public secondary school leaver). One employee, however, appeared a little over anxious of the consequences of any monetary contribution from employers because school leavers may feel obliged to join those employers who had helped them (Typist, former public BSS leaver).

8.2.3 *Question 2.3*

What criteria does the employee believe were involved in his having been successful in getting this job?

Most of the employees mentioned more than one factor. These proved to be very similar to factors relating to criteria which best helped get a job in subsection 8.1.3. Nine employees felt employers looked at qualifications only. Although four employees believed employers looked at other things, the employees did not state what they were and the remaining twenty four in the sample cited factors such as performance at the interview, general behaviour, personal appearance and previous work experience.

Employees were asked to indicate what persons had made recommendations for them in respect of the jobs they are now in. Although fifteen employees declared that no one had recommended them for the job, twenty-two stated differently. Of the latter responses, six were for the category 'previous employer only', with the remainder frequently mentioning the 'school head/teacher' with various other persons.

Looking more specifically at the question of the importance of recommendations from

school, table 8.8 shows employees' responses by type of school attended:

Table 8.8
Distribution of employee sample by type of school attended
and their opinion on the importance of recommendations from school

Type of School attended	Importance of Recommendations from school				Total
	Very Important	Important	Not Important	not stated	
	n	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	2	1	-	-	3
BSS, Private	-	1	2	1	4
Business, Public	-	-	1	1	2
Business, Private	8	2	1	1	12
Secondary, Public Government/ Secretarial	4	2	1	1	8
Polytechnic	2	-	-	1	3
	3	1	-	1	5
Total n	19	7	5	6	37
Total (%)	(51)	(19)	(14)	(16)	(100)

A strong majority of seventy percent of the sample considered them to be important or very important. Such recommendations confirm, for example, the suitability of the applicant for the job (Typist, private business school leaver), and the headteacher knows the school leaver's ability and character (Accounts clerk, public BSS leaver).

Criteria for selection such as similarities in the background of the employer with that of the employee did not come into play according to findings from employees in table 8.9:

Table 8.9
Distribution of employee sample by similarities
between their background and that of their employer

Background of employer	Background similarities to employee			Total
	Yes	No	Don't Know	
	n	n	n	n
Home region	2	23	12	37
School	-	24	13	37
Tribe	3	22	12	37
Religion	4	18	15	37
Related to employee	3	30	4	37

The few that did mention some similarities may be regarded as negligible since the 'No' and 'Don't Know' responses reflect very strongly against the supposition that such criteria are important.

Table 8.10 distributes the employee sample by their impressions of the importance employers may attach to gender in getting a job.

Sixty-seven percent did not consider gender to be important as far as employers were concerned. For this proportion of the sample, there were no specific requirements for either gender with recruitment being based on qualifications or other non-cognitive criteria but not gender. However one should not dismiss the thirty percent who felt that there was some justification for accusing employers of some discrimination. The table shows no significant difference between the employee genders in the importance or non-importance that was attached to their respective genders at the point of recruitment. In Chapter 3, it was seen that in Ghana women generally have a lower status than men and therefore one would have expected that to have been highlighted here. This, however, is not the case with males and females showing very similar opinions on the importance attached to gender in getting jobs.

Table 8.10
Distribution of employee sample by gender and
by importance attached to gender in getting a job

Type of School attended	Importance attached to gender								Grand Total
	Yes		No		Don't Know		Total		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	
BSS, Public	1	-	-	2	-	-	1	2	3
BSS, Private		-	1	3	-	-	3	1	4
Business, Public	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	2
Business, Private	2	1	5	4	-	-	6	2	12
Secondary, Public Government/ Secretarial	1	-	5	2	-	-	6	2	8
Polytechnic	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	3	3
	-	2	-	2	-	1	-	5	5
Total n	5	6	13	12	-	1	18	19	37
Total (%)	14	16	35	32	-	3	49	51	100

The reasons for those opinions, however, differed according to their gender. Whilst the female employee feels she was recruited because women are, for example, more respectful or more obedient than men, the male employee feels he was recruited because men can, for example, work longer hours and have no maternity problems. Table 8A.4 further shows that for eleven employees there was discrimination mainly from large firms.

Another item under Q.13 in the questionnaire asked what type of person the employee thought his employer was looking for. Most simply cited their own qualification, i.e. if they were typists or accounts clerks, they listed the requisite skills as may be found in any local daily newspaper. Seven employees, however, gave responses which were not too dissimilar to those given earlier, namely, someone having good qualifications, efficient experienced and willing to do extra work.

Further, in answer to Q.14 in the questionnaire, out of the total employee sample, twenty-seven (73 percent) said the employer did not advertise; thirty-six (97 percent) that he did not contact the schools except at the Polytechnic level, as mentioned by one employee with that background; and thirty-three (89 percent) did not ask around, as far as they knew.

Pursuing the subject further, employees were asked why they felt they were selected amongst all the other candidates for the job. Typically, many of the responses were centred around qualifications acquired, contacts, a number of personal attributes and experience. Not so common were the responses 'An accounts clerk resigned' and 'There were no other applicants' with the latter accompanied by more detailed comments:

My employer chose me because he had the confidence that I was the employee he was looking for. I was the only applicant but I would have been chosen if I had come with others. I knew I would get a job because I was not all that bad.

(Polytechnic, stenographer;
small, private).

Finally, the survey sought to find out employees' opinion on the importance they felt employers attached to examination results. As expected thirty-two employees (86 percent) believe employers regarded them as at least important or very important. In comparing responses to the item on the importance attached to recommendations from school, it is interesting that the results are very similar, confirming that references from school are very much tied together with qualifications obtained from school. But other comments from two employees, in particular, showed that they did not believe employers were so

concerned about examination results:

Before I got appointed as accounts clerk, I took a selection test and an interview outside the scope of my studies in the business school.

(Business private; accounts clerk; large, private).

The results were not out when I applied for the job. However, I was tested at the interview and I suppose that convinced my employer that I was capable.

(Polytechnic, secretary/receptionist; small, private).

8.2.4 *Question 2.4*

How satisfied is the employee in his job and does he think there is need to include a recruitment policy specifically for school leavers?

Twenty seven employees were satisfied with their job but the other ten were not. Employees' comments show more clearly the pluses and minuses of their job, as they see them. In one case, having studied up to pre-university level, the accounts clerk (former private business school leaver) feels there are prospects of advancement through promotion and merit and amenities for higher studies by way of reimbursing expenses on successful completion of course. Another, a typist with a private business school background, commends the large private firms she works in for having introduced her to its modern facilities.

On the other hand, others are not so happy. One complains of the problems of having to cope with colleagues who are related to the employer, another is occupying a fairly responsible position in a large private firm but still has the same status, and an accounts clerk with a public secondary school background, also working in a large private firm, bemoans the fact that there are no prospects of further training for the junior staff nor are there promotion possibilities for junior workers. Furthermore, whilst ten employees would like to change jobs, they mention, understandably, the fear that with high unemployment persisting in the country, they might not find another job and even if they did it is very probable that they would be put on a lower scale than they are at presently.

Twenty-four employees have taken up courses since joining the firm in an effort to better themselves. Twenty employees, at the time of this survey, were attending evening classes. The professional accounting examinations proved very popular among the

accounts clerks (with every type of school background, including the Polytechnic) while typists (with a BSS, Business or Secondary background) aimed for stenographer grades; the Secretaryship grade II (with a Polytechnic background) demanded higher education qualifications; and the Diploma in Business Studies or RSA required those with, at least, a business school background.

Thirty-one employees are not aware of any recruitment policy regarding school leavers, although seven have firm opinions on what policy the firms *should* have and six have ideas about developing a recruitment policy for school leavers. These are presented in the box below:

Box 8.1: Opinions on general and school leaver recruitment policies needed

A. <u>General recruitment policies needed</u>	B. <u>School-leaver recruitment policies needed</u>
1. A policy based on qualifications only	1. Include knowledge of the French language
2. A policy of upgrading the status of employees	2. No relations or friends of applicants should be on the interview panel
3. Promoting employees within the firm first.	3. Offer on the job training
4. Recruiting more experienced bilingual secretaries	4. Advertise in the Youth Employment Centre
5. A policy of public advertising	5. Include recruitment of those with a good social background
6. Recruiting from school	6. Require credit in oral English
7. Advertise more	

8.3 Summary of findings

This chapter has described and analysed the backgrounds of the employee sample respondents. Findings suggest that the type of schools attended related closely to the employees' present job. However, no help was provided by the schools in obtaining jobs, except that one-third of the sample had received general advice and information.

However, two-thirds of employees believed that their performance at school was significant to their recruitment. Employees with a Polytechnic or Government Secretarial school background felt they were best prepared to meet employers' needs, with secondary school leavers faring poorly in the competition for jobs.

Formal application letters, interviews and selection tests were the normal route for getting jobs, with personal contacts playing only a small role. Less than half of the sample had received advice from parents and friends, which took the form of guidance in how to

apply for jobs and how to behave at the interview.

In addition, the study sought to compare reasons given by employees regarding why they were selected for the job. This was examined in three ways:

- (a) factors which *best helped* get a job;
- (b) factors employers looked at *other than qualifications*; and
- (c) factors which contributed to being selected *from amongst all the other candidates* for the job.

What stood out repeatedly for each of these categories was that qualifications were essential at the *initial* stage of the job selection process. Examination results were felt to be very important to employers by one-third of the sample respondents. However, recommendations from school headteachers and/or previous employers, performance at the interview/selection tests and positive personal attributes were equally important, if not crucial, in the *final* selection process. The influence of contacts (neighbours, friends, parents) was evident, although much less so than envisaged by final year students (see Chapter 7).

If employees were able to start school again, two-thirds would opt for the BSS. Almost all the respondents were in favour of business subjects being taught in all secondary schools because:

- (a) it would be more useful after school either for jobs or further training; and
- (b) it would be better to combine (business) practical skills with 'academic' knowledge.

Employees were aware not only of the various factors that combine to facilitate their recruitment but also of some of the weaknesses of their schools in relating their studies to practical work experience. Their proposals for solution generally had a bearing on these. These were applied to three important issues: interaction between employers and schools; providing better, more experienced teachers; and introducing up to date, sophisticated equipment into schools. To that end, at least half the sample agreed that employers should be aware of what is happening in business education, that employers should tell schools what is required, and that employers should have a say on the content of business education. Two-thirds agreed that employers should help with sponsorship or subsidies to business studies.

On the work front, many of the employee sample wanted to remain in their present jobs, expressing general satisfaction in terms of experience gained, opportunities to meet people and good conditions of service. Where there was some dissatisfaction, this was to do with job conditions and limited promotion prospects. Employees' suggestions for future policies, both in general and as concerns the recruitment of school leavers in particular, reflect not only a wish for greater diversification of the school curricula but a need also for better information from employers about what is required from schools, together with efforts on the part of employers to help schools achieve what they want. The next chapter discusses whether these considerations are met by employers.

Chapter 9 Taking on Typists and Accounts Clerks

9.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of employers from large and small scale firms (as defined in chapter 3) located in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. It seeks to determine whether employers' opinions and beliefs about recruiting school leavers may be characteristic of their particular type of firm .

Chapter 4 pointed to a few landmarks in recent documents, seminars and papers. These landmarks, with their accusations of 'irrelevant skills' and pleas for 'tools for the job', will be compared, in this chapter, with the perceived needs of a range of employers.

With this purpose in view, in the survey carried out, employers were asked to indicate the main criteria for selection and recruitment of applicants for typing and clerical jobs. The sample consists of sixty-one employers from the state, parastatal and private sectors of Ghana's industries who completed 61 interview schedules and questionnaires (see Chapter 5 and Appendix 9C).

Table 9.1a presents the distribution of the employer sample by sector and by scale and table 9.1b shows the distribution of the total number of staff members in each firm:

Table 9.1a
Distribution of employer sample by scale and by sector

Sector	Scale			Total
	Large	Small	not stated	
	n	n	n	n
State	12	-	2	14
Parastatal	11	-	-	11
Private	23	8	5	36
Total	46	8	7	61

* The private sector is represented more given current attempts in Ghana toward privatisation (see Chapter 3).

Table 9.1b
Total employees by firm

	n		n
1. Accountants	23	47. Manufacturing	300
2. Accountants	56	48. Manufacturing	180
3. Agriculture	-	49. Manufacturing	60
4. Agriculture	2500	50. Manufacturing	613
5. Banking	787	51. Petroleum	151
6. Banking	722	52. Petroleum	184
7. Banking	1370	53. Publishing	759
8. Banking	61	54. Transport	2450
9. Banking	200	55. Transport	21
10. Banking	985	56. Transport	19
11. Banking	2300	57. Other	200
12. Banking	-	58. Other	36
13. Banking	1590	59. Other	-
14. Banking	6000	60. Other	67
15. Banking	-	61. Other	130
16. Building & Construction	10		
17. Commerce and trade	96		
18. Commerce and trade	36		
19. Commerce and trade	250		
20. Commerce and trade	361		
21. Commerce and trade	190		
22. Commerce and trade	-		
23. Commerce and trade	499		
24. Commerce and trade	29		
25. Commerce and trade	570		
26. Commerce and trade	50		
27. Commerce and trade	83		
28. Commerce and trade	-		
29. Commerce and trade	-		
30. Commerce and trade	340		
31. Engineering	18		
32. Engineering	950		
33. Engineering	100		
34. Hotels and tourism	28		
35. Insurance	67		
36. Manufacturing	165		
37. Manufacturing	45		
38. Manufacturing	50		
39. Manufacturing	72		
40. Manufacturing	300		
41. Manufacturing	738		
42. Manufacturing	986		
43. Manufacturing	35		
44. Manufacturing	429		
45. Manufacturing	350		
46. Manufacturing	24	Total	28,635

Note: Blank spaces are for firms which did not indicate the number of staff members.
(See table 9.1b).

* Small- and large-scale private firms analysed in section 9.1

The results of this study will be looked at in the following ways:

- 9.1 the characteristics of different firms and the relations between these and other variables;
- 9.2 the distinct combinations of Business Secondary School leaver characteristics (ascriptive, cognitive and non-cognitive) and their differences for determining job profiles;
- 9.3 the relation between employers' considerations of what they need and the significance, if any, this might have for hiring school leavers;
- 9.4 the profiles for typing and clerical accounting jobs in the different firms;
- 9.5 the place of policy guidelines as they affect the recruitment of school leavers; and
- 9.6 the differences/similarities between employers' responses with specific reference to small- and large-scale private firms.

The six following sections are further subdivided according to the interview schedules and questionnaires completed by the employers. Each section analyses the responses by sets of questions in seeking to explore the bases on which employers make their choices of school leaver job applicants.

9.1 Characteristics of different firms

This section is divided into four subsections. Each will summarise the main characteristics of the various types of firms, their role in Ghana's economy and their willingness or reluctance to provide jobs for business secondary school leavers.

9.1.1 *Question 1.1*

What type of firms provide typing and clerical accounting jobs and how would they define their economic status in terms of (a) the different roles they play in Ghana's economy and (b) the type of equipment used?

In this and some of the following questions reference is made to the two groups, scale and sector, into which the data from the sample is to be divided using, in some cases, the base of type of firm. Table 9.2 below sets out this data to assist easy reference later.

Banking, commerce and trade and manufacturing firms feature prominently making up 11, 14 and 15 employers, respectively.

The employers were asked to consider whether they saw themselves as of a 'modern', 'intermediate' or even 'traditional' economic status. None of the employers opted for the latter: twenty employers declined to state any type of status, whilst twenty-six and fifteen described themselves as of 'modern' and 'intermediate' status, respectively.

Table 9.2
Distribution of employer sample by type of firm and by scale and sector (n = 61)

Type of Firm	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Accounting	1	1	-	-	-	2	2
Agriculture	-	1	1	1	-	1	2
Banking	-	9	2	2	6	3	11
Building & Construction	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Commerce and trade	1	10	3	3	-	11	14
Engineering	1	2	-	1	-	2	3
Hotels & tourism	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
Insurance	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Manufacturing	1	14	-	2	4	9	15
Petroleum	-	2	-	2	-	-	2
Publishing	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
Transport	2	1	-	1	-	2	3
Other*	-	4	1	1	1	3	5
Total n	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

* International corporations, cultural centres, government establishments and the media

The description of these figures according to the type of firm is given in table 9A.1 (Appendix 9A). Box 9.1 outlines the reasons for these definitions:

BOX 9.1 Reasons given for definition as 'modern' or 'intermediate'

A. Modern

- we have up to date equipment and technology
- we manufacture goods
- our machines are comparable to those of the more developed nations
- we deal with foreign companies the quality of service we provide is very good
- we are always looking ahead to the future

B. Intermediate

- we are not advanced enough
- we are still in the process of restructuring our organisation
- our equipment and machines are old and not up to date
- we depend solely on self-financing
- the market for our products is too small

These differences in reasons are reflected in varying levels of economic development. These may be enumerated as follows: employers seeing themselves as 'modern' are the most likely to have up to date equipment, have the ability to manufacture exportable goods, conduct dealings with foreign companies and provide a better polished service to customers. In complete contrast, employers seeing themselves as 'intermediate' possess very little, if any, advanced technology, are typically small or in the process of expansion and do not have the means to promote themselves except in a very tiny measure. In attempting to explain how these differences arise, table 9.3 compares employers' considerations about what their role in the economy might be with their own definitions of economic status.

The 'modern' employer, sees his role, generally, as 'very important'. However, the notion of reducing unemployment is mentioned by more 'intermediate' employers than 'modern'. The importance of this in relation to their status definitions is twofold. Firstly, the distinction between 'modern' and 'intermediate' is somewhat artificial and does not seriously suggest that the latter is any less 'modern' than the former. Secondly, the term 'modern' as used by employers was limited mainly to notions of advanced technology and size, whereas they may not in fact be contributing more significantly to providing employment or developing the country than the so-called 'intermediate' employer.

Table 9.3
Employers' perceived role in the economy by their own definition of economic status

Role in the economy	Defined economic status			
	'Modern'	'Intermediate'	not stated	Total
	n	n	n	n
Our role is very important	15	3	6	24
Reducing unemployment	1	4	1	6
Helping develop the country	1	2	2	5
Helping trade and commerce	6	1	1	8
Developing management	1	-	-	1
Developing industry	1	-	-	1
Providing a service	-	1	4	5
Not stated	1	4	6	11
Total	26	15	20	61

Chapter 3 (subsection 3.1.1) discussed these issues in some detail and findings so far confirm the arguments put forward that the boundaries between 'modern' and 'intermediate' are likely to be blurred in practice.

Table 9.4 shows the distribution of office equipment. The size of the firm does not appear to be a significant factor in the choice of equipment:

Table 9.4
Type of office equipment used by firm scale and sector

Scale and Sector	Type of Office Equipment used				
	Up to date office equipment	Up to date office equipment but no computers	Only manual office equipment	Not stated	Total
	n	n	n	n	n
Small	2	2	2	2	8
Large	9	15	16	6	46
not stated	2	1	2	2	7
Total	19	19	10	13	61
State	3	5	4	2	14
Parastatal	5	4	-	2	11
Private	11	10	6	9	36
Total	19	19	10	13	61

Of the three sectors, the parastatals show the most positive trend towards increasingly advanced office equipment, namely word processing packages and computer software. Evidence from the sample confirms that employers have recognised the challenge that the new technology presents and are beginning to respond to it.

9.1.2 Question 1.2

How different or similar are the entry levels for each firm in respect to the job of typist or accounts clerk and how did they obtain their very first recruits?

The two main entry levels required by employers before recruitment into their firms were 'O' levels as the minimum and/or the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) Stages I, II and III. Table 9A.2 (Appendix 9A) shows, for each employer, the entry levels required. In their responses several employers gave more than one answer and therefore a number of combinations is shown.

The selections of entry levels did not vary significantly amongst the employers, particularly with respect to their need to be satisfied at the very basic level. This lack of variation reflects the similarities in context, that is, similar modes of articulation with recruitment and selection in the labour market and consequent similarities in the type of job applicant that satisfies employers.

Examples of responses are given to this item, where the respondent was prepared to give further details. In the examples that follow, the information in brackets refers to scale, sector, nature of work and position of employer.

One group of employers has little confidence in the secondary school system:

Most of the ordinary typists with a secondary school background have weak passes in their overall performance. Most of the typists we have did not have secondary education but came through middle school. Those in the stenographer grade have usually had work experience after leaving the Government Secretarial School - very few come here straight from school
(large, parastatal, bank, head of administration).

This firm does not take secondary school products, only those from business schools. We depend on the standards set by the Government Secretarial School for the typists and we depend on the RSA exams for our accounts clerks
(large, parastatal, manufacturing, administrative manager).

And

We demand commercial [business] school certificates in accounts in addition to lots of experience where necessary and especially where they have no certificates. If we can afford to pay less because of no certificates, we take advantage because we are having a lot of problems with our finances therefore we lower the entry level requirements so that we cut down on losses
(large, state, agriculture, managing director).

Employers' selection of job applicants comes from a number of sources. Table 9A.3 (Appendix 9A) shows the distribution by employer sample scale and sector and by source of recruitment of their very first employees. Although the sample responded very poorly to this item, (with thirty-nine not stating their source of recruitment), findings suggest that the Government Employment Centre together with school leavers' (and BSS leavers') applications are the most common source of recruitment by six employers.

9.1.3 *Question 1.3*

How many employers have taken on applicants with a business secondary background and how significant is that in terms of (a) the numbers employed over the past year and (b) whether in fact they are employed for jobs other than typing and clerical accounting?

The study's attempt to relate the employer scale and sector to the possible tendency for recruitment to take place among a type of secondary school as opposed to another should be understood as illustrative and exploratory.

Employers' responses to the type of secondary school from which school leavers enter jobs show fewer than ten employers opting for business/secondary school leavers. The majority, if not all, are not interested in recruiting secondary school leavers, be they from ordinary secondary schools or business secondary schools. One employer voices this opinion:

Ninety percent of those from secondary schools will not pass my [selection] tests because the training they have in secondary schools is not enough. Those who want to do commercial [business] subjects should go to business schools and let secondary schools stick only to their academic subjects. I don't see why we should mix the two

(large, private, manufacturing,
administrative manager).

In an attempt to elucidate further whether employers were taking on secondary school leavers, a comparison was made between their perceptions of their role in the economy (as previously analysed) with the number of clerical staff recruited in the past year in table 9.5.

There is a deceptively high number of school leavers shown as being recruited over the past year. However, the bulk of that number came only from the banking sector. Furthermore, very few employers recruit for reasons of reducing unemployment, most preferring to adopt the old cliché of having a 'very important role'.

Table 9.5
Comparing employers' perceptions of their role in the economy
with the number of accounts clerks and typists they have recruited over the past year

Perceptions of role in the economy	Number employed over past year		None recruited	
	n	%	n	%
our role is very important	544	(93)	13	(52)
<i>to reduce unemployment</i>	25	(4)	2	(8)
helping develop the country	1	(-)	3	(12)
helping trade and commerce	13	(2)	3	(12)
developing management	1	(-)	3	(12)
providing a service	3	(1)	1	(4)
Total	587	(100)	25	(100)

Note: Out of a total of 587, three major businesses, namely banking, engineering and manufacturing indicated totals of 553, 18 and 16 respectively as having been employed over the past year.

Of the twenty-five employers who did not recruit at all, twenty-two did not feel the need to recruit and vacancies were limited. In addition, as one employer points out:

We are not recruiting because of the embargo on employment due to the government's Economic Recovery Programme [see Chapter 3]. We are supposed to engage in redeployment efforts and in that respect we have toned down our recruitment of staff
(large, parastatal, banking, head of administration).

What is certain is that most of those selected for jobs, do what they were recruited for, i.e. thirty-six employers claim that those applying for clerical accounting and typing jobs, do precisely that if selected (table 9A.4, Appendix 9A). There are a few exceptions, for example:

Sometimes we have people in the factory who have had secondary education but they accept factory work and then when we have vacancies we advertise internally and when they come and apply they are tested to see if they are suitable
(large, private, manufacturing, administrative manager).

On the other hand, some employers, notably those from the large state sector, believe the job applicant could do even more than his or her specific job requirements especially if the applicant has the minimum qualifications of 5 '0' levels. In addition, this would provide the added advantage of employing one typist in the place of two clerks, for example.

9.2 Employers' selection of and opinions about Business Secondary School (BSS) leavers

This section examines how employers select school leavers with a business secondary background. It contrasts findings with employers' perceptions of the aims of BSSs and offers some insight into the 'relevance' and practical objectives of BSS subjects as employers see them. The section then considers the expectations and opinions held by employers on the ability of BSS leavers to be recruited more easily into business organisations or to find employment more quickly than their more academic counterparts. It is important to understand what impressions employers have of these schools. This is what the section attempts to assess.

Finally, the question of whether BSSs function in accordance with employers' 'wishes' in terms of satisfactory performance, once they enter the job market, is tackled both within and across employer scale and sector.

9.2.1 *Question 2.1*

What form does the selection of job applicants with a BSS background take and how do they receive information about them?

This question considers criteria used by employers in their selection of prospective typists and accounts clerks. It relates these as well as the form in which they receive information about BSS leavers to employers' scale and sector. Table 9.6 shows the importance attached to interviews by over half of the sample with twenty-four employers particularly interested in both tests and interviews; this is the case for large private firms.

On the other hand, six employers rely on their own tests and five on qualifications, educational background and experience put together. The 'not stated' response from fourteen employers is higher than might be expected and with three out of eight of those responses coming from the small firms, it could be argued that the latter do not rely as much on a precise form of selection as do large firms.

Table 9.6
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
and by method of selection of typists and accounts clerks

Method of selection	Scale				Sector		Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
By interview only	1	5	1	3	-	4	7
By interview and recommendation	-	2	-	1	-	1	2
By interview and test	1	20	3	5	7	12	24
By interview and qualifications	-	3	-	-	1	2	3
By qualifications only	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
By educational background and attitude	-	2	-	1	1	-	2
By educational background and experience	-	-	1	1	-	-	1
By tests only	3	1	2	-	-	6	6
not stated	3	11	-	3	2	9	14
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

Alternatively, there is the possibility that with an almost total lack of contact by 84 percent of employers with BSSs (table 9.7), the need for tests becomes of paramount importance:

Table 9.7
Distribution of total employer sample by contacts with BSSs

Contact with BSSs	Employers	
	n	%
No contact	51	(84)
Sometime we give donations to schools	2	(3)
Some contact	3	(5)
Contact with schools but not BSSs	2	(3)
not stated	3	(5)
Total	61	(100)

In assessing some of the comments made by employers it becomes clear that the majority have no face to face contact because they are conversant with standards required of prospective employees and therefore do not need to have any contact with BSSs. But

where contact had been made it was as a result of the performance of certain individuals who might have come from that school.

Another question put to the employer sample was the context of their sources of information on BSSs which they depend on.

Table 9.8
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
and by source of information about Business Secondary Schools

Source of Information	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not private	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
References from schools	-	9	-	2	3	4	9
Writing to or visiting schools	-	5	-	3	-	2	5
Advertisements and interviews	-	1	2	-	-	3	3
Applications from individuals	4	20	4	7	5	16	28
From relations in business	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
From the labour office	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
From the media	-	3	-	1	2	-	3
Other*	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
No information	1	-	1	-	-	2	2
not stated	3	4	-	1	1	5	7
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

* Mostly trained here (mentioned by one employer)

Table 9.8 shows the relative importance attached to applications and references from schools:

We have all passed through the system and we know people who are in it so we don't have to make a big effort to get information. Our brothers, children and so on, are all in the system so we are in touch all the time

(large, private, commerce and trade, general manager).

The 'hard sell' approach - advertising, radio and television - is not important. Even the labour office, as a source of *information* as opposed to source of *recruitment* only (table 9A.3 Appendix 9A), has only two employers rating it as of importance.

This fully supports findings in Chapter 7 that there is little confidence in the labour offices.

However, there was found to be general satisfaction amongst employers with their sources of information. On the other hand, nineteen employers are *not* satisfied and lack of confidence in the schools appears evident in their responses with four preferring to use their own tests.

Referring back to table 9.6, employers' method of selection is a reflection of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with information provided about BSSs. Preference for interviews and tests is high with employers expressing concern about information on schools, notably their examination grades and overall performance:

When they apply we insist they give details of grades.
 We take certificates back to the issuing authorities to confirm that they are genuine and we write to schools.
 This (procedure) is all right but in some cases, it has not worked: some references are exaggerated and where we are suspicious we send someone to go and verify.
 With a banking institution, such as ours, it is helpful if people can vouch for them

(large, parastatal, banking, head of administration).

9.2.2 Question 2.2

Is there agreement amongst employers about what the aims of BSSs should be and how varied are their impressions of BSS subjects?

The respondents were next asked about what they felt the aims of BSSs should be, giving also their impressions of BSS subjects and it emerged that their opinions of, and reactions to these issues varied greatly. However, most employers were able to assign a primary aim to the role of BSSs. They feel that the aim of BSSs should be to educate and train people to meet the requirements of businesses, not surprisingly given the name of the schools! In this connection phrases like 'emphasising basic practical skills', 'specialising in business subjects' and 'fitting into positions in industry' recurred.

Seven of the employers sampled see BSSs as emphasising basic practical business skills. They believe that school leavers from such schools could operate, with minimum training, in industry. And it is also felt that BSSs should concentrate on training people who are not interested in academic pursuits but in business only. Indeed for one state sector banker, most (75 percent) of his clerical staff have only a basic academic background.

Six employers are inclined towards specialisation in business subjects with a diversity of skills. Of these, two from large private firms advocates that BSSs should teach students

courses bearing direct relevance to the running of profit-making organisations. At the same time, students having technical knowledge and considerable practical experience would enhance their ready recruitment. Four employers from large parastatal firms believe that students should be provided with knowledge and skills required for effective running of the business/commercial sector of the economy and, together with students coming out as good, polite and efficient secretaries or competent accounts clerks for the future, the students should have attained not only theoretical and practical knowledge of the subjects taught in order to be readily employable on leaving school. They must also have sufficiently high standards to be able to cope with the modern facilities which are gradually taking the place of the manuals. However, for one small private firm, the school leaver should be equipped with useful skills *without* having to go through long expensive training on the job.

But more employers, ten, value the teaching of broad business skills which allow prospects for further training:

We expect them to offer a broad range of business subjects including academic subjects which are cognate to business subjects and then leavers can fit into the role of senior management as far as later development is concerned. They have to have hope that they will not remain typists or accounts clerks.

(large, state, agriculture, managing director).

In terms of the employers' impressions of BSS subjects, eighteen incline towards the acquisition of basic skills as well as an emphasis on the practicals. As testified by a number of large state and private employers there is not enough emphasis on the practical aspects. The type of training received in a BSS does not give students enough broad based knowledge before proceeding to the application of skills in the workplace. In addition, although the subjects are good for basic needs, not enough attention is given to Data Processing and Computers. This is probably because, as one large parastatal employer points out, although BSSs are good institutions for the business community, they need financial assistance in order to meet rising costs due to economic constraints.

From a quite different perspective, another employer speaks more in terms of students' *attitudes* :

Willingness to learn is lacking. There is either less willingness to accept to learn or maybe because they need to have formal qualifications, they just want to pass the time quickly so that those with real talent are very few.

(large, private, manufacturing,
executive manager).

9.2.3 Question 2.3

How far have BSS job applicants rather than job applicants with a mainly academic background met employers' expectations in terms of skills required and in what directions would they consider improvements in BSSs as justified?

Forty-six (69 percent) employers are of the opinion that BSS job applicants are better than mainly academic job applicants in terms of meeting employers' expectations. In table 9.9 results show that within and across scale and sector there is more confidence in BSS leavers' ability to be recruited more easily into jobs:

Table 9.9
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
and by opinions on whether a BSS background is better
suited to recruitment into firms than an academic background

BSS leavers compare better than academic leavers for recruitment into jobs	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Yes	5	36	5	10	10	26	46
No ¹	1	2	1	3	-	1	4
Other ²	-	3	1	-	-	4	4
not stated	2	5	-	1	1	5	7
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

1 There is not much difference because their aptitudes are the same (mentioned by one employer)

2 It depends on the type of candidate (mentioned by four employers)

Employers stress the preparatory role that BSSs have in stating that with more emphasis placed on business subjects in these schools than in ordinary secondary schools, they are far better because they are already prepared so the employer has little to do once they are engaged.

Employers were further asked why they believe BSS leavers are better. There is a definite accent on 'better business knowledge', an obvious requirement given the *raison d'être* of these schools. Whilst employees with a BSS background have been trained in subjects useful to businesses, 'O' level staff possess only a general academic background. Furthermore, as one banker points out, those with the accounting background learn the job faster and are easily able to pass the Institute of Bankers category whereas someone who

has done pure Arts subjects has to take some time. Those with a business background learn very quickly.

Some employers are not so sure, for example:

Those with a commercial [business] bias have a better chance of being employed particularly with typing and shorthand jobs, but when you come to clerical work, I think that in this country the straight academic secondary school leavers have a better chance
(large, private, commerce and trade, manager).

Others limit BSS students' chances to the private sector only, as for instance:

The business secondary school leaver has more chances in the private sector because those in the academic options will want to go further but those in the business options know that after a point they cannot afford to go any higher so they stay where they are. That is why the private sector tends to prefer the BSS or business school leaver. Also salaries in the private sector are better because if we find the person is doing well we don't mind giving a higher salary.
(large, private, manufacturing, company secretary).

Forty-five employers (74 percent) are nevertheless positive that improvements should be made to BSSs (table 9.10):

Table 9.10
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by opinions on whether improvements are needed in Business Secondary schools

Opinions on whether improvements needed on BSSs	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
Yes	5	35	5	12	6	27	45
No	-	2	1	1	1	1	3
not stated	3	9	1	1	4	8	13
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

The employers have quite clear recommendations for reform which centre on links with industry in terms of practical knowledge and changes in the business environment . The

suggestions made can be divided into two groups: (a) preference for practical training and affiliations with firms and (b) preference for more general and broad skills.

The first group, composed mainly of large private and parastatal employers, emphasises the need for good typewriters, adequate stationery and up-to-date manuals for instruction.

The role of the school is seen in terms of providing

- tuition on the mechanics and repairs of tools such as typewriters, photocopiers, and so on;
- tuition on statistical data, its use and analysis;
- tuition on computer application in business firms and companies;
- tuition in company laws and policies and basic operations of banks.

And, one can have, as suggests one accountant, students attached to accounting companies for practical, on the job training, or improvements through practical training but not necessarily in an office. For example, proper books, for the accounting student, could be kept during practical lessons: what a cash book is and how to write it up. As one employer puts it:

Those with an accounting background only need a short time to accumulate knowledge. But although the subjects taught are okay, students should be exposed to practical training with companies before they leave school, say during holidays, and then go back to the classroom. This is not happening. We recently had an application from the National Vocational Training Institute seeking to do something like that. This would also be good in BSSs.

(large, private, banking, staff manager).

The second group focuses, on the other hand, on the broadening of the business course structure being needed to embrace international business, economics, English language and other related subjects since their low ability in these subjects becomes a draw back in their typewriting and shorthand work.

Another employer elaborates on his reasons for emphasising the acquisition of broad skills:

Prospective employees should be able to cater to the needs of any type of secretarial duties. For example, supposing an employee were tied to the industrial manager and he had to be shifted to the bank manager, then he should be able to do so without any problems even though the duties of both managers are different. In other words, he should have been taught a wider range of subjects so that he can handle such diversification.

(large, private, manufacturing, executive manager).

Not all employers are convinced, however, that improvements in BSSs are the answer and have other suggestions, for example:

Most of the people we have would normally have received training after school so they come here well equipped. If they come straight from school, I don't think the typist (school leaver), for example, would have had much experience so that going in for the professional typist training *after* BSS is much more desirable.

(large, parastatal, manufacturing,
assistant personnel manager)

The point is that even if schools were to take business training on board fully, some of the equipment needed are far too expensive to have in schools. An increasing number of employers especially in the large private firms have sophisticated computers and other types of advanced office equipment but employees only become conversant with using them after they have joined the firms where they are trained on them.

In fact, one personnel manager even advocates that the firm follows the school rather than the converse where, for example, in some cases, firms could have their secretarial work standardised so that it would be easily related to what is taught at school.

9.2.4 *Question 2.4*

How far do employers measure the importance of BSSs in terms of (a) its function, (b) the work performance of previous BSS leavers and (c) their intention to recruit, or not recruit, BSS leavers (again)?

This question considers the vocational aspects of BSSs from the employers' standpoint. The role of BSSs in preparing for the job market gains acknowledgment as 'very important' by twenty-five employers. They see them not only as affording an opportunity for career choice at an early age, but as offering them a good background for employment opportunities given both the theoretical and practical skills they will have acquired.

However, this finding is contrasted sharply by another presented in table 9.11 below showing BSSs' function to be negligible and inadequate by half the sample:

Table 9.11
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
and by whether BSSs have an important function

BSSs have an important function	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Yes	2	17	3	4	3	15	22
No	1	7	3	2	2	7	11
Inadequate	-	20	-	8	4	8	20
not stated	5	2	1	-	2	6	8
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

Employers expressed what they felt was inadequate in terms of the net effect of time spent on business subjects as, invariably, leavers of BSSs have to undertake extra courses in business and office skills to attain competence in them or else they will require on the job training before they can excel.

In addition:

The threshold of acceptable qualification should be raised for these schools because they tend to be lackadaisical or tend to think we are training people only for low paid jobs or junior levels. We want people hoping to go on to be assistant managers, managers, senior managers and so on. That is, those who are ambitious.

(large, state agriculture, managing director)

Furthermore, findings support Goebel's assertion that in Germany employers believe that teachers are 'too often unable to relate their teaching to practical experience and reality' (Chapter 4). From this study's survey, over 40 percent of the employer sample point to the lack of teaching methods and hint at the inadequacy of teachers both in number and quality. BSSs should have more competent tutors who can impart knowledge to students. Yet this is difficult when, as one chief accountant points out, BSSs are always beset with getting teachers with the requisite qualifications and experience.

Other employers also emphasise general subjects, again supporting many of Dougherty's views on the need for 'technological literacy' and more basic education (Chapter 4). As one employer puts it:

I think if the standard was raised I'd be happier. By 'standard', I mean the total package, not only typing, shorthand but the knowledge that makes one able to fit in and cope with the job. There is no point having somebody who can type or write shorthand but cannot express himself or cannot write.

(large, state, manufacturing, personnel director).

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate whether they intend to recruit BSS leavers at all or recruit them again if they have already done so in the past. Table 9.12 shows the somewhat optimistic confidence of the employer sample in BSSs with forty-four employers (72 percent) responding in the affirmative:

Table 9.12
Distribution of employer sample by
intention to recruit, or not recruit, BSS leavers

Intention to recruit, or not recruit, BSS leavers (again)	Employers	
	n	%
Yes	44	(72)
No	5	(8)
Don't know	8	(13)
not stated	4	(7)
Total	61	(100)

Alternatively, it could be argued that the wish to recruit BSS leavers represents the numbers who either have not taken on BSS leavers before and therefore are not aware of their 'failings' or are impressed with the current performance of their BSS employees. The sample was also asked to expand on the reasons for their intentions to recruit or not recruit BSS leavers in future.

The most important reason given for recruiting BSS leavers is an almost 'permanent' need for them. This is particularly significant given that only a quarter of the employers express doubts about their work whereas two-thirds emphasise instead having 'enough on our staff' or 'no vacancies'. There is, therefore, not enough evidence to condemn BSSs for reasons of 'poor quality'.

Although the findings (regarding reasons for not taking on BSS leavers) do confirm conclusions found by Lillis and Hogan (1983) about reductions in job prospects resulting from 'students' inadequate preparation and a lack of 'practical skills and experience' (Chapter 4), other findings (regarding reasons for taking on BSS leavers) show a

reasonably encouraging attitude on the part of employers towards BSS leavers and their potential for doing 'satisfactory' work.

Finally, an analysis of employers' opinions on the performance at work of BSS leavers currently with them was made in table 9.13. The table gives the results with a breakdown between those who are considered 'very good', 'good', 'satisfactory', 'poor' or 'other':

Table 9.13
Employers' opinions on BSS leavers
performance at work by firm scale and sector

	Very Good	Good	Satis- factory	Poor	Other	not stated	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Small	-	2	1	-	2	3	8
Large	4	12	18	3	7	2	46
not stated	1	2	2	-	1	1	7
State	2	4	6	-	2	-	14
Parastatal	-	4	3	1	1	2	11
Private	3	8	12	2	7	4	36

Most of the respondents summarise their opinions on BSS leavers' performance as 'good' (thirty-two employers) or 'satisfactory' (forty-two employers). In the 'other' category, comments by these employers show some satisfaction but with reservations regarding students' lack of any practicals, the very poor academic standard reached and the majority who rise up to a certain point and are not good material for promotion to the next grade.

The implication here is that the BSS leaver is by definition, a marginal applicant and, as one personnel officer in charge of recruitment sees it, school leavers with a BSS education background have no edge or advantage in the performance of their jobs.

9.3 Employers' considerations in hiring any school leaver

The focus of this section is on five other considerations as they may impinge on criteria employers use when looking for workers. These are, namely, (a) recommendations made to employers on behalf of job applicants, (b) the effects, if any, of political pressure as felt by employers, (c) the importance of personal knowledge or contact with prospective employees, (d) the issue of gender preference in cases where it arises and (e) the place of examination results on their own and, as compared with employers' own selection tests.

The section seeks to analyse, in detail, responses of employers to each of the above, and, at the same time, assess how far these may be objective considerations in the recruitment of school leavers rather than indicative of very subjective criteria in the job selection process.

9.3.1 Question 3.1

Are recommendations about job applicants taken more seriously when they come from the school or from someone known to the employer?

Responses to both questions of whether 'recommendations were considered from school or from someone known to you' were regrouped on ratings of 'Very important' to 'Not important' and 'not stated'. The overall frequencies of responses are set out in tables 9.14 and 9.15 below which also include notes on detailed responses to related questions.

Table 9.14
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by importance attached to recommendations from school

Importance of recommendations from school	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Very important	4	29	6	9	7	23	39
Fairly important ¹	1	9	-	4	4	2	10
Important	-	4	-	-	-	4	4
Not important ²	3	3	1	1	-	6	7
not stated	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

1 Such recommendations rely very much on the integrity of the Headteacher (mentioned by five employers);

2 Such recommendations could be misleading (mentioned by one employer).

The above table clearly demonstrates the dependence of employers on schools in recommending future employees. Five small firms and forty-two large firms, with thirty-nine employers across each of the three sectors respectively, attach great importance to such recommendations. The school is important as far as confirming character, responsibility and leadership qualities is concerned, recommendations from school play an important role in determining job suitability.

The level of 'neutrality' was low with figures for the 'not important' category showing

employers to be unimpressed mainly because they are often 'stereotypical' or even 'misleading'. More important, as will be confirmed later in the chapter, is the belief that such recommendations are not necessary since employers have to subject applicants to selection tests and interviews.

This is even more so from findings shown in the second table which indicates the importance of recommendations from someone known to the employer:

Table 9.15
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by
the importance attached to recommendations from someone known to the employer

Importance of recommendations from someone known to the employer	Scale		Sector				
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Very important ¹	3	15	2	3	5	12	20
Fairly important	-	1	-	-	1	-	1
Important ²	1	2	-	2	-	1	3
Not important ³	3	27	4	9	5	20	34
not stated	1	1	1	-	-	3	3
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

1 The person making the recommendation must be trustworthy and reliable (mentioned by eight employers);

2 The person should be from the business world (mentioned by two employers);

3 Not important at the junior level and therefore such persons are not considered at all (mentioned by five employers).

Over half the sample for each scale and sector are not in favour of encouraging such recommendations:

For record purposes it is important but when we take people through the selection interview or during their probationary period we get the opportunity to confirm other things.

(large, state, manufacturing, personnel director).

Nevertheless, the positive ratings grouped together only give a difference of ten employers from the negative rating showing some bias in the sample towards knowing the person giving recommendations. Being able to trust in what the referee says, believing him to be

giving a true picture of the applicant is an important consideration. However, another employer did not consider either the school or personal knowledge of the referee but instead the contacts and influence the applicant might have. In that case, such an applicant is hardly likely to be a school leaver but a more mature, and probably more experienced, worker:

We normally prefer people who have the background and have influences in the market or in the country. This is business and we have to increase our business by the way we select. Sometimes we select people who have influence in the government or in the business sector.
(large, parastatal, banking, operations manager).

Given the significance attached to 'school heads and referees', a further analysis was made of the importance of recommendations from school with the perceived importance of BSSs in particular. The results were quite conclusive with only one respondent making no choices at all to the question. The analysis shown in table 9A.4 (Appendix 9A) reveals differences in ratings of importance of recommendations from schools per se as compared to employers' perceived importance of BSSs to be very slight. Whilst just over half the employers sampled clearly see schools' recommendations as very important, more value those from BSSs in particular. But, given previous comments from many employers of BSS leavers today, it was surprising that the result was not more negative.

9.3.2 *Question 3.2*

Are employers moved through political pressure to give preference to certain job applicants?

The study does not intend to suggest that political pressure or problems therefrom are dominant influences; clearly the most important factor is choice and perceived suitability of the job applicant. But for many employers the choice of job applicants was very wide and given this, secondary factors must be considered. With the question of political influences, however, the majority of the employer sample responded with an overwhelming negative.

Table 9.16
 Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
 and by whether employers have had any political pressure
 on recruitment and if any problems ensued from it

	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Political pressure received							
Yes	-	2	1	-	1	2	3
No	8	36	5	11	7	31	49
Sometimes	-	7	-	2	2	3	7
not stated	-	1	1	1	1	-	2
Any problems from such pressure							
Yes ¹	-	2	-	2	-	1	2
No ²	-	3	1	-	1	2	4
Sometimes	-	1	-	-	1	-	1
Not applicable	8	38	6	12	7	33	52
not stated	-	2	-	-	2	-	2
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

- 1 The person is sometimes not suitable at all (mentioned by one employer);
 there is pressure when there are not vacancies (mentioned by one employer);
 2 We rely solely on our 'screening' mechanism (mentioned by 2 employers).

This response was consistent of course with another high negative response (85 percent) to the question of problems they might have encountered. With such a sizable negative response, ranking 'political pressure' a factor of little importance, a further analysis was made based on recommendations politicians may make rather than any direct, or unwanted, influence they may bring to bear on employers' recruitment practices. Results are shown in table 9.17:

Table 9.17
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
and by whether politicians recommend people for jobs

Politicians recommend others for jobs	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Yes*	1	9	2	4	2	7	12
No	7	35	5	9	8	29	47
Not usual	-	2	-	1	1	-	2
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

* "But we feel no pressure" (mentioned by three employers);
"But we treat them in the same way as the other applicants" (mentioned by four employers);
"But acceptance depends on vacancies" (mentioned by one employer).

There is, again, a strong negative response from forty-seven employers (79 percent).

9.3.3 Question 3.3

Do employers find themselves in situations where they prefer recruiting people that they either know personally, are related to or have some common link with and are they contacted personally by people on behalf of job applicants?

Employers were requested to indicate whether it suited them to recruit those they were related to or those they knew personally. As expected thirty-eight employers, all from the state sector, declare that they are not in favour of recruiting those they know personally or are related to. It would present problems if nepotism were raised as an accusation against them and what the firms are concerned with foremost is the applicant's capabilities so the interest does not lie in *who* the people are but *what* they can offer.

Preferences for qualifications and skills, especially, take priority over considerations for recruiting those known personally. It must be said, however, that these findings may not be truly representative of what happens in reality. The delicacy of a question such as this is bound to lead to some defensive responses.

But responses on whether employers feel special responsibility for certain categories of applicants show a different picture, for some cases. Private firms are much more likely to consider taking on job applicants on the basis of factors other than educational qualifications. The figure might be even higher for small firms, where, of the eight firms, six admit special responsibility for 'like' persons. For example, employers feel there is

the tendency to prefer people with whom they attended the same school provided that the level of attainment is what is required and in cases where two candidates have equal chances of being recruited, the employer would certainly go in for the familiar candidate. One parastatal employer also allows for certain conditions:

It can happen but we have to be careful, going strictly by results of interviews and selecting the best. [At the same time], with about 11 branches in the country, if you don't have the right type of person you will have a lot of problems. [Hence], in opening a branch we prefer people from that area who can sell the bank; that is our policy.
(large, parastatal, banking, head of administration)

However, 'ability and merit' count more than any feelings of special responsibility for certain job applicants. The large state firms, in particular, show a wariness for such persons, no doubt strongly influenced in part by government regulations and by the 'natural' objectivity of selection bodies and interview panels:

If there is a vacancy and the applicant has good qualifications then we'll try to be fair. If there are two people then I would take a test and take on the best of the two. It would not make any difference who they are or where they come from.
(large, state, agriculture, managing director)

A further analysis was made to see if employers were contacted personally by others acting on behalf of job applicants. Table 9.18 shows that it does happen for 70 percent of the respondents with varying degrees of frequency from 'often' to 'hardly':

Table 9.18
Distribution of employer sample by frequency of personal contacts for jobs

Responses on whether and how often employers are contacted personally by others on behalf of job applicants	Employers	
	n	%
Happens often	23	(38)
Happens occasionally	18	(29)
Hardly happens	2	(3)
Does not happen	17	(28)
not stated	1	(2)
Total	61	(100)

It could be argued that this apparently high frequency of such contacts with employers

would imply that job applicants may be recruited on the basis of factors other than paper qualifications when, in the latter case, it would be perfectly proper to depend on sending applications forms only. This explanation has to be largely conjectural.

The reason for including this question was based not only on personal hunch but previous research. A search of the literature in Chapter 4 revealed more than a passing reference to the fact that non-cognitive, ascriptive factors might have some influence on recruitment.

9.3.4 *Question 3.4*

Why do employers choose certain job applicants in favour of others and how important is the gender of the applicant?

Baxter (1987) cites Boddy et al. who argued, referring to employers in Bristol, that selection factors relating to 'competence' become less relevant to employers when confronted with an excess of supply of technically qualified candidates. In this situation 'suitability' factors come to the fore, 'factors much less objective than technical competence, and more subject to the effects of stereotyping'. The main 'suitability' factors which have this knock-out effect are track record and location. The former affects mainly the young and the unemployed, the latter is significant where 'informal, word of mouth forms of recruitment operate'. Table 9.19 compares the Ghanaian case for employers' selection of factors influencing choice.

The study uses four main criteria for selection to jobs namely, cognitive output (criterion A), non-cognitive output (criterion B), vocational attributes (criterion C) and other output (criterion D). The table above summarises these options by showing scores and percentages for preferences for each criterion. It also shows, for each item, the percentage for the total sample (n =61).

Table 9.19
Distribution of employer sample by factors influencing choice of employees

Employers' selection of factors influencing choice of employees grouped into the four categories	Total		as % of total sample (n = 61)
	n	%	%
A. Cognitive output			
academic performance	5	(3)	8
qualifications	33	(18)	54
performance at tests by firm	5	(3)	8
B. Non-cognitive output			
background	25	(14)	41
character	5	(3)	8
age	20	(11)	33
personality	7	(4)	11
general attitude	13	(7)	21
work attitude	6	(3)	10
C. Vocational attributes			
experience	20	(11)	33
practical knowledge	6	(3)	10
D. Other output			
performance at selection interview	18	(10)	29
references	3	(2)	5
being friends of employees	3	(2)	5
being relatives of employees	3	(2)	5
health	7	(4)	11
Total	179	(100)	

Responses were not mutually exclusive and employers were allowed to mention as many factors as they wished hence the total figure of 179.

For criteria A to C, qualifications (54 percent), background (41 percent), age (33 percent), performance at the selection interview (29 percent) and experience (33 percent), respectively, were the most frequently mentioned. Employers who were more interested in cognitive output accorded qualifications high priority. This is not surprising because since leavers are expected to find employment in the jobs for which they were prepared and employers are likely to be looking both for general and specific job-related skills, the selection that occurs on entry to jobs becomes all the more crucial, performing a significant screening function. For this reason, the initial selection criteria tend to be stringent. Appendix 9D also shows a sample of typing job requirements as outlined by a state insurance company in Ghana.

School leavers hoping to gain employment, despite their (weak) qualifications or because

they cannot afford to pursue further studies, may still expect their prospects of employment to be reasonably good. Criterion B, non-cognitive output, shows employers focussing very much on background, age and attitude. One employer from a bank provided a sample of what was considered by an interview panel. This is shown in Box 9.2:

Box 9.2 Factors considered by an interview panel

AT THE INTERVIEW

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| APPEARANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has he/she got a pleasant likable personality? Neatly turned out? - Inspires confidence? - Do you see him/her as a cashier in 1 year's time? - Do you see him/her as a manager in 10 years time? |
| BEHAVIOUR | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does he look and behave like a gentleman or lady? Disciplined? - Polite? |
| INTERVIEW | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does he/she speak clearly and with a reasonable command of the English Language? - Do answers show depth in thinking? - Up to date on events around him? - Alert and quick off the mark? |
| SPECIAL INTERESTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has he/she got any special qualities/ qualifications or skills in any fields? - Any extra-curricula interests? |
-

As with the cognitive output criterion, the school leavers need to portray themselves in a way that is credible to potential employers. Unlike the cognitive output criterion, there is less tendency to focus on occupationally specific skills. In looking at these two categories, it is clear that paper qualifications and good performance on the job are important but they are not sufficient conditions for recruitment. School leavers, in particular, will, by definition, be hard put to satisfy these 'other' conditions. In practice many items which appear to belong in the non-cognitive criterion might more appropriately be classified under the vocational attributes criterion, as these qualities are linked much more closely with the process of work itself: the essence of having had previous

experience, for example, has nothing to do with whether qualifications had been acquired or not, but with the applicants' ability to *do the job*.

Experienced applicants relying on criterion C, not surprisingly, must believe that their experience and practical knowledge might help them find employment. Yet where motivation and personal qualities, as revealed by performance on the job, are typically the main criteria for selection, so experience with good references attract many employers who will be induced to recruit the more experienced applicant than the school leaver.

Finally, criterion D, other output, is so called to indicate its detachment from the more obvious processes of selection and recruitment in the labour market. Although members of this category are, like their counterparts in criterion B, at the mercy of labour market competition, it serves as a last resort for school leavers; it enables those who do not have much going for them in the first three criteria to have some hope although, with the exception of the need for good health, they are, by definition, less qualified and less 'employable' than those in other sectors. It is interesting that the issue of gender was not mentioned once as a possible criterion of selection to jobs. Yet a managing director of a large state firm states that he gives preference to those with experience and maturity. Also *men* are better at figures so they are preferred in the first instance.

This comment leads neatly into the second part of the question, the importance or irrelevance of the job applicant's gender to employers' recruitment practices. In a straight comparison between the genders, table 9.20 reveals that a quarter of the employer sample express a preference for men and six employers a preference for women:

Table 9.20
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by gender preference

Gender preference in the selection process	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Men preferred	1	14	-	6	4	5	15
Women preferred	4	2	-	-	1	5	6
No preference	2	21	6	5	3	21	29
Other*	1	5	1	2	2	3	7
not stated	-	4	-	1	1	2	4
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

* Our preference would depend on the type of job (mentioned by three employers);
We prefer female typists but male accounts clerks (mentioned by three employers).

However, the relatively large number of employers who expressed no preference for either gender provides evidence to substantiate the general claim that employers will more readily select job applicants on grounds of ability and merit rather than gender. Appendix 9E provides a sample of requirements from a bank in the state sector which shows them to be exactly the same for males and females, although it is interesting that no provision was made for 'male typists'. This is probably a symptom of the common practice of gender-typing, as discussed below.

Although table 9.20 shows a considerable difference between preferences for men or women (see also table 9A.5, Appendix 9A), there is no real variation in the reasons given for those preferences. For example, the main advantage of selecting men, as stated by the employers, is that they can 'work late hours' and women because they are 'trustworthy' and respect 'confidentiality'.

At the same time, where preference is expressed, employers confer fairly stereotypical attributes on men and women and both are seen to work hard or better but they do so in distinctly different ways. Many believe men make better employees in terms of duty consciousness and are more ready to face inconveniences that may arise from the need to work extra hours if necessary. They are more energetic or more reliable and can handle the most difficult duties whilst in many cases women are not able to as they often have problems with children and so on.

Furthermore, the most unreasonable remark 'We have a 'no women policy'', albeit mentioned by only two employers, is, nevertheless, evidence of a very blinkered view of women, even today. In a study carried out by Anker and Hein (1985) on 'Why Third World urban employers usually prefer men', they came up with similar findings in Ghana. They found for example, as in other countries, that because legislation requires that maternity leave benefits be paid entirely by the employers, they are not willing to employ women. But, as concerns the actual turnover behaviour of employees, their Ghana study notes the high job stability and strong work commitment of the women employees in the sample: ten percent of the study sample women and only one percent of the study sample men had kept their first job for more than ten years. But this could be because of the greater propensity of men to get promoted. Again, similar to this study's findings, Anker and Hein also perceived gender-typing of jobs to be clearly evident. Taking for example, supervisory roles, fifty-eight percent of Accra employers thought men were better than women in supervising and only eight percent thought women were better, the remainder saying they saw no difference. In this study of employers, there were some who saw the roles of men and women in a very structured way:

We employ males and females according to the departments in which they are needed, although work requiring late hours into the night is given to the men.

(large, state, publishing, senior personnel officer)

And

We have *female* typists and *male* accountants because the jobs are departmentalised with females doing typing at their best while they compete with the men in the accounting fields

(large, state, commerce and trade, personnel manager).

In terms of reasons why employers considered women to be more suitable, again there are similarities between their findings and this study's: they more easily accept lower wages and show greater docility (women employees were considered by about two-fifths of the employer sample to be less likely to be insubordinate and to make fewer demands for pay increases), they are best suited to household-type skills, they are versatile in that they can be used as typists, receptionists and sometimes provide catering services for visitors and they have 'sex appeal'.

9.3.5 Question 3.5

Do employers find examination results sufficient and reliable for recruitment or do they depend more on (a) information about the character of the job applicant and (b) their own selection tests?

The arguments put forward by many critics (see Chapter 4) that employers are particularistic about how they determine their educational requirements, that assessment procedures in schools are losing their validity and that doing well in schools is not necessarily a passport to good jobs, are questioned here. The study does not aim to refute these arguments but to show whether or not they are still true today and whether there have been any adjustments in employers' recruitment thinking and practice.

Ten percent of the employer sample were non-committal about the importance of examination results. Less than half the employer sample attached significant importance to examination results, the rest were less enthusiastic taking no notice of examination results in selection procedures, primarily because they do not mean very much when it comes to job performance and also because they are not enough on their own without some kind of 'back up'. This attitude appears frequently in the comments of many of the respondents.

In terms of cognitive output, as measured by examination results, two comments show

leanings towards human capital considerations because they see it as instrumental in inviting an applicant for an interview in the first place. Secondly, it is the only immediate yardstick available to know that the applicant is qualified.

Other employers are less enthusiastic, preferring attitudinal attributes which cannot and are not tested by public examinations although these educational outcomes are the ones deemed most productive in school leavers:

Examination results confirm that the candidate has had some basic education but where two people have shown the potential for further development, we shall give a place to the one that shows a far better potential to cope with the job or learn better on the job. [In other words] you can have two people whose test results will be the same but one will perform better than the other and you may rather take the one with the lower exam mark because he has the type of attributes you were looking for, for that particular job.

(large, state, manufacturing, personnel director)

In addition, good character was considered to be very important provided the person is satisfactorily qualified. Employers in general believe that the applicant does not need to have superlative results but should be able to perform with the basic minimum requirements.

Further analysis centred on the school subjects which are deemed to be of particular relevance for employers. Results are shown in table 9.21:

Table 9.21
Distribution of employers sample by scale and sector and by subjects
in the school certificate which employers find particularly relevant for them

Subjects of particular importance to employers	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
English, maths and 3 credits in any other subjects	2	6	3	2	3	6	11
English, maths and business	-	10	1	3	2	6	11
English and business	-	6	-	2	-	4	6
English and typing	1	2	-	1	-	2	3
Accounts and typing	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
English only	-	1	-	-	1	-	1
Business only	1	7	1	-	1	8	9
Typing speed tests	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
All subjects taken	-	8	1	3	2	4	9
No particular subject/ not stated	4	4	1	2	1	6	9
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

It comes as no surprise to find the vast majority of respondents agreeing that the subjects particularly relevant to them in the selection procedure are English, Mathematics and Business studies. However, twenty employers fail to mention English in either general or specific form and thirty fail to highlight Mathematics as being of particular importance.

In the light of the above findings, it would perhaps be fruitful, at this stage, to consider Marsden's (1987) 'Output Matrix of Business and Education' in which he 'brings within one analytical frame those characteristics of business and education that are often seen as being in conflict or contradiction with one another' (OU 1989). Briefly, he contends that (a) a business is driven hard by its 'bottom line' with the vertical 'output flow' in figure 9.1 leading to financial results $\text{£}x_1 + \text{£}x_2$ etc, where the output of a business is the sum of $X + Y$:

Figure 9.1 Business Outputs Matrix

A firm's main products or services

Environment					Y1 longer term
Training					Y2 less easily
Equal opportunity					Y2 measured
Education links					Y4 outputs
	X1	X2	X3	X4	<u>X + Y</u>

'Bottom Line'

He asserts that the horizontal outputs (effects of environment, recruitment policy, equal opportunities policy, staff training and development programmes and relationships with the local community, including education), although longer term and less easily measured, can add to a company's performance and, if got wrong, can cost it dearly.

And (b) a school is driven hard by its performance indicator: the 'vertical outputs' of examination results ($x_1 + x_2$ etc, in figure 9.2), ignoring the horizontal 'cross-curricular' outputs ($y_1 + y_2$ etc, in figure 9.2) to the detriment of a rounded education in its students, where the output of the school, the effective capability of its students, is the sum of X + Y:

Figure 9.2 School Outputs Matrix

Individual Subjects

Communication skills						Y1 longer term
Economic Awareness						Y2 less easily
Industry Understanding						Y3 measured
Technology capacity						Y4 outputs
Work attitudes						Y5
	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	<u>X + Y</u>

Examination Results

Marsden, representing British Petroleum plc, believes there has been increasing industry-education contact with a recognition that industry is improving its record in this respect. This may well be so in the British case but comments from the Ghanaian employer sample show little or very slow movements towards such contact. Indeed, as the OU (1989:49) suggests, while Marsden's arguments 'encourage a view of the relationship between business and education that focuses on the interplay between a variety of organisational goals or outputs ... [his arguments] tend to leave out major differences in the principles that underlie the social organisation of business and education.' In addition, although Marsden rightly perceives schools' efficiency to be generally guided by its examination results, this study's findings do not support his view, also held by others, that 'examination results are, of course, still very important and employers will continue, rightly, to use them as vital indicators of performance' (1987:82).

Academic qualifications hold no great esteem in the minds of Ghanaian employers other than at a very general level. As evidenced from comments pertaining to the importance of examination results, employers seek to identify potential recruits with desired qualities by whatever means possible. Certainly, employers use examination 'success' as a measure of potential productivity when recruiting school leavers. However, they do agree that general basic skills are to be preferred to specific ones, and that academic ability alone is not a sufficient requirement.

Employers are not working with schools nor are they able to articulate their human resource needs in terms that schools can understand, as evidenced in subsection 9.2.1, so that getting the right balance between X and Y has not emerged in the Ghana case. There is still strong emphasis on the 'vertical outputs' of education, not allowing individual subjects to develop in ways that ensure achievement of the desired 'horizontal outputs'. But, 'organisational 'inputs' that materially affect the outputs' (OU 1989) cannot be ignored in the process of developing a fruitful working partnership between business and education.

Furthermore, findings show that employers' principal interest is in the pursuit of the short-term bottom line, more so when potential recruits are not in short supply but in such numbers as employers can pick and choose. Hence, it suits employers to use their own selection tests. Table 9.22 shows the vast majority of the employer sample using their own tests as part of the selection procedure:

Table 9.22
Distribution of employer sample
by scale and sector and by their use of selection tests

Using selection tests	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Yes	6	34	7	10	9	28	47
No	2	6	-	2	1	5	8
Sometimes	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
not stated	-	5	-	2	1	2	5
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

From an inspection of the results across each scale and sector, it becomes apparent that the selection test plays an important role as a deciding factor in the final recruitment process.

9.4 Preferences of individual firms in recruiting staff for typing and clerical accounting jobs

How far the onus may be on the employer to help prospective school leavers to prepare themselves for work is discussed in this section. The questions of availability of information by employers, 'proper' teaching of business skills and employers' own training schemes are dealt with according to each firm surveyed.

9.4.1 *Question 4.1*

In what way is information made available to school leavers about typing and clerical accounting jobs by employers and what factors are deemed as most important in the final selection of job applicants?

A number of questions in the questionnaire were concerned directly or indirectly with methods used by employers to inform schools about future job openings. Table 9.23 shows that many are recruited by advertising (54 percent) and/or by asking others, mainly colleagues, about prospective candidates (61 percent).

Table 9.23
Distribution of employers sample by methods used
by employers to make schools and others aware of job openings

Recruit by advertising	Employers	
	n	%
Yes	15	(25)
Yes: in newspapers and noticeboards	9	(15)
Yes: if necessary	1	(2)
Yes: internally	1	(2)
Sometimes	6	(10)
No	21	(34)
No: not with so many applications in	8	(12)
<hr/>		
Recruit by contacting people		
Yes	5	(7)
Yes: if need arises	1	(2)
No	43	(70)
No: more experience acquired	1	(2)
No: not with so many applications coming in	7	(12)
Only the Government Secretarial School for top level positions	3	(5)
Only Polytechnics	1	(2)
<hr/>		
Recruit by asking others about candidates		
Yes	5	(8)
Yes: from colleagues	12	(20)
Yes: in some cases	4	(7)
Yes: those in similar firms	5	(8)
Yes: from friends, colleagues, employees and clients	10	(16)
Yes: using the Personnel Managers' Association	1	(2)
No	22	(36)
No: not at this level	2	(3)
<hr/>		
Recruit through contacts with BSSs		
Yes	3	(6)
Some contact	1	(2)
Sometimes we give donations	2	(3)
We help with vacation employment	1	(2)
Not with BSSs	2	(3)
No	52	(84)
<hr/>		
Recruit through personal introduction to the schools		
Yes	6	(10)
Yes: through our adverts	1	(2)
Only at university level	3	(5)
No	47	(77)
No: but good idea of given opportunity	2	(3)
No: applications are too many	2	(3)
<hr/>		
Total	61	(100)

However, the overwhelming majority of employers (84 to 87 percent) did not recruit either by contacting people generally or through contacts with BSSs or through personally introducing themselves to schools:

There are too many schools in the system and too much unemployment already. We don't have the need to go to schools. We give preference to certain schools however: if they are exceptionally good it is because they have been in the system longer.

(large, state, agriculture, managing director).

Respondents were also asked to indicate what factors they would select when choosing between *several* 'good' candidates for a job. Table 9.24 shows the percentage frequencies for the sample:

Table 9.24
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by factors selected in choosing between several 'good' job applicants

Factors Selected	Scale		not stated	Sector			Total
	Small	Large		State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Performance at interview	3	14	1	4	4	10	18
Experience and age	-	2	-	2	-	-	2
Experience and tests	-	2	-	2	-	-	2
Experience, interview and background	-	3	-	2	1	-	3
Experience, interview, background and appearance	1	6	1	3	2	3	8
Interview and tests	1	9	1	1	2	8	11
Tests only	2	1	2	-	-	5	5
Interview, health, referees, tests, age and experience	-	4	1	-	1	4	5
Gender, age, background and interview	-	2	-	-	1	1	2
not stated	1	3	1	-	-	5	5
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

The factors are listed according to groups specified by each employer. A wide range of factors were listed by employers and as has been remarked previously, performance at interviews is an almost indispensable tool for employers to use in assessing the work abilities of candidates. Just how far this is so is seen by the high number of employers

(forty-seven) who nominated this item. Only fourteen employers did not indicate performance at interviews as essential when choosing job applicants.

The concept of 'good' is always difficult to define and can be contentious. In this case, employers are invariably assuming that applicants have the necessary minimum paper qualifications, hence their exclusion of this criterion from the factors listed. It can be argued then that when employers select from several 'good' applicants the first consideration *after* proof of qualifications, is performance at the interview and all that it entails. The employers who made few selections according to gender, again reflect previously expressed views that they had no preferences for either gender in the recruitment procedure. However with twenty respondents opting for some experience, it is hardly likely that school leavers will be in the running! This is perhaps inevitable given the context of the question when employers are bound to want to use more demanding criteria when selecting from amongst equally 'good' candidates for the job.

There is one interesting feature shown in the table. Although the range of factors sought by employers according to scale and sector was almost identical, the question of selecting according to tests only is not considered at all by the state or parastatal sectors, with only one large firm employer mentioning this. This is sharply contrasted with the small private firm employers who feel more inclined to use tests on their own.

9.4.2 *Question 4.2*

How much confidence do employers have in schools for teaching business skills?

The question contains the word 'confidence', implying that employers are a little wary of schools' ability to prepare business students for jobs. In most people's minds there probably exist types of institutions which they feel can do the job of educating and training for businesses at any level required. In this section, the paramount importance of the best place to acquire business skills is discussed.

As well as asking respondents to identify the type of place best suited to teaching business skills, the questionnaire also asked them to name the institutions to which they were referring and, in an open-ended question, invited brief descriptions of these categories. The employers were asked to respond to the best place they would choose, given 'school, on the job training and both'. The results are shown in table 9.25. The categories actually went a little further with some employers giving a 'before' and 'after' concept to how students acquired business skills. For example, 'school then on the job training' and 'on

the job training while in school' were seen as linked rather than two separate experiences. On the other hand, some employers - albeit only a few - see distinct modes of training as being directly associated with the type of job as in 'schools for secretarial skills and on the job training for accounting skills'.

Table 9.25
Employers' preferred venue for teaching business skills, by scale and sector

	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
<u>Best Place</u>							
Schools	5	22	5	8	6	18	32
On the job training	-	3	1	1	-	3	4
Schools and on the job training	1	13	1	4	3	8	15
Schools for secretarial skills and on the job training for accounting skills	-	1	-	-	1	-	1
Schools then on the job training	1	5	-	1	1	4	6
On the job training while in school	-	2	-	-	-	2	2
not stated	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
<u>Type of school</u>							
Business	2	18	2	5	6	11	22
BSS	1	10	2	2	2	9	13
BSS and further training	-	3	-	1	2	-	3
Any school with equipment and good teachers	1	3	-	-	-	4	4
Secondary with business or secondary only or Polytechnics	-	4	1	2	1	2	5
National Vocational Training Institute or other post-secondary school	2	2	1	1	-	4	5
Government Secretarial School and /or Polytechnic	-	2	-	2	-	-	2
not applicable	1	3	1	1	-	4	5
not stated	1	1	-	-	-	2	2
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

Table 9.25 shows the somewhat optimistic attitude of employers, that is, thirty-two have faith in schools only principally because, according to the large state and private employers, they provide the necessary theoretical grounding in preparation for the practical

skills that can be acquired after a period of training with the firm. But few employers give any credence to on the job training only.

However, a further analysis of the type of school employers are thinking about, as seen in the second half of the table, shows a fair proportion of the employer sample opting for the more specialised business schools, offering only business subjects, notably the Government Secretarial School which is especially highly acclaimed for catering directly to the 'needs' of business firms. The two photographs in Appendix 9F show employees who attended such schools, (in photograph 9F.1, a secretary from a private business school is working in a small private firm and in photograph 9F.2 there is the private secretary from a government secretarial school working in a large state firm; the first obvious difference between them is that employee 9F.1 uses an electric typewriter and employee 9F.2, a manual one; the other difference between them is evident in the conditions in which they work).

Nevertheless, it could be argued that possession of more general, even academic, knowledge is one of the reasons other employers opt for business secondary schools and that forty-three employers is a reasonable proportion. At the same time, of this proportion, three see the need for school leavers *not* to stop at BSSs but proceed to further training, no doubt in the Government Secretarial School, the National Vocational Training Institute or a polytechnic.

In view of the above findings, the relationship between employers' perception of the importance of recommendations from school, with schools seen as the best place for teaching business skills, was also analysed. The responses are given in table 9.26 where the 'not stated' category shows a relatively high refusal rate of respondents who declined to indicate the significance of such recommendations. This is an interesting reflection of some employers' reluctance to attach importance to recommendations even if they believe in the capacity of the schools 'to do the job'.

Table 9.26
Cross-tabulation of employers' perception of the importance of
recommendations from school with schools as the best place for teaching business skills

Importance of recommendations from school	Best place to teach	
	n	%
Very important	23	(38)
Fairly important ¹	5	(8)
Important	2	(3)
Not important ²	2	(3)
not stated	29	(48)
Total	61	(100)

1 See notes under table 9.14

2 See notes under table 9.14

Respondents were further invited to give their opinions on whether they would like to see business subjects taught in all secondary schools in the country (table 9.27). An overwhelming majority of fifty-six employers gave a positive response which is somewhat startling given previous responses.

Table 9.27
Distribution of employer sample
by scale and sector and by desire to see, or not see,
business subjects taught in all secondary schools in the country

Business subjects across all secondary schools	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Yes	7	40	6	10	10	33	53
Yes: as optional subjects	-	2	-	1	-	1	2
Yes: in girls' schools	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
No	-	2	1	1	1	1	3
not stated	1	1	-	1	-	1	2
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

The employers were then asked to give reasons why they felt business studies should be taught in all secondary schools. Many gave varied answers with thirty-one employers (52 percent) of the opinion that these subjects were very useful because they were directly related to work and could help school leavers find some employment.

At a general level, not limited to preparing for the job market, it is also felt that the inclusion of business/vocational subjects would allow students more options. Every school leaver would be adequately equipped to make a choice and students with aptitudes for such subjects can develop them and specialise later at higher levels. Three employers suggest that it would relieve students of the pressure of doing subjects they have no interest in or prove difficult, two more feel there should be a combination of business and academic subjects taught:

It kills two birds with one stone, in that proficiency in business skills is attained at the same time as the academic standard is [becoming] appreciably high
(large, private, accounting, partner).

9.4.3 *Question 4.3*

Are training and apprenticeship schemes used by employers to supplement basic skills acquired in school?

The role of training schemes is significant in employers' school leaver recruitment practices. It is important to ascertain how far they might be an integral part of employers' recruitment processes, and of school leavers' entry into the labour market. Also under investigation is the question of whether employers prefer paying lower wages with training on the job in specific skills than hiring the outputs of business secondary schools (Chapter 4).

Responses from this item in the questionnaire are presented in table 9.28 below. Sixty-nine percent of the employer sample have training schemes although five percent of this proportion are not providing such schemes for office staff. This level could well be seen as a very practical comment on the twelve or more years of compulsory schooling supposedly received by those the firms are taking on. The number of trainees in each firm is shown in table 9A.6 (Appendix 9A).

Employers gave free responses when asked what criteria they used for the selection to training schemes and these are reported in the second half of the table.

A number of differences in criteria for selection emerged. The large state and parastatal sectors are more keen to have their staff improve on their skills and depend a lot more on performance appraisals to determine if they should go on training schemes. The small private sector, on the other hand, sees training schemes more in terms of whether promotion is desired or if the firms are prepared to bear the expense of such training.

Table 9.28
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by
whether they have training schemes and how prospective trainees are selected for them

	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para- statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Existence of training schemes							
Yes	2	31	5	12	9	17	38
No	4	10	2	2	1	13	16
On the job training							
Not for office work	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
not stated	-	3	-	-	1	2	3
	1	2	-	-	-	3	3
Criteria for selection to training schemes							
Need to improve skills	-	4	-	2	1	1	4
From performance so far	-	8	-	2	2	4	8
From recommendations given our branches and head office	-	1	1	1	-	1	2
Depends on length of service	-	2	1	1	1	1	3
Depends on length of service, experience and performance	-	3	-	-	3	-	3
Policy is to train after recruitment	1	3	-	1	-	3	4
Depends on if promotion is desired and if it fits needs of our firm	2	4	1	2	-	5	7
Depends on performance and educational background	-	4	1	1	1	3	5
Not applicable	5	12	2	3	2	14	19
not stated	-	5	1	1	1	14	6
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

A number of employers feel there were differences in the performance of trainees depending on their educational background. The top section of table 9.29 reports the school background of trainees and the bottom compares trainees with a BSS background to other trainees.

Table 9.29
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by
school background of trainees, comparing BSS trainees with other trainees

	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
School background of trainees							
BSS	-	11	1	4	3	5	12
Ordinary secondary	-	1	1	1	-	1	2
BSS and ordinary secondary	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Business school	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Technical school	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
All types of schools	-	11	2	3	2	8	13
Not from <i>schools</i>	8	1	3	4	-	8	12
not stated	-	19	-	1	6	12	19
Comparing BSS trainees with other trainees							
Ordinary secondary have to be trained	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
BSSs more competent and have and edge	-	8	-	2	-	6	8
Ordinary secondary better with English language	-	2	1	-	2	1	3
BSSs still need more training	-	1	-	1	-	-	1
BSSs very good after a few years with us	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
Depends on the individual	-	2	-	1	1	-	2
They are the same	-	2	1	-	1	2	3
Not applicable	8	17	3	5	5	18	28
not stated	-	13	1	4	2	8	14
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

Nineteen percent of the employer sample have trainees with a BSS background only, while others incline towards a number of trainees with diverse backgrounds. In comparing these backgrounds, fourteen employers believe there are distinct differences between the job needs of BSS leavers and those of ordinary secondary school leavers. Some favourable statements were made about BSS leavers: these were statements about the work skills of these students, mainly that BSS leavers are more competent .

In contrast, ordinary secondary leavers are seen as having better English language skills (three employers). And two employers see the difference, if any, as depending on the individual, for example:

They are kind of at par but people from BSSs would be able to do their jobs as well as those of a shipping clerk, for example, who cannot do an accounts clerk's job. So an accounts clerk (BSS leaver) can do both jobs and therefore he has an advantage
(large, private, petroleum, personnel executive).

9.5 Policy guidelines for employers' recruitment of school leavers

More questions centred on specific recruitment policies as they are currently executed in the 61 firms of the survey. The aim was to determine what influences there were in the design of such policies and what part employees may have played in recruitment practices in the past.

9.5.1 *Question 5.1*

Are employers in favour of adjusting their recruitment policy or developing a policy for school leavers?

The overall frequencies of responses are set out in tables 9.30 and 9.31. The first table clearly demonstrates employers' lack of interest in adjusting their recruitment policy:

Table 9.30
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector
and by their perceived need for adjusting their recruitment policy

Need for adjustments	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Yes	-	12	1	2	2	9	13
No	4	28	5	11	7	19	37
No policy exists	1	1	1	-	-	3	3
not stated	3	5	-	1	2	5	8
N	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

However, the high negative response from forty employers should not lead to a dismissal of responses made by the other thirteen who feel the need to adjust their recruitment policy:

Policies should be flexible and, therefore, keeping in view my job requirements and, in case I do not get a person to fit my requirements, I will have to be flexible. If I am rigid I will be without people
(large, private, manufacturing, executive manager).

Table 9.31 shows the distribution of responses and, again, employers show negative responses towards developing a recruitment policy for school leavers:

Table 9.31
Distribution of employer sample by scale and sector and by whether they would consider developing a recruitment policy for school leavers

A recruitment policy for school leavers is needed	Scale			Sector			Total
	Small	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
yes	-	14	-	2	5	7	14
no	3	12	3	8	2	8	18
not stated	5	20	4	4	4	21	29
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

It should be pointed out, however, that the 'not stated' category response from twenty-nine employers is particularly high. This might indicate that employers are not necessarily against developing such a policy but may be ambivalent or indifferent. This is purely conjectural however. Another point is that, unlike the first table, the margin of difference between the 'yes' and 'no' responses is very small hence, much more attention should be paid to what employers have to say than may be warranted from immediate findings. For example:

Orientation courses [to be conducted by us] are needed in this age of computer and electronic gadgets for recording messages and letters, BSSs should think seriously of introducing students to these subjects e.g. word processing, which is now acquiring wide acceptance in developing countries
(large, state, transport, personnel manager).

9.5.2 Question 5.2

Are the state and parastatal institutions content with government regulations regarding their recruitment policy and what state recruitment policy affects private firms; also what influence, if any, do their employees have in private firms in terms of (a) views they may express about the way they recruit and (b) helping relatives or others to find jobs in the firm?

Employers from the state and parastatal sectors (n = 25) were asked to indicate whether they were subjected to government regulations in recruiting, if they desired any changes in these regulations and whether discretion was given within these rules. The results are given in table 9A.7 (Appendix 9A) which shows that regulations on recruitment are practically non-existent for sixteen employers.

The table also shows that changes in regulations where they were applied, though not desired by eleven employers, are very much wanted for *at least* four employers, the 'not stated' category being an unknown factor:

The law forbids the business sectors from engaging relatives and friends and we just conform to it [but] I feel there must be flexibility so that the right people with experience are selected
(large, parastatal, manufacturing, managing director).

It is interesting to note reactions from employers who *are* subject to regulations, including those from the twelve employers who state that they were given some discretion:

The policy is that people should already have acquired the Government Secretarial School certificate upon recruitment into the company. But we do not always follow this. We sometimes take them without the certificate and then send them there to get the grade
(large, state, publishing, senior personnel officer).

As was the case with the state and parastatal sector employers, employers from the private sector sample (n = 36) were asked about influences the government might exert over their recruitment policies. They were also asked about the influence that their employees might have in carrying out that policy. The responses are recorded in table 9A.8 (Appendix 9A).

Similar to findings for the state and parastatal sectors, the majority of the employer sample are *not* influenced by the government in their policy for recruitment.

In terms of changes desired in their recruitment policy, there are similar findings to that of the state and parastatal sectors:

Our hiring policy can be improved in the way we sell the job. We don't give that much information about the job or people come and ask what it is that is expected. If we gave more information about the job, this would give people a better opportunity of self-selection, deciding whether they can do the job or not
(large, private, petroleum, personnel executive).

Although almost all of the private sector employers state that employees barely have any say on the way they recruit, many (twenty-four) state that employees who approach them on behalf of others are helped. But for another employer who could not help:

At first it was a policy to recruit about four or five during the long vacation but those were the heydays. Now things are difficult and we don't have the money to spend on them. Training them is also a waste for the firm as we can no longer afford it
(large, private, manufacturing, administrative manager).

9.6 Comments and opinions from small- and large-scale private employers

In order to explore the question of whether there is any difference or similarity in employers' attitudes and hiring beliefs according to the size of their organisation, this section compares employers from four small and four large private firms operating in the same industrial sectors, namely accounting, commercial, engineering and manufacturing. For the other nine industrial sectors no such comparisons could be made: there are no small firms represented in the agriculture, banking, insurance, petroleum, publishing and 'other' sectors. Further, the building and construction and hotels and tourism sectors include only one small private firm. In the transport sector both small firms are private with the large firm belonging to the state sector. The large state and parastatal firms cannot be so compared since there are no such firms represented here on a small scale. (Table 9.1b p. 241 shows the total number of employees by firm where 30 or more employees represents the lower limit for large firms with 10-29 employees the upper limit for small firms; see also Chapter 3 p. 60.)

Private employers' responses to the question of whether they had taken on applicants with a business secondary background shows that small firms tend not to consider that type of school background, especially. The one exception is the small accounting employer who, in agreement with his larger counterpart, takes on people with a BSS background. The small engineering employer as opposed to the larger firm is more of the opinion that 'if you can do the job [irrespective of where you come from] we take you on' (personnel manager).

In terms of criteria used by employers in their selection of prospective typists and accounts clerks, interviews and selection tests are frequently mentioned. However, the *small* commercial and engineering firms are less inclined to look at tests whilst responses made by both the small and large accounting employers are very similar:

We select by inviting applicants for an interview and using academic standards, age and performance at interview as yardsticks for selection

(small, private, accounting, partner);

and

We advertise and conduct interviews as well as carry out our own selection tests to ensure that the right person is engaged

(large, private, accounting, partner).

Employers' opinions about what the aims of BSSs should be, as well as their impressions of BSS subjects show both small and large accounting employers giving very similar views in favour of BSSs. Both believe BSSs are there 'to fill positions of middle grade technical staff such as bookkeepers, typists and secretaries' and the general impression of BSSs is that they 'seem to satisfy the needs of business' and are 'useful especially if backed by practical experience'. None of the other six employers expressed views on this item.

The question of whether or not BSS job applicants are better than mainly academic job applicants in terms of meeting employers' expectations met with similar responses for both types of accounting firms. They believe that

employees with a BSS background have been trained in subjects useful to business while 'O' level staff possess only a general academic background. [Such a background] makes it easier for them to follow office routine.

However, the small firms for the commercial and manufacturing sectors do not attach any significance to a BSS background, unlike their larger counterparts who feel that 'skills in accounting/bookkeeping, office management and so on, [acquired in BSSs], have been of

value to their work in my company,' (large, private, commercial, head of personnel) and 'they have received full tuition on theory necessary for the job' (large, private, manufacturing, managing director).

The private accounting and manufacturing sector employers have clear recommendations for reform which centre on links with industry in terms of practical knowledge and emphasis on general /broad skills. They show some differences in their responses. For the accounting sector, whilst the small-scale employer feels

there is need for indepth training in accounts and other related subjects as well as a need for BSS students to read up to 'A' level at least in English language since [lack of understanding] becomes a drawback in their typing and shorthand work
(small, private, accounting, partner),

the large-scale employer believes their education

should be backed up by practical training, not necessarily in an office but proper books could be kept during practical lessons such as what a cash book is and how to write it up
(large, private, accounting, partner)

Again, different emphases are found between small and large private accounting firms concerning opinions on BSS leavers' performance at work. Whilst the first stresses that 'a few (especially the typist) would have done better if their *academic standards* were a bit high', the second remarks on how 'mostly people with some *working experience* are better'. Both the small and large engineering employers agree that performance improves after employees have worked for some time. Clearly, they have potential from the start but its only after a period of two to three years practical work experience that they are regarded as 'good'.

All eight employers agree that recommendations from school are important but each group of firms differs regarding the importance of recommendations from someone known to the employer. Whilst the small accounting employer sees such recommendations as unlikely, he believes that there are advantages in them. His larger counterpart, on the other hand, sees only the school headteacher as important. Again, the small engineering employer believes such recommendations are very important since they are probably more trustworthy. This is not the case for the large-scale employer who sees them as 'for note only'. The small manufacturing employer, in agreement with the other small firms, believes that 'some schools do not give fair information concerning their students so other sources of information are important.' But for the large-scale employer such

recommendations are 'no more important than those from the school'.

As with all the other employers in the preceding sections of this chapter, political pressure and problems therefrom are minimal if not altogether absent. Of this subgroup, only the large manufacturing employer states that this happens occasionally, creating problems where there are no vacancies. But the large accounting employer complains not of *political* pressure, but pressure from friends and relatives which also presents problems. This latter response was consistent with another positive response from the same employer on whether employers are contacted personally by others acting on behalf of job applicants. For the small accounting employer, however, this hardly happens and this is the same for the other small-scale firms in this subgroup, although their larger counterparts agree that it does happen.

Employers' selection of factors influencing choice of certain job applicants in favour of others shows for the small commercial, engineering and manufacturing firms no demand for requirements other than (innate or learned) ability to do the job. In the particular case of the small engineering firm, it appears nothing at all is required as 'they are mostly trained [in the firm]'. However, for the small accounting firm and the other large-scale firms of this subgroup, as with the majority of the total employer sample, qualifications, background, age, performance at the selection interview and experience are important.

For the commercial and engineering sectors there were differences of opinion between small- and large-scale employers relating to the importance or irrelevance of the job applicant's gender when recruiting. For the small-scale firms gender makes no difference, whereas the large commercial employer, for example, finds that 'males are more hardworking' and the large engineering employer, that

females are preferred for secretarial work because they are more versatile. They can be used as typists, receptionists and sometimes provide catering services for visitors

(large, private, engineering, general manager).

Photographs 9F.3 and 9F.4 (Appendix 9F), for example, show a predominance of men working as accounts clerks in large private firms.

Whilst both small and large accounting firms agree that examination results are important, both small and large manufacturing firms do not believe that at all. Differences of opinion however, emerged for the small and large commercial and engineering firms where the

small-scale firms attach less importance to results as opposed to the large firms which do use them as some measure of ability.

Finally, the small commercial and engineering firms do not use selection tests as part of the selection procedure. However, both small and large accounting and manufacturing firms approve the use of selection tests. Reasons given are, for example, 'to ensure that the right person is engaged', 'to satisfy our own standard requirements', 'to verify the claims of the applicant', 'to select the best candidate' and 'in order to make sure that the person is actually qualified'.

It is evident from the analysis of this subgroup that, on the whole, small-scale private employers from whatever industrial sector, are less stringent in their selection requirements and generally more open in their attitudes and hiring beliefs than large-scale private employers, particularly in the considerations about new (BSS) employees' performance at work, the importance of recommendations from school or from someone known to the employer, frequency of personal contacts for jobs and factors that influence their choice of job applicants. Having said that, however, it is striking that both small- and large-scale private employers from the *accounting* sector share very similar hiring beliefs, differing only on relatively minor issues such as source of recommendations about BSS leavers or incidents of political pressure and problems therefrom.

At the end of the questionnaire and interview schedule, employers were invited to give additional comments about the questions asked and the issues discussed. Only 9 (all large private firms) out of the 61 employers sampled gave additional comments (all but one were interviewees). They covered issues such as combining business with academic subjects, a point amply reported earlier, and the problem of inadequate teachers. One employer stressed the point that

If secondary schools want to teach commercial [business] subjects then they should engage teachers who are as good as the teachers for the secondary school subjects otherwise they should scrap these subjects and leave them for the commercial [business] schools
(large, private, manufacturing, administrative manager).

Another large private employer from the commercial sector raised the matter of 'status' and business education. He believed ideas on business secondary education tend to be on the negative side as people prefer to send their children to (prestigious) academic schools. This employer, however, concedes that business secondary education is not a bad idea.

Indeed, such leavers have an initial advantage and if sharp, would be much better, in many respects, than the often over-rated ordinary secondary school leaver.

9.7 Summary of findings

The diversity of employers' background in terms of their type of firm is not so sharply reflected in their views on recruitment and selection. The strongest message which came through is that employers do place value on specific business skills taught at school. But, at the same time, they want school leavers with a broad general education, although they do reveal that academic knowledge as such has low priority.

The point frequently mentioned by employers under Section 9.2 is that Business Secondary School leavers have better job prospects in general than do their academic counterparts. Another expectation clearly voiced by employers is that BSS students will be prepared adequately to seek entry into the work place, if only at the junior level. They will, invariably, need more training before they can move up to senior levels. Further, employers emphasise reforms in BSSs regarding links with industry, keeping up to date with modern office trends, acquiring the necessary equipment, and providing well qualified teachers. But skills in constructing job applications and interviewing for job vacancies are not mentioned at all.

Sections 9.3 and 9.4 sought to enquire into the considerations that bore on the recruitment of school leavers, notably in typing and clerical accounting jobs. The first looked at recommendations from school and from people known to the employer. The former is considered very important, the latter, is a minor factor. Recruiting relatives and those known personally to the employer is practised by small private sector employers but not encouraged by large state sector employers, who declared qualifications and skills to be far more important. Many speak, however, of the 'tendency' and 'willingness' to help such people but feel unable to do so mainly for fear of being accused of nepotism, favouritism, or encouraging indiscipline and so on.

A sense of *responsibility, reliability, good appearance* are some of the personal attributes that have emerged as high priorities for employers of school leavers. (These findings are not dissimilar from those by MORI (1990) on employers in Britain, with personal attributes being much more frequently mentioned than educational qualifications as the most important criteria in selecting a young applicant). But other characteristics such as *knowledge, skills, experience, performance at the selection interview* are usually considered to be of greater importance in cases where selection must be made amongst

several equally 'good' candidates for the job. School leavers are not seen as sufficiently prepared for work and most employers advocate further training and specialisation in business studies before entering the job market. Furthermore, the term 'experience', as used by employers, is not so much referring to a condition for the recruitment of school leavers as, 'it *vaguely* defines a requirement that young people know about work and the work place' (Blakers cited by Cumming 1988:17).

Less than half the employer sample attach significant importance to examination results *per se*. Most, especially small private sector employers, prefer to use their own selection tests, principally because they feel better able to make sure they have the 'right' person.

Further analysis failed to establish overwhelming preference for either gender in the selection process. Many acknowledge, however, the existence of stereotypical images of men and women as concerns the *type of job* they are allocated.

The importance of advertising in the local dailies was confirmed, but employers are usually inundated with applications from individuals anyway. There is, therefore, no need to go far in contacting people or secondary schools. The question then becomes one of selecting the 'best' candidate from among many applications. Again the most effective way of doing so is through performance at the selection interview.

Some employers were specific about the business skills they require of new employees, such as writing cashbooks, entering invoices, handling cheques, requiring specific typing speeds per minute and writing in shorthand. Others listed numeracy and literacy as basic requirements which, some feel, are *not* of the required standard in BSS leavers as compared to the ordinary secondary school leavers they appointed.

That being said, however, BSS leavers recruited in the past and BSS trainees within the firms are considered to be better material than others, notably ordinary secondary school leavers, in terms of competence and ability to learn new skills quickly. In addition almost all the employers agree that business subjects should be taught in secondary schools all over Ghana, mainly because they are useful, as a first step, in *finding employment* and would also allow students to have *more options*.

Despite their existence as a potentially powerful force in regulating recruitment, it appears from the interview and questionnaire data, under Section 9.5, that the direct influence of the government upon employers' hiring practices is not great, especially for private sector employers. In the very few cases where changes in regulations were desired, mention

was made of the need for *flexibility* in selecting applicants.

On the whole, the climate of opinion amongst employers is certainly far from unfavourable - and some individuals have carefully formulated views - but there has been little enthusiastic recruitment of Business Secondary Schools leavers. There are essentially three reasons for this. Firstly the interest of employers in recruiting for typing and clerical accounting jobs is focussed on the need for broadly useful business knowledge together with reasonably specialised business skills and therefore their attention is not so much directed at BSSs but at business schools and polytechnics. Secondly, business education in secondary schools may be viewed as limited vocationally because of their lack of up to date equipment and adequate practical emphasis in teaching methods. Thirdly, some employers see BSSs themselves as the source of students' failure to be recruited immediately after school. This may be because the very nature of the school does not enable the leavers to reach a specified level of attainment and they are, therefore, forced, probably to their own later advantage, to pursue further training in order to perform more than just 'satisfactorily' at work.

To briefly summarise then, it would appear from this chapter that given employers' general pessimism about school qualifications and employment, business studies as a subject does not fair too badly.

Chapter 10 Implications of Findings and Conclusions

This study has highlighted both general and specific differences between the importance attached to business secondary education output by teachers/educationists, students, employees and employers. It has explored and analysed views held by teachers and educationists on the relationship between education and work through the medium of the business secondary school; examined the aspirations and expectations of business school leavers and the criteria by which they are judged by employers to be suitable for recruitment into jobs. It has shown the tactics which the school leavers expect to use in the search for jobs and the realities of the workplace as expounded by those already working, i.e. the employees. It has discussed and analysed the opinions of employers on the attributes they wish for in employees and their evaluation of the educational system in relation to employment. This has important implications for both theory and policy, considered later in the chapter. Firstly though the main findings of the study are summarised and given below.

10.1 Summary of main findings

From the evidence given by business teachers and students as well as employers in this study, business subjects are the object of essentially positive attitudes. They are liked rather than disliked by the majority. This is so even though there is no apparently great commitment to these subjects in the general secondary schools contacted in the study. This is not the case with the business and business secondary schools surveyed where business subjects are well in place as they are mentioned more frequently as being valuable, than is seen to be the case with the general secondary schools.

All the teachers consider their schools to be performing satisfactorily on the whole although, as they further acknowledge, lack of equipment and materials exacerbates the problem of not only teaching the business subjects but also meeting employers' needs (see Chapter 6). They all agree that establishing contacts with employers and encouraging co-operation with them are essential in order to understand what they want. Examination success, for example, is considered a relatively unimportant educational outcome given that employers are influenced not only by qualifications but also, perhaps more, by the job applicant's personal qualities, performance at the interview and previous experience. However, to what extent the business teachers use this knowledge in their teaching, i.e. by including elements of non-cognitive attributes whenever possible, is a matter of

conjecture. None of the teachers advocates finding an office job immediately after school but all see proceeding to post-secondary specialisation as the better option since past experience shows that employers invariably prefer those with more than just basic skills. Nevertheless, questions of teacher involvement in the business curriculum design, not just its implementation in the classroom are crucial here since different assessments of the importance of proper design and planning of business subjects are clearly shown by the general belief that, in the short term at least, these subjects as opposed to academic subjects will provide graduates from business secondary schools with better employment prospects.

After having made the decision to choose business subjects, whether through personal choice or upon advice from teachers and parents, business students in the final year show business subjects to be held in a still relatively high position compared with other subjects, be they practical or academic, according to those questioned. In Chapter 7 two other patterns make themselves apparent in the study. The degree to which a student feels he or she is likely to get a job after taking business subjects shows up as being in part a factor determining the subjects' importance. This shows the position which a practical qualification rather than an academic one holds in the minds of the sample students. Business subjects are regarded as useful in a general way rather than a specific way (see pp. 198-199). This apart, business subjects taken at the secondary school level are shown to be relatively stable and healthy, if a little tarnished by the students' increased negative attitudes and dissatisfaction with schooling mainly in terms of the few (manual) typewriters they have and lack of textbooks which they feel hamper their chances of doing well in examinations.

Furthermore, students' expectations of what schools can or should produce depends on what they feel the school can do for them by way of enhancing their chances not only of finding jobs but of pursuing further or higher education. In addition, it is evident from the findings that the chances of finding work are considerably lower for ordinary secondary schools than for business schools or BSSs, where the former see their future more in terms of proceeding to Sixth Form or other further education. The implications of this are that attempts to inculcate the many skills and attitudes which are deemed desirable attributes by employers, if only at the junior level of employment, are seen more as a waste of time for students from the first group of schools. But, certainly where it is felt that there would be little chance of proceeding to further education, aspirations for office work are common to all the students. Indeed, a very narrow definition of the type of business subjects considered appropriate in enabling them to obtain office work is apparent with their absolute confidence in what they have studied at school together with

an almost complete exclusion of non-cognitive output. However, although qualifications and vocational attributes are deemed important by these students, reliance on help from family and friends is evident. At the same time, there was considerable maturity in their responses such as the ability with which the students were able to assess their examination potential in 'O' level grades and the unequivocal acknowledgement that the prime motive for taking business subjects was to enhance immediate future career prospects. Clearly they are not oblivious of the realities of the current unemployment situation in Ghana as they consider security in a job to be a major concern and in admitting that the threat of unemployment had influenced them in making any choices, it is probable that the contemporary situation did have its effect.

It seems the students' fears about what awaits them 'outside' are not altogether unfounded given the evidence from the sample employees. It has been shown that employees place less value on the influence of contacts (neighbours, friends and relatives) when compared with the potentialities envisaged by the final year students sample (see Chapter 8). Application letters, performance at interviews and selection tests, assume much greater importance in their recruitment into jobs and although the influence of personal contacts is an advantage, it would be unwise to depend on them. Despite this evidence, employees perceive that employers seem to be placing greater emphasis on recommendations from teachers and previous employers with considerable attention also to the personal attributes they bring to the job. Qualifications and performance at school are essential, more so at the initial stage of the recruitment process, especially for leavers from post-secondary institutions, such as Polytechnics, or business schools. Findings also show that at the secondary level, basic skills and the inculcation of the 'right' attitudes are more important because in the search for office jobs, notably at the junior level, these are attributes that employers look for more than anything else.

Like the heads and teachers, employers consider non-cognitive attributes, as outlined above, to be as important as qualifications and assessment for employment. They also consider attitudinal attributes just as important as cognitive output, *measures* of cognitive output and *any* vocational attributes. This importance by employers has implications for theory in the next section. Here one may say that the reason for it can be attributed to:

- (a) the easing of the selection process especially in the event that there are several job applicants who are equally good solely on the basis of educational qualifications; and

- (b) employers' concern over the development and future of their firm which depends on having employees who are not only trainable but possess desirable qualities that enhance the image of the firm.

Chapter 9 showed, if nothing else, that employers do not underestimate the value of business subjects at the secondary level in preparing for work and that differences in private employers' responses according to the size of firm were relatively marginal. The accountancy sector, in particular, shared similar hiring beliefs on most aspects surrounding the recruitment of school leavers with a business secondary background, and the small-scale private employers were, on the whole, more relaxed. It would appear at least that the evidence gathered here, notably from employers who have recruited BSS leavers in the past, shows there is no reason for students to shift away from business subjects as these would be more useful in the queue for employment. It is rather the case that the selection of these subjects in school should be encouraged because of its general usefulness and perceived qualities of employability.

Comments received from the employers show that attitudinal attributes are considered just as important as examination success. But in the initial selection process employers still feel bound to use the latter as a means of assessing potential productivity or even trainability. Qualifications from school serve as a proxy measure for skills and abilities but for the attitudinal attributes they consider so vital, employers must turn to recommendations and references principally from school heads and previous employers. In terms of cognitive output, general rather than specific skills are preferred but the margin separating the choice for either one or other of these skills was very narrow. As an example of the former the inclusion of the questions 'the choice of certain job applicants in favour of others, and the dependence on selection tests'; produced some interesting results. Considering the general employers' rhetoric concerning the need for basic literacy and numeracy skills, this study reveals the following:

- (a) Employers did comment briefly that basic literacy and numeracy skills were lacking in schools, especially the business schools and BSSs, but still they attach more importance to qualifications, background, age, performance at the selection interview and experience in which these same schools fair comparatively better.
- (b) Employers did not consider school leavers in general to be ideally suited for recruitment since they lacked further training and specialisation in business studies. Preference, therefore, goes to higher level business schools and

Polytechnics where equipment is up to date and more practical emphasis is placed on business teaching methods.

- (c) Employers consider their own selection tests to be much more important than examination results in determining whether the candidate is of recruitment material.

All four sample groups considered the 'gaining of *both* general and specific business skills, and attitudes which enable students to gain employment' as important educational and vocational outcomes. Therefore one can conclude that employers (naturally), students and teachers are all concerned with school leavers' potential employability. Which business skills and attitudes they perceive as doing this are evident in the study. It has already been stated that all the teachers appear to be in accord with employers over what constitutes important educational and attitudinal skills the three groups of schools are reasonably capable of producing. Thus, the way in which cognitive screening is manifested in these schools can be considered 'successful' as they do, even if to a limited extent, meet employers' demands. But employers use examination passes as a measure, albeit a proxy measure, only for both the academic and attitudinal skills and not for the attributes and vocational skills they seek. Students and teachers realise this yet are not able to behave accordingly, probably because social screening and labour market segmentation considerations are not controlled in the school but fall within the domain of the employer.

When employers criticise schools as not producing the attributes they consider make school leavers more employable, a clear definition of 'business secondary schools' is therefore warranted since business teachers agree with employers at least over the importance of students gaining certain business skills, be they general or specific, and attitudinal attributes. One can conclude from this that the practical aspects of education deemed important by teachers are not in conflict with employer requirements of school leavers, but the necessity for simple hiring criteria, especially in a climate where the carrying out of work is becoming more and more complex, is paramount even if such crude measures as examination results are only proxy measures.

10.2 Implications for Theory

For theoretical purposes three areas of analysis were considered. Firstly, the human capital theory because it sees differences in personal characteristics, such as education, between individuals resulting in differences in their productivity. Secondly, the screening hypothesis because it is concerned with the concept of selection according to abilities and skills as identified by schools. And thirdly, the correspondence principle because the

school conditions people to accept their 'place' within the society's hierarchical structure. These theories served to illuminate issues on two questions posed earlier in the study, that is, (a) who and what determines whether the outcomes of schooling are more educational or vocational? and (b) which attributes according to employers make students more desirable to them and are schools producing them?

In the light of the findings, it can be said that even if, in line with human capital theory, a school is considered able to supply productive knowledge and skills by one group (for example teachers) it may not be enough for another (say, employers). The latter may have to go beyond those attributes to look at the social background or personal qualities, such as good presentation, responsibility, motivation or ability to learn which may be either inherent in the applicant or learnt at school. In this way social screening, and even to some extent, the correspondence principle, are not dissimilar to the social aspects of human capital as the school is deemed inefficient by one or more groups even if it is deemed efficient by another in its identification and selection of those of general ability, higher intelligence, perseverance, punctuality, obedience and so on.

This study has shown that there are differences of opinion between the two sample groups, teachers and employers, over the 'correct' matrix of educational output (see Figures 9.1 and 2 p. 275). Therefore one can conclude that some groups will consider schools 'to be doing the job' educationally, if not vocationally inadequate also. Since the quality of output from business secondary schools and the quality of what is taught are necessarily interrelated, employers' perceptions as well as those of teachers and educationists of the many educational outcomes, render this analysis crucial.

With so many expectations of what output a school is capable of producing, or should be producing at the level of cognitive screening, problems of selecting the 'right' school leaver from various groups of school leavers create the need for employers to resort to social screening. As stated above, not all educational outcomes are likely to prove satisfactory to employers, in terms of vocational adequacy, and even if some are, however measured, then others are bound to be produced at a mediocre level.

This analysis highlights the problems posed by Oxenham (1984), Clarke (1984) and others about the application of human capital and screening functions to education. It raises all sorts of problems about measuring and improving not only cognitive efficiency within schools but to some extent ensuring the acquisition of attributes which though desired by employers, are not within the realms of the function of a school.

The study has found that if, as is likely, the human capital and cognitive screening function of a school cannot fully cater to satisfying the needs of the modern sector employer then teachers and educationists as well as employers themselves will have to content themselves with a combination of cognitive and social screening that serves all groups, given certain assumptions about the variables concerned.

Quite clearly wider vocational objectives of business education are held by teachers even if concern for students' employment prospects is not to be found. This question though is quite distinct from any consideration of which attributes make students more desirable for recruitment into different types of firms. Again, any difference of opinion over the ones which do actually make students more employable, is crucial. Employers' demand for the 'right' employee is obvious and the identification, inculcation and measurement of them as conducted by the respective firms has important implications for policy considered next. What is clear from this study is that for each type of employer, general *as well as* specific skills are necessary attitudinal attributes that are desired qualities often lacking in school leavers and examination success does not necessarily guarantee recruitment into firms, although it is used as a proxy measure. Employers use it not only as evidence of skills gained at school or as a 'screen' for 'innate ability' but as an indication of 'trainability', being one of the many desirable attributes a school leaver can bring to the labour market.

10.3 Implications for Policy

When considering the policy implications of this study a further group must be taken into account when analysing the different views as to what constitutes vocationally-oriented secondary education. Chapters 2 and 3 listed many interested groups of which the government is one. Current government initiatives are concerned with vocationalising school education through the new Junior Secondary Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools advocated by Ghana's 'New Content and Structure of Education' (1974). One of the major objectives of these schemes is to make school leavers more productive i.e. to meet the requirements of the labour market. But if these ventures do *not* produce the attributes employers seek then government attempts to reorientate education away from the academic to the more vocational education are misconceived. Certainly any emphasis on specific skills would be wrong, as we have seen, since employers clearly view general basic skills as at least equally important, be they cognitive or non-cognitive.

It is not simply a question of increasing efforts towards providing more textbooks and equipment, providing better training for teachers and encouraging them to stay on, though these are difficult and necessary tasks in themselves. Imbuing teachers with the

motivation to carry on is more important for whilst all the required resources may be made available, the incentive to use them to their best advantage will not be there. In addition, it is evident from the survey that little is being done in the way of staff development programmes. Yet, if we are to make sure that sufficient properly trained and educated teachers of office skills and business studies are available to Ghana's industry in the future, then a staff development programme which emphasises the need for an understanding of the different categories of office workers and the types of business skills school leavers should bring to the labour market is called for. If the modern sector employers do not specify them or the government does not design policies which allow schools to provide them, resources will not only be allocated inefficiently in the production of business secondary educational output but the administrators of and advisors on programmes in business education will not be able to envisage the link that must be established between the business secondary school and the modern sector employer.

In terms of the employing firms in the Ghanaian modern sector, three important points should be made. Firstly, the categorisation of the modern sector into small- and large-scale firms has been useful in this study, showing clearly that the existence of the small firms has a definite effect on the overall recruitment of school leavers with a business secondary education background. It has also shown, in a separate analysis of small- and large-scale private firms from the same industrial sectors, that they have many similarities in terms of their attitudes and hiring beliefs although there are some subtle differences in what they wish for in an employee which the school leaver may find to his or her advantage. Credentialism and its overemphasis in schools encourages not only the search for work in the modern sector but also the desire to work in small and private firms rather than in the public sector firms where employers are more reluctant to accept forms of public examinations other than the West African Examinations Council examinations, regarding others such as the Government Secretarial School or the National Vocational Training Institute examinations which are not only too limited in scope, but 'confuse employers as they cannot choose between the excessive duplication of technical and commercial examinations' (Bennett, 1988).

Secondly, another consideration regarding school leaver recruitment policy is the 'role' of employers in developing and implementing such a policy. Earlier Chapters stressed the point that whatever the view of the 'correct' mix of output it is the employers who make the final selection for jobs. Any disagreement between employers and others over what criteria should be included in their recruitment procedures, in this case with teachers and educationists, will almost certainly lead to a less than a happy outcome (both in terms of the type of skills required and various non-cognitive attributes). Conflicts of interest with

recruitment policy would have to be resolved more by persuasion than by compulsion especially given the effects of Ghana's current programme of public service manpower redeployment and the reduction of employment opportunities, and perhaps also by retraining teachers and encouraging employers to seek contact with the business secondary schools. This again has implications for business secondary educational finance and planning.

Finally, any new government initiatives must involve planning with clearly understood and agreed objectives between government, teachers and employers over exactly what is required by the latter and what can be accomplished by the first two. It has been stated several times before in various educational documents and national development plans that there is need for sufficient short and long term finance being made available so that those objectives can be met with resources being allocated as efficiently as possible. But before all else, especially given the existing confusion over what is or is not pre-vocational and vocational education, agreement must be reached over the concept of vocationally-oriented business secondary education output, for only then will it become less difficult to determine whether business secondary schools are becoming more efficient (or less inefficient), only then will the problem really become less intractable.

10.4 Conclusions and recommendations

It has been shown that business secondary education is only valued when it is able to cater to the needs of the world of work. Theories on that relationship (see Chapter 1) and the most recent official Ghanaian curriculum documents, as well as considerable literature on vocationally-oriented education, are evidence of this (see Chapter 4). Similarly, doubts have been expressed concerning the value of business subjects in obtaining a career or job on leaving school. The whole area is seen as being one of importance as shown at the subject specific level by the efforts of Tsikata (1986) and Mensah (1986) and at the general level by the figures taken from the Ghana Education Service (see Appendices 2A-C).

Very few initiatives involving co-operative efforts, such as the often-mentioned Pitman 2000 seminar held at the University of Cape Coast in 1986, have been embarked on in Ghana and no doubt there is considerable potential for the further development of such efforts. These should ensure, for example, that the education service is ready to meet the new challenges which will undoubtedly arise. Furthermore, now that a section of the teaching force, represented in the sample for this study (if only a small one), has given its definite views on its needs for practical training and stronger links with firms, and for up to date equipment and materials, it is now up to policy-makers and teacher educators to

respond.

All business students, whether accounting or secretarial, should be given an appreciation of technological developments and their implications. They should be introduced to as much of the hardware available as possible, as well as understand how the introduction of new technology will affect the operations of their firm. There is one major concern for the immediate future, however. As the number of students of secondary age rises sharply through the 1990s, thereby increasing the numbers of business curriculum students in the secondary schools, resources are going to be very tightly stretched. However, as far as clerical and secretarial training for full-time students in general secondary schools is concerned, the findings appear to follow a trend which is already apparent (see Chapter 4 section 4.2), that the skills subjects of accounting and especially shorthand/typewriting, will continue to have less dominance in the general secondary curriculum. In which case it would be better to concentrate resources in those subjects in business schools and BSSs, which cater for an education which leads more directly to work, without necessarily limiting opportunities to pursue advanced education or training. In addition, they enjoy a comparatively higher prestige rating and were the first choice of the majority of respondents.

Further, the predicament of the business secondary school leaver who does not wish to go on to higher education needs consideration by both teachers and employers. He/she emerges as the 'poor relation', understandably maybe, but not necessarily so. At a time of very high unemployment this student is receiving less support from home, from peers and from school than his counterpart who proposes to continue in full time education. Comments from those now working show that not all felt they completed their secondary education with the necessary useful skills that should have been taught by the school. Not everyone can be expected to pursue advanced education and more could be done in some schools to help orientate such students to the world of work rather than the world of academia. Several of the employee respondents emphasised how important they felt their part time job to be and the school could help in this with placement and experience. What the school fails to do employers, within the limits of their own capacities, should be in a position to provide.

For vocationally-oriented secondary education to make an impact requires that such a curriculum satisfies teachers' sense of what is needed in a vocational course and their account of needs is based in the structures of the school and the workplace as well as in the ideology that links school and the workplace. Change in the business secondary curriculum then involves confronting the segmented structure of the labour market and the

role of the school in allocating and preparing young workers.

In view of the very large number of employer establishments in the country, the survey was conducted on a comparatively small scale. Therefore any conclusions reached can only be taken as indicators or pointers as to how employers are responding to the changes and challenges of the future. Evidence from the sample confirms that both employers and teachers have recognised the challenge that the new technology presents, and are beginning to respond to it. It is essential that adequate provision is made to meet the changing circumstances.

At the same time it has been important to emphasise the perspective of the employer, for 'unless the cost and profit constraints as perceived by employers are taken into account, wishful thinking, declarations of principle and even laws will all too often [prove] ineffectual' (Anker and Hein, 1985:87). In other words, there is a need to move beyond the generalities and phrases, even if well-meaning, that tend to pervade much of the contemporary debate on co-operation. Practical activities and ventures that will enable business students, business teachers and modern sector employers to interact meaningfully are required.

As a final comment, all concerned in business education need to consider the changing conditions of work itself. It is clear that they have undergone immense change in Ghana in recent times, especially with the introduction of the Economic Recovery Programme. The effects of these changes are still being felt and will continue to be for some time to come. In order, then, to ensure that both the aspirations identified by school leavers and the expectations of employers are fulfilled, a better understanding of their respective needs is vital but not enough on its own. It is imperative that, together with that understanding, greater co-operation between employers, teachers and educationists is re-emphasised and acted upon.

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APPENDIX 2A

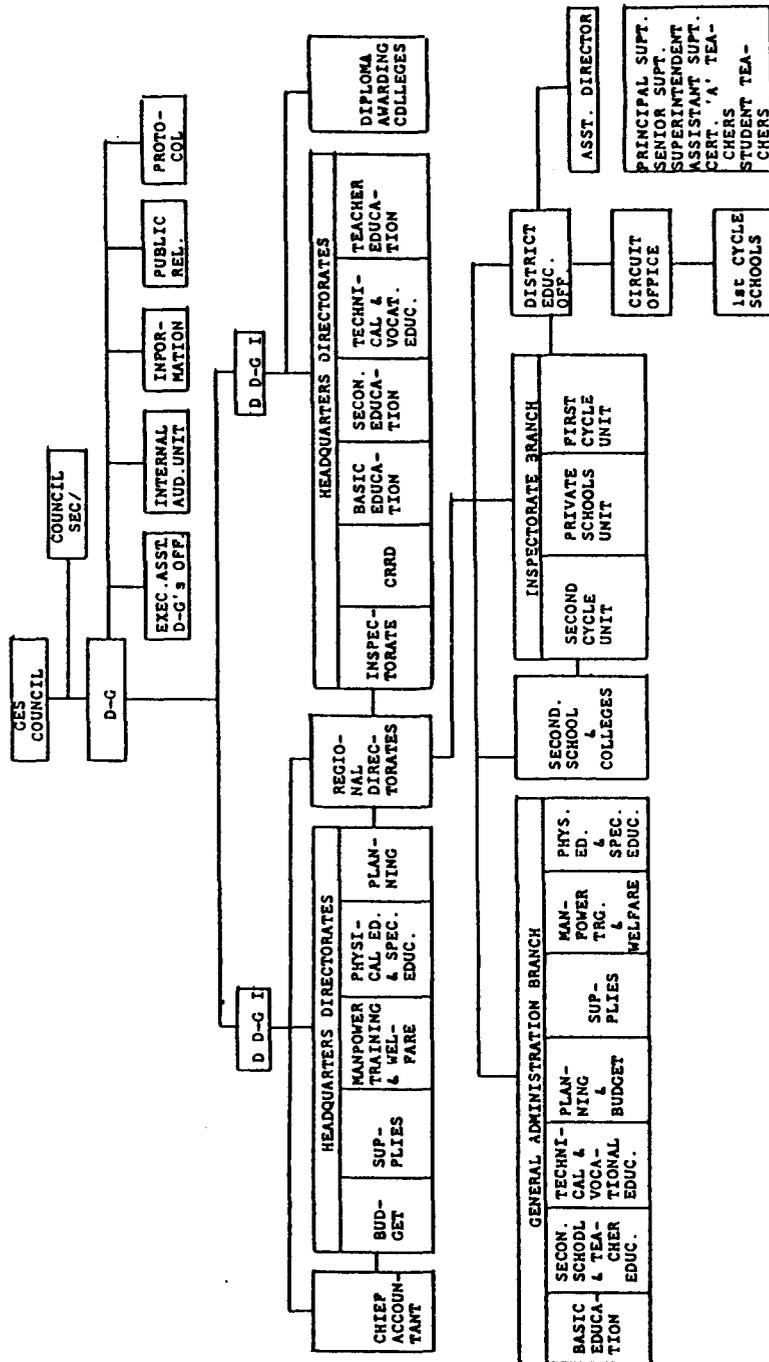
**SUMMARY TABLE SHOWING NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS BY LEVELS
STUDENT ENROLMENT AND TEACHERS BY STATUS: 1984-1988**

Level Of Education	No. of Institutions	Enrolment	Teaching Staff			Others	Total
			Trained	Untrained	Graduates		
1984/85							
PRIMARY	8965	1464624	23884	29678	-	53562	
MIDDLE	5242	579856	17520	9434	-	26954	
JUNIOR SECONDARY	105	17745	1186	550	-	1744	
SECONDARY SCHOOL	229	125659	6857	-	-	6857	
TEACHER TRAINING	45	16595	822	-	-	822	
TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL	22	20880	1020	12	-	1032	
SPECIAL EDUCATION	*	*	*	*	-	*	
1985/86							
PRIMARY	9004	1491162	28654	35604	-	64258	
MIDDLE	5310	617612	20509	10623	-	31132	
JUNIOR SECONDARY	110	18372	1347	546	-	1893	
SECONDARY SCHOOL	233	133435	7202	-	-	7202	
TEACHER TRAINING	45	15210	947	-	-	947	
TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL	26	19457	977	-	-	977	
SPECIAL EDUCATION	*	*	*	*	-	*	
1986/87							
PRIMARY	9485	1469820	29663	34166	-	64258	
MIDDLE	5275	562476	21070	11472	-	32542	
JUNIOR SECONDARY	99	20724	1467	439	-	1906	
SECONDARY SCHOOL	236	137189	6665	1324	-	7989	
TEACHER TRAINING	45	16417	978	19	-	997	
TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL	28	18047	703	439	-	1142	
SPECIAL EDUCATION	17	1749	151	54	-	205	
1987/88							
PRIMARY	9921	1479449	32304	30857	-	63161	
MIDDLE	5151	418308	15152	10480	-	25632	
JUNIOR SECONDARY	4444	207033	12123	2773	-	14896	
SECONDARY SCHOOL	240	146701	6347	1462	-	7809	
TEACHER TRAINING	45	16974	1004	11	-	1015	
TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL	27	17560	734	445	-	1179	
SPECIAL EDUCATION	16	1434	197	70	-	267	

*Figures not available

Source: Ghana Country Paper 1989

STRUCTURE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT UNDER THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE - PHASE I OF REORGANIZATION 1981/82

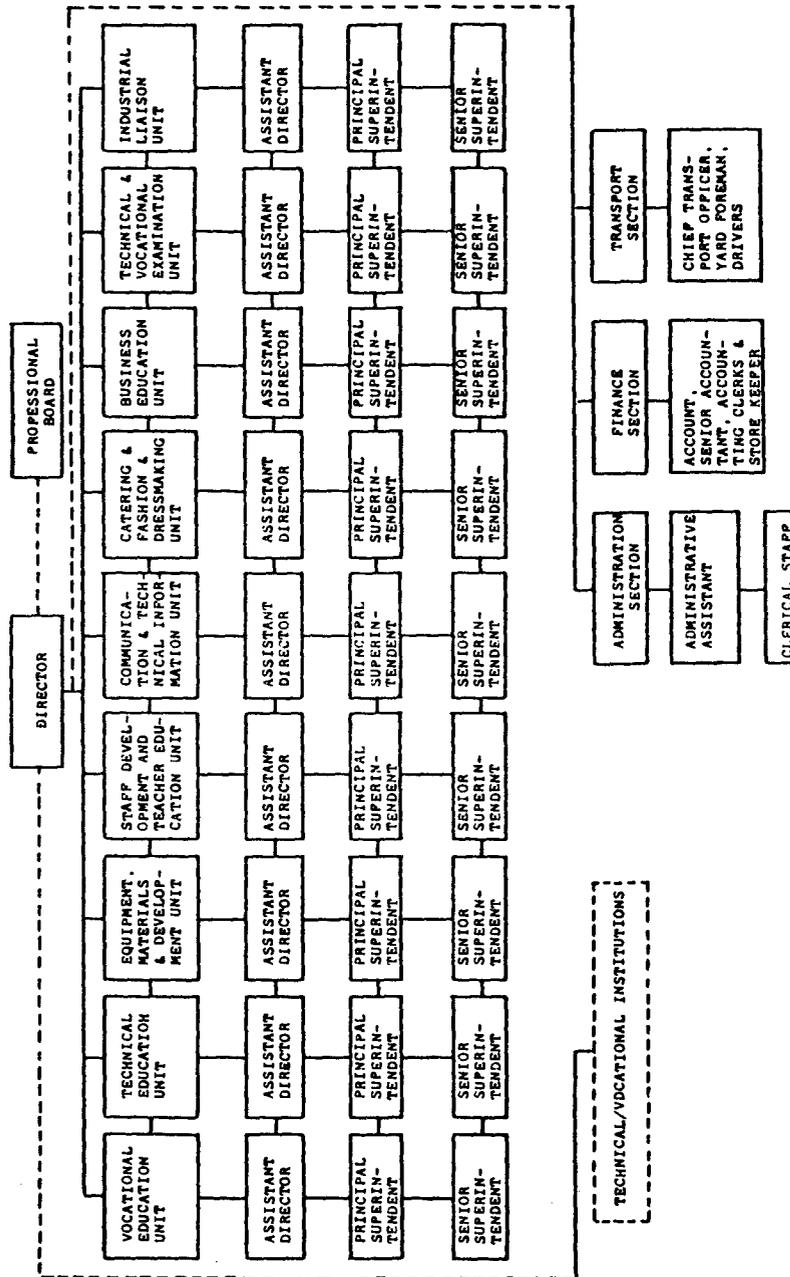


DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION BUDGET.
(AMOUNT IN THOUSAND CEDIS)

	1985		1986		1987		1988	
	Allocation	% Educ. Budget						
Primary Education	2242804	26.31	5675200	28.71	6841085	26.97	8622248	27.36
Junior Sec/Middle Educ.	1395319	16.37	3467600	17.54	4185825	16.50	6910555	21.93
Secondary Educ.	1032500	12.11	2490381	12.60	3103651	12.23	4393218	13.94
Teacher Training (Initial)	176687	2.07	518238	2.93	794714	3.13	733090	2.33
Technical Educ. (Polytechnics)	54630	0.64	137842	0.70	211658	0.83	266851	0.85
Vocational Educ. (Tech. Inst.)	138626	1.63	376900	1.91	429237	1.69	442963	1.41
Specialist Teacher Training Institutions (Diploma Colleges)	156250	1.83	359300	1.82	416059	1.64	501866	1.59
Institutions of The Handicapped	66508	0.78	140783	0.71	160706	0.63	184648	0.59
Higher Education (Third-Cycle)	1056667	12.40	2498856	12.64	3388780	13.36	1007000	3.19

APPENDIX 2D

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DIVISION OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE



Source: Ghana Education Service 1984

APPENDIX 3A

Supplementary Tables

Table 3A.1
Employment by sector in 1986

Sector	'000	% of total
Agriculture	39.3	9.5
Mining and quarrying	26.5	6.4
Manufacturing	53.6	13.0
Electricity, water & gas	7.6	1.8
Construction	22.2	5.4
Domestic trade & catering services	20.8	5.0
Transport, storage & communications	20.5	4.9
Financial & business services	25.4	6.1
Community, social & personal services	197.8	47.8
Total	413.7	100.0

Source: EIU (1990).

Table 3A.2
Gross official development assistance^a (ODA) (\$mn)

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
Bilateral	75.2	108.4	113.8	148.5	152.5	278.4
of which:						
Japan	7.4	12.7	24.0	29.8	20.8	63.2
UK	10.1	5.1	15.0	28.5	32.3	55.9
West Germany	25.4	16.0	21.7	28.9	27.5	35.0
Canada	6.2	37.0	18.4	17.5	19.1	20.9
Multilateral	55.2	126.6	115.7	250.6	250.8	228.4
of which:						
IDA	16.9	49.5	63.8	170.4	191.0	166.0
EC	13.8	46.5	11.5	39.5	11.8	20.4
ADF	4.0	5.2	19.2	13.3	16.6	15.5
WFP	9.9	14.2	10.5	17.0	14.3	12.1
Total	130.4	235.0	229.4	399.1	403.2	506.9
of which:						
grants	75.5	131.2	105.2	172.4	146.6	230.7

a Disbursements. Official development assistance is defined as grants and loans with at least a 25 per cent grant element, provided by OECD and Opec member countries and multilateral agencies. IMF loans, other than Trust Fund facilities, are excluded, as is aid from the Eastern bloc.

Source: EIU (1990).

APPENDIX 5A

Categories RSTUVW identified in survey questionnaires**R:**

Importance of schooling generally for preparing students for entry into the job market. This includes perceptions of the importance/value (or lack of such) of a BSS background. Issues of equal importance are the expectations and aspirations that students have.

Employers:	Question nos. 5-16
Heads/Teachers:	Question nos. 1-4, 9, 12-35
Educationists:	Question nos. 1-5, 9-30
First and final year students:	Question nos. 1-9 (first year), 1-11, 13 (final year)
Employees:	Question nos. 2, 3, 9, 18-21, 30-34

S:

Beliefs on proper method of recruitment given both information that employers already have and other information they may wish to have.

Employers:	Question nos. 17-18, 32-35
Heads/Teachers:	Question nos. 6, 8, 9, 21
Educationists:	Question nos. 6-9, 26, 27, 30
Final year students:	Question nos. 14, 15 (final year)
Employees:	Question nos. 7, 8, 11

T:

Actual recruitment behaviour (examining of labour market sectors).

Employers:	Question nos. 1-4, 8-13, 25
Heads/Teachers:	Question nos. 6-11, 21
Employees:	Question no. 29

U:

Opinions and stated policies on skills and qualities needed to do jobs of the kind that BSSs purport to prepare (different) entry level skills.

Employers:	Question nos. 4-18, 22, 23, 29, 30, 34
Heads/Teachers:	Question nos. 7, 13-20, 22, 23, 30-33
Educationists:	Question nos. 7-11, 13-25, 28-30
Final year students:	Question nos. 13-18 (final year)

V:

Opinions on the role of ascriptive and relational characteristics in recruitment, i.e. on the role these should play and the role they play in reality.

Employers:	Question nos. 19-23
Heads/Teachers:	Question nos. 8, 10, 12, 15, 29
Educationists:	Question nos. 6-10, 15, 21-23
First and final year students	Question nos. 10-15 (first year), 16, 21-23 (final year)
Employees:	Question nos. 4, 12, 22-26

W:

Value attached to the job in terms of need for a 'very' well-qualified applicant, possibly implying also that employers would rather take on 'their own'.

Employers:	Question nos. 27, 28, 30, 31
Heads/Teachers:	Question nos. 2-5, 7-20, 22-24
Educationists:	Question nos. 7, 11-25
Final year students:	Question no. 15 (final year)
Employees:	Question nos. 1, 6, 16, 20, 27, 28, 35

APPENDIX 6A

Sample of examination results by school and gender

The purpose of this analysis is to establish the similarities and differences between the sample schools, in terms of their performance in examinations. Five of the six schools surveyed responded to the investigation and the respective headteachers supplied the researcher with the GCE results and class test scores from final year students of the previous academic year. This means, of course, that the students whose results are shown, are not the same students surveyed in this study. (See Chapter 7.)

Where the sample headteachers could not provide GCE results, class test scores were used. Since these were graded in the same way as GCE results, it was thought reasonable to use both sets of scores together.

The range of business subjects surveyed numbered seven: Typing, English, Mathematics, Business Studies, Commerce, Accounts and Shorthand. See also Appendix 6D for a general outline of what subjects were offered by the sample schools.

The results for each subject are compared according to student gender and type of school, as shown in table 6A.0 below:

Table 6A.0
Distribution of school examination
results by type of school and by gender

Type of School	Boys		Girls		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
BSS, Public	20	(29)	9	(15)	29	(22)
BSS, Private	14	(20)	14	(23)	28	(21)
Business, Public	19	(27)	10	(16)	29	(22)
Business, Private	8	(11)	19	(31)	27	(21)
Secondary, Public	9	(13)	9	(15)	18	(14)
Total	70	(100)	61	(100)	131	(100)

The results are presented in tables 6A.1a to 6A.7b.

Just over half the boys and almost two-thirds of the girls failed Typing (tables 6A.1a and b). The performance of the girls is poorer than one would have expected, more so when the failure was consistent across all the schools. The few who passed were graded from 'very weak' to 'fair'. The boys in the public BSS performed better.

Tables 6A.2a and b show more favourable outcomes in English for the boys rather than for the girls. Comparing boys between schools, both business schools did quite well. In the secondary school, 6 out of 9 passed the subject and all but one passed in the public BSS. Nine percent also had higher grades ranging from 'good' to 'excellent'. The girls, on the other hand, only attained the 'satisfactory' level with more (27 percent) having

failed or not taken (45 percent) the subject. Again, those in the public BSS performed better compared with the poor results from the private BSS where 3 failed and the other 11 did not take the subject. Both business schools also failed badly and the public secondary school had 'very weak' passes.

Fifty percent of the boys passed Mathematics (table 6A.3a), 2 percent of whom were graded as 'very good' and 'excellent', but the girls (table 6A.3b) fared better in the public secondary school than the boys. Also, 46 percent of the boys as against only 16 percent of the girls did not take the subject. Few boys or girls took Mathematics in the public BSS although at both business schools, where the subject was taken in large numbers, the boys did much better than the girls.

Business Studies was not taken by either boys or girls in the public secondary school (tables 6A.4a and b). This probably means the subject was not offered by this school. Information provided by the other schools shows, however, that the boys performed considerably better than the girls. With 67 percent having passed, the boys' performance was consistently good across all the schools. The same cannot be said for the girls whose performance left a lot to be desired in both the public BSS and business school.

Similarly, tables 6A.5a and b show a comparatively better performance by boys in commerce with almost 60 percent of boys as against 28 percent of girls who passed in Commerce. The private BSS, in particular, shows the stark contrast in their results with only one girl having passed the subject. The public secondary school, on the other hand, shows both boys and girls performing less than well.

More surprising were the results for Accounts (tables 6A.6a and b). Most of the students either did not take the subject or failed it, but among those who passed, the *girls* are represented at 26 points higher than the boys. This runs contrary to the general expectation that boys would do better than girls. Photograph 6E.8, Appendix 6E, portrays an example of a mixed accounts class in the private BSS sampled, being taught by a male teacher.

Finally, tables 6A.7a and b indicate, much more according to expectation, that girls did better in Shorthand than boys. Photograph 6E.9, Appendix 6E, shows a typical class of boys taking the subject in the private BSS sampled. The private schools in particular did well with one student in each of the private BSS and business schools, having received an 'excellent' grading. (See also photograph 6E.10, Appendix 6E). But in the public secondary school, only 2 out of the 9 girls took the subject, with results graded as 'weak' passes.

From the evidence above, it is apparent that of the five schools, the public secondary school did not fare as well as the others. The more striking conclusion from tables 6A.1a and b; and 6A.3a and b, is how the public secondary schools still did not achieve strong passes even in the more 'academic' subjects, namely English and Mathematics. Results in these subjects for the business schools were very poor, as expected. However, when it came to the business subjects, the trend was for both BSS and business schools, especially in the private sector, to do well. The exception was Typing which showed a remarkably poor performance, even in the business schools which are purported to prepare students intensively for the job market.

Table 6A.1a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>Typing</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
75-79, very good	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
65-69, fairly good	-	2	-	-	-	2	3
60-64, satisfactory	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
50-59, fair	4	-	-	1	1	6	9
45-49, weak	2	2	1	-	-	5	7
40-44, very weak	4	1	6	-	-	11	16
fail	9	9	4	7	7	36	51
not taken	-	-	8	-	-	8	12
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.1b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>Typing</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
60-64, satisfactory	-	-	-	-	2	2	3
50-59, fair	4	-	-	2	2	8	13
45-49, weak	-	1	-	3	-	4	7
40-44, very weak	1	3	1	1	-	6	10
fail	4	10	7	13	5	39	64
not taken	-	-	2	-	-	2	3
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

Table 6A.2a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>English</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
75-79, very good	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
70-74, good	4	-	-	1	-	5	7
65-69, fairly good	-	-	1	2	-	3	4
60-64, satisfactory	2	1	1	1	1	6	9
50-59, fair	7	1	1	-	1	10	14
45-49, weak	5	-	3	-	4	12	17
40-44, very weak	-	1	3	-	-	4	6
fail	-	7	2	3	3	15	22
not taken	1	4	8	-	-	13	19
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.2b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>English</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
60-64, satisfactory	1	-	-	1	-	2	3
50-59, fair	2	-	-	-	-	2	3
45-49, weak	4	-	1	-	2	7	11
40-44, very weak	1	-	1	1	4	7	11
fail	1	3	6	4	2	16	27
not taken	-	11	2	13	1	27	45
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

Table 6A.3a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>Mathematics</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
75-79, very good	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
70-74, good	-	-	2	2	-	4	6
65-69, fairly good	-	4	-	2	1	7	10
60-64, satisfactory	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
50-59, fair	1	2	2	1	2	8	12
45-49, weak	-	1	1	2	-	4	6
40-44, very weak	-	2	2	-	5	9	13
fail	-	2	-	-	1	3	4
not taken	18	3	11	-	-	32	46
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.3b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>Mathematics</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
70-74, good	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
65-69, fairly good	-	-	-	1	1	2	3
60-64, satisfactory	-	-	1	-	1	2	3
50-59, fair	-	-	-	1	4	5	8
45-49, weak	-	1	-	1	2	4	7
40-44, very weak	-	2	2	3	1	8	13
fail	1	11	4	13	-	29	48
not taken	7	-	3	-	-	10	16
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

Table 6A.4a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>Business Studies</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	2	1	1	2	-	6	9
75-79, very good	-	1	1	1	-	3	4
70-74, good	2	-	2	1	-	5	7
65-69, fairly good	-	2	-	1	-	3	4
60-64, satisfactory	3	3	-	1	-	7	10
50-59, fair	-	2	3	1	-	6	9
45-49, weak	4	3	4	1	-	12	17
40-44, very weak	2	2	1	-	-	5	7
fail	2	-	2	-	-	4	6
not taken	5	-	5	-	9	19	27
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.4b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>Business Studies</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
75-79, very good	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
65-69, fairly good	-	1	-	2	-	3	5
60-64, satisfactory	1	-	1	1	-	3	5
50-59, fair	2	3	1	2	-	8	13
45-49, weak	1	2	-	-	-	3	5
40-44, very weak	-	2	2	5	-	9	15
fail	2	5	4	8	-	19	31
not taken	3	1	2	-	9	15	24
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

Table 6A.5a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>Commerce</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	1	1	-	-	-	2	3
70-74, very good	3	1	-	1	1	6	9
65-69, fairly good	4	1	2	4	-	11	16
60-64, satisfactory	1	1	2	1	1	6	9
50-59, fair	1	2	1	1	1	6	9
45-49, weak	3	-	4	1	1	9	13
fail	-	3	3	-	3	9	13
not taken	6	4	6	-	-	16	28
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.5b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>Commerce</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
70-74, good	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
65-69, fairly good	1	-	-	1	1	3	5
60-64, satisfactory	1	-	1	-	1	3	5
50-59, fair	-	1	-	2	-	3	5
40-44, weak	1	-	2	3	1	7	11
fail	-	3	3	13	4	23	38
not taken	5	10	4	-	2	21	34
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

Table 6A.6a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>Accounts</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
75-79, very good	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
70-74, good	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
50-59, fair	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
45-49, weak	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
fail	-	3	-	-	-	3	4
not taken	16	10	19	8	9	62	91
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.6b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>Accounts</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	-	1	-	-	-	1	2
75-79, very good	1	1	-	-	-	2	3
65-69, fairly good	-	1	-	1	1	3	5
60-64, satisfactory	-	-	-	1	-	1	2
50-59, fair	-	-	-	4	-	4	7
45-49, weak	-	1	1	2	-	4	7
40-44, very weak	-	1	-	2	-	3	5
fail	1	6	-	3	-	10	16
not taken	7	3	9	6	8	33	53
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

Table 6A.7a
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

BOYS							
Subject: <u>Shorthand</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
75-79, very good	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
70-74, good	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
65-69, fairly good	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
60-64, satisfactory	-	-	-	3	-	3	4
50-59, fair	-	1	1	-	-	2	3
40-44, very weak	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
fail	-	2	-	-	-	2	3
not taken	20	10	18	1	9	58	85
Total	20	14	19	8	9	70	100

Table 6A.7b
Distribution of sample examination results by type of school

GIRLS							
Subject: <u>Shorthand</u>							
Scores/Grades	BSS Public	BSS Private	Business Public	Business Private	Secondary Public	Total	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	%
80-100, excellent	-	1	-	1	-	2	3
75-79, very good	-	1	-	2	-	3	5
70-74, good	1	1	1	-	-	3	5
65-69, fairly good	-	2	-	1	-	3	5
60-64, satisfactory	-	-	1	1	-	2	3
50-59, fair	-	2	-	4	-	6	10
45-49, weak	-	-	1	2	2	5	8
40-44, very weak	-	3	-	1	-	4	7
fail	1	1	-	6	-	8	13
not taken	7	3	7	1	7	25	41
Total	9	14	10	19	9	61	100

APPENDIX 6B

Survey Questions

Section 1 Business secondary education: in context

- 1.1 How do business teachers and headteachers see the function of these schools in terms of their objectives, curriculum, performance and the problems they face?
- 1.2 How far do business teachers and headteachers feel that great importance is attached to examination results by employers and is this sentiment reflected in the resources the school has or in their method of teaching business subjects?
- 1.3 Do business teachers and headteachers see any advantage in teaching business subjects at the secondary level and how successful are they in helping students find jobs?
- 1.4 Do business teachers and headteachers believe employers to be more in favour of students with a business background than any other type of background and, at the same time, how far is it true to say that employers do look at other criteria than students' educational background?

Section 2 The business teachers' role

- 2.1 How does the educational background of teachers involved in business education at the secondary level vary between the different types of schools surveyed?
- 2.2 What do the business teachers feel are the reasons for the popularity or unpopularity of typing and accounts especially in terms of their facilitating prospects for getting jobs?
- 2.3 Has the business teachers' past business work experience, if any, been an advantage to them in their teaching of business subjects; and what do they feel could be improved on in the teacher training programme? Also, how satisfied are they with their profession?

Section 3 Opinions of headteachers on business education at the secondary level

- 3.1 How do the headteachers rate their schools as compared to others and how much help and support are they given in terms of staffing, financing and general development?
- 3.2 How much effort do headteachers put into considering labour market issues when preparing syllabuses for business subjects?
- 3.3 Are any attempts made to send business teachers on attachment to various firms for experience and how far do the headteachers see business education as benefiting from the input of resources in their school?

APPENDIX 6C

**QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEADTEACHERS,
PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS**

This survey is envisaged as of special significance to the Ministry of Education.

In carrying out the survey, I am looking at the Business Secondary School curriculum with specific reference to Typing and Accounting/Bookkeeping skills.

I must emphasise that, as an educationist, my interest in this survey relates to Business Secondary School leavers as an ideal means of enquiring into and arriving at an understanding of the relationship between education and the labour market. This survey in effect, aims at finding out, in the broader context, what employers think about what is being taught and how their needs may be best met.

I have selected your school as part of a sample of Ghanaian Business Secondary Schools. As such, I am relying on your professional interest in business education to guide this study and present significant evaluative information.

This survey is for a research degree I am doing at the University of London Institute of Education. It is very important for this study that I get frank answers. Therefore, the information you give me will be treated in the strictest confidence. Your views will only be reported in such a way as will protect anonymity and confidentiality.

When this survey is completed, I shall be happy to share whatever findings emerge from it.

The main topics I want to discuss with you are:

- (a) Strengths and weaknesses in business secondary schools. What comes to mind?
- (b) Government and private support for business secondary schools. What has been their contribution? What could have been done better?
- (c) Is the level of material resources (equipment etc) in your school adequate in order to teach according to the syllabus and according to employer requirements (if known)?
- (d) What are the strengths and weaknesses of services rendered by the Maintenance Unit? (I am thinking about your typewriters).
- (e) What type of jobs do your students generally aim at? Do they often get them?
- (f) What are your views of the syllabuses?
- (g) What are your views of the mode of assessment in business subjects?
- (h) Do you have contact with employers?
- (i) Students interest in business subjects. Has it changed over time? How strong is it now? Are students on the whole more interested in certain subjects than in others?
- (j) What happens to students after they leave school?
- (k) What are the most difficult tasks:
 - in running a business secondary school? (for heads/principals?)
 - in being a business teacher?
 - in establishing contacts with companies/business organisations both for enhancing teacher experience and in placing students?

1. What comments do you have on
 - (a) the aims/objectives of your school?
 - (b) the curriculum of your school?
 - (c) the performance of your school?
 - (d) problems facing your school?

2. Do you think that business education subjects should only be taught on the job, in specialised schools (such as yours), or should they be taught in secondary schools right across the country? Why?

3. What are your views on the external examinations in typing and clerical accounting?
 - (a) Is the examination fair?
 - (b) How much importance do you think is given to examination results by employers?
 - (c) Do you have any evidence about this?

4. What material resources are available for business/commercial studies in your school?
 - (a) How many classrooms are there for typing and clerical accounting?
Is that sufficient?
 - (b) Is there adequate space for practical activities such as typing?
Do you have enough typewriters?
 - (c) Are there teachers' guides for business studies?
How many copies?
How often do you consult them?
What are your views of them?
 - (d) Are there textbooks for business studies in your school?
How many are there?
Do students have to share?
Do students buy their own?
What is your view of these textbooks?

5. With a view to helping students to find jobs as typists or accounting clerks, what do you think are the advantages of teaching typing and clerical accounting at the secondary school level?

What are the disadvantages?

6. Have arrangements been made for helping students to find a job?
 - (a) What are these arrangements?
 - (b) How successful or unsuccessful have they been?

7. Have you had comments about the suitability of typing and clerical accounting subjects in relation to job requirements? Notably comments from

- (a) Business Secondary School graduates
- (b) Employers

8. Have you had any contact with employers who might hire, or who have hired, students from your school?
(I would appreciate the name and, if known, the address of such employers).

- (a) How much do you think these employers know about Business education?
- (b) Do you think employers give any preference to Business Education students at all?

Why or Why not?

9. Do you think employers look at other things than your students' educational qualifications?

What do they look at?

10. Have employers contacted you in the past about former students who have applied for jobs?

How many times last year for example?

FOR HEADMASTERS/PRINCIPALS

11. How would you rate your school as compared with other Business Secondary Schools?

- Above average
- Average
- Below average

Why?

12. For the proper teaching of business courses

- (a) do you have enough staff?
- (b) are you satisfied with the type and level of training of your staff?
- (c) are there any improvements you feel are needed?

13. How is your school financed?

How much do you get from

- (a) Government?
- (b) Companies/business organisations?
- (c) Parents' contributions (apart from fees)?
- (d) Contributions from outside the country?
- (e) Other?

14. What fees does your school charge for the various courses?

Are there any extra charges that students have to pay?

15. To help your teachers keep up to date (and improve their teaching), does your school get any help from outside?

- (a) Inspectorate?
- (b) Curriculum Development Unit?
- (c) Business Education Unit?

16. What examinations do you prepare for other than the West African School Certificate?

17. Does your school get the support it needs?

From:

- (a) Inspectorate
- (b) Teacher training
- (c) Universities
- (d) Curriculum Development Unit
- (e) Business Education Unit
- (f) District Administration/Local Government

How many visits have you had from the above agencies during the last 2 years?

If none, when was the last visit?

Are there other contacts (for example, teachers going on courses; Principals visiting)?

18. When you prepare syllabuses for courses (or decide which subjects to offer) do you ask what the job opportunities for students will be?

Do you ask how the syllabuses will match those opportunities?

Do you take the initiative in developing courses?

19. In addition to the normal running of your school have you ever had occasion to do any of the following:

- (a) Conduct a survey of what employers require from Business Secondary School graduates?
- (b) Seek advice from employers or others in business and commerce?
- (c) Promote links between your school and certain employers?

What do you think of the above suggestions?

20. Have businesses ever sent anyone to your school in order to recruit school leavers?

When was the last time an employer came to your school to recruit?

21. Are there any arrangements made for typing or clerical accounting teaching staff to be attached to companies for experience?

Please indicate

- (a) subject area of staff member
- (b) company the teacher(s) went to
- (c) nature of attachment
- (d) period of attachment
- (e) benefits derived?

Is it feasible to set up such attachments?

22. Are any arrangements made for counselling students in the course of teachers' training?

Do you have

- (a) information from a Guidance Counsellor?
- (b) talks by teachers and other guests from outside the school?

Do students receive any guidance and counselling in job placement?

How is this organised?

23. A great deal of money has been spent to establish and fund Business Secondary Schools. Some people think it would have been of greater benefit to secondary education if these resources could have been used to strengthen or introduce other subjects. Do you agree?

Why or Why not?

24. If private, how did your school get established?

FOR TEACHERS

25. (a) Which subjects do you teach?
 (b) How many periods (duration by hour) per week do you teach?
 (c) Type of teaching qualifications obtained?
 (d) Where did you obtain your teaching qualifications?
 (e) What is your highest academic qualification?
 (f) How many years have you been a business secondary school teacher?
 (g) In how many business secondary schools have you taught?
 (h) How many years have you taught at your present school?
 (i) Are you a Head of Department?
26. How would you rate the importance of a Guidance Counsellor in your school?
- Very important
 Not so important
 Of little importance
- Why?
27. How popular are typing and clerical accounting among students compared to other business subjects? Why?
28. Thinking about students who have taken business subjects at 'O' level in general secondary schools, do you think they are at less of an advantage in finding employment, as compared with business secondary school students? Why?
- What about students with only academic subjects? Why?
29. Is it easier for a graduate of your school to find a job in typing or clerical accounting compared to other types of schools and compared to other BSSs?
- When looking for a job, is it easier for those who take typing or clerical accounting or both?
30. In preparing for typing and clerical accounting jobs, what are the most important skills to teach your students?
31. Have you had any working experience in companies, for example, typing letters for others or helping to keep accounts even if not for a company?
- (a) Do you sometimes do any such work now?
 (b) What kind of work?
32. Have you taken your students on visits to companies?
- (a) How often in the last 2 years?
 (b) When was the last time?
 (c) What have you gained from such visits?

33. What efforts have been made to provide an appropriate office setting in the classroom?

How adequate is the arrangement?

34. What changes should be made in teacher training programmes so that teachers can better prepare students for business and commerce?

What courses would you personally have liked to have had in order to help you better prepare the school leavers for jobs as typists or accounts clerks?

35. (a) How satisfied are you with being a business subjects teacher?

(b) Do you think you will be teaching in ten years time? Why?

(c) If you could start your life all over again, what occupation would you like to have? Why?

I would like to trace former Business Secondary School Students who left in 1986 or 1987. Do you have information about where they are and what they are doing now?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND CO-OPERATION

QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CURRICULUM PLANNERS, INSPECTORS, EDUCATION OFFICERS AND TEACHER TRAINERS

1. In your opinion, how have business subjects as part of the secondary school curriculum been handled so far?
2. How do you, in your work, help business studies?
 - (a) What do you do?
 - (b) How long have you been doing it?
3. How often are you able to visit the schools?
 - (a) How many Business Secondary Schools (BSSs) have you been to this year (since the beginning of the last academic year)?
 - (b) What do you do when you are there?
 - (c) What about transport to get out to schools?
4. Apart from going to schools, what else do you do?
 - (a) How often since the last academic year?
 - (b) What happens when you do this?
5. Could you tell me about any changes which have occurred over the last 5 years in business subjects in the BSSs?
 - (a) How have things changed? Why?
 - (b) What happened next?
 - (c) Who would know much about that?
6. Do you think employers look at other things than secondary school students' educational qualifications and why?

What do they look at?
7. Some employers believe it is better to train people on the job than employ secondary school leavers who have taken Business studies.

What is your own view? Why?
8. Have you had any contact with employers who might hire, or have hired, students from Business Secondary Schools?

(I would appreciate the name and, if known, the address of such employers)

 - (a) How much do you think these employers know about business education/subjects as occurs in secondary schools?
 - (b) Do you think employers give any preference to Business education students? Do they avoid them?

9. Comment on any specific problems facing Business Secondary School:
How far could these problems have been expected? Why?
10. To what extent are the BSSs a success?
Should the schools continue to exist?
11. Where do you think is the best place for teaching business skills for secretarial work and accountancy? Why?
Should business education subjects be taught in specialised schools (such as Business Secondary Schools), on the job or should they be taught in secondary schools right across the country? Why?

**FOR CURRICULUM PLANNERS, INSPECTORS AND EDUCATION OFFICERS/
ADMINISTRATORS**

12. To what extent have empirical factors, gleaned from the schools' performance, influenced current development in planning curricula? By way of examples, please give specific details in specific areas.
13. What do you think of the balance between academic subjects and business subjects in BSSs?
Should there be any change in this balance? Why?
14. (a) Are the labour market needs considered when the content of BSS subjects is decided?
(b) How far is the labour market important when considering the enrolments in BSS courses?
(c) How is this done?
15. What are your views on the WASC, Government Secretarial, RSA or NVTI examinations in typing and bookkeeping?
(a) How much importance do you think is given to examination results by employers?
(b) What is your own opinion on this?
16. A great deal of money has been spent to establish and run business studies in secondary schools. Some people think it would have been of greater benefit to secondary education if this money had been spent on other subjects. Do you agree?
Why or Why not?

17. How much material resources are made available for business studies?
- Are there teachers' guides for business/commercial studies? Are there enough copies for all BSSs?
 - What about textbooks for business studies in these schools? Are they sufficient or do students have to share?
18. What are your impressions of the introduction of new technology, such as computers, word processors, photocopiers and digital pocket calculators, in the offices?
- How is this catered for in Business education courses?
19. Your view of the future: what future developments in BSSs do you think are desirable or most likely?
20. What is the quality of the intake to the BSSs?

FOR CURRICULUM PLANNERS AND INSPECTORS

21. Where do the business curricula come from?
- from interested persons?
 - from foreign contributions?
- Who has the most influence?
22. When were the curricula last revised?
- What was changed then? Why?
- What about before that time? When was there a revision? Why?
23. Are there any improvements needed on the maintenance and subsequent development of business education?
- If yes,
- what are they?
 - who would you involve?
24. Have Business Secondary School teachers been involved at all in the curriculum designing and development of business education?
- If yes,
- What are the advantages of involving teachers in curriculum development of business education?
 - What are the disadvantages?
- If no, why were the teachers not involved?

25. Have you contacted employers when developing curricula or in deciding on equipment?

FOR INSPECTORS AND EDUCATION OFFICERS/ADMINISTRATORS

26. What type of students enrol in BSSs?

- (a) Has this changed over the years?
- (b) How many applicants are there for each place in a BSS?

27. Where do BSSs get their money from? How much from:

- (a) funds from the Education Department?
- (b) resources from the community?
- (c) Parent Teacher Association funds?
- (d) other sources of direct appeals to the public?

Do the schools get any extra money for business studies?

Is it satisfactory?

28. What are the strengths and weaknesses of services rendered by the Maintenance Unit? (I am thinking about the typewriters).

29. What efforts are made to keep 'good' teachers and to get trained ones?

What efforts are made to improve the type and level of training of teachers?

30. Is there anything done for typing or clerical accounting staff to be attached to companies/business organisations for experience?

Please indicate:

- (a) subject area of the teacher(s)
- (b) company, business organisation the teacher(s) went to
- (c) nature of attachment
- (d) period of attachment
- (e) benefits derived

31. Do schools do anything to help students find jobs?

- (a) What do they do?
- (b) What could be done better?
- (c) Has anyone tried to see what happens to students after school? What is your impression?

32. What is done to make employers aware of what BSSs offer?

- (a) Who takes such initiatives?
- (b) Is this adequate?
- (c) What else could be done or should be done?
- (d) Do employers have an accurate picture? What do they misunderstand/get wrong? Why?

FOR TEACHER TRAINERS

33. What efforts are made to improve the type and level of training of teachers?

34. What about in-service courses?

35. (a) Is anything done to help teachers better prepare students for business and commerce?
- (b) Is anything done to train teachers in the guidance and counselling of students preparing for entry into the job market?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX 6D

Description of the Curriculum in the Schools Surveyed

One of each type of sample schools described is, one business secondary school curriculum, one business school curriculum and one secondary school curriculum.

Business Secondary School

- Course A: Four-year secondary course leading to the School Certificate/General Certificate of Education examinations (G.C.E. Ordinary Level):
- Course B: Four-year business/commercial course leading to the General Certificate of Education examinations (Ordinary Level), the Royal Society of Arts (R.S.A.), National Vocational Training Institute (N.V.T.I.) and Government Secretarial School (G.S.S.) examinations.

SECONDARY

English Language
 English Literature
 Mathematics
 General/Health Science
 Economics
 Accounting
 Commerce
 Introduction to Business
 Management

BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL

English Language
 English Literature
 Business Mathematics
 Commerce
 Economics
 Accounting
 Shorthand
 Typewriting

Business School

- Course A: Three-year business/commercial course leading to the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.); the National Vocational Training Institute (N.V.T.I.) and the Government Secretarial School (G.S.S.) examinations.
- Course B: Three-year course in basic business management leading to the Retail Distribution examination conducted by the National Clerical Training Council of the National Vocational Training Institute and the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) and Royal Society of Arts (R.S.A.) examinations.
- Course C: Two-year basic course in dressmaking leading to the Trade Test Grade II examination conducted by the National Vocational Training Institute and/or an examination to be determined by the Ghana Education Service. They will also be awarded certificates by the Social Advance Institute.

Only details of the curriculum for Courses A and B are shown below:

BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL

English Language
 Typewriting
 Shorthand (Pitman)
 Business Methods
 Economics
 Arithmetic
 Commerce
 Geography
 Civic and Social
 Responsibilities
 Moral Education

**BASIC BUSINESS
 MANAGEMENT**

English Language
 Retail Project and Display
 Retail Selling and
 Organisation
 Accounts
 Office Practice
 Economics
 Commerce
 Typewriting
 Business Mathematics

Secondary School

Course: Five-year course leading to the School
 Certificate/General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.)
 examinations.

SECONDARY

English Language
 Ghanaian Languages
 Mathematics
 Agriculture Science
 Home Science
 Art
 History
 Business Management
 Physical Education
 Government
 Bible Knowledge
 Typewriting

English Literature
 French
 Integrated Science
 Health Science
 Music
 Accounts
 Geography
 Commerce
 Electronics
 Economics
 Technical Drawing
 Shorthand

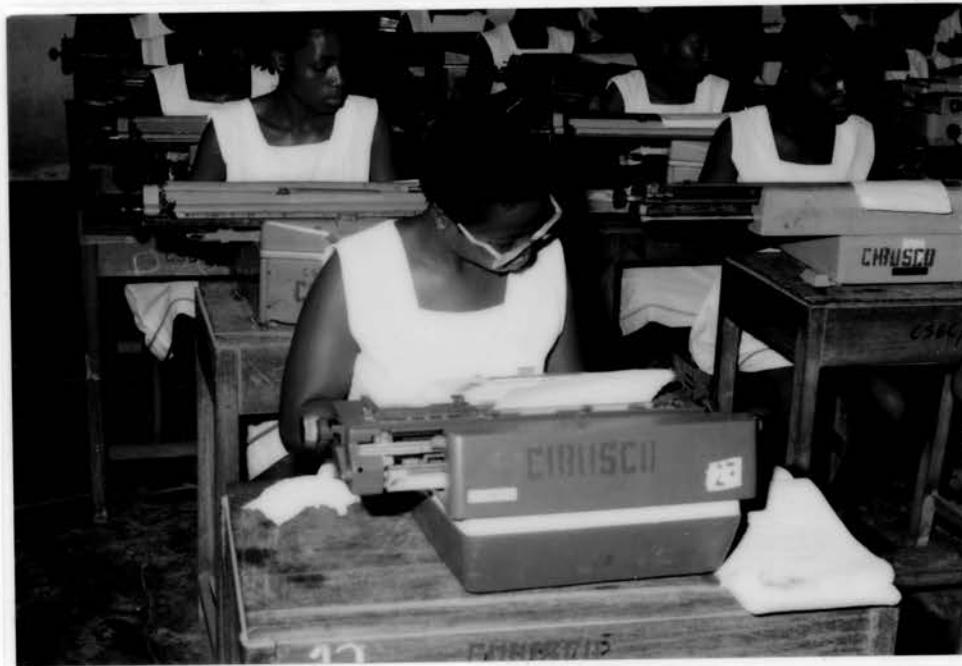
APPENDIX 6E

Photographs of students in the classroom

6E.1 Final year students in a private business school typewriting class



6E.2 Second year students in a public Business Secondary School (BSS) typewriting class



6E.3 Second year students in a private Business Secondary School (BSS) typewriting class



6E.4 Final year students in a Government Secretarial School (GSS) shorthand class



6E.5 Second year students in a public business school typewriting class



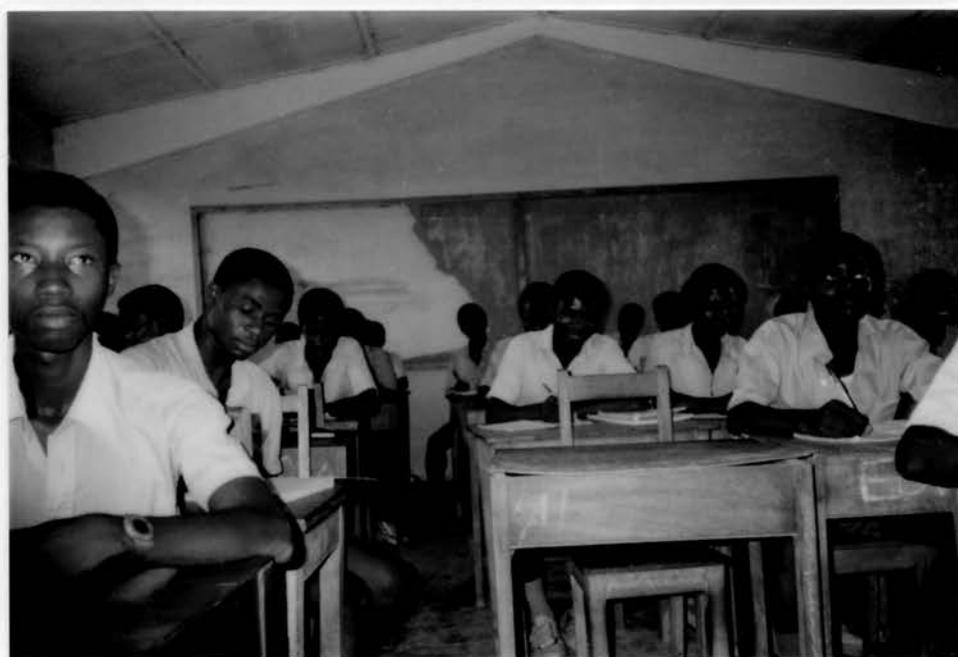
6E.6 Second year students in a public business school accounts class



6E.7 Final year students in a Government Secretarial School (GSS) typewriting class



6E.8 Second year students in a private Business Secondary School (BSS) accounts class



6E.9 Second year students in a private Business Secondary School (BSS) shorthand class



6E.10 Final year students in a private business school shorthand class

APPENDIX 7A

Supplementary Tables

Table 7A.1
Comparison between school and middle school level at which students left

	Year	Middle School level (in numbers only)			Total
		Form Two	Form Three	Form Four	
		n	n	n	n
BSS Public	1st	4	3	13	20
	5th	2	7	13	22
BSS Private	1st	-	-	8	8
	5th	3	3	10	16
Sub-total		10	13	44	66
Business Public	1st	1	4	23	28
	5th	2	2	21	25
Business Private	1st	1	-	14	15
	5th	3	2	11	16
Sub-total		7	8	69	84
Secondary Public	1st	13	9	5	27
	5th	4	3	1	8
Secondary Private	1st	3	4	3	10
	5th	1	1	6	8
Sub-total		21	17	15	53
Sub-total	1st	22	20	66	108
	5th	15	18	62	95
TOTAL		37	38	128	203

Of the 203 students who left in Form Four, 44 (22 percent) entered BSSs, 69 (34 percent) went onto Business Schools and 15 (7 percent) onto Secondary schools. Of those who left Middle school in Form Two, most went onto Secondary schools.

Table 7A.2
Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by sex

	Year	No of Students	Boys			Girls			
			n	%	(%)	n	%	(%)	
BSS Public	1st	31	4	13		27	87		
	5th	30	23	23		23	77		
Sub-total		61	11	18	(8)	50	82	(26)	
BSS Private	1st	26	14	54		12	46		
	5th	29	18	62		11	38		
Sub-total		55	32	58	(22)	23	42	(12)	
Business Public	1st	31	23	74		8	26		
	5th	30	23	77		7	23		
Sub-total		61	46	75	(32)	15	25	(8)	
Business Private	1st	31	-	-		31	100		
	5th	26	-	-		26	100		
Sub-total		57	-	-	-	57	100	(30)	
Secondary Public	1st	29	16	55		13	45		
	5th	17	7	41		10	59		
Sub-total		46	23	50	(16)	23	50	(12)	
Secondary Private	1st	29	21	72		8	28		
	5th	25	12	48		13	52		
Sub-total		54	33	61	(23)	21	39	(11)	
Sub-total		1st	177	78	44		99	56	
		5th	157	67	43		90	57	
TOTAL		334	145	43	(100)	189	57	(100)	

note: column percentages are in parentheses.

Table 7A.3
Distribution of student sample by year, by school and by age

	Year	No of students		10-13		14-17		18-21		22-25	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
BSS Public	1st	31	1	3	12	39	18	58	-	-	
	5th	30	-	-	3	10	26	87	1	-	
Sub-total		61	1	2	15	25	44	72	1	2	
BSS Private	1st	26	15	58	11	42	-	-	-	-	
	5th	29	-	-	10	3	19	66	-	-	
Sub-total		54	15	28	21	39	19	35	-	-	
Business Public	1st	31	4	13	21	68	6	19	-	-	
	5th	30	-	-	3	10	26	87	1	3	
Sub-total		61	4	7	24	39	32	52	1	2	
Business Private	1st	31	-	-	23	74	8	26	-	-	
	5th	26	-	-	7	27	18	69	1	4	
Sub-total		57	-	-	30	53	26	46	1	2	
Secondary Public	1st	29	19	66	10	34	-	-	-	-	
	5th	17	-	-	4	24	13	76	-	-	
Sub-total		46	19	41	14	30	13	28	-	-	
Secondary Private	1st	29	12	41	16	55	1	3	-	-	
	5th	25	-	-	11	44	14	56	-	-	
Sub-total		54	12	22	27	50	15	28	-	-	
Sub-total	1st	177	51	29	93	53	33	18	-	-	
	5th	157	-	-	38	24	116	74	3	2	
TOTAL		334	51	15	131	39	149	45	3	1	

APPENDIX 7B

Survey Questions

Section 1 Business secondary students: a profile

- 1.1 Where do the students come from and how similar or different are they in terms of (a) the type of primary school they attended, (b) their ethnic group and (c) their religious affiliation?
- 1.2 Of those who left Middle school early (ie in Form Two) or later (ie in Form Four), what school are they in now and how did they perform in the Common Entrance examination?
- 1.3 How important are the student's gender and age in terms of performance in the Common Entrance examination?
- 1.4 How different or homogeneous are the students in terms of the level of education their parents received and in terms of their socio-economic status?

Section 2 Choosing the school

- 2.1 What went into the choice of any particular school and could there be a link between the choice students made and the Common Entrance examination results obtained?
- 2.2 Does the school the student is in reflect his region of birth or the region in which he has stayed longest?
- 2.3 Did the choices students made for attending their school reflect in any way the type of education their parents received or the type of work their parents do?

Section 3 To work or not to work

- 3.1 What do the students want to do immediately after school?
- 3.2 Do the schools and/or do parents encourage students to stay on or to leave and look for jobs immediately after school?

Section 4 Making Occupational Choices

- 4.1 What type of job is desired and why?
- 4.2 Do the boys and girls choose jobs typically associated with their gender and do these jobs reflect their parents' occupation?
- 4.3 Do the students have any idea about where and what type of organisation they would like to go to?
- 4.4 What information or advice have students received about getting jobs?

APPENDIX 7C

**SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS' SCHOOL-LEAVER RECRUITMENT
PRACTICES****QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BSS, BUSINESS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS****Instructions:**

Please do not write your name.

Where several answers are given, please tick (✓) next to the answer that applies to you.

Where there are no answers already given, then write your own answer in the space provided.

Please answer all questions.

Questionnaire for first year students

This is not a test. I need frank answers and all your answers are confidential. I hope my survey will help education in Ghana.

1. What type of primary school did you attend?

Government
Mission
International/Private

2. If you attended middle school, what form did you leave?

Form

3. Was there any break in your schooling, between the time you completed middle school, up to the time you started secondary school?

No
Yes

If yes, say what you were doing during that time?

4. Have you been a student in any other secondary school?

No
Yes

If yes, how many schools have you been in?
If yes, what type of school were you in?

Private secondary
Government secondary
Private business/commercial
Government business/commercial
Vocational
Technical
Other

5. Did you pass the Common Entrance Examination?

No
Yes

If yes, what aggregate did you get?

6. When you were looking for a secondary school, where was this school on your list of choices?

It was not on my list
 It was my first choice
 It was my second choice
 It was my third choice

7. Why did you come to this particular school?

I like the subjects this school offers
 It was the only school where I could gain admission
 My father/brother/mother/uncle wanted me to come here
 Some other reason (Please state it below)

8. Imagine you are just about to begin your secondary schooling and you can attend any type of school you like, which type of school will you choose to attend?

Ordinary secondary school
 Business secondary school
 Technical secondary school
 Some other type of school (Please state it below)

9. a) What do you think your chances are of getting admission to Sixth Form?
 b) If you had to find a job after Form 5, what kind of job will you be looking for?

10. Your sex:

Male
 Female

How old are you?

Your place of birth:

Region where you have stayed longest?

Your tribe

11. Who pays your school fees and expenses? (Tick all those who contribute seriously and underline the one who pays most)

Father
 Mother
 Uncle
 Brother
 Scholarship
 Some other person (Please state below)

12. If you are on scholarship, who provides the scholarship?

Cocoa Marketing Board
Local Authority
Scholarships Secretariat
The school or some other organisation

13. Are you a boarder or a day student?

Boarder
Day

14. a) How much education did your father have?

b) How much education did your mother have?

c) What kind of work does your father do?

If your mother works outside the home, what does she do? (Please give details, not just where he or she works)

15. What is your religion?

None
Roman Catholic
Anglican/Presbyterian/Methodist
Pentecostalist
Muslim

Questionnaire for final year students

1. What type of primary school did you attend?

Government
Mission
International/Private

2. If you attended middle school, what form did you leave?

Form

3. Was there any break in your schooling, between the time you completed middle school, up to the time you started secondary school?

No
Yes

If yes, say what you were doing during that time?

4. Have you been a student in any other secondary school?

No
Yes

If yes, how many previous schools have you been in?
If yes, what type of school were you in?

Private secondary
Government secondary
Private business/commercial
Government business/commercial
Vocational
Technical
Other

5. Did you pass the Common Entrance Examination?

No
Yes

If yes, what aggregate did you get?

6. When you were looking for a secondary school, where was this school on your list of choices?

It was not on my list at all
It was my first choice
It was my second choice
It was my third choice

7. Why did you come to this particular school?

I like the courses this school offers
It was the only school where I could gain admission
My father/uncle/mother/brother wanted me to come here
Some other reason (Please state it here)

8. Imagine you are just about to begin your secondary schooling and you can attend any type of school you like, which type of school will you choose to attend?

Ordinary secondary school
Business secondary school
Technical secondary school
Some other type of school (Please state it here)

9. You may feel there are some good points and bad points about your school and the course you are now doing now. Put down some of these points:

Good points:

Bad points:

10. a) In the short run, what do you think you are most likely to do after Form 5?

b) What do you think your chances are of getting admission to Sixth Form?

11. Will you apply for a job after leaving school?

No
Yes

If yes,

- a) what type of work will you look for?
b) where in Ghana will you be looking?
c) who will you apply to?

12. Why are you looking for a job?

How important are these reasons:

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important
--	-------------------	---------------------	------------------

No hope of getting into
Sixth Form

Pressure from parents

Want to leave school

Cannot afford school fees

13. a) If you have to find a job after Form 5, what kind of job will you be looking for?

b) Why would you look for this kind of job?

14. Who has given you advice and /or how did you get information about getting a job?

15. Do you think the course you are now following will help you to get the job you want?

No
Yes

Why or why not?

16. In deciding where to apply for a job, school leavers may consider these things:

Distance from home
 Reputation/prestige of the company/organisation
 Interesting job
 Family connections
 Employers are known to you
 Friends are working there
 Recommendations by teachers
 Good facilities/nice place
 Other (please specify)

In the list above, underline those which are important for you.

17. Would you rather work for a small company/organisation or a large one? Why?

18. Would you prefer to work in a company/organisation that is

very close to the town/city centre
 isolated or on the outskirts of the town/city centre
 have no strong feelings on this

Why?

19. What job would you, ideally, like to be doing in the long run (say, ten years from now)?

What job do you really believe you will be doing by then?

20. Do you enjoy life in Form 5 or do you wish to get away from a school environment as quickly as possible?

Enjoying life at school
 No strong feelings either way
 Want to leave the school environment as soon as possible

21. Your sex:

Male
 Female

How old are you?

Your place of birth:

Region where you have stayed longest:

Your tribe:

22. Who pays your school fees and expenses? (Tick all those who contribute seriously)

and underline the one who pays most)

Father
Mother
Uncle
Brother
Scholarship
Some other person (Please state who)

23. If you are on scholarship, who provides the scholarship?

Cocoa Marketing Board
Local Authority
Scholarships Secretariat
The school or some other organisation

24. Are you a boarder or a day student?

Boarder
Day

25. a) How much education did your father have?
b) How much education did your mother have?
c) What work does your father do?

If your mother works outside the home, what does she do? (Please give details, not just where he or she works)

26. What is your religion?

None
Roman Catholic
Anglican/Presbyterian/Methodist
Pentecostalist
Muslim

I am trying to trace Business Secondary School students who left in 1986 or 1987. I need your help to do this. I need names, postal or house addresses, workplaces if they are working, and as much information as possible about what they are doing now. If he or she is working, give as much detail about the kind of work as you know. If he or she is in school, what course is it? Please fill in as much information as you know, using the sheets provided.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX 8A

Supplementary Tables

Table 8A.1
Distribution of employee sample
by type of firm in which recruited

Type of Firm	Number of Employees
Accounting, large private	2
Accounting, small private	1
Banking, large state	8
Commerce and trade, large private	6
Commerce and trade, large state	1
Commerce and trade, small private	1
Engineering, large private	1
Engineering, small private	1
Government corporation, large state	1
Housing, large state	1
International organisation, large private	1
Manufacturing, large private	10
Petroleum, large private	1
Publishing, large state	1
Transport, small private	1
Total	37

Table 8A.2
Distribution of employee sample by type of
school attended and by length of time with the firm

Type of School attended	Length of time with firm				Total
	Up to 1 year	2-5 years	6-10 years	more than 10 years	
	n	n	n	n	n
BSS, Public	-	1	1	1	3
BSS, Private	-	-	3	1	4
Business, Public	1	-	-	1	2
Business, Private	2	5	1	4	12
Secondary, Public	1	4	2	1	8
Government Secretarial	1	2	-	-	3
Polytechnic	2	2	-	1	5
Total n	7	14	7	9	37
Total (%)	(19)	(38)	(19)	(24)	(100)

Table 8A.3
 Distributon of employee sample by
 salary earned and by type of firm (in scale and sector)

Salary earned in C '000s	Type of Firm			Total
	Large State	Large Private	Small Private	
	n	n	n	n
70-79	1	1	-	2
80-89	1	1	1	3
90-99	2	7	-	9
100-109	1	5	1	7
110-119	2	2	-	4
120-129	1	-	-	1
130-139	2	-	-	2
140-149	1	2	1	3
150-159	-	-	-	-
160-169	-	-	1	1
170-179	-	1	-	1
over 200	-	-	1	1
not stated	1	2	-	3
Total n	12	21	4	37
Total (%)	(32)	(57)	(11)	(100)

Table 8A.4
 Distribution of employee sample by importance
 attached to gender in recruitment and by type of firm (scale and sector)

Importance attached to gender	Type of Firm			Total
	Large State	Large Private	Small Private	
	n	n	n	n
Yes	4	6	1	11
No	7	15	3	25
Don't know	1	-	-	1
Total n	12	21	4	37
Total (%)	(32)	(57)	(11)	(100)

APPENDIX 8B**Survey Questions****Section 1 The 'before' and 'after' events surrounding the employees' present job**

- 1.1 Is the type of school the employee attended reflected in the job he is doing now?
- 1.2 How many applications did the employee make before getting this job and why is he with this particular firm?
- 1.3 What advice, if any, did the employee receive and what does he feel best helped him in getting the job he has now?

Section 2 Opinions from employees about employers

- 2.1 Does the employee believe his school had prepared him adequately for meeting his employer's needs or would changes in what and how business subjects are taught be justified?
- 2.2 What are the employee's views concerning employers' ability to help promote business education at the secondary level?
- 2.3 What criteria does the employee believe were involved in his having been successful in getting this job?
- 2.4 How satisfied is the employee in his job and does he think there is need to include a recruitment policy specifically for school leavers?

APPENDIX 8C

QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EMPLOYEES

This interview is strictly confidential. Your employer will not see your answers.

1.
 - (a) What is the nature of your job?
 - (b) What kinds of work do you do most of the time?
 - (c) What is your official title?
 - (d) What type of job were you looking for after school?

2. Before your employment here, which type of school did you attend?
 - (a) Did your school help and/or advise you in any way in getting a job? Did the school offer any information?
 - (b) Do you think the type of school you attended helped you get this job?
 - (c) What comments do you have about your school? Was there anything special about your school which helped you get this job?
 - (d) What about how well you did in school. Did your employer place much weight on that when you got the job?

3. What do you feel are the main difficulties facing leavers from your type of school?

4. Were you employed part-time (or during holidays) when you were attending school?
If yes,
 - (a) What did you do?
 - (b) Where were you employed?
 - (c) Has it helped you in getting your present job?

5.
 - (a) What is your home district?
 - (b) Where are you living now?
 - (c) Where did you go to look for work after you finished school?

6. Is this your first job?
If no, what other jobs have you had?

7. Your present job:
- (a) For how long have you been in this job?
 - (b) How did you get the job?
 - (c) Who helped you find this job?
 - (d) Before you got this job, how many other applications did you make?
To which organisations?
 - (e) Why are you working in this type of company?
 - (f) What is your annual salary?
8. Did you get advice about how to find a job from
- (a) your parents?
 - (b) your relatives?
 - (c) your friends?
 - (d) friends of the family?
- How helpful was the advice you received from these people?
9. (a) What is your father's occupation?
(b) What is your mother's occupation?
10. What, in your opinion, is the most important reason for your getting this job?
11. Do you feel that certain subjects you took in school helped you get this job?
- If yes,
- (a) In what way did they help?
 - (b) How well did your school subjects prepare you for the kind of work you are doing now?
12. (a) While in school did you attend any evening classes for any other training besides school subjects? Have these classes been of any help to you in your job?
- (b) Before you left school, what job did you wish you would get?
How does your present job compare with the expectations you then had?
13. What kind of person was your employer looking for when you were hired? What skills were they looking for?
14. How did you find out that your employer was looking for a typist or accounts clerk?
- (a) Did he advertise?
 - (b) Did he contact your school?
 - (c) Do you know if he was asking around for suitable candidates? Do you know whom he asked?
15. Why do you think your employer chose you rather than other applicants?

16. Have you ever approached your employer on behalf of relatives or others who need a job?

Has your employer helped them?

17. Do you think your examination results/grades were important in getting you the job?

What are the qualifications needed to get this job?

18. Is there anything in your certificate which you feel best helped you to get this job?

19. Many employers believe it is better to train people on the job than to employ secondary school leavers. What is your own view? Why?

20. Do you think there should be any changes in what secondary schools teach, in order to meet the needs of work in offices?

21. In terms of employment opportunities, do you think business secondary school leavers stand better chances than those from purely academic secondary schools?

Why or why not?

22. Given the knowledge you now have, if you were only now starting your secondary schooling, and you were free to attend any type of secondary schooling, which would you choose?

- (a) Business Secondary?
- (b) Ordinary Secondary?
- (c) Technical Secondary?
- (d) Some other type of school?

Why?

23. Do you think that business education subjects should only be taught in specialised schools, (such as Business Secondary Schools) or should they be taught in all secondary schools right across the country?

Why?

24. What are your views on what employers can do to help promote business education at the secondary level? - Please comment on the following possible suggestions:

- (a) Employers should have a clear understanding of what the business education programme sets out to achieve.
- (b) Employers must tell schools what skills they are looking for.
- (c) Employers should have a say in deciding the contents of the business subjects.
- (d) Employers should help with money and equipment.

25. Did your employers look at other things than your educational qualifications?
26. How important do you think it is to come with a good recommendation when applying for a job?

For example:

- (a) Did anyone recommend you for this job?
 - (b) What persons made such recommendations?
 - (c) How important is it that the recommendation should come from your school?
 - (d) Are there certain persons you would specially wish to make recommendations for you? Who are they?
27. Employers are often contacted personally by people who are trying to find a job for school leavers they wish to help. Did this happen in your case?

28. Do you come from a similar background to that of your employer?

For example, does he

- (a) come from your own home place?
 - (b) come from the schools you went to yourself?
 - (c) come from your own tribe?
 - (d) share your religious beliefs?
 - (f) is he related to you?
29. Do you feel that the fact that you are male/female helped you to get this job?
- (a) Does it make any difference whether you are male/female?
 - (b) Why do you think so?

30. Are you satisfied with the job you are in?

Why or why not?

Are you thinking of changing jobs? Why?

31. Are you doing any course at the moment or have you done one since leaving school?

If yes,

- (a) What qualifications are you aiming at?
 - (b) Are you attending evening classes? Where?
32. Are you aware of any recruitment policy regarding school leavers in this company?
- (a) What policy do you think the company should have?
 - (b) What would you include in developing a recruitment policy for school leavers? Why?

FOR EMPLOYEES FROM BUSINESS SECONDARY SCHOOLS

33. What do you think the aims of the Business Secondary School are?
What do you think they should be? Why?
34. Do you think that leavers from Business Secondary Schools can advance faster in your job than those from ordinary secondary schools? Why?
35. (a) How closely do you think your school background is related to the kind of skills required by your company?
(b) How do you think typing or clerical accounting subjects taught in Business Secondary Schools could be improved upon?
36. In general, what are your impressions of Business Secondary subjects?
37. (a) Did your school try in any way to make the classroom look like an office?
(b) What would you like to see in a typing or clerical accounting classroom which would make you better familiar with offices in the business world?

FOR TRAINEES/APPRENTICES

38. Did you come into this company from a secondary school?
If yes, what type of secondary school?
If no, how were you selected for this training programme?
Do you feel you have an advantage over secondary school leaver employees?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX 9A

Supplementary Tables

Table 9A.1
Type of firm and employers' definition of economic status

Type of Firm	'Modern'	'Intermediate'	not stated	Total
	n	n	n	n
Accounting	-	-	2	2
Agriculture	-	1	1	2
Banking	6	1	4	11
Building & Construction	-	1	-	1
Commerce and trade	7	1	6	14
Engineering	2	1	-	3
Hotels and tourism	1	-	-	1
Insurance	-	1	-	1
Manufacturing	8	6	1	15
Petroleum	1	-	1	2
Publishing	-	1	-	1
Transport	-	2	1	3
Other	1	-	4	5
Total	26	15	20	61

Table 9A.2
Entry levels required for recruitment
of typists and accounts clerks, by type of firm

Type of Firm	Entry levels required					
	'O' level minimum	RSA stages I II III	Typing speed	Gov't ¹ Secretarial Certificate	Other ² or not identified	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	n
Accounting	1	-	-	-	1	2
Agriculture	1	1	1	-	1	4
Banking	6	5	5	-	5	21
Building & Construction	-	-	-	-	1	1
Commerce and trade	4	4	3	-	8	19
Engineering	2	2	1	1	1	7
Hotels and tourism	-	-	-	-	1	1
Insurance	1	1	1	1	1	5
Manufacturing	8	7	3	4	3	25
Petroleum	-	1	1	-	1	3
Publishing	1	-	-	-	-	-
Transport	1	1	1	-	2	5
Other	2	2	3	-	1	8
Total	27	24	19	6	26	102

1 A certificate awarded by government secretarial schools

2 Other: i.e. the middle school leaving certificate (mentioned by 2 employers)

Table 9A.3
Distribution of employers sample by scale, sector
and by source of recruitment of first employees

Source of Recruitment	Scale			State	Sector		Total
	Small	Large	not stated		Para-statal	Private	
	n	n	n	n	n	n	n
Government							
Employment Centre	1	6	-	2	2	3	6
School leavers	-	3	-	1	1	1	3
BSS leavers	-	3	-	-	-	3	3
Advertisements	1	2	-	-	-	3	3
Other companies	1	2	1	1	1	2	4
Expatriates	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
Mission schools	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Through friends	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
not stated	4	29	5	10	7	21	39
Total	8	46	7	14	11	36	61

Table 9A.4
 Cross-tabulation of employers' perceived importance of recommendations
 from school by the importance they attach to Business Secondary Schools

Recommendations from school	Very important	Fairly Important	Important	Not important	not stated	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	n
Very important	22	6	3	3	5	39
Fairly important	3	3	2	1	1	10
Important	2	1	-	1	-	4
Not important	3	2	1	-	1	7
not stated	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	30	12	6	5	8	61

Table 9A.5
 Employers' gender preferences by type of firm

Type of Firm	Men preferred	Women preferred	No preference	Other	not stated	Total
	n	n	n	n	n	n
Accounting	-	-	2	-	-	2
Agriculture	1	-	1	-	-	2
Banking	1	1	6	2	1	11
Building & Construction	-	-	1	-	-	1
Commerce and trade	5	1	5	2	1	14
Engineering	2	-	1	-	-	3
Hotels and tourism	-	-	-	1	-	1
Insurance	-	1	-	-	-	1
Manufacturing	4	3	5	2	1	15
Petroleum	-	-	2	-	-	2
Publishing	1	-	-	-	-	1
Transport	-	-	3	-	-	3
Other	1	-	3	-	1	5
Total	15	6	29	7	4	61

Table 9A.6
Number of trainees in each firm by type of firm

Type of Firm	Number of Trainees
Accountants	n 2
Agriculture	1
Banking	11
Building & Construction	-
Commerce and trade	9
Engineering	2
Hotels and tourism*	1
Insurance	1
Manufacturing	7
Petroleum	1
Publishing	1
Transport	1
Other	5
Total	42

* On the job training

Table 9A.7
Distribution of state and parastatal employer sample by scale
and according to government regulations they are subjected to (n = 25)

Subject to government regulations	Scale		Sector		Total
	Large	not stated	State	Para-statal	
	n	n	n	n	n
Yes	7	-	6	1	7
No regulations on recruitment	12	4	7	9	16
not stated	2	-	1	1	2
<u>Desire for changes in regulations</u>					
Yes	4	-	3	1	4
No changes desired	7	4	7	4	11
not stated	10	-	4	6	10
<u>Discretion given within rules</u>					
Yes	8	4	5	7	12
No	3	-	2	1	3
not stated	10	-	7	3	10
Total	21	4	14	11	25

Table 9A.8
Private sector employers' views on state
and employees' influences on recruitment policy

	Scale			Sector
	Small	Large	not stated	Private (= total)
	n	n	n	n
<u>Influenced by government in recruitment policy</u>				
Yes	-	7	-	7
No	8	17	4	29
<u>Changes desired</u>				
Yes: need to advertise our job requirements	-	2	-	2
If need arises	-	4	1	5
No change required	5	11	3	20
not stated	3	7	-	9
<u>Employees views on recruitment policy</u>				
Everyone is satisfied	1	-	1	2
Views regarding internal promotions	1	1	-	2
Views in terms of vouching for integrity of an applicant	-	1	-	1
No views	6	20	3	29
not stated	-	2	-	2
<u>Any help given after approaches from employees on behalf of others</u>				
Yes	6	15	3	24
No	1	6	1	8
not stated	1	3	-	4
Total	8	24	4	36

APPENDIX 9B

Survey Questions

Section 1 Characteristics of different firms

- 1.1 What type of firms provide typing and clerical accounting jobs and how would they define their economic status in terms of (a) the different roles they play in Ghana's economy and (b) the type of equipment used?
- 1.2 How different or similar are the entry levels for each firm in respect to the job of typist or accounts clerk and how did they obtain their very first recruits?
- 1.3 How many employers have taken on applicants with a business secondary background and how significant is that in terms of (a) the numbers employed over the past year and (b) whether in fact they are employed for jobs other than typing and clerical accounting?

Section 2 Employers' selection of and opinions about Business Secondary School (BSS) leavers?

- 2.1 What form does the selection of job applicants with a BSS background take and how do they receive any information about them?
- 2.2 Is there agreement amongst employers about what the aims of BSSs should be and how varied are their impressions of BSS subjects?
- 2.3 How far have BSS job applicants rather than job applicants with a mainly academic background met employers' expectations in terms of skills required and in what directions would they consider improvements in BSSs as justified?
- 2.4 How far do employers measure the importance of BSSs in terms of (a) its function, (b) the work performance of previous BSS leavers and (c) their intention to recruit, or not recruit, BSS leavers (again)?

Section 3 Employers' considerations in hiring any school leaver

- 3.1 Are recommendations about job applicants taken more seriously when they come from the school or from someone known to the employer?
- 3.2 Are employers moved through political pressure to give preference to certain job applicants?

- 3.3 Do employers find themselves in situations where they prefer recruiting people that they either know personally, are related to or have some common link with and are they contacted personally by people on behalf of job applicants?
- 3.4 Why do employers choose certain job applicants in favour of others and how important is the gender of the applicant?
- 3.5 Do employers find examination results sufficient and reliable for recruitment or do they depend more on (a) information about the character of the job applicant and (b) their own selection tests?

Section 4 Preferences of individual firms in recruiting staff for typing and clerical accounting jobs

- 4.1 In what way is information made available to school leavers about typing and clerical accounting jobs by employers and what factors are deemed as most important in the final selection of job applicants?
- 4.2 How much confidence do employers have in schools for teaching business skills?
- 4.3 Are training and apprenticeship schemes used by employers to supplement basic skills acquired in school?

Section 5 Policy guidelines for recruitment of job applicants

- 5.1 Are employers in favour of adjusting their recruitment policy or developing a policy for school leavers?
- 5.2 Are the state and parastatal institutions content with government regulations regarding their recruitment policy and what state recruitment policy affects private firms; also what influence, if any, do their employers have in terms of (a) views they may express about the way they recruit and (b) helping relatives or others to find jobs in the firm?

Section 6 Further comments and opinions from employers

Section 7 Summary of findings

APPENDIX 9C**QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EMPLOYERS**

This survey is envisaged as of special significance to both the Ministry of Education and the Employers' Association.

I am carrying out a survey among employers, employees, teachers and students about how school leavers with a typing or accounting/bookkeeping background are recruited. I have a particular interest in business secondary school leavers and the survey is to find out what employers think about what is being taught and how their needs may be best met.

The survey is for a research degree I am undertaking at the University of London Institute of Education. When this survey is completed I shall be happy to share whatever findings emerge from it.

Everything you tell me will be treated in the strictest confidence and no individual will be identifiable in any way in the report on the survey.

Please indicate the position you hold in this company/organisation

1. What is the name and address of your company? (Please use a stamp, if you can)
2. Is your organisation State, Private or Parastatal?
3. What is the nature of your company? What services do you provide and what do you produce?
4. How many are there in your company?
5. Are there different entry levels in your company as required for the job of typist or accounts clerk?
6. Have you employed anyone who has taken typing or clerical accounting in a secondary school?

If yes:

- (a) About how many persons with this background have you employed over the past year?
- (b) If you employ Business Secondary School leavers, how many do you usually employ in a year?
- (c) Have you hired any school leavers with a Business Secondary School background for jobs other than typing or clerical accounting? What kind of jobs?

7. The Business Secondary School (BSS)

- (a) What do you think the aims of the BSS should be?
- (b) In general, what are your impressions of BSS subjects?

8. Have employees with a BSS background any skills which have been of special value for their work in your company as compared to employees with a purely academic 'O' level background?

If yes:

- (a) What kind of knowledge or special skills do you have in mind?
- (b) Do you think typing or clerical accounting taught in BSSs could be improved to have more value for companies and business organisations? Would you please suggest a few recommendations?

9. How do you receive your information about BSS leavers?

Are you satisfied with this?

If no, what other type of information would help you in the selection process?

10. What factors have influenced you in your choice of employees in the past?
11. If you are hiring a typist or an accounts clerk, do you prefer males or females, or does it make no difference?
Why do you think so?
12. How do you select people with a BSS background?
13. Do you carry out your own selection tests?
If yes, why?
If no:
(a) do you use other methods?
(b) what do you go by when you select?
14. How much importance do you give to examination results?
15. Do you pay special attention to the result of any particular subjects covered in the Certificate?
16. Many employers make inquiries as to the character of school leavers before hiring them and do not only go by school certificates. Do you make such inquiries?
Who do you usually approach?
- I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS, NOT ONLY ABOUT TYPING AND CLERICAL ACCOUNTING JOBS BUT ABOUT ANY JOB FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS
17. How important is it that a school leaver comes with a good recommendation from school?
(a) How important is it that the recommendation should come from someone known to you and, perhaps, other than someone from his/her school?
(b) Are there certain persons whose recommendation you usually give special importance to? What persons make such recommendations?
18. Do you sometimes feel that you are under political pressure to give preference to certain applicants?
Does this present any problems for you?
19. Sometimes politicians recommend certain persons for the job.
Does this ever happen in your company?

20. Do you find that it is more in the interest of your company to take on people you know personally or are related to?
21. People often feel a special responsibility for trying to help others get a job if they come from a similar background to one's own. Are you able to help such people?

I am thinking of:

- (a) people from your own home town?
- (b) people from schools you went to yourself?
- (c) people from your own tribe?
- (d) people with whom you share religious beliefs
- (e) people who are related to employees in this company?
- (f) people who are related to you

Looking at this list, whom do you feel any such responsibility for, when hiring school leavers?

22. Employers are often contacted personally by people who are trying to find a job for school leavers they wish to help. How often does this happen to you?

What do you tell them?

I NOW HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT TYPING AND CLERICAL ACCOUNTING JOBS

23. How do applicants find out if you are hiring a typist or an accounts clerk?

- (a) Do you advertise?
- (b) Do you contact a school?
- (c) Do you ask others if they know of suitable candidates?
Who do you ask?
- (d) How do you choose when several applicants seem to have equally good qualifications or skills?

24. Some employers do have contacts with BSSs or may be asked for advice on what these schools teach. Do you have any such contacts?

How about anyone else in this company?

25. Does your company introduce itself and/or interest school leavers in employment opportunities available?

26. In terms of employment opportunities, do you think BSS leavers stand a better chance than those from academic secondary schools?

27. In your opinion, do secondary school leavers with business education have a better background for recruitment in business enterprises than those with a purely academic background?

28. Where do you think is the best place for teaching business skills for secretarial work or accountancy?

- (a) School or training on the job?
- (b) If school, what kind of school?
- (c) If training on the job only, then what type of school background do they need to have first?

29. What is your opinion about the importance of BSSs for preparing typists and accounts clerks?

- (a) Are the BSSs functioning as you would like?
- (b) Looking at the BSS leavers you have employed in the past, what have been your impressions about their performance?
- (c) Do you intend to take on (more) BSS leavers in the future? Why or Why not?

30. Do you think that business education subjects should be taught in secondary schools right across the country?

Why or Why not?

31. Do you have training/apprenticeship schemes in your company?

If yes:

- (a) How do you select people for your training programme?
- (b) Are some trainees/apprentices, school leavers from BSSs or other schools?

32. Are there any adjustments you would wish to see made in your recruitment policy?

What are they?

What would you include in developing a recruitment policy for school leavers? Why?

FOR PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS/PARASTATALS

33. Are you subject to any Government policy or regulations when hiring typists or accounts clerks? What are the rules?

- (a) How appropriate do you think these rules are? What changes would you like to see in the rules?
- (b) Are you given enough discretion within these rules?

FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES/ORGANISATIONS

34. Does the Government influence your hiring policy in anyway?

35. Concerning employees already in your company:

- (a) have the views expressed by them in any way influenced your hiring policy and what has the influence been?
- (b) do they often approach you about relatives or others who need a job as a typist or accounts clerk and have you been able to help them?

36. Would you like to see any changes in your hiring policy?

TO ALL EMPLOYERS**Additional comments:**

Apart from any additional comments you may wish to make, I would also appreciate your response to the following four questions:

1. How do you see your role in Ghana's economy?
2. Where do you fit in, in terms of 'modern', 'intermediate' or 'traditional' sector considerations? Please explain why.
3. What sort of office equipment do you have i.e. manual/electronic typewriters, computers, calculating machines etc?
4. If you are a private firm, how did you first become established and where did you get your very first recruits (typists and accounts clerks) from?

THANK YOU FOR YOU HELP AND CO-OPERATION

APPENDIX 9D

Sample of typing job requirements
from a state insurance company

1. JUNIOR TYPIST:(a) Qualifications:

Candidates must: (i) Possess a minimum educational qualification of Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC) or a statement from a recognised secondary school to the effect that the applicant has satisfactorily completed at least form III and must be able to type at the rate of 30 words per minute for 10 minutes and possess a recognised certificate to that effect.

OR

(ii) Possess a Government Secretarial School Typing Grade II Certificate.

(b) Job Summary:

Copy Typing

(c) Attributes:

Must have a pleasant personality and a sense of responsibility and should be able to present neat work.

(d) Method of Entry:

Vacancies are advertised and successful candidates are appointed after an interview.

(e) Age:

Not below 16 years.

(f) Salary:

C74,266 x 1823 - C90,669.

2. TYPIST:(a) Qualifications:

Candidates must: (i) Possess a pass in English language at the G.C.E. 'O' Level Examination and three other passes or its equivalent or R.S.A. Stage II with a pass in English Language and three other passes plus a Typist Grade I Certificate from a recognised institution. In addition, the candidate should pass the (company's) internal examination.

(b) Job Summary:

Typing.

(c) Attributes:

The candidate must be able to present neat work and have a pleasant personality with a sense of responsibility.

(d) Method of Entry:

- i) Internal: Serving junior typists should pass the prescribed examination as indicated under section 2 (a) above.
- ii) External: By way of advertisement and interview.

(e) Age:

Between the ages of 17 and 25.

(f) Salary:

C102,973 x 1230 - C107,893.

APPENDIX 9E

Sample of clerical and typing job requirements
from a bank in the state sector

MALE CLERKS

1. GCE "0" Level or RSA Stage II with 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics (or Economics).
2. Age - not more than 24 years in the case of school leavers, or 28 in the case of people with working experience in an allied field such as Accountancy, Audit etc.
3. Fit by the Bank's medical standards.
4. Good references from at least 3 people, one of whom must be the head of the last educational institution attended.

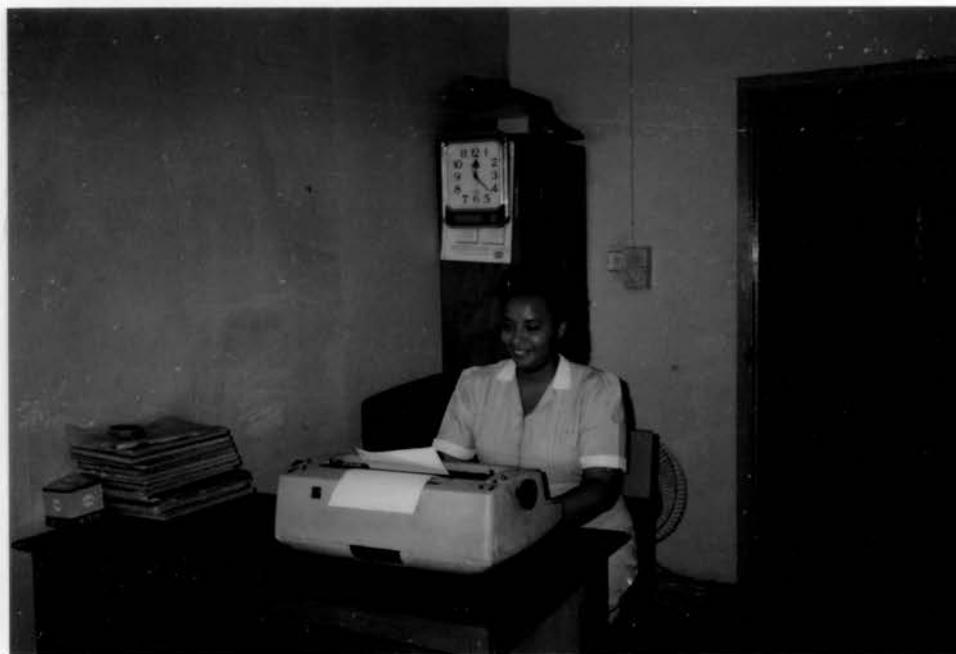
FEMALE CLERKS

1. GCE "0" Level or RSA Stage II with 5 credits including English Language and Mathematics (or Economics).
2. Age - not more than 24 years in the case of school leavers, or 28 in the case of people with working experience in an allied field such as Accountancy, Audit etc.
3. Fit by the Bank's medical standards.
4. Good references from at least 3 people, one of whom must be the head of the last educational institution attended.

FEMALE TYPISTS

1. RSA Stage II or GCE "0" Level with passes in English Language and one other subject. Typing at minimum 40 w.p.m. (Shorthand at 60 w.p.m. an advantage).
2. Age - not more than 24 years in the case of school leavers, or 28 in the case of people with working experience in an allied field such as Accountancy, Audit etc.
3. Fit by the Bank's medical standards.
4. Good references from at least 3 people, one of whom must be the head of the last educational institution attended.

APPENDIX 9F

Photographs of office workers in Ghanaian firms

9F.1 Secretary with a private business school background using an electric typewriter in a small private firm



9F.2 Private secretary with a government secretarial school background using a manual typewriter in a large state firm



9F.3 Accounts clerks from BSS and secondary school backgrounds using adding machines in a large private firm



9F.4 Accounts clerks from BSS and secondary school backgrounds using adding machines in a large private firm