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EFFECTS OF GLOBALISATION ON GAMBIAN EDUCATION: FOCUS ON  
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Globalisation is the process through which the world has become increasingly interconnected and interdependent due to increased trade and cultural exchanges. This has resulted to the integration of economies, markets, cultures and policy making around the world. There has been a lot of research on the pros and cons of globalisation in national economies, immigration and education systems. This research contributes to the discussion of the effects of globalisation on Gambian education.

The aim of the research is to describe the effects of globalisation on Gambian education. It is a qualitative research using qualitative content analysis. The previous and current Gambian education policies were the main sources of data. Globalisation theory was the lens used to look into what could be described as effects of globalisation.

The findings show the presence of global actors in all levels of Gambian education, the synchronisation of educational aims with international initiatives and the push for the inclusion of educational technology in schools. I found these not only as effects of globalisation in Gambian education system but also as the driving forces of the changes in the education system. The findings and conclusions drawn from this research are not as such generalisable to other contexts. However, the findings will be handy for anyone who wants to understand the effects of globalisation in developing countries like The Gambia. The Gambia's Ministry of Education may also use it to gauge the perspective of external partners/stakeholders of its education system. Similarly it could be used as a barometer to measure the quality of Gambian education policy in comparison to regional and international standards.

Like any other research, the limitation of this research include issues with definitions, reliability of data sources, not knowing the margin of error and the fact that changes may have occurred since the publication of the data. However, most of the changes that have occurred since the publication of the documents were tracked and reflected in the reviews of the policies, which were also incorporated into the data.

The debate surrounding globalisation and the dynamics of education policies was a challenge but I managed not to deviate from the focus of the research. The fact that I only considered education related documents in Gambian context is inline with qualitative analysis, which explores meanings and interpretations at a deeper level. The findings of this research are therefore reflections of the effects of globalisation on Gambian education.

Keywords Education, Effects, Gambia, International initiatives, Policy, Technology, UNESCO, UNICEF, Qualitative content analysis, World Bank

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Bully M Camara

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## **1. Introduction**

From time immemorial, ideas, cultures, products and people have been moving across borders. This is still continuing today but what has changed especially in the last two decades is the rate at which these movements are taking place. What has also happened is the consistent use of certain terms associated with these movements to an extent that they have become household names. Some of these terms include multiculturalism, internationalization, global trade, global education policies, global politics, regionalization to name but just a few. All these terms could be broadly categorized as globalisation. You may already sense that globalisation is such a topic and that its effects are wide. This research looks into the effects of globalisation in Gambian education. It does this by identifying issues found in Gambian education policies and other related documents that are or were as a result of globalisation.

It doesn't matter where you are or who you are, globalisation affects you in one way or the other. Of all the effects of globalisation in our lives, this research focused on education because Nelson Mandela has told us that it is the single most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world. In the developed world, globalisation has affected the education system by altering teaching and learning processes. With the advent of technology and internet in particular, virtual classrooms are created, access to resources are not limited to only within the four walls of your local library, students can collaborate in doing their work without needing to be within the same space and time.

According to Crossley (2002), the degree of the effects of globalisation varies from place to place if not from one person to another. In developing countries like The Gambia globalisation has in general lightened the communication and information flow. Computers are installed in most regional education centres throughout the country, some selected schools in both public and private schools are offering some form of computer classes. Despite these improvements, there is an evident lack of readiness in its educational framework to fully utilize some of the related benefits of globalised education. This is probably one of the fundamental reasons for its education system to be subject to external influence.

The increasing awareness of the importance of education in developing countries is attributed to external influences. While this is a positive thing, the external influences also carry along it some negative effects. This research, due to its limitation does not differentiate the effects into positive and negative categories. Rather, it contributes to an understanding of the effects of globalisation in Gambian education. However, during the course of writing and reading process, one cannot help but reluctantly conclude that some of the identified effects are positive and others are not. That is by no means the aim of the research. I have managed to describe the effects of globalisation in Gambian education without qualifying the said effects as negative or positive. Any indication of a negative or positive effect is unintentional.

The easy flow of information around the globe brought about by the advent of Internet has encouraged the participation of ordinary citizens in policy making. This is because ordinary citizens now know what is happening in other countries and hence talk about it in their own context. Discussions like that in the long run filter down to the decision makers and practioners and thereby making an influence. Since ordinary citizens are more than ever before aware of happenings in other places, they are more likely to talk or ask for similar things in their own context. A former UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, rightly said that Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.

There is no doubt that education is the fundamental to any nation's development. As a result, every nation strives to provide quality education to its citizens. In doing so nations try to design their education systems to meet the needs of their people. This requires that nation states plan their education system in accordance to what they deem necessary (Al'Abri 2011). However, in today's age of information flow, the needs or desires of people in The Gambia do not differ much from people elsewhere. The question is whether it is accessible to them or not. This research shows how the increased interdependence and interconnectedness created as a result of globalisation affects education policy making in The Gambia.

## **1.1 Research aim and Questions**



Rizvi and Lingard (2010) affirmed that globalisation have transformed education policy making. It is no longer the sole responsibility of the nation state. These effects are not restricted to developing or less developed nations alone. Al' Abrie (2011) also argued that globalization has had strong influences on education policy in all nations. He also pointed out that developing countries are much affected by globalization and their education policies compared with those in developed countries have been seriously influenced. As a developing country, The Gambia stands out as an interesting case study to look into this issue further.

The advent of the Internet, which I shall keep referring to in the rest of research has made a lot of changes in The Gambia as a nation and its education system in particular. For example an increasing number of households in the urban area now have Wi-Fi connections and almost every adult in the villages have their own mobile phones. Even though in some instances, cell phone owners will have to travel to the next village or town in order to charge their phones.

According to the current Gambian education policy (2004 – 2015, p.32):

The Science and technology policy (STE) will be pursued to ensure that there is development of a strong science and technology commencing at the basic level to the development of an in country based research scientists and engineers at tertiary and higher education level.

This research does not aim to find out the success or failure of the STE policy. It has been designed to identify issues or indications that could be related to the effects of globalisation in Gambian education. In attempt to do this, the research has one main research question: What are the effects of globalisation on Gambian education and how has it affected education policy-making in the Gambia? It is hoped that the effects of globalisation will determine what affects the education policy-making process. Therefore, this research does not aim to get any generable conclusions but rather to identify the effects of globalisation in Gambian education.

## **1.2 Theoretical assumptions**

It is important to state this research began with an assumption that globalisation has an encompassing effect in our daily lives. As a result I started asking questions specific to the effects of globalisation in Gambian education. The process of asking philosophical questions about reality is described as ontology (Grix 2002 as cited in Sefotho 2015). In other words, ontology refers to the reality been studied. Therefore my ontological point of departure is finding the effects of globalisation in Gambian education as constructed in the research data. This is inline with Sefotho (2015) who stated that ontology could be said to study conceptions of being, reality or the phenomenon of the presenting research problem. Scotland (2012) points out that researchers need to take a position regarding their perception of how things really are and how things really work (as cited in Sefotho 2015).

My position and assumption is that globalisation does have effects in Gambian education system. That becomes my ontological starting point. As previously stated that this research does not aim to make any generalization, I chose to conduct a qualitative content analysis, which will enhance my understanding of the reality in question. Sefotho (2015) also referred to Willig (2013) who argued that epistemology as a theory looks into what, and how can we know? The how and what can we know will be answered through qualitative content analysis.

## **2. The Gambia and its education**

This section will give some facts, statistics and the educational structure of The Gambia. It will also chronicle the literature that looks at the changes that have been taking place in Gambian education. In doing so, there will be a summary of publicly available literature on Gambian education with the aim of tracking the main changes taking place within it. Knowing that the Gambian education system as a whole is too wide, the research will focus on the possible effects of globalisation with specific target on policy changes. The section ends with a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the education system. It starts with some basic facts and statistics of the Gambia and its educational history.

### **2.1 The Gambian and its education in a context**

The Gambia is a former British colony, which gained its independence in 1965. With an estimated total population of 1.9 million (World Bank 2014) and a total land area of a little above 11,000 square kilometres. The Gambia is one of the smallest countries on mainland African continent. About 90 % of the population are Muslims with 5% Christians. Followers of both religions have been peacefully living together with no records of religious violence to date. The peaceful co-existence has been strengthened by inter-religious marriages and the lack of segregated residential areas for followers of any particular religion.

There are two main types of education systems in the Gambia, the secular one inherited from the colonialist and the “madrassa” education system. Madrassa schools are formal schools that use Arabic as a language of instruction. The main thrust of emphasis in the “madrassa” schools is Islamic education. The first two education policies 1965 – 1975 and 1976 – 1986 made no mention of the Madrassa education system. It was mentioned only in the review of the 1988-2003-education policy. The lack of reference to the madrassa education system in the first two education policies indicates that the two education systems were operating separately within The Gambia. This means that “madrassas” used to have their own curriculum and certification system different from the secular education system. With

the current education policy (2004 – 2015), all madrassas fall within the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. This means “madrassa” schools are obliged to teach certain subjects in their schools and follow the ministry’s standards of teaching and learning. The current policy clearly points to the operation and existence of “madrassa” schools under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education. The 2006-2015 Education Sector Strategic Plan states that:

Assistance to Madrassa schools is formally recognized by the Department of State for Education (DOSE) included English language textbooks and teachers’ guides, technical assistance, and professional support with curriculum, Department of State for Education (p.28).

The plan also states that a monthly subvention is paid to madrassa schools to facilitate the recruitment and retention of English teachers to synchronise syllabus in the madrassas. In addition to “Madrassa” and the secular education systems there is also what is locally called “magilis”. These are informal learning centres set up in villages headed by the local religious leaders (locally called Imams). The imams do not issue certificates to their graduates and do not charge any tuition fees. In return, the learners’ offer their labour on farms of their imams or in any other area as requested. The use of learners’ labour on the farms of their imams has been contested by NGOs like UNICEF who consider it as child abuse.

The secular schools on the other hand form the backbone of the education system. The system has gone through a series of changes most of which started during the later part of the previous education policy (1988-2003). For example, it used to operate on a 6-3-3-4 learning order. That is children spend six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary and four years in tertiary and/higher education. This has now changed to a 9-3-4 cycle of education. This was done in-line with some international conventions (see below) that The Gambia appends its signature to. Every child now has to have nine years of uninterrupted basic education. Following this is a three years secondary education and four years of tertiary and/higher education. According to DOSE Strategic Plan 2006-2015, Basic education (years 1- 9):

are financed principally by government while secondary school education, which is three years, is primarily provided by the private sector with grant-aided schools assisted by government and managed by school boards, (p.16)

In the area of post-secondary education, the Gambia has a number of tertiary institutions that provides a variety of programmes. The prominent ones amongst these include Gambia Technical Training Institute (GTTI), Banjul Skills Centre, Julangel Skills Centre and the Rural Development Institute (RDI). Together these institutions provide courses including mechanical, electrical and construction engineering, computer technology and commercial subjects. Others provide only preparatory courses for basic school graduates while others offer lower level courses.

There is also The Gambia Teacher Training College that provides training for both primary and senior secondary teachers' education. It is the only teacher-training institute in the country. Schweisfurth (2002, p.302) also highlighted the significance of the college:

The college is the sole provider of teacher education in this small West African nation, and as such it has considerable influence over education in the country.

As a result, most changes in the education sector start in the college. For example, in recent years, it was obliged to increase the number of intakes for both Primary Teacher Education (PTC) and Higher Teacher Education (HTC) in order to meet the increasing demand for trained teachers. Some critics stated that the increase of the intakes made the college loosen its entry requirements and that had an impact on the quality of education. Following an outcry about the quality of education provided in Gambian schools, the college responded by increasing the duration of both training programmes (PTC & HTC) from two to three years. With those changes, PTC trainees had to have one-year college based education and two years teaching experience during which lecturers provide them with distant education materials and visit them in their various schools. HTC trainees have two years college based

education and one year teaching experience. These changes were made with the aim of increasing the quantity and quality of education in the country.

Until 1999, all Gambians wanting higher education had to leave the country. A considerable number of them have studied in West African countries including Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria, with others travelling to western countries like the United Kingdom, USA, Germany among others. There are claims that very few of those who studied in the west return to The Gambia. According to Rizvi and Lingard (2009, p.179), the rate of skilled migration from developing to developed countries has increased under the conditions of globalisation. Rizvi et al (2009) also referred to Carrington and Detragiache (1998) who stated that the annual rate of skilled migration from Africa in the past decade is over 30 per cent. The brain drain resulting from Gambians studying abroad was enough of a reason to establish a local university. Consequently, The Gambia University was established in 1999 with a small number of staff that offered only few courses. Since then the university has been steadily growing in all areas. The first batch of students graduated in 2004. The university is continuing to produce graduate students in the field of agricultural sciences, medicine, nursing and midwifery, law, education, computer sciences to name but a few. Recently, the Chancellor of the university told delegation members from the University of South Africa (UNISA) that they currently have about 5000 students with an objective of channeling their staff to PhD programmes within the next four years.

Access to schools had been relatively unequal until recently when the government embarked on expanding existing schools and building new ones. On paper all children have access to basic education. A situational analysis of education in The Gambia by Save the Children Sweden (2005, p.13) puts it this way:

In the Gambia geographic access to education facilities is considered adequate. Most parts of the country have primary, junior and senior schools. Parents as a result experience relatively little difficulties in securing schools for their children compared to the past.

This is a welcomed positive development in the education sector. On the contrary, critics have claimed that the increase in the number of schools around the country

corresponded to a decline in the quality of education offered. That has also been noted in Save the Children, Sweden 2005 report referred to above. Similarly, The Gambian government through its education department admitted the lack of quality in the education it provided. The National Assessment Test (NAT) shows that in all core subjects including Mathematics, English, and Science, a maximum of 10% of Grades 3 and 5 students reached the mastery level of 73%, Department of State for Basic & Secondary Education, (Sector report 2006). Results from United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Monitoring Learning Achievements (MLA, 2000) also referred to in the same report demonstrated that 46% of students reached the passing minimum mark (40%) in the core subjects. The report concludes that:

the shift in education policy and practice in recent years did not happen along with the required institutional capacity for the systems, structures and facilities (Ibid).

During the current policy period (2004 – 2015), The Gambian education has seen a lot of transformations.

## **2.2 Review of international conventions**

It is difficult to give a clear distinction if any, between international law and globalisation. Nonetheless an attempt to do so will be helpful to understand this section. International law also called international conventions are binding rules and regulations signed by countries and nations. While, globalisation in this research is considered to be an increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals, nations and regions around the world. International laws in most cases become the basis of acceptable practices between the signatories. The success of any international law is dependent on nation-states' willingness to sign and enforce it into practice. International conventions are also considered as minimum requirements for some companies and multinational cooperations to operate in countries around the world. Arguably, it is the most powerful determinant of bilateral relations amongst countries. International laws are also increasingly becoming a basis for developing countries to receive foreign aid. It is therefore fitting to say that

both globalisation and international law contribute to the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and nations across the world. This is not to say that the two are the same but the lenses I am using to look at them give me a similar meaning for both.

The Gambia like any other nation in the world is a signatory to a multitude of such conventions but the focus here will be on education related ones. In addition, countries also have local policies in place outlining the procedure of implementing and evaluating the undersigned conventions. There is no hard and fast rule that international conventions over ride local ones or the local ones over riding the international ones. What is certain is the fact that local laws or regulations are amended to merge with the international ones and sometimes it happens that there already exist local laws that can be used to implement the international ones. The economic power of a country is usually a great determinant of the level of pressure it had to deal with regards to signing international conventions. Now let us look at how The Gambia has faired in education related international conventions.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right that came into being in 1948 made education a right for everyone. And in 1990, about 150 governments around the world adopted the World Declaration on Education For All (EFA). This adoption was made in Jomtien, Thailand and became known as the Jomtien Convention. A decade after the Jomtien convention, the world education forum was held in Dakar, Senegal with representative from The Gambia. The Dakar forum revived the Jomtien commitment and laid down six EFA goals that run to 2015. The EFA movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults (UNESCO website). The Gambia's commitment in the EFA has paid dividend in terms of increased enrolment and the eradication of school fees in early years (grade 1-6). The eradication of school fees in the early years came along side the complete removal of school fees for girls in Gambian schools. This was laudable and questionable at the same time. For some, it was an opportunity for increased access to girls' education. While for others, both boys and girls deserve free education. Others considered pumping more resources to girls' education in a country like The Gambia where early marriage and teenage pregnancy is still on the rise as a waste of state resources.



Other global movements to which The Gambia is a signatory includes Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), The African Charter on the Rights of the Child (ACRWC), A World Fit for Children and the Salamanca Declaration and Frame of Action as well as the Worst Forms of Labor and the Minimum Age Convention (Save the children, Sweden report 2005). The Gambia's current education policy specifically singled out the two of the eight MDG goals: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and achieving universal primary education by 2015 and laid out plans to achieve them. Although not all of the MDG goals have been achieved, substantial improvements are registered. Access to schools has generally improved throughout the country and the enrolment and retention has also improved. This policy period has also witnessed the formation of a Girls' Education Initiative Programme within the ministry of Education. The sole responsibility of this programme is to collaborate with international bodies like UNICEF and the World Bank to pursue and implement favourable environment for girls' education and empowerment. This was in response to the Millennium Development Goal number three, the 'promotion of gender equity'. The Girls' Education initiative Programme hence aimed to provide equal opportunities for both boys and girls. The remaining 6 MDG goals of reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, ensuring environmental sustainability and global partnership were also within the framework of the policy.

Since 2005, a UN Working Committee on the Rights of the Child put early childhood education on its agenda, noting that young children have particular needs for nurturing, care and guidance (EFA report 2010). The resulting document from the working committee specifies that early childhood education to be linked to children's right to develop their personalities, talents and mental and physical abilities from birth. The document noted that early childhood development programmes are among several activities to meet young children's right to education (EFA report 2010). Education authorities in The Gambia reacted to this by making sure that Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) became part of the basic education cycle given the importance of the early years of development for children. The Education Policy (2004 – 2015) acknowledges the importance of early years, and the Ministry of education developed linkages with other government departments, NGOs, and local authorities and local committees to promote an integrated approach to early

childhood development, (Department of state for Basic & Secondary education, sector report 2006). From the above-enacted conventions, it is evident that there have been a lot of changes in Gambian education over the years. Some of these changes are positive ones but that does not mean that it is devoid of negative effects. The rest of this section will look into those changes with emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses that has caused on Gambian education.

### **2.3 Strengths and weaknesses of Gambian education**

Since most of our needs as human beings keep changing, so also are the mechanisms put in place for the achievement of those needs. Therefore, one could say that education systems or policies get changed either as a result of not meeting the targets it was to achieve or the targets are no longer relevant to the people or there are better ways of achieving the said needs. All these prove that every system has its own strengths and weaknesses. As mentioned earlier, there have been some changes in Gambian education over the years and one way of classifying the changes will be by looking at its strengths and weakness.

#### **2.3.1 Strengths**

The Gambia been a signatory to major international conventions with corresponding local policies for a smooth implementation of those conventions indicate the readiness of the government in providing education to its citizens. Millennium Development Goals and EFA benchmarks mentioned earlier did not only improve access to education in The Gambia but also help to retain more children in schools across the country than ever before. The ministry embarked on what it calls the "Big Bang Campaign" to sensitise communities on the right and importance of children to attend school (Save the children report, 2005). The increasing enrolment of children in schools went hand-in-hand with building more structures and training more teachers. The establishment of schools around the country under the Third Education Sector Programme (TESP) in 1998 was born in response to this. That has made education accessible to many Gambian children.

In addition to the international conventions signed, the 1997 Gambian constitution (section 30) clearly pointed to children's right to education. This re-enforces the

government's EFA commitment and mandate the law enforcement agents to deal with those who obstruct children's education. The inclusion of a wide range of issues within the policy is a reflection of the varying and increasing needs of The Gambian people. The ministry pointed out that the policy was designed after an intensive consultation and validation process involving stakeholders, practitioners and the Gambian community as whole. In other words, the formulation of the policy followed a democratic process which in itself is considered to be empowering and hence a source of strength. The 1998-2003 policy indicated the need to create:

an awareness of the importance of peace, democracy and human rights, and the responsibility of the individual in fostering these qualities, (Department of State for Education, 1998-2003, p.10).

The current policy (2004-2015) set the enabling environment for democratic schooling that includes but not limited to participatory leadership, teamwork, rights and responsibilities and partnership support. Values and principles of democracy, human rights and peaceful coexistence is imbedded into the teaching and learning processes (Save the Children Sweden, 2005).

### **2.3.2 Weaknesses**

Despite the improvements in both the number of new schools and children enrolled in schools, there are still a significant number of children out of school. Most observers including Save the Children Sweden 2005 reported that poverty continues to be the main impediment of children attending schools in The Gambia. This raises the question why is poverty still acting as an impediment to schooling when basic education is free in The Gambia. The reason is that most people especially those living in the rural areas of The Gambia are subsistence farmers and they need their children to help on the farms. The other reason is the fact that parents still have to shoulder the cost of uniforms, school lunch and in some cases books for their children if they do send them to school. The free education offered by the government does not include such expenses. In situations where a farmer can afford to send only one child to school due to poverty, the choice is normally a boy. This has created gender disparities across the country especially in the rural areas.

Another reason for the disparity of boys and girls attending school is early marriage. The Gambian society, premised on national tradition and religion, continue to practice early marriage, especially amongst girls. Girls getting marriage as early as 13 means that they are either not sent to school or withdrawn at an early age. A recent surge in teenage pregnancy among school going girls also made a significant impact on parental opinion on girls education due to societal rebuttal of pregnancy out side marriage, Save the Children Sweden (2005).

The Department of State for Basic & Secondary Education 2006 sector report, point fingers to limited human resources available to the education system as one of its biggest challenges. This has thwarted the attainment of the sector's objectives and is likely to continue until something is done about it. The report also linked attrition within the teaching staff to low remuneration and thereby keeping highly motivated and qualified workers in both management and teaching positions becomes a problem.

Although the development of the current policy has followed a democratic process, observations made by Schweisfurth (2002, p. 4) suggest

that there were gaps between the policy rhetoric and stakeholder enthusiasm for democratic education on the one hand, and practice in many classrooms and schools on the other.

This is largely due to the co-existence of local traditional values and modern values whereby the local traditions run contrary to the modern ones. This trend, as Riggs (1964) and Harber & Davies (1997) argued is not a replacement of tradition with modernity but the two living side by side, Schweisfurth (2002, p. 72). For example 17 out of 45 respondents in a seminar strongly agreed to the statement that: the majority of people in my community are concerned that democracy in schools could lead to lack of discipline (ibid). It is in the same vein that the abolishment of corporal punishment is still a recurrent theme in The Gambia. Most people are of the opinion that abolishing it will create indiscipline in youths. But since corporal punishment is undemocratic, a national policy has now restricted who can administer it in school and under what circumstances.

However, even restricted use contravenes democratic and human and child rights principles, Schweisfurth (2002, p. 72).

From my personal experiences as a teacher in the Gambia, I can say with certainty that the mere fact that students were aware of the possibility for corporal punishment was enough to put them under control. Despite that I was not keen on corporal punishment, I was regrettably happy that it existed because it made my job easy. The turning point for me was when I came to Finland and doing my internship in a pre-school back in 2008. Corporal or any other form of physical punishment is unthinkable and the children were well behaved. It was a shocking realization that a simple punishment like sending a child outside the class was enough for them to regret what they did. The whole point of punishing a child in my opinion is to avert the repetition of the behavior she/he was punished for. If mild punishments like sending a child out of a class for five minutes or being the last one to line up for lunch is serving the same purpose then there is no point of inflicting 30 lashes on a child.

The ministry's claim of involving teachers in the development of the current policy raises a lot of questions because it fails to explain the extent of these involvements. It also fails to point out teachers' specific roles in developing the policy. If practitioners (teachers in this case) are not involved in the development of a policy, the entire process becomes a top-down issue. Blakemore & Griggs (2007) ask if the 'top-down' policy-making invalidate the idea of democratic influences on policy. Blakemore et al (2007, p.155) further stressed that:

The democratic model does not rule out the idea that power is concentrated in government. It would be naïve to expect every policy to reflect grassroots opinion or consultation with pressure groups.

This is contrary to the ministry's claim that the pronouncements made in the 2004-2015 policy are meant to reflect the collective aspirations and development needs of the Gambian citizens, (Ministry of Education p.4). I consider this claim to be a sweeping statement and a naivety to expect every policy to reflect grassroots opinion, (Blakemore et al 2007). This made me think that it is not a complete reflection of the needs of those at the grassroots level (children and parents)

because observations made by NGOs including Save the Children Sweden 2005 report indicate that poverty remains to be the main impediment to most children who do not attend school. If consulted, children and parent are unlikely to settle for a mere abolition of school fees alone knowing that the cost of uniforms and school lunch would still be untenable. As a result, I am of the opinion that the current policy was a product of a top-down policy-making, Blakemore et al 2007).

Quality is another issue in Gambian education system. Although the first half of the policy period (1988-2003), lacks specific set targets for learning outcomes but there exist both the National Achievement Test (NAT) and Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA). Both of these have revealed low mastery of the core subjects English, Mathematics, Science and Social studies among year 3 and 5 pupils. These poor and unsatisfactory results are not only confined to rural areas, as quality of primary education registered a marked decline in urban areas. Children from poorer families obviously seem to suffer most from the above declining standard of education in lower basic schools, Save the Children Sweden (2005). Recently, standards in educational outcomes have been in general decline in The Gambia especially in public school. This brings in the private versus public school debate with the average Gambian been unable to afford the high cost in private schools. The good news is that the increasing number of graduates from the teacher training college and University of The Gambia is already transforming Gambian education for the better.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework is the backbone of any piece of research. Without it, little or no meaning could be derived from a research data. It provides a window through which research data is looked at. A theoretical framework also defines the meaning of the concepts applied in a research. More often than not, most concepts could have more than one meaning and each of the meanings are applicable in different instances or situations. The theoretical framework dictates the meaning of the concepts applied in a given research. It does so by contextualizing the concepts and hence deduces the meaning. The epicenter of this particular theoretical framework will be on globalisation and its effects on education policies. It will start with a brief definition/description of globalisation, followed by theoretical approaches to globalisation. This section will also discuss the spread of globalisation to its present stage and try to point out the forces behind it.

The controversies surrounding globalisation theory shall also be brought into the discussion and where possible and throw light on the reasons behind these contestations. It is my view that the huge globalisation debate especially among academics and politicians is premised on the fact that it does not only affect our economics, cultures, education systems and our lives in general but also because it is a phenomenon that has come to stay with us for good. This section will therefore point to some of those effects with special emphasis on the ones it has on education policies. However, since most people tend to view, define or describe globalisation in economic terms, more references to economic globalisation and free markets are likely to be present throughout this section. It is evident that whatever affects the economy is likely to have an encompassing effect on other spheres of our lives. That shows the close connection between the two.

#### **3.1 Globalisation theory**

The theory of globalisation is a multifaceted one. Robertson (1992, p.16) opined that the multifaceted nature of it came as a result of the increasing number of movements and interest groups each with their own perspective on as well as interest in globalisation. Globalisation, he continued:

has become an important ingredient of advertising ... as well become a matter of great concern in consideration of the curriculum in many educational systems, along with an often competing interest in multicultural- indeed 'postmodern'-education" Robertson (1992, p.16).

In consequence, globalisation has taken many dimensions, most of which cannot be mentioned nor discussed here due to the scope and nature of the research. Before getting into the dimensions globalisation has taken, let us have a look at some of the definitions/descriptions of globalisation.

Giddens (1990 as cited by Done & Manthri 2010) all refer to it as the growing interconnectedness between people and places, between time and space. He adds that world wide social relations are linked to distant localities in a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away. Similarly, Rizvi & Lingard (2009) re-echoed the same views when they cited Appadurai (2006) pointed out that globalization represents a social imaginary, an awareness of growing interconnectedness that has the potential for international understanding and cooperation on the one hand and reactionary politics and xenophobia on the other. Albrow (1990 as cited in Robertson 1992) wrote:

globalization is the direct result of the interaction of 'nationalism' and internationalism, and indirectly of all the preceding stages. The principle of globalization 'results from the freedom individual sociologists have to work with other individuals anywhere on the globe and to appreciate the worldwide processes within which and on which they work, (p.21).

The resulting freedom that comes with globalisation includes the open markets and an easier movement of ideas, cultures and people across borders. All these combined leads to the changes in the role of nation states.

Held et al (1999) defined globalisation as 'a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions. This according to them is assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact which generate transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power' (as cited in Done &



Manthri 2010). Other definitions of globalization Held & McGrew 2007 referred to includes the internationalization of financial markets and production networks; the erosion of borders and the end of the nation-state as we know it and the global diffusion of norms and cultural scripts. Earlier in 1992, Robertson wrote, globalisation as a concept refers to both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole...both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole in the twentieth century (as cited in Robinson 2007, p.138). This is perhaps the most accepted definition of globalisation according to Robinson 2007. This is by no means an exclusive list of the definitions of globalisation but it gives me a starting point to talk about the globalisation theory.

Globalisation theory hinges on the notion that current developments represent not merely an extension of long-established trends, but an acceleration of such an order that it becomes a qualitative shift. .. but dialectic of history is missing ... the challenge for globalisation theory is to demonstrate that the phenomenon is both historically distinctive and truly global – or at least is likely to be at some time (Green, 1997, p. 157 as cited by Done & Manthri 2010 p. 25).

That challenge for the theory to demonstrate that the phenomenon is both historically distinctive and truly global is a difficult one to overcome due to the fact that the debators are divided into three major camps-globalist, skeptics and transformationalist. The globalist view globalisation as real and has significantly altered all aspects of our lives while the skeptics (Hirst & Thompson) deny this claim and view globalisation as primarily ideological construction with limited explanatory value (Rizvi & Lingard 2009). The transformationalist who took a middle position between the globalist and skeptics believed that globalisation has produced entrenched and enduring patterns of worldwide interconnectedness Rizvi & Lingard 2009). I think what makes the globalisation theory more interesting is the wide range of connections it has with other theories. For example, the world-system theory and globalisation both have critique of capitalism as an expansionary system that encompassed the world over a half century ago. The world-system theory as elaborated by Wallerstein (cited in Robinson 2007, p.128) is constituted on the

proposition that the appropriate unit of analysis for macrosocial inquiry in the modern world is neither class, society nor country but a larger historical system in which these categories are located. Similarly, there seems to be a general consensus that the effects of globalisation are wide spreads even though the tools that should be used to measure it are still contested. On the contrary, others may not consider world-system theory as a theory of globalisation or having any significant connections to it. Instead it is taken to be an alternative theory of world society. This according to Robinson (2007) is dependent on how one defines the contested concept of globalisation.

Manuel Castells' *Rise of the Network Society* (1996, 1997, 1998) has been hailed by many including Robinson (2007) as a 'technologistic' approach to globalisation. Castells' theory shares with world-system and global capitalism approaches an analysis of the capitalist system and its dynamics. Robinson argues that it is not the logic of capitalist development but that of technological change that is seen to exercise underlying casual determination in the myriad of processes referred to as globalisation. Certainly globalisation in whatever form one could think of has been taking place for a while now. What is also certain is the fact that the rapid acceleration and spread of globalisation has been possible largely due to the advent of the Internet. This is where the globalisation theory links to Castells' 'informationalism'. The development of information technology (IT) especially computers and the Internet is representing a new informational paradigm and Castells called it 'informationalism'. With the advent of the Internet, which I always like to relate to the rapid acceleration and spread of globalisation, our generation has become more dependent on technology than those before us. With that in mind, it is safe to say that Castells theory could be in many ways discussed in tandem with the globalisation theory.

There has been much debate about whether globalisation is a new phenomenon or whether it is merely old political economy wrapped in new terminology. This has resulted to a lot of assumptions been made with regards to approaches to globalisation. Robinson (2007) referred to these assumptions as domain questions. One of the domain questions and a cross cutting one is: 'When does globalization begin?' The answers to this question contain as much controversy as does the question. Sen (2002a, b) argues that flows of goods, information, knowledge and

technology from East to West were features of international relation over millennia of our human history. However, Sen (2002a, b) continued, what makes the current global reach different is the imperative of competition driven by global capitalism, this being a system not in place in the previous millennia of human history. Capitalism as understood by Held et al (2007, p.65) has two distinct features:

the exploitation of wage labour by capital and the competitive accumulation of capital. The immediate producers are denied direct access to the means of production and thereby compelled to sell their labour-power to the capitalist who do control these means on terms that lead to the workers exploitation, and, on the other, the competitive interaction of rival capitalist leads to the reinvestment of a large share of the profits that are fruits of this exploitation in further development of the productive forces.

From the above, we can make two basic conclusions. The first one is the fact the definition epitomizes what is happening in most North-South relations or simply the relationships between rich and poor. Developing countries are a home to most of the world raw materials and yet remain poor. Examples include the coffee farmers in Brazil, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and so on. The second conclusion is a strengthening of the notion that like globalisation, capitalism does not benefit everyone equally. Some people, companies, regions or countries benefit more than others. If there were a third conclusion to be made from the above, it would be a naïve conclusion of the reason behind the currency war between the capitalist United States and China. Both want to increase their exports in order to increase their economics, which consequently increase their global influence. In their quest to strengthen their economies, both try to extend bilateral relations to as many countries as possible. China's increasing presence in Africa could be an example of that. These and many more things that are either directly or indirectly connected to globalisation have immensely increased interdependence and interconnectedness among nations, regions and individuals in terms of economy, culture or education. Those are commonly described as the effects of globalisation. A number of authors (including Held & McGrew 2000; Chinnammai 2005; Rizvi & Lingard 2009; Tikly 2001; Nordtveit 2010 and Rizvi 2011) have written on the effects of globalisation from different perspectives. But before getting to some of those effects, let us consider a few points that are seemingly agreeable among scholars of globalisation.

Despite the heated contestations and disagreements surrounding the meaning and theoretical tools that are best to understand globalisation, Robinson (2007) identified number of points that he thinks most will agree to. To start with, Robinson 2007 pointed out that the pace of social change and transformation in the world has quickened dramatically in the later decades of the last century. The second point is the relation of social change to increasing connectivity among people and countries worldwide. The third point refers to the effects of globalization be it economic, social, political or ideological processes which are present everywhere with interrelated dimensions.

### **3.2 Effects of globalisation**

The rapid technological development has not only lead to increasing interconnectedness in the world but also changed the delivery methods of most services by making it faster, easier and more convenient than ever before. As a result, governments and people around the world are more than ever before trying to copy each other in many areas including social, economic, immigration and education policies. Writing on the effects of globalisation is not the easiest thing to do. The reason for the difficulties is based on the controversy surrounding not only the meaning but also the beginning of globalisation. Another issue that is also controversial if not most controversial is the question of where to draw the lines stating what counts or does not count as globalisation. In a similar way, figuring out which changes in our education system are or were results of globalisation is also problematic. Defined as a complex network of interconnected processes, the effects of globalisation will also go along the lines of complexities. In order to avoid further complicating an already complicated issue, writers very often align themselves with a particular definition when writing. Aligning oneself with a particular definition does not mean that writers are dismissive of other definitions. Having defined globalisation as an increasing interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals and nations means that what is known or made in one part of the world easily becomes available in another part of the world. Globalisation as a process has affected many areas of human life, one of which is education (Chinnammai 2005). It is obvious that, when talking about education, we are directly/indirectly talking about our economy, language and culture. The interconnections between

these terms are hard to differentiate and therefore when talking about the effects of globalisation, we are also likely to slip into other areas related to it. Chinnammai (2005) further stressed that:

The spread of education internationally, as a result of globalisation, has clearly had effects on cultures worldwide (p.3).

The fact that the spread of education around the world as a result of globalisation has impact on cultures worldwide is a force to be reckoned with. What then is the force behind the spread of globalisation as process? Sahlberg (2011) points out that:

International cooperation and understanding plays in big role in the spread of globalisation. For example the OECD PISA assessment results has mobilized politicians and education experts to visit countries like Finland, Canada and Korea with the aim of learning from them to improve their own (p.97).

This, according to Sahlberg (2011) is due to an increasing use of common indicators and international comparison of student achievement across national borders. Globalisation, Sahlberg adds, unifies national education policies by integrating them with broader global trends. Sahlberg's point above does not only strengthen the interconnectedness aspect of globalisation but also gives us an idea of how globalisation spreads around. Global movements and organisations more often than not end up putting down pre-conditions before operating in a country. As a result, international cooperation and understanding becomes products of globalisation. Sometimes, international cooperation comes as a result of upheavals. After the Second World War, the United Nations, GATT, NATO and a US-Japanese alliance were all launched (Held et al 2007,p.41). American hegemony, as (Ikenberry, 2007) puts it, is facilitated globalisation by occupying defeated territories while transforming trade and economic relations with Japan and European great powers (p.58). Thus, the interconnection between American hegemony and economic globalisation was not a surprise to Held et al (2007, p.41). His argument is based on the fact that economic relationships are always driven in the desired direction of the powerful states and the United States is one of those. Held et al (2007, p.41)

further argued that after great wars and disturbances in international relations are presented with unusual opportunities to shape basic organisation and rules of regional and global markets.

OECD, Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) and Education For All (EFA) are other examples of the effects of globalisation on education. For example of the 73 countries expected to participate in PISA 2015, only 34 are member states of OECD. The desire for education authorities around the world to opt to participate in PISA is likely to keep increasing. Thinking of education, the increasing free trade in the world is a force to be reckoned with. According to Chinnammai 2005:

educational institutions have reacted accordingly, by becoming more market oriented, focusing their energy more on creating funds rather than providing sufficient education for students (p.3).

This has raised the concern that schools are no longer serving their traditional purpose of providing education or at least not the form it used to be. But I wonder if there is anything in that still exists in its original form. Borders are becoming less important in terms of cash flow or cyber crime, online courses are changing the ways of teaching and learning, immigration and multiculturalism are on the rise. More people than ever before in human history are living in places where they were not born. We live in a world with constant changes most of which are linked to advancement in technology. Now let's turn to a few examples of the effects of globalisation in African education and then wind down with its effects in Gambian education.

In 1990 world leaders and experts met in Jomtien, Thailand to discuss ways and means of increasing their support for basic education programmes. That also meant that most of the existing education policies at the time had to be reformed in order to create room for the agreements made. The 1990 Jomtien conference was dominated by the emphasis on access to basic education. This was followed by increased enrolment across schools in Africa albeit with its own challenges. In Sub-Saharan Africa, despite the net, the enrolment is lower than any other region, it stands at 81.2% in 2000 and about 40% of children of a school age are out of school, (Johnson 2008, p.15). The number of school age children out of school in the Sub-Saharan Africa was also higher than in any other region in the world.

A decade after the Jomtien conference, the World Education Forum was held in 2000 in the Senegalese capital, Dakar. Known as the Dakar Framework, participating countries re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990). All countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Africa in general committed themselves to the universal primary education and education for all set in the Dakar Framework. Johnson (2008) opined that even after considerable efforts to expand access, most education systems in the region are far from reaching the Dakar goals. As of 2011:

57 million children of primary school age and another 69 million children of lower secondary school age were still out of school. There are also indications that progress towards universal primary education is slowing and that the goal will not be met by 2015 if current trends continue (UNESCO website).

The good news is that even though the goal is unlikely to be achieved by the set deadline, the commitments made have led to improvements in most education systems around the world.

In Uganda, it led to the formation of Teacher Development Mechanism System (TDMS), which focused on primary teacher training in Uganda (Eilor et al, 2003 as cited in Johnson 2008). The TDMS and reforms in Uganda boosted teacher morale and equity in the distribution of qualified teachers across the country. The reforms kept progressing slowly and in 1997, President Museveni abolished school fees. This resulted to an explosive growth in enrolment from 2.6 million in 1993 to 5.2 million in 1997, (Johnson 2008,p.34). The enrolment figure climbed to 7.2 million in 2003. The eminent challenge to such a steep increase in enrolment was not only to retain the enrolled children in school but also to give them quality education. The international community, known for reacting to situations instead of acting, responded with increased funding. The US agency and the World Bank, which were already active in Uganda, were joined by British, Irish, Dutch and other agencies. In addition to the funding provided by these agencies, they collaborated with Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp). SWAp emerged after the Jomtien conference

as a process to produce comprehensive sector development programme providing coherence to the support of international funding agencies and increasingly also NGOs, and government funding programmes (Johnson 2008, p.33).

Apart from the rise in HIV/AIDS in Uganda at the time of the above mentioned interventions, the experience is similar to many other Sub-Saharan countries including The Gambia. Another example of the effects of globalisation can be found in Senegal, the host country of the Dakar Framework. Senegal is the only country that shares land border with The Gambia. History has it that the two countries were the same people sharing the same culture and language and only got divided by the colonialist. Nordtveit (2010) pointed out that Jean Dard, a French teacher established the first colonial school in Senegal in 1817. Dard believed that African education systems should be built on local languages, and therefore learnt Wolof (the dominant local language in Senegal) transcribed it using Latin letters, and established a grammar and a dictionary (Printz 1996 as cited in Nordtveit 2010). Upon Dard's return to France:

..the French project of making a local school system was abandoned. Instead, schools used French as the language of instruction and aimed at training a number of Africans to be employed as lower-level civil servants to help in the administration of the colony (Nordtveit 2009 as cited in Nordtveit 2010, p.328).

As a result, the formal school system is still perceived as foreign in Senegal and this perception is enforced by a curriculum that remains highly theoretical and is still largely inspired by the French (Nordtveit 2009; Nordtveit 2010 and Sylla 1993). In the Gambia, the story is the same. The only variation is the nationalities of the colonisers (French and British). About two decades ago, Gambian lawmakers debated the possibility of introducing local languages schools and as we speak today, the current policy clearly stated that:

Instruction in the first 3 years of basic schooling should be in the local language of the community in which the school is located, (Gambian education policy 2004 – 2015, p.19).



Now this state of affairs raises two interesting points regarding the education system of both Senegal and The Gambia. The first one is that it baffles me that Jean Dard (a French national) had to be the one to pioneer the building of an African education based on African language in an African country, Senegal. To add salt to injury, it was the very African people who abandoned Dard's initiative after his return to France. It is also baffling that both countries became independent more than four decades ago and yet local language instruction in their education systems remains in its infant stage. I also wonder why it is taking the African continent particularly Sub-Saharan Africa so long to come up with an education system that truly reflects its needs and context? When as early as 1922, the Phelps-Stokes Fund based in New York published a report on the educational conditions in West, South and Equatorial Africa clearly stating that African education systems should not be a copy-paste model of the one imposed on it by the colonial leaders. The report, as seen in the summary below encompasses everything from cultural background of the learners, socio-economic development to cooperation with not only the colonial government but also among African themselves. The report summarised as:

Adaptation of the form and content of education to socio-economic and cultural background of the students; cooperation of the colonial government, with missions, Africans, and the commercial sector at various levels; and development of an administrative system and organization. The adaptation of various aspects of school life to the social background of students was at the centre of the theory of black education promoted by Thomas Jesse Jones, the chairman of the commission. Jones made recommendations under the headings of: health, use of environment, preparation for home life, recreation, vernacular instruction, and character training and religious life (Yamada 2008, p.24)

This report was published in 1922 and yet scholars argue that the education system implemented in most developing countries does not reflect the needs of the people. Does that mean the education systems have failed to serve their purpose? Fullan (1993, p.4) wrote:

education must produce critical thinkers and problem solvers etc. but these have become clichés

It would be naïve to conclude that education systems in Africa have not produced critical thinkers and problem solvers but it is safe to say not much has changed in African education when compared to the aims and objectives of education. Education policy development and implementation in Africa still has more things in common to what was inherited at independence than not.

Now whether the Phelps-Stokes Fund report could be classified as a part of globalisation or not is highly controversial depending on who is asked. But since the report calls for the modification of the colonialist education systems before implementing them in the colonies gives us an indication of the close connection of power and globalisation. The report also points out that the powers behind it were interested in the homogenisation of education systems (that is linked to globalisation, depending on one's perception of it).

Now if you are still wondering what has all these to do with the Gambia; a country ranked 165 out of 186 countries in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human development Report 2013. There are two possible answers to this question. The first one is that the focus of this research is on globalisation, which is a phenomenon accused of eroding borders and Gambia certainly fits into that. Secondly, the fact that the Gambia is a former colony of the United Kingdom which is another form of cultural globalisation (p.6 (from Reading Education Policy in the Global Era) and globalisation of organized violence (Held et al 2007, p. 16-24).

Studies of African democracy demonstrate that most post independence African states tended to adopt their former colonizers' democracy model (Mazrui, 2008; Good, 2002; Duignan and Jackson, 1986 as cited in Ozor 2010, p. 232). However, Ozor (2010) added that experiments with democracy in those states have remained largely faulted.

...in The Gambia the prevailing political culture is characterized by political complacency, uncritical support for the political leadership, particularly by the youth, youth political ignorance, and generally, political socialization tends to create awareness and knowledge of values of obedience to the state, civic obligations supportive of the establishment and, on the whole, a culture of

unquestioning support, as well as tailored demand inputs to the political system (Ozor 2010, p.232).

What this shows is that despite former colonies adopting democratic models from former colonies, it does not always work out for them as it does for the colonialist. Could this be due to the cultural and contextual differences between the colonies and their colonisers? Or the differences in the implementation processes? Certainly, it is easier to ask these questions than answering them.

In addition, former colonies also adopt education models from their colonisers' and again, I ask: does it work for them? In The Gambia, the education system was formed and managed by the colonialist up until independence in 1965. With only a handful of literates at the time of independence, presumably incapable of developing a new education system, The Gambia continued to implement the education policies imposed on her by the colonialist. However, adopted education policies especially from former colonialist have been scorned by many scholars. It is claimed that colonialist education policies in the colonies are designed to help them maintain control and order instead of empowering the colonized. Neil Postman (1996 as cited in Nordtveit 2010, p.325) underlined:

...how the implementation of schooling (or the *engineering* aspect of education) has been allocated an extraordinary importance by the west, whereas the content – or aims – of education (which he terms the *metaphysical* parts), has received much less attention.

This creates another line of interconnectedness and interdependence of former colonies with colonialist and hence increasing influence of hegemonic global discourses. The story is similar for many former African colonies.

The Gambia, like many other small and economically weak states are more vulnerable to global influences and pressures than larger nations, (Schweisfurth 2008, p.71).

Reasons for these as highlighted in (Schweisfurth, 2005 as cited in Schweisfurth, 2008, p.71) includes the prevalence of imported goods and media due to little or no local production; presence of foreign tourists; foreign aid dependence and expertise; the unavailability of higher level education, necessitating oversea training of local

personnel. For example, Michele Schweisfurth, who led a research project in the Gambia back in 2000 stated:

In the Gambia, the Director and Deputy Director of Standard and Quality Assurance Directorate (SQAD), the Principal Education Officers in four out of six of the regional offices, and several other powerful individuals have all studied at the University of Birmingham with members of the project team (Schweisfurth 2008, p.69).

The foreign educated Gambians are more than likely to be implementing some of the standard operating procedures from their schools in the West.

Another effect of globalisation is visible in international conventions signed by a country. In developing countries, commitments to such conventions are as a result of donor agencies' pre-conditions for aid. Heavily indebted and aid dependent countries such as the Gambia are therefore more likely to be vulnerable to pressures exerted during negotiation of priorities and strategies (Schweisfurth 2008, p.71). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO 2002; cited in Schweisfurth, 2008) The Gambia is one of the 'fast-track' countries receiving extra support in meeting the MDG goals including EFA.

The good news is that this has led to some improvements in Gambian education. Ozor, who has had considerable experience of teaching in different levels in both Gambian and Nigerian education systems, noted the improvements:

Education in the Gambia is getting better than in the past years during the government of Dr. Dawda Jawara who ruled the country for 30 years with relative stable democracy among an illiterate population (Ozor 2010, p.235).

A lot of improvements are noticeable in Gambian education. Enrolments in schools have generally increased when compared to previous statistics. UNESCO's country status report on the Gambia published in 2011 showed that enrolment in Senior school have more than doubled from 15,554 to 36,141 between 2000- 2009 while that of lower basic increased from 223,328 to 303,281. In addition to the increased enrolment in Gambian schools, the report also showed that retention and completion rates have also improved. Girls' education in particular has been high on the policy agenda. In response to the government's commitment to EFA and

other MDG goals, the current education policy was subjected to reviews with the aim of aligning it to the needs of not only Gambian learners but also those of global standards.

#### 4. Education Policy

What are education policies? Why do we have education policies? In trying to answer these questions, we must start by looking at the general meaning of policy and narrow it down to education policy. That is going to be the core of this section. It will also address the processes of policy development and conclude by looking at the forces behind policy changes. Policy as a field of study is relatively new in academia (Rizvi & Lingard 2009). It emerged in the 50's mostly in liberal democratic countries and fifty years later policy studies became an established field of study (ibid). Policies have now become a prism through which social issues are analysed and appropriate measures developed to address them. Since policies are used to analyse social issues and determine appropriate measures to address them, it is fitting that we have different types of policies for different social issues. That is one of the reasons for the numerous definitions of policy. Of these numerous definitions of policy Dye (1992 as cited in Rizvi et al 2009, p.4) described it as:

Whatever a government choose to or not to do

Rizvi et al (2009) made two abstractions from Dye's definition. They pointed out Dye seems to be concerned with policies made by government (public policies) and they argued that intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and corporations also make policy. Rizvi et al (2009) referred to Ball (2007) who highlighted the increasing partnership of public/private sector that accordingly leads to the involvement of private sector in policy processes. The second point is the resonation of non-decision making as decision-making. In other words the lack of taking decisions on certain issues is in effect equivalent to decision making. Blakemore & Griggs (2007) seems to concur by coming up with a definition that does not specify who makes policies. They said policies can be seen as aims or goals, or statements of what ought to happen. However, Blakemore et al (2007, p.1) emphasized that policies are living things adding that policies are not just static lists of goals, rules or laws to be implemented. Policies, when implemented could have unexpected results or even disastrous results. In other words, the outcome or effects of policies are unpredictable.

It is in this regards that Taylor et al. (1997 as cited in Rizvi et al 2009) described

policy as

...much more than a specific policy document or text. Rather, policy is both process and product. In such a conceptualization, policy involves the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice (p.5).

It is important to make two emphases about the above description. The first one is as process; policies go through or at least are supposed to go through different stages before final approval. And in each stage, a policy goes through; it is likely to be subjected to changes and modifications. The changes and modifications made might end up changing its focus and anticipated outcomes. The second point to be noted is the fact that when highly noticeable unexpected results are observed at the beginning of the implementation stage, a policy might undergo drastic modifications. That is highly possible because policy processes and implementation do not take place in vacuum, they take place in relation to other issues. The environment or context in which the policy is implemented also plays a part in determining the results of the policy or at least affects its implementation.

In addition to the environment or context of a policy, the stakeholders or participants' input also shapes it. Blakemore et al (2007) made some distinctions. There are policies that are drawn and imposed by governments without discussion or democratic input, and those that have been shaped by a more democratic process of negotiation between interest groups or grass root involvement, Blakemore et al (2007, p.133). How far policies are developed in the interest of the public is another distinction to be made. Taking education policy as an example, Blakemore et al (2007) asked if a new policy actually benefits children's learning or responds to parents' wishes for a better education system? Similarly, they also ask if the new policy designed primarily to promote the power and reputation of a government party or the 'government machine' as a whole? (ibid). The ways one looks at a policy, the intentions and the processes leading to the formation of it are important considerations. This overview of policy will now help us to describe education policies and how they are developed.

#### 4.1 Education policy development

If a policy is considered to be both process and product instead of just a document or text, what then is an education policy? Could it be the process of building schools and sending children there who will spend a specified number of years and then get certificated? Whereby the building of and sending learners to school is the process while the certificates obtained at the end of the schooling become the product. There are no simple answers to these questions. However, we will look at some definitions that are seemingly agreeable among scholars. Luke & Hogan (2006 as cited in Rizvi et al 2009, p.7) defined:

educational policy making as the prescriptive regulation of flows of human resources, discourse and capital across educational systems towards normative social, economic and cultural ends.

This definition indicates that education policymaking is dependent on other social policies that are already in place or about to be put in place. For example, the definition made mention of the economy which has policy of its own. This suggests that descriptions of education policy or the making of it can only be made in cognizant with other policies. In consequence of this, values in education policy, its implementations and expected outcomes must be subjected to negotiations. The parties involved in the negotiations have to make promises by outlining the intended outcomes of the policy and make trade-offs by committing resources to the planning and implementation of the policy in question instead of others. It is also evident that the negotiators are no longer confined within national boundaries or particular government parastatals.

National policymakers now feel obliged to redraft education policies in relation to what they interpret as the emerging imperatives of globalisation, aligning them loosely to the values negotiated at the national or local levels (Rizvi et al 2009, p.72).

The authors added that policy makers do not only note down comparative data from international organizations, but also consider globally dominant educational values. The fact that policy makers do look beyond national borders is an indication of the



homogenisation aspect of globalisation. While, I do not intend to say that educational policy homogenisation only comes as a result of globalisation, it is undeniable that it plays a bigger role than any other process or phenomenon.

There are other possible ways of looking at education policies. Having acknowledged that policy is not just a text, we now turn to examine what is a policy text and what does it stand for? Policy text is the actual words contained in the document. Attempts are made to appease, manage and accommodate competing interest during the production of the text and the text represents the temporal settlement between diverse, competing, and unequal forces within civil society, the state itself, and between associated discursive regimes Kenway (1990 as cited in Rizvi et al 2009). The presence of competing interested in policy text necessitated the need for policy text to mask whose interest is actually represented. The interest represented in a policy is only known after its implementation, which is preceded by trade-offs. As a discourse, Ball (2006 as cited in *ibid*, 8) said:

policy texts are framed by broader discourses. In Ball's conception, discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where, and with what authority.

This way of conceptualizing discourse according Rizvi et al (2009) is derived from Foucault, suggesting the location of policies in a collection of interrelated policies- a policy ensemble. The need to appreciate the way in which policy ensembles, collection of related policies, exert power through the production of truth and knowledge as discourses, was emphasized in Ball (2006 as cited in Rizvi et al 2009, p.8). For Trowler (2003), viewing policy as text refers to the contested, changing and negotiated character of it. According to Trowler (2003), policy statements are always the outcome of struggle and compromise between the different individuals, groups and interests involved in policy-making. The emphasis of both Trowler and Ball connects to an earlier point made above, that policy development and implementation cannot take place in a vacuum. It takes place in relation to existing policies. In other words, the environment and context has an impact on any given policy.

In fact that is the reason behind what Rizvi et al (2009) call incremental and rational

polycymaking. Incrementalism, according to the authors accepts the fact that policies are usually built on or developed out of previous policies. For instance, the current Gambian education policy (2004-2015) points out that it was drafted after a careful analysis of the weaknesses and strengths observed in the previous policy. In technological terms, one can liken new policies to newer versions of a product. Manufacturers when making a new product consider customer experiences. Similarly, Trowler (2003, p.35) noted that policies change in reaction to changing circumstances and they can appear (and be) uncoordinated, even contradictory. Rational policies on the other hand are said to be imposed if you like, on polycymakers by the state. The state prescribes the steps for its development and consequence implementation. Rational policies may emerge as responses to perceived problems. For Etzioni (1967) as cited by Trowler (2003) the rational:

model assumes that policy-makers become aware of a problem, consider alternative ways of solving it and then choose the best.

Rational policies could also be as a result of a state appending its signature to new laws or rules put forward by an international organization. For example, in 1990 when UNESCO and four other UN agencies (the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Bank), adopted a new vision of basic education in Jomtien, Thailand, most countries had to come with rational policies that made basic education compulsory and free for all. The process of governments or other legitimate authorities to layout what needs to be done in the planning and implementation of a policy has been regarded as 'prescriptive regulation' (Luke & Hogan 2006 as cited in Rizvi et al 2009), which in turn has been described as the 'mandating aspects' of policy. Rational policies are prescriptive in the sense that the authorities clearly state what needs to be done in both the planning and implementation stages. What this tells us is the close connection between policies and authorities. A policy without the backing of an authority of some kind will only exist in the form of a text (policy is more than just a static text).

A 1953 definition of policy by Easton (as cited in Rizvi et al 2009) explains the link between policy and authority. Easton described policy as the 'authoritative allocation of values'. Policies could either articulate or presuppose certain values (normative)

and direct people towards action in an authoritative way (Easton 1953 as cited in *ibid*). Hence, the legitimacy of a policy is derived from an authority, be it governments, social institutions like a school or a corporation. In addition this definition has also shown us that policies are value laden. It does not matter whether a policy is an incremental or rational one, it will still be loaded with values. What is however argued among scholars is the shift in the manner in which the values are expressed. Rizvi et al (2009) argued that there has been a reorientation of values from a focus on democracy and equality to the values of efficiency and accountability in education policy discourses (p.72). Accordingly, this place a bigger emphasis on human capital formation as demanded by knowledge industries serving as a bar for nations to be able to compete in a global economy (*ibid*). The authors added that it does not mean the abandonment of the social values of equality and democracy. Instead it has been re-articulated and subordinated to the dominant economic concerns. The replacement of local policy concerns with global (dominant or powerful) ones is a common thing in our era of globalisation. Others might consider this to be a negative effect of globalisation, but it is not. As Andreas Schleicher (Special Advisor on Education Policy to the OECD's Secretary-General) commented in 2013:

In a global economy improvement by national standards is not a measure of success. You compete globally. Your country's competitiveness and your individual job prospects are heavily influenced by what happens in other countries (BBC website)

Similarly, in as early as 1900 in his famous Guildford address, Michael Sadler said:

we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside (Phillips & Ochs 2003, p.458).

I will therefore rather not say that the subordination of local policy concerns with dominant ones is in its entirety a bad thing. But rather the manner in which it is done determine the effects. However, a copy-paste method of another country's education policy is not encouraged either. It is for this reason that Sadler has been warning policy makers of the dangers in quick decision-making based on a sudden

enthusiasm for an educational idea born and nurtured and brought to maturity in a foreign context (ibid p.459-460). Sadler has not called for a complete rejection of foreign educational policies but rather cautioned policy makers of the possible dangers or failures if you like that might arise as a result of direct implementation of such policies.

As recent as 2011, a Finnish educationist gave a similar warning. It is better to have a dream of your own than rent one from others was a warning from Sahlberg (2011, p.6) to nations wanting to transform their education systems. My understanding of Sahlberg's warning is that it is okay to look up to other nations' education policies but only with the intention of modifying it to suit their own needs. Suffice it to say that it is needless to copy foreign education policy without calculating the suitability of it in the context of its implementation. It is only then that an imported education policy might be of importance to its importers. Considering the effect of globalization (discussed earlier on) and the need for education systems to produce critical and innovative thinkers capable of transforming our economies by demonstrating productive skills and acting as models for the younger generation is an insurmountable task for education systems around the world. The road leading to these goals is a bumpy one with a lot of challenges for the road users, policy makers and educators.

#### **4.2 Challenges of education systems**

Policy makers and educationists around the world are constantly battling with the ever-changing demands of human beings. Education being tied to every facet of our lives makes education policy makers to be one of the first to start most human endeavours. Globalisation and technological advancements being one of the famous catch phrases of our time implies that the use of technology and its appropriation in our education systems will pose some challenges. This is because technology in itself is not stagnant. It keeps evolving and changing and therefore, any thing that depends on it must follow suit. Technology has changed the traditional methods of teaching and learning and also brought in new ways of creating knowledge. As good as this may sound, we must also be aware that there is an unequal access to technology and hence an over reliance on our education systems will only worsen

the inequality in between the rich and poor.

The challenge for global leaders is therefore to encourage international cooperation between institutions, nations and regions in order to share knowledge across borders and facilitate collaboration, which, furthermore, represents an essential element for the construction of a planetary (Morin, 2009 as cited in Granados) and post-cosmopolitan citizenship (Dobson and Bell, 2006 as cited in *ibid*): the assumption of interdependence, “deterritorialisation”, participation, co-responsibility, and solidarity among all inhabitants of the planet. In addition Granados also opined that the role of supranational organisations such as UNESCO in advancing the prospects of trends and improvements, as well as in promoting networking and twinning programmes among institutions. Grandos cited the European Commission’s report (EC-JRC, 2010), calling for the inclusion of information and communication technologies in the teaching and learning process among its member states. There is nothing wrong with this call other than the fact that access to the said technologies is not readily available in all the member states or its use is restricted due to the unavailability of trained teachers to use it. The problem is compounded in the developing world where both the technology and trained personnel are lacking.

The transformation of inputs into learning takes place in the classroom and that is where the teachers are found. Teachers therefore need to be re-trained to use the available technologies in their work and retrain themselves in their professional fields. The challenge now is not only to re-train the generation of teachers in the education system that were trained in the absence of the present educational technologies but also use it for the training of aspiring teachers. Such futuristic initiatives will be more difficult and demanding on the scarce resources of developing countries. As a substitute, governments in developing world call for aid from global organisations like World Bank, UNESCO and IMF or arms of national governments like USAID, German Technical Assistance (GTZ), and U.S. Peace Corps for funding and technical assistance. Many a time, such assistance, if granted comes with pre-conditions that recipients have to oblige to, Schweisfurth (2008). This is largely due to weak capacities of the governments in question. In March 2014, the World Bank has approved more than US\$ 11 million to support 290,000

children in The Gambia to gain the knowledge and skills they need to move out of poverty and to live healthy and productive lives.

The fact that international agencies still play a critical role in setting education agenda in many countries in Africa indicates that ministries of education have not developed the capacity to take ownership of their policies and programmes (Johnson 2008, p.39). It is therefore better for international agencies to help develop the human resource capacities of the recipient countries so that they will continue to implement and grow programmes the international agencies have left. In order for this to happen, the locals should be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of whatever project or activity that is been done. The materials or resources to be used in foreign funded projects should be chosen bearing in mind that the same materials may be available in the local communities. Johnson (2008, p.38) asks:

Would it not be preferable to design innovations of a limited scope that do not deviate far from existing practice, that can be adapted and applied by a large number of teachers without too much difficulty and support implementation over time of a series of those innovations?

A logical approach would be that new innovation should not be completely different from the old one for the simple reason that learning starts from the known to the unknown. The challenge, this situation puts on education is to make sure that new concepts or practices are customised in consideration of cultural sensitivity. Global agencies and national governments should cooperate in making sure that projects or models are accepted on a need basis.

Another challenge for education systems nowadays is their ability to respond to diversity in the classrooms. While this could be due to conflicts, wars and environmental disasters, globalisation still plays a significant role in the migration of people around the world. With increased communication and interconnectedness more people than ever before are living in places they were not born. This has increased the number of immigrants in classrooms in many countries thereby necessitating the need to equip teachers' with the skills to help immigrants in their classrooms. Teacher educators are now challenged to diversify teacher training by

including multicultural competences in their training programmes. Räsänen (2000, p.117) summed it up:

The multicultural and international reality is not easy for the teacher, particularly as it is not the only change and challenge to be coped with. Variety and richness of cultures, global interrelatedness, expansion of participation and responsibility require knowledge, new skills, and above all re-evaluation of earlier perspectives, attitudes and paradigms. Teachers are faced with the question of how to live with this reality and prepare new generations to meet difference, to co-operate and care for people, world and shared future – to take responsibility in the global village. The new situation presents teachers with many challenges and possibilities where value-questions have a central role; when changes are quick it is important to ask what is essential in education and human development from individual, communal and global perspective – what increases human and global well-being in the long run.

As a result, it becomes a demand for teacher educators to include intercultural competences in teacher education programmes. Alongside the learning of intercultural competences, teachers more often than not have to adjust their teaching methods in order to accommodate diversity within the class.

In addition to the common challenges of the impact of technology in our classrooms, provision of quality education and migration of education systems, the retention of teachers and other staff in the education sector are major obstacles in Gambian education. According to the National Learning Commission (NPC) of The Gambia, the salaries and benefits for teachers and education staff are not attractive. This has resulted to a high attrition rate of trained teachers to other NGO's and other government departments. The planning commission further pointed to the inaccessibility of basic facilities like power and communication in the countryside as demotivating factors for teachers to serve in those regions (hardship areas). When posted to hardship areas, teachers will either refuse to comply, or stay briefly. Other teachers opt to teach for the mission or private schools most of which are located within or close to the capital area. This happens after they have been trained at the expense of taxpayers. The government responded to the unwillingness of teachers

to be posted to hardship areas by introducing the hardship allowance in 2005. This is a special allowance paid to only those teachers posted in regions that are categorized as hard areas. In other words areas that are deprived of facilities of electricity and consistent communication facilities. Since its introduction in 2005, some teachers have applied to post to the areas of hardship thereby reversing the trend (NPC).

The National Planning Commission also highlighted some challenges facing the Gambia's only teacher training college. The two major courses the college's faculty of education PTC (Primary Teacher Certificate) and HTC (Higher Teacher Certificate) programme content are not aligned to the school curriculum. Many problems experience by developing countries in their development strategies have resulted from lack of correlation between science policy and higher technical education, Singh (1991, p. 18) warns least developed countries to minimize such problems by correlating science policy with higher technical education, and develop human resources on the basis of needs-based planning objectives. In The Gambia, although NPC has not given details of the incompatibility of the programme content and the curriculum, authorities must step in to correlate PTC and HTC programme content with the school curriculum. A lack of correlation of the programme content with the curriculum that the trainees are going to teach upon graduation can only be described as retro-progressive.



## 5. Methodology

This section explains the processes involved in the collection and analysis of the research data. After identifying a research problem, researchers also figure out an appropriate process of collecting data and then study it. The two are commonly called methodology and method. Tight (2012, p.184) differentiated the two by referring to

methodology as the underlying philosophical standpoint of a research and the data collection processes as a method.

Similarly, Dawson (2002) described methodology as the philosophy or general principle that will guide your research and methods as the tools you use to gather data, such as questionnaires or interviews. Dawson also pointed out that when one starts to think about a research methodology, they should also think about the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. There has been a lot of debate surrounding the two methodologies most of which according to Dawson (2002, p.16) is based on quality versus quantitative inquiry – which might be the best and which is more scientific.

However, researchers like Dawson (2002), Lichtman (2006), Johnson & Christensen (2008) will not be drawn into the debate of which methodology is more reliable or scientific than the other. They simply think that the two are different and each has strengths and weaknesses. Lichtman (2006) and Johnson & Christensen (2008) further pinpointed quantitative research as having a purpose of testing a hypothesis or making predictions of a larger and randomly selected study group with specific variables in the form of numbers and statistics carrying our analysis aiming to identify statistical relationships. On the contrary, the authors described qualitative research as having a purpose of understanding and interpreting social interactions of smaller carefully selected groups and analyse the data in with the aim of identifying patterns, features and themes.

Since the aim of the research is to find out the effects of globalisation on Gambian education policy, I figured out that using qualitative research (QR) would help me go deeper into the possible interpretations of the data to get answers. The option of

using written data instead of conducting interviews to collect raw data was another reason for choosing QR. The data consisted of two Gambian Education Policies (1988 – 2003 policy and 2004 – 2015 policy), Review of 2004 - 2015 policy, Department of State for Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006 -2015, UNICEF Gambia Thematic Interventions, World Bank documents on Gambian education and a couple of other written documents on Gambian by international corporations.

Having decided on proceeding with QR, I also had to choose which aspect of it is most suitable for the task ahead. The obvious choice became qualitative content analysis (QCA). In what follows, I will briefly talk about QR and QCA followed by data collection and analysis.

### **5.1 Qualitative research**

Definitions and descriptions of qualitative research are numerous mainly due to the availability of different approaches to it. According to Creswell (2007, p.37) qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Having made up my mind to look into the effects of globalisation on Gambian education, I was drawn-in by the above description of qualitative research. With qualitative research, one is able to look deeper into a particular social issue and analyse from the perspectives of the participants. In this case, I am not dealing with real life participants. Instead I am taking the content of the documents as the perspectives of the authors of the said documents.

Unlike quantitative research that is largely represented in numeric values, qualitative research deals with words and looks into the questions of how and why. In choosing a research methodology, Bell (2006, p.115) states that the initial question is not what is the methodology but what needs to be investigated and why? Discussions on which method is better than the other having been going on in the academia and the dust is far from settling. According to Shuttleworth (2008), the reason why the issue remains unresolved until now is that, each methodology has its own strengths and weaknesses, which actually vary depending upon the topic the researcher

wants to discuss. This then leads us to the question “Which method should be used?”

Therefore it is important that a researcher looks into strengths and weaknesses of a particular methodology before using it. Aligning the aims of a research with the strengths of a particular methodology will help in making a choice. Shuttleworth (2008) stressed that if your study aims to find out the answer to an inquiry through numerical evidence, then you should make use of the Quantitative Research. However, if in your study you wish to explain further why this particular event happened, or why this particular phenomenon is the case, then you should make use of Qualitative Research.

From the above, I found qualitative research to be fitting for my research because the point is not to give numerical evidence of globalisation but to better understand its effects on Gambian education. However, by choosing to do qualitative research does not mean that quantitative research is inappropriate for it. In addition to providing an understanding of a phenomenon, qualitative research is flexible and provide and intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studies. This has been re-echoed by Silverman (2005 & 2006).

In qualitative approach exists an intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied. There is a yearning in observing how social experience is produced and provides meanings, Silverman, (2005, p.10).

Still on qualitative research, Silverman (2006, p.349) stated that it is flexible, and studies what people are doing in their natural context and also examines processes and outcomes. The present research differs in the sense that it is not directly dealing with people. Nevertheless, I found solace in Mason (2002, p.7) who argues that qualitative research should produce explanations or arguments rather than claiming to offer more descriptions.

## **5.2 Qualitative content analysis**

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) as described by Schreier (2012, p.1) is a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material. It is one of the numerous research methods used to analyse text data. Other methods include ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and historical research (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, p.1278). In doing QCA, focus is made on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text as cited in Hsieh & Shannon (2005). Hsieh et al also referred to Kondracki and Wellman (2002) who stated that the text in QCA varies from verbal, print, or electronic form and might have been obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books or manuals.

However, it is important to bear in mind that QCA, unlike other qualitative methods focuses on selected parts of the data. In so doing it gives an in-depth analysis of the parts of the data it is focused on. This is probably one of the main reasons why QR findings are not generalisable. As a result of not wanting make any generalization qualitative research and QCA in particular became my apparent choice. QCA was therefore used as an analytical tool to find out the effects of globalisation in Gambian education. Hence, it was my hope that by using QCA, I would be able to find out the effects of globaliastion on Gambian education. The next section explains the data collection process and the choices I have made to filter the collected data.

## **5.3 Data collection**

In qualitative research, the different research phases (data collection, data analysis, presenting the findings) are often not distinct but merge with each other (Schreier 2012, p.219). This is exactly what I have been doing. The processes involved in this research have not been a linear one. The only clear thing I had in mind at any point in time was the fact that I wanted to find out the effects of globalisation on Gambian education without involving human participants (interviews). This left me with the ultimate choice of using secondary data. And that again led me to the cross road of choosing which secondary data to consider. As usual for many qualitative

researchers, the first phases of reading through the data was rambling and overwhelming at the same time. Although each of the data sets were on Gambia education but their focus points were slightly different. Each data set made me feel like wanting to adjust the focus and slightly change the research question.

Since the research is focused on the effects of Globalisation on Gambian education, I asked the question: What are the effects of globalisation on Gambian education and how has it affected education policy-making in the Gambia? The answers to the research question were not as evident as I thought they would have been. The multifaceted and contested nature of globalisation further complicated the coding process by making it difficult to choose which aspects of the data to be coded.

A coding frame was then developed which helped to identify and code only the data that was directly relevant to the research question. This is inline with Schreier (2012) referred to earlier, who said coding frame is a way of structuring one's data. It enables a researcher to discard and retain some data based on the research question. I used two main criteria to filter the data for coding. The first one was that any data to be coded must be found within one of the two Gambian education policies (1988 – 2003 policy or 2004 – 2015 policy). The second criterion was making sure that all other data to be coded must be mentioned in one of the two policies referred to in criterion one.

The Gambian policy documents (1988-2003 and 2004-2015) were my primary set of data because it is in them that the government articulates the rules and laws regulating the education system. In fact the previous and current education policy documents were the only documents I wanted to use as my data. It was only after the analysis of the first policy (1988-2003) that I realised that analyzing the two policy documents alone was not going to give enough information on the possible effects of globalisation on Gambian education.

In consequence, the next thing to consider was the criteria to use in selecting other documents to be analysed. The inclusion criteria I put in place were to consider other documents that were mentioned in the two primary data sets such as the Education Medium Term Plan 2008-2011 and the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2015. Like the two policy documents, the Gambia's Ministry of education also

wrote these. However, since these documents were not the primary data, I have mostly used them to verify issues that I found unclear in the primary data.

I also read other documents on Gambian education besides those written by The Gambia's Ministry of Education. Again the inclusion criterion was the need to be mentioned or referred to in the primary data or the content of it been primary on Gambian education. Examples of that includes The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2007- 2011) in The Gambia, The Gambia Education Country Status report by World Bank, UNESCO in collaboration with The Gambia government and World Data on Education 7th Ed. 2010/11. I have also read written and published researches on Gambian education in order to familiarise myself with the education system as a whole.

#### **5.4 Data analysis**

It is almost impossible to use all the data collected for any particular research. Different methods are employed by different research designs to filter data before the actual analysis. In qualitative content analysis (QCA), coding frames are built for this purpose. A coding frame, as referred to by Schreier (2012), "is a way of structuring" one's data. It consists of both main and subcategories. The main categories (also called dimensions) are the aspects of the data that a researcher wants to focus her/his analysis on. The subcategories as the name implies pinpoint what is said about the main categories.

There is a lot of literature talking about category development processes in QCA. However, the process is usually dictated by the approach a researcher takes. Naturally, it also depends on the research question that is been asked. The most common processes according to Mayring (2000 as cited in Schreier 2012) are inductive and deductive category development.

If there is not enough prior knowledge on the phenomenon studied or if this knowledge is fragmented, the inductive approach is recommended (Lauri & Kyngäs 2005 as cited in Elo et al 2007). This means that the categories are inductively derived from the data. Chinn & Kramer (1999 as cited in Elo et al 2007) pointed out that, an inductive approach moves from the specific to the general. By so doing particular instances are observed and the combined into a larger whole or general

statement. Deductive approach is the opposite of the inductive approach. It is applied when the structure of the analysis is organized on the basis of a previous knowledge with the aim of testing a theory (Kyngäs & Vanhanen 1999 as cited in Elo et al 2007). Been based on a theory or model, the deductive approach moves from the general to the specific (Burns & Grove 2005 as cited in Elo et al 2007).

Similarly, Hsieh & Shannon (2005) identified three approaches and named them conventional, directed and summative approaches. Their description of conventional and directed approaches matches Maring's (2000) description of inductive and deductive approaches. According to them, the summative approach starts with the identification and quantification of certain words or phrases in the text with the aim of finding their contextual use. They further stated that the quantification is not aimed at inferring meaning but rather to explore usage. The analysis for the appearance of the word or content in a text is referred to as manifest content (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein 1999 as cited in Hsieh & Shannon 2005). However, the analysis should not stop at a mere counting of the frequencies. Otherwise, it may be regarded as a quantitative analysis (Kondracki & Wellman 2002 as cited in Hsieh et al 2005).

Therefore a summative approach goes beyond a mere word count to include latent analysis, which is the process of interpretation of the content (Holsti, 1969 as cited in Hsieh & Shannon 2005). In short, summative analysis focuses on discovering the underlying meanings of words or the content (Babbie, 1992; Catanzaro, 1988; Morse & Field, 1995 as cited in Hsieh & Shannon 2005). However, there have been some debates about questioning whether hidden (latent) meaning in documents should be analysed or not. Such analysis involves some interpretation (Elo et al 2007). Robson (1993, as cited in Elo et al. 2007) concludes that researchers are guided by the aim and research question of their study in choosing the contents to analyse.

Having read the different approaches of qualitative content analysis confused me at the beginning because I could not figure out which approach best suits my research. But as Robson (1993) concludes above, I let the aim and research question guide me. For example, I intend to find out the effects of globalisation on Gambian education. To find out, I asked the question: What are the effects of globalisation on

Gambian education and how has it affected education policy-making in the Gambia? Even though it is evident in the question that the main issues that I am focusing on are globalisation, education policy and how the former impacted changes on subsequent policy, I still had to read the data several times in order to immerse myself in it (Burnard 1991, Polit & Beck 2004 as cited in Elo et al. 2007). Consequently, I came up with table (table 1 below) summarizing parts of the data I want to analyse.

Table 1: A sample of original and simplified statements from the data.

ORIGINAL STATEMENTS	SIMPLIFIED STATEMENTS
<p>In consequence, the 2004-2015 policy period focuses on ensuring that the right to quality education for all is upheld and that Education for All, with its ramifications, and the Millennium Development Goals are achieved. The ultimate object of eliminating poverty, enhancing quality living and nurturing a learning society forms the cornerstone of this policy.</p>	<p>2004-2015 policy focuses on weakness of its predecessor and the implementation of EFA and MDG goals with the aim of <b>eliminating poverty</b></p>
<p>Committed to developing its human resource base with priority given to free basic education for all. It is for this reason that this policy will be used as a means for the attainment of a high level of economic growth to alleviate poverty with emphasis on the critical areas for the realisation of the MDGs, EFA and NEPAD</p>	<p>Committed to giving <b>free basic education</b> to all as starting point for human resource development as a means for economic development by emphasising on the realization of MDG and EFA</p>
<p>Access to ICT resources and facilities in schools will be made available to out-of-school youth and other members of the community. Communities in which schools are located will be encouraged to use the ICT resources and facilities in the schools in order to communicate and also improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Cyber cafés and computer resource centres will be established in every region to enhance the ODL programmes of both the University and the Gambia College.</p>	<p>Out-of-school youths and community members will be encouraged to use the <b>ICT resources</b> in schools to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. ODL programmes will be established in both the college and university</p>



The above table was further modified into coding frame to help me identify and inductively derive the themes. In building a coding frame, Schreier (2012) pointed out that each category must be defined. In doing so she emphasized that each category definition must have a name, a description of what is meant by the name and an example. Decision rules may or may not be added. Such rules are not a must and are only added when one feels that the categories will overlap. Table 2 below shows the main categories and descriptions of the categories with some examples.

Table 2: Sample of a coding frame used in the coding process

ORIGINAL STATEMENTS	SIMPLIFIED STATEMENT	DERIVED MAIN CATEGORY	DERIVED SUB-CATEGORY	DECISION RULE
In consequence, the 2004-2015 policy period focuses on ensuring that the right to quality education for all is upheld and that Education for All, with its ramifications, and the Millennium Development Goals are achieved. The ultimate object of eliminating poverty, enhancing quality living and nurturing a learning society forms the cornerstone of this policy.	2004-2015 policy focuses on weakness of the its predecessor and the implementation of EFA and MDG goals with the aim of eliminating poverty	Global actors	Goals and targets of global actors	

<p>Committed to developing its human resource base with priority given to free basic education for all. It is for this reason that this policy will be used as a means for the attainment of a high level of economic growth to alleviate poverty with emphasis on the critical areas for the realisation of the MDGs, EFA and NEPAD</p>	<p>Committed to giving free basic education to all as starting point for human resource development as a means for economic development by emphasising on the realization of MDG and EFA</p>	<p>International initiatives</p>		
<p>Access to ICT resources and facilities in schools will be made available to out-of-school youth and other members of the community. Communities in which schools are located will be encouraged to use the ICT resources and facilities in the schools in order to communicate and also improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Cyber café and computer resource centres will be established in every region to enhance the ODL programmes of both the University and the Gambia College.</p>	<p>Out-of-school youths and community members will be encouraged to use the ICT resources in schools to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. ODL programmes will be established in both the college and university</p>	<p>Technology</p>		

The table above shows how I arrived at the findings. It illustrates not only the sources of the findings but also shows the process of arriving at them. This table also helps me to discuss the findings in the context of the data it was derived from.

## **6. Findings**

The findings presented here are my interpretations and abstractions that I have made from the research data with qualitative content analysis as tool to enhance my understanding and interpretation. Like in any qualitative research, the findings of this research are not generalizable.

The main findings that emerged after the analysis were the presence of global actors in all levels of Gambian education, the synchronisation of educational aims with international initiatives and the push for the inclusion of educational technology in schools. I found these not only as effects of globalisation in Gambian education system but also as the driving forces in the changes in the current education policy (2004-2015). I also found that the push for actors outside The Gambia had in most cases triggered the changes sponsored them.

The findings are very much related and overlapping with each other. However, each of them contributes in its own way in answering the research question. Let us now have a closer look at each finding.

### **6.1 Global actors**

Global actors such as the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, were found to be the key players in Gambian education. The contributions of these international organisations were evident in the data. Documents on Gambian education published by these actors are also evidence of their contribution to Gambian education system. However, it is important to note in today's globalised world, the mere presence of global actors in a country's education system or its economy does not make the country and its actors less important.

The issue, however, lies in the level of influence the actors assert in a particular country, which in most cases is dictated by the country's level of dependency on donations. For many developing countries including The Gambia, being recipient of donations from the global actors are likely to succumb to pressures from the donors. This does not mean that global actors do not put pressure on developed countries. To a certain extent, they do but that is not an issue to be emphasized here.

Pressures or conditions associated with aid (Rizvi et al 2009) have real effects on policy and curriculum. The Gambia's only teacher training college used to train both primary and senior schoolteachers for duration of two years. This was up until the intervention of the World Bank (WB) in the late 90's. The WB's intervention was in form of financial assistance for the teacher-training programme with strings (effects as I would like to call it here) attached to it.

The attached conditions were to increase the number of female enrolment in the teacher-training programme and also extend the duration of the training from 2 to 3 years. In response to this, education authorities in the Gambia introduced a one year college based face-to-face teaching and two years school based practical teachings for primary teachers' certificate course. Higher teachers' certificate trainees spent two years on face-to-face training at the college and a year's teaching experience in schools thereby affecting both policy and practice. This is inline with what (Dale 1999 as cited in Tikly 2001) called the mechanism of dissemination whereby supra-national organisations such as the WB set policy agendas, indicators and targets in African education. In the Gambian teacher –training referred to above, the two main policy agenda's set by the WB were the increase in the number of female teachers enrolled at the country's only teacher training college and the extension of the training programme from two to three years.

Policy harmonization was another mechanism identified by Dale (1999) as cited in *ibid*). In this regards, Dale pointed out that regional organisations such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now called African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADEC) have sponsored research aimed at policy harmonization. In The Gambia, the current education policy (2004-2015) clearly states that:

Government will explore all avenues of securing co-operation and collaboration at the regional and international levels, including the support and assistance from international organisations and agencies in developing a dynamic Open and Distance Learning (ODL) education system in The Gambia

This shows how committed education authorities are in collaborating with bodies outside of its borders. It is difficult to ascertain whether such collaborations are or

were purely based on the intend of policy harmonization or not. What is evident is the fact that the influence of it came from international partners.

The other two main global actors found be key players in Gambian education are UNICEF and UNESCO. The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, described the fundamental mission of UNICEF as the promotion of the rights of all children, everywhere, in everything the organization does in programmes, in advocacy and in operations. UNICEF funds different projects, initiates dialogue on policy development, facilitates interaction and cooperation between different government agencies and training. In The Gambia, UNICEF has been providing school uniforms, books, staff training workshops among other things to selected schools (locally called UNICEF schools). This is in addition to the technical support and finance given to the education department.

As early as 1965 when The Gambia became independent, UNICEF and UNESCO started contributing to Gambian education. As Jammeh (2012, p.30) wrote:

After independence in 1965, UNESCO assumed the role played by the colonial Government by sending a mission to conduct a survey of education in The Gambia. The mission was financed by UNICEF and led by Dr G. F. Sleight .....

Interestingly, the report was adopted as a policy without any adjustments by The Gambian education authorities. Evidence of this is found in the Forward page of the policy text by The Gambian Minister of Education as cited by Jammeh (2012, p.31):

The Development Programme in Education for The Gambia 1965 – 1975 which is now published as a Sessional Paper is a comprehensive document which has been prepared by a UNESCO Educational Planning Mission ... Cabinet has agreed to adopt the development programme outlined in the Report as Government's long-term Education Policy ...

There is no evidence outlining the level of involvement of the Gambian policy makers in the formulation and implementation of the report. While the research does not aim to look into that, it is tempting not to stop thinking about the reasons behind the complete adoption of the report without any modifications. Having said that it is

however a clear indication of the involvement of global actors in Gambian education system at the time.

Like UNICEF, UNESCO also gives a range of support to The Gambian education in the form of technical assistance and learning tools. It also highlights challenges and trends in education around the world to governments with the aim of starting a policy dialogue in education. For example

In 2006 and 2007, UNESCO gathered the most authoritative data to date on the spread of national learning assessments, which tend to focus on how well the intended curriculum is taught and learned (Kamens & McNeely 2010, p7).

The above point validates the statement made earlier that global actors are present in almost every nation but their level of pressure or assertion in each country varies.

UNESCO also organizes international meetings for the discussion and adoption of policy ideas. For example in April 2000, participants in the World Education Forum in Dakar entrusted UNESCO with the overall responsibility of co-ordinating all international players and sustaining the global momentum. UNESCO staff in The Gambia participated directly in curriculum planning at both strategic and operational levels. The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO currently has three key areas of focus: EFA / poverty reduction, education for sustainable development and ICT in education. These areas of focus are aligned with the present policy (2004-2015), which has a guiding principle of “Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction”.

At regional level, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) is responsible for designing and conducting final examinations of both the basic and senior secondary schools in The Gambia. WAEC is a council consisting of the five English-speaking countries in West Africa (Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) and it was established in 1952. It is an examining body providing qualitative and reliable education assessment in its member states. WAEC conducts both the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WSSCE) and the West African Junior School Certificate Examination (WJSCE). The WSSCE examination is a determinant of the job opportunities of graduating high school students and also acts as a filter for those who could not attend a university. The WJSCE results on the other hand are the

basis used for determine the type of high school or vocational training college a student enrolls in.

## 6.2 International Initiatives

International initiatives such as those of the MDG goals and EFA targets were also found in the education system. As was the finding of global actors in its education system, the international initiatives that are usually put forward by the said actors were not a surprise. The Gambia, as do many other countries in the Global South depend on aid to implement its educational commitments. Johnson (2008) wrote:

In most developing countries, regardless of scale, their own commitments to millennium development (MDGs), including Education for All, has been reinforced by donor agencies' emphasis on MDG agenda.

In light of the above, Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction which happens to be the theme for the current Gambian education policy is in line with MDG goal number one: **eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**. At first, it was difficult for me to conclude if the theme was coined as part of the Gambia's respond in aligning herself to the international initiatives or not. In the current policy, it is stated that:

.....the 2004-2015 policy period focuses on ensuring that the right to quality education for all is upheld and that Education for All, with its ramifications, and the Millennium Development Goals are achieved. The ultimate object of eliminating poverty, enhancing quality living and nurturing a learning society forms the cornerstone of this policy, (Gambia Education Policy 2004-2015, p.4).

Similarly:

Improving access to quality education for all, particularly girls, for greater gender equity, (ibid, p.9)

The above quotate relates to MDG goal number 3 and EFA goal number 5, both of which are geared towards ensuring the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. The policy further conformed to this by promising to increase the share of enrolment particularly of

girls to match the gender equality goals of EFA by 2015. Globalised education policy discourse frames (Rizvi et al 2009) such as governance, management, quality, equity and life long learning was also prevalent in the policy.

One can go on and on to point out quotations that are either a repetition of international initiatives or a re-articulation of the initiatives in another way. It does not matter whether the aims and objectives of Gambian education are a re-articulation or a repetition of international initiatives; the fact is that any possible implementation is dependent on donations from global actors. As pointed out earlier, The Gambia is one of the most heavily indebted countries (Johnson 2008) and one of the 18 fast-track countries receiving extra support in meeting the MDG goals (UNESCO 2002 as cited in Johnson 2008).

### **6.3 Technology**

Globalisation and technology are certainly not the same, but it is due to the advent of the later that the world witnessed an unprecedented spread of the former in the last decades. Technology is transforming education systems around the world with the Gambia included. While the analysed data did not give any details of the technological transformation in The Gambia, it did indicate that, plans are afoot (at least within) the policy to make way for it. The policy stated that the acquisition and development of other teaching/learning tools and technologies should be prioritised during the policy period.

.....the use of new technologies such as computers, Internet and associated multimedia products as well as old technologies like radio, video, television and calculators will continue to be promoted, (Gambia Education Policy 2004-2015, p.36).

The use of such technologies will undoubtedly enhance the interconnected aspect of globalisation. With it learners in The Gambia can listen or participate in educational programmes around the world in real time. They could also design and broadcast tailored made programmes for Gambian learners. In fact, it is on this basis that the Educational Broadcasting Services (EBS) came into being. The policy stated that EBS would be provided to support teaching/learning processes. Whether, the programmes broadcasted on the EBS are locally made or streamed



from abroad, it will still fall under the umbrella of technology thereby supporting and enhancing globalisation.

For Torin (2005), information technology is not only a means of global expansion; it also represents a system of linking students and public institutions intimately to globalization processes, thereby reproducing and reinforcing rationalities of global competition and interconnection. In The Gambia, the policy document has everything it needs in terms of technical preparedness. Whether, that is the same in practice is beyond this thesis. The content of the policy documents clearly shows that Gambian education and its learners are homogenised with global processes. The policy recognizes that ICT will play an important role in fulfilling its MDG and EFA goals. Most importantly, it stated that distance education methods through the use of ICT can provide a cost-effective, efficient and viable system of education and training for varying needs and aspirations of people, especially in developing countries, (Gambia education policy 2004-2015).

Technology has certainly transformed a lot of things in our generation and education is not an exception. The cost-effective and efficient nature of it in education is just one of such. But when I see developing countries like the Gambia forced to use ICT to address issues of equity and access, it makes one wonder if the desire to do so was triggered by not wanting to be different from others or putting the horse before the cart. Example is the commencement of using ICT as a teaching and learning tool in Senior Secondary Schools (Gambian education policy, 2004-2015) at a time when teachers are not trained to use those technologies.

Training workshops and other professional development activities will continue to be conducted for school heads, teachers and students to ensure that every teacher and student in the country is computer and information literate, (Gambian education policy 2004-2015, p.33)

While attempting to do such massive transformation in an education system within a 15-year period is commendable, policy makers must ensure that they do not end up providing only the technological hardware and Internet. Doing so without the necessary know-how will make little or no difference. More often than not, policy initiatives in developing countries to overcome digital divide have centered on the provision of computers and connectivity, (Rizvi et al 2009, p.155). Digital divide,

according to Rizvi et al (2009) is a slogan commonly used to differentiate between those who are electronically networked and those who are not. The authors further noted that a country's capacity to participate in the new information economy is determined by which sides of the digital divide it falls (electronically networked and those who are not). The policy indicates clearly that steps towards joining the network society have been taken. But what is less clear is whether the steps taken were triggered by desire to be like others or as a result of pressures from global actors.

## **7. Discussion**

The aim of this section is to further interpret and elaborate on the research findings and relate it to existing knowledge in the field of globalisation and education policy making in The Gambia. It is hoped that an elaboration on the findings in the previous section will not only increase readers understanding but also help to identify the main drivers of policy making in The Gambia. There are many ways to do this but I chose to do a qualitative content analysis as a methodology and use globalisation as a theoretical lens through which I looked at the data. The main research question was “What are the effects of globalisation on Gambian education and how has it affected education policy-making in the Gambia?”

The findings have generally shown that globalisation has effects on Gambian education. More importantly, features of globalisation such as connectivity, interdependence and flexibility were consistently shown in the current Gambian education policy. The results from the analysed data have shown that global actors such as the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF are the main drivers of education policy making in The Gambia. The effects of their involvement was seen in the number of global conventions ratified by education authorities in the Gambia and the inclusion of some changes such as ICT, EFA, Education Broadcasting Unit (EBU) in its policy to meet the requirement of the global actors. In what follows, will be a detailed elaboration on each of the findings.

### **7.1 The Role of Global Actors in Gambian Education**

Global actors such as the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF and regional organisations like West African Examination Council (WAEC) have played significant roles in education policy making in The Gambia.

#### **7.1.1 World Bank**

Recognised as a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the World, the World Bank has sponsored a number of educational programmes including teacher training programmes, increase access to basic education and supported critical behaviour changes to reinforce governance of the

education system (World Bank, 2014). In March 2014, the World Bank announced a grant comprising of US\$11.9 million from IDA and US\$16 million from the Government of The Gambia. The grant according to the WB is set to support Results for Education Achievement and Development Project (READ). The target beneficiaries of the project include Early Childhood Development (ECD) children, lower and upper basic and secondary students, lower basic and upper basic teachers, and student teachers. This happens to be the main areas that need to be solid in any functional education system.

The WB country director in The Gambia pointed out that, the objective of the READ project is to

“Increase access to basic education especially for underserved populations, improve quality of teaching and learning in lower basic schools, and strengthen education systems using a results based approach” (WB website 2015).

The director further pointed out that the READ project is aligned with the twin goals of the World Bank’s strategy -poverty reduction and shared prosperity because education builds human capital. Without a doubt, the READ project is also aligned to MDG goal number one - which is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and thereby inviting the conclusion of it been an effect of globalisation. Firstly as an influence of global actors in Gambian education and secondly as a direct attempt by Gambian education authorities to homogenise its policies with international initiatives.

Chart 1 (see appendix) shows the official development assistance to The Gambia from all donors between 1990 and 2010. Looking at the total Government expenditure on education per centage of government expenditure in The Gambia, it was 18.76 in 2008 (the highest in the last 12 years) and 13.80 as of 2012 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2015). This shows that The Gambian education sector is highly reliant on global donor agencies. The said reliance on donors was indirectly referred to by the government in its Education Sector Strategic Plan 2006-2015, (p.37)

The overall investment for the ten-year strategic plan is US\$194.6 million, of

which 66.2% is investment cost and 33.8% is current cost... Currently, the funding acquired so far amounts to 35.9%, leaving a gap of 64.1%. This translates to approximately an annual funding gap of \$12.5 million.

The strategic plan further states that the funding gap will not be entirely met by external partners. This can be interpreted in many ways but I considered it as meaning that external partners will be involved in financing the ten-year strategic plan.

The multifaceted nature and varying descriptions of globalisation make it hard to say if the involvements of the global actors are effects of globalisation or not. But what is not hard to say is the fact that globalisation is one of the fundamental factors of the involvement of the global actors. This is in line with what the KOF index called the most common descriptions of globalisation. In defining globalisation, the KOF index follows Clark (2000, p. 86):

Globalization describes the process of creating networks of connections among actors at multicontinental distances, mediated through a variety of flows including people, information and ideas, capital, and goods

Arguably, some authors will say that the flow of people, capital and ideas has been happening since before the First World War in 1914. In other words there has been other forms of globalisation before. In distinguishing this current wave of globalization from others, author Thomas Friedman has said that today globalization is “farther, faster, cheaper, and deeper.”

Finally, in its Education Sector Medium Term Plan 2008-2011, the Department of Basic and Secondary Education wrote:

The financial framework for the medium term ESSP is based on cost projections from the financial model and the investment programme, both developed by the sector team with technical assistance from the World Bank.  
(p.659)

More than anything else, the above quote portrays the WB as one of the key drivers in Gambian education. Now let us look at UNICEF, another driver.

### 7.1.2 UNICEF

As noted earlier in section 6.1, UNESCO assumed the role played by the colonial government after independence in 1965. UNESCO sent a mission to conduct the first post independence survey of education in The Gambia. The mission was financed by UNICEF and led by Dr. G. F. Sleight. Both UNICEF and UNESCO continue to play vital roles in today's Gambian education.

Currently, The Government of The Gambia-UNICEF Country Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016, focuses on four key areas: Child Survival and Development, Basic Education, Child Protection, and Social Policy. The programme according to UNICEF aims to:

Achieve the outcomes related to children and women specified by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations Development Action Framework (UNDAF), and The Gambia's strategic paper, Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE).

The programme is implemented at national and area based levels. The area-based levels are mainly in the rural areas (Central and Upper River Regions) with poor development indicators for children and women- including poverty and school attendance. As a result, addressing these issues became not only a national priority but also an international one. It became an international priority as result of its close correlation with MDG goals 1 and 2 (achieving universal primary education and the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment).

This correlation was enough of a reason to attract the attention of the global actors and in this case it happens to be UNICEF. Following this was a joint situational analysis of the education system by UNICEF and The Gambia government. The analysis shows that like any other education system, the Gambia's education has undergone a lot of transformations. The good news however is that each policies recognised the issues of access, relevance and quality education as underpinned by the principles of equity to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals and the MDG goals 2 and 3 by 2015. In consequence of the implementation of these policies

witnessed a rapid expansion in access to basic education, resulting in a Gross Enrolment ratio (GER) of 92 per cent in 2014 (Education Management Information System - Generate Year Book 2014). Other associated issues included lower proportion of students continuing to Upper Basic School, low retention of students in schools especially girls. The country Status Report 2010 showed that:

Out of 69 per cent of children starting school, only 63 per cent reach 9th Grade and only 17 per cent achieve a pass in mathematics, which indicates a major problem relating to quality. The rural poor girls have only 1 per cent chance of reaching Grade 12 as opposed to 43 per cent of boys in the urban areas.

The situational analysis shows a sub-standard performance across all levels of education in the country. To address the challenge of quality in schools, UNICEF together with the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) developed an innovative approach called the Program for Improved Quality Standards in Schools (PIQSS). This is an adaptation of the Child Friendly School Initiative (CFSI), which integrates the principles of the whole school development. UNICEF, in partnership with the MoBSE, introduced the PIQSS initiative in 90 schools in poor rural areas of the country as part of its equity agenda and is making progress in terms of improving access and students' learning achievements.

The introduction of the PIQSS in 2012 led to the realisation of the improved school environment and management, improved teaching and learning, improved children's wellbeing and sustainable and improved community participation. Despite these results, UNICEF through its official website states that PIQSS approach:

will be intensified in the coming years to further promote quality improvement in schools while ensuring conducive learning environments and further strengthening teachers' skills in child centered teaching methodologies. Children will become healthier and protected, schools well managed, completion and retention rates particularly for girls improved, and children's learning outcomes enhanced.

Again, this is a clear demonstration of UNICEF's involvement in Gambian education.

### 7.1.3 UNESCO

Like UNICEF, UNESCO has been involved in Gambian education in different ways. While the actual involvement of UNESCO dates back to early post independence, The Gambia National Commission for UNESCO (NATCOM) was formed in 1983. According to its official website, its main aim is "an intermediary link between the Government of The Gambia and UNESCO as well as to guarantee active participation in relevant cultural and education programmes". The commission also coordinates the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) programmes and cooperates with other international agencies interested in education.

As part of its operations in Gambian education, UNESCO (NATCOM) has also been organising Training For Young People and Women Film Makers and Promoting Youth and Student Engagement as part of the 20th Anniversary of The UNESCO Slave Route Project in Gambia (2014-2015).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) launched by the UN between 2005-2014 was led by UNESCO in The Gambia and around the World. ESD in accordance with UNESCO allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. The website further states that ESD means:

Including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way (UNESCO website 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015)

While this is no doubt another indication of the involvement of UNESCO as a global actor in Gambian education, it is inconclusive to say if the involvement was only as a result of globalisation. However, the effects of globalisation cannot be taken out



of it and hence it became the basis of my argument. Another key finding of the research is international initiatives.

## **7.2 International Initiatives in Gambian Education**

International initiatives are plans, regulations, or action items designed and presented by either intergovernmental or nongovernmental organisations that are operating in two or more countries. The formulations of such initiatives are usually as a result of particular country or organisation wanting to fulfil or comply with international conventions. A country's failure to come up with initiatives to meet standards set by international conventions can be regarded as non compliance which could lead to economic or political sanctions. This is something that every country wants to avoid especially those in the developing south.

Since the signing of the EFA agreement in 1990, followed by the World Education forum ten years later, The Gambia has taken on-board a number of initiatives as part of its efforts to comply with the said conventions. Starting with the theme of its current education policy (2004 – 2015) 'Rethinking Education for Poverty Reduction' corresponds to MDG goal one - eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The Gambia also introduced a free and compulsory primary education for all Gambian children for the first time in its history. This is an important commitment made by the government to its people. At the same time commitment could be seen as part of Gambia's compliance to EFA goal number 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all.

Other initiatives taken by the government of The Gambia that appeared in the policy as policy priorities includes access and quality education for all Gambians. Under access, the policy made mention of gender equity and life skills education geared towards the HIV/AIDS prevention. Again, these two initiatives correspond to EFA goal number 5: Achieve Gender Parity and MDG goal number 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. The list goes on and on.

Finding out the effectiveness of the initiatives was not considered in this research. Instead, the research focused on the presence of the effects of globalisation on the

education system. The research found that almost every initiative found in Gambian education is closely linked to an international convention.

### **7.3 Introduction of Technology in Gambian Education**

Technology as a finding and an effect of globalisation in Gambian education may be a surprise to many readers. Arriving at it was based on two things. The first one is based on the undisputable fact that the spread of globalisation in its current state is largely possible due to advancements made in technology. This is not to say that globalisation started after advancements were made in technology. Certainly not but it has been aided by information technology. The other reason is based on evidence found in the policy. For example, the government through her current policy stated:

the government will collaborate with stakeholders such as United States Peace Corps (USPC) and the WAEC to develop an ICT policy for basic and senior secondary schools, (Gambia education policy 2004-2015 p.33).

The policy also made mention of the recognition and importance of information and communication technology as essential tools to facilitate effective and efficient management of the education sector.

At the beginning of the policy in in 2004, only two of the Department of State for Education (DoSE) buildings in the nation's capital had a local area network (LAN).

In addition to the local area network (LAN) set up in the two DoSE buildings in Banjul, additional networking facilities will be provided for the regional offices, given their anticipated responsibilities under the decentralisation process. A wide area network (WAN) linking all the directorates and units of DoSE and schools will also be set up, 2004-2015 Policy, (p.33)

Now all directorates across the country have access to a wide area network (WAN) and staff has been trained accordingly. This show willingness of the government to put technology and what comes with it in the forefront of Gambian education. Most Upper Basic Schools (Grade 7-9) are equipped with computers and students have at least half an hour of computer classes in some form.

The West African Examination Councils that administer The Gambia Basic

Education Certificate Examination (GABECE) and the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) now publishes its results online. For the students, this means they have to purchase result checker cards for the WASSCE to view their results online, (WENR, website <http://wenr.wes.org/>).

Other technology related issues in policy are the introduction of an Education Broadcasting Service (EBS), training and retraining of science teachers, the use of ICT and distant learning methods and technology to improve access, equity and quality of at all levels of the system. The introduction of EBS was to strengthen the Education Broadcasting Unit (EBU) to design and develop educational materials for transmission to schools, (Gambia education policy 2004-2015 p.34).

All these goes to show that the efforts of the government in cooperating technology into its education system despite the inexistence of the infrastructure for it at the time. In 2008, the Department of Basic Education conducted a review of the education policy to pinpoint the progress made. The review that became known as The Educator Sector Medium Term Plan 2008-2011 pinpointed the following issues that hindered the progress of rolling out technology in Gambian education:

1. None availability of trained ICT teachers in schools
2. Limited science and technology infrastructure, resources and capacity
3. Lack of development of supportive or complementary infrastructure (.....rural electricity or telecommunication needed to enhance the impact of science and technology)
4. Lack of critical mass of scientifically literate policy-makers or decision-makers who appreciate the link between science and technology and the socio-economic and socio-political issues to a level where they can commit costly and long-term investment as a matter of priority, (The Education Sector Medium Term Plan 2008-2011 (p.55).

The identification of the above issues gives two indications. The first is that the use of technology is found in Gambian education or at the very least efforts of incorporation are in it. The other indication that can be deduced from the identified issue may be that technology was embedded into The Gambian education policy without proper assessment of what is needed to get it going. Until further research

is conducted to prove this assumption, one can only reluctantly conclude that technology measures were incorporated into the policy in order to comply with global standards.

## **8. Ethical considerations, reliability, validity and limitations**

In typical social research involving human participants, great care is taken in making sure that no harm is done to them during and after the research. Researchers including Smith (2009), Smith (2006) and Sin (2010) have reiterated this. In this research, there was no need to have an informed consent or issues of confidentiality with regards to research participants because there weren't any involved. Instead, I used readily available documents as my research data.

The use of secondary data dispels the worry of power relations between the researcher and the interviewees (Reed 2006) or potential deep connection between the two (Richardson 1999).

Like in any other research, the issues of reliability and validity are very important in qualitative research, (Kirk and Miller 1986; Silverman 1993; Miles and Huberman 1994 as cited by Denscombe 2003). In this research, a great care was taken in selecting and interpreting the data. However, that does not in anyway guarantee that a follow-up analysis of the same data will produce the same findings. The reason been that every researcher's interpretation is likely influenced by her/his positionality. Lingard (2009, 228) wrote that a researcher's positionality

Is clearly relevant in determining the approach to be taken to policy analysis

I would like to reflect on my positionality by pointing out that I am a novice student researcher from The Gambia and I happen to be researching the effects of globalisation on Gambian education. Having been a teacher in The Gambia also gave me insider knowledge of the education system from the perspective of a teacher. It is important to state that my interest was triggered by my experience and Gambian nationality. But the most important source of interest in doing this is my desire to increase my understanding of the topic. Having this in mind, I made sure that my positionality does not affect the research in any significant form other than the normal personal biases of the average researcher. Just by making a choice to study or research a particular topic could be considered as a sign of subjectivity.

However, I am not sure of the consistency as described by O'Leary (2010, 37) who wrote that

Consistency in methods is referred to as reliability or the extent to which a measure, procedure, instrument provides the same results on repeated trials.

I believe that a repeated analysis of the research data may not have the same findings. Nonetheless, a repeated analysis will certainly come up with evidence of the effects of globalisation in Gambian education, which is the whole purpose of this research. The reason for the possible different findings could be attribute to the fact that the research was an interpretive one. My interpretation of the data is more than likely to be different to another person's interpretation. This is supported by Denzin (1986), who stated that an interpretative research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher. Similarly, Descombe (2003) pointed out that there is an increasing approval among qualitative data analyst to include some biographical details about the researcher as part of the data analysis. By so doing, a researcher can explore the various ways she/he thinks personal experiences and values might influence the research while at the same time enabling the reader to judge "how reasonable the writer's claims are with regards to detachment or involvement of self-identity, values and beliefs", (Descombe 2003, p.273). Thus the personality of the researcher says a lot of about the findings.

However, the findings of a research from all positions or personalities will be valid as long as the researcher is able to point out not only the limits but also his/her positionalities. As Herr and Anderson (2014, p.59) argued that:

all dissertations have limitations section because all research methods have limitations. Unless researchers are honest about these limitations, they will end up making claims not substantiated by the evidence.

The above argument, despite made in reference to action research are very well applicable to other forms of social research.

The first limitation is the fact that I have only used documents data in this research, which means that it has all the limitations/problems associated with secondary data analysis of documents. Some of these include issues with definitions, reliability of data sources, not knowing the margin of error and the fact that changes might have occurred since the publication of the data. The data in this research was the official Gambian Education policies plus other documents written by global actors like WB,

UNESCO and UNICEF. Reliability was maintained by making sure that all documents considered as part of the data were stated within one of the two Gambian Education Policies or are significantly focused on Gambian education.

I must admit that some things have changed since the publication of the current Gambian Education Policy (2004 – 2015). For example, the arm of government responsible for education in The Gambia used to be called the Department of State for Education (DoSE), it is now called the Ministry of Education. It is sub-divided into Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and The Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST).

But the good news is that the changes were included in the Education Sector Medium Term Plan (2008 – 2011), which was also incorporated into the data. In short I have great confidence that the changes that occurred since the publication of the analysed data does not have a significant impact on the findings of this research.

However, this does not mean that this research was without challenges and limitations. As the controversial nature of the term globalisation was a challenge in itself, it was impossible for me to fully explore any particular definition or description of globalisation, let alone to dive deep into the globalist, skeptics and transformationist camps. The other limitation is the fact that I only considered education related documents in Gambian context, which means the findings are not generalisable in other contexts. It is also important to note the analysed data was not specific to any particular sector of Gambian education. Instead, it covers the entire education sector.

## **9. Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis is to identify the effects of globalisation in Gambian education system. In order to do this, it is designed to answer the question: What are the effects of globalisation on Gambian education and how has it affected education policy-making in the Gambia? The findings showed that globalisation does have

effects in Gambian education. In addition, the findings also pointed out the key players or influencers in Gambian education policy making. These players are the ones pushing for the identified effects of globalisation in The Gambian education system.

The World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO were found to be the main global actors in Gambian education. Regional bodies like the West African Examination Council (WAEC) also played key roles in Gambian education. The influences of the global actors were evident in the current Gambian education policy (2004 – 2015). In addition to identifying the global actors as influencers in Gambian education, the thesis also found that there has been a drive for new policy directions, incorporating technology in the education system, push for changes in the teacher training practices and an increase in the intake of primary school children across the country.

The thesis findings also show that most of the new initiatives found in the current education policy have more international dimensions than local ones. For example, the government ambitious aim of providing every child with free basic education has had some positive effects in enrolment ratios. The increase in enrolment ratio was negatively impacted on the quality of education. Accordingly, this was due to hasty approval without a proper assessment of the human and material resource capabilities of the education sector.

This research and its findings could be of help to anyone who wants to understand education policy making in The Gambia. The Ministry of Education in The Gambia may also use it to gauge the perspectives of external partners/stakeholders of its education system. External stakeholders are more likely to get their information on Gambian education through the documents written by global actors like WB, UNESCO and UNICEF, which were used as a data set for this research.

Therefore, the findings may be a true reflection of an individual who only read documents about Gambian education written by global actors.

The findings led me to ask questions like whether the identified effects are good or bad for Gambian education? How could Gambian as a developing country make best use of the influences of global actors in its education system? Should developing countries accept aid with its imposed conditions or try to negotiate better use of aid money? A further research to focus on these questions will help



education authorities in making decisions in future policy discussions. Such research will also point out the issues that are implementable in Gambian context.

On a personal level, doing this research has increased my understanding of globalisation in general and Gambian education system. During the process, I came across documents relating to Gambian education that I will otherwise not know much more read them. Another takeaway for me is an increased understanding of the roles of international organisations around the world.

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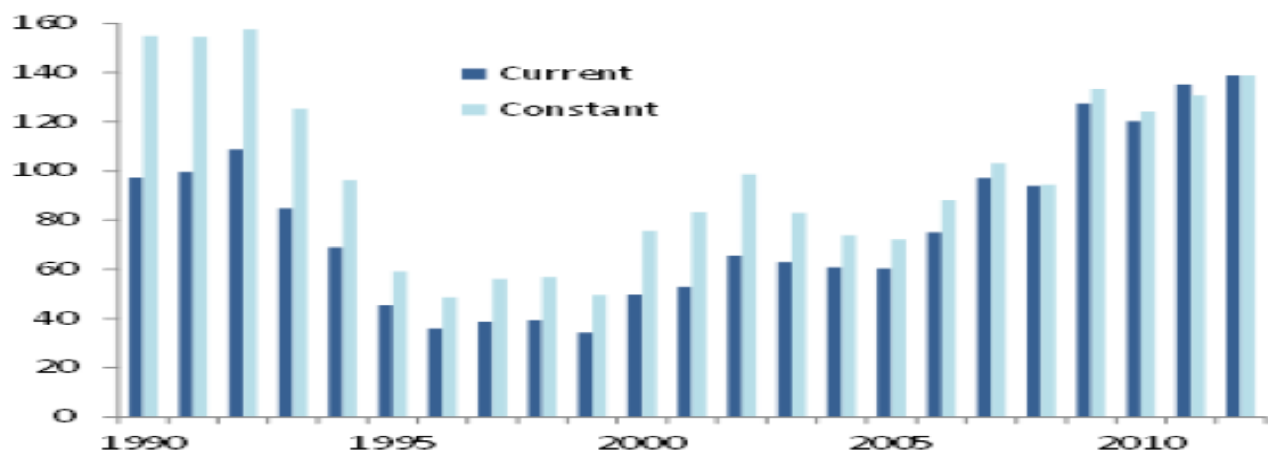




## Appendices

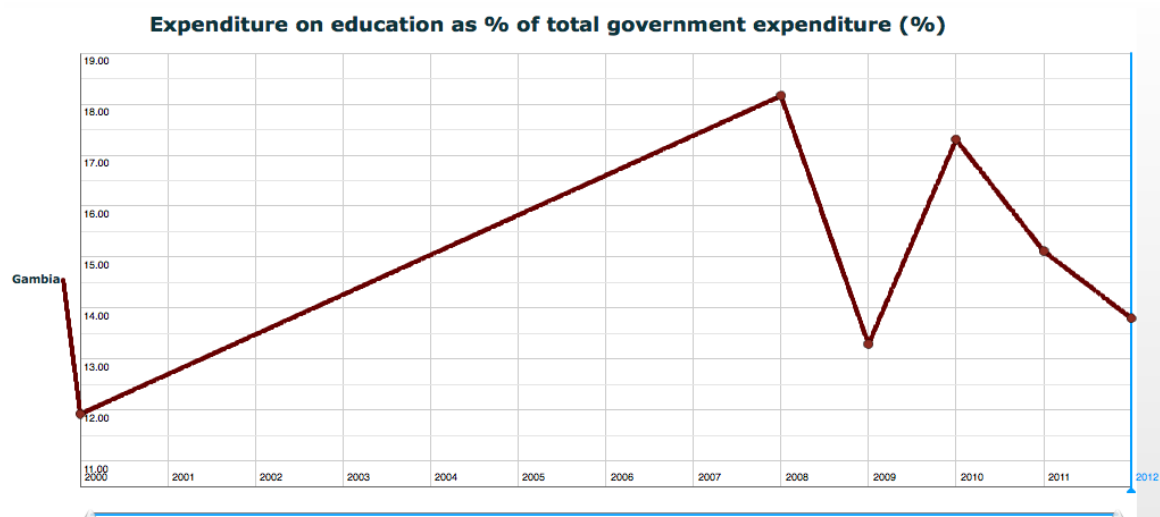
Chart 1: Official Development Assistance to The Gambia from all donors

US\$ million in current prices at 2012 constant prices



Source: World Bank Data

Chart 2: Expenditure on education as % of total government expenditure



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2015 accessed 10th August 2015.