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# Ghana-Korea Relations Research: A-State-of-the-Art Review

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## Abstract

Even though scholars have written on Ghana-Korea relations over the past forty years, there is a lacuna in the literature because there is no “one-stop shop” from which one could easily access the literature. The problem is that scholarly works on Ghana-Korea relations are scattered in books and journals which has made undertaking research on the relations between the two countries a bit Herculean. The purpose of this article is therefore to fill the lacuna and provide a state-of-the-art on some key themes in Ghana-Korea relations which have emerged and yet scattered in scholarly works. They include culture and society; governance and leadership; economy; bilateral relations (including political, economic and technical cooperation); and science and education. The methodology employed is desktop research through the consultation of government publications, books and articles.

## Keywords

Ghana – Korea – relations – state-of-the-art – thematic areas

## 1 Introduction: Issues and Objectives

Even though scholars have written on Ghana-Korea relations over the past forty years, there is still a lacuna in the literature because there is no “one-stop shop” from which one could easily access the literature. The problem is that scholarly works on Ghana-Korea relations are scattered in books and journals which has made undertaking research on the relations between the two

countries a bit Herculean. This situation is compounded because some of the literature is in Korean and not English. The purpose of this article is therefore to fill the lacuna and provide a state-of-the-art on some key thematic areas in Ghana-Korea relations, which have emerged and yet scattered in scholarly works using a desk study. They include the comparative literature; single case studies on the two countries; governance and leadership; the economy; bilateral relations; and information technology. There is a short conclusion at the end of the article which points to an agenda for future research.

The research value of the approaches of this paper can be justified on a number of grounds. First, a review of the state-of-the-art usually entails a desk study in which an effort is made to deal with the seminal and current literature that can serve as a very useful source of information for scholars who want to work on Ghana-Korea relations research. Second, the focus on the indicators of governance and leadership, the economy, bilateral relations and information technology may be seen as providing the building blocks that underpin Ghana-Korea relations research which have attracted much attention and interest in the literature. In addition, the indicators of governance, leadership, the economy and information technology have dominated the debate on why Ghana and Korea are different and may sometimes be perceived as incomparable in spite of their seemingly similar status in the immediate post-independence period in which the two countries had literally the same economic indicators and prognoses. The effectiveness of using the approaches in the context of this article is not only to complement and extend the empirical and comparative literature but also to draw attention to the usefulness of the indicators in undertaking a state-of-the-art that focuses on relations research between other countries other than Ghana and Korea. This will no doubt enable scholars to extrapolate the convergences and divergences in using and applying the indicators and how they are relevant in the specific contexts of the countries on which research is being undertaken.

## 2 The Comparative Literature on Ghana-Korea Relations

The comparative literature on Ghana and Korea largely focuses on the sharply contrasting development record or trajectory of the two countries. This has motivated some scholars as well as policy makers to search for plausible explanations. They include the publications of Werlin, (1991; 1994; Kalu and Kim, 2014; Afesorgbor, 2014; Kim, 2015). For instance, Werlin in his 1991 publication pointed out that even though Ghana and South Korea had about the same annual *per capita* GDP in 1960, the latter's annual purchasing power per head was

about ten times that of the former. Ghana's economy had retrogressed arising from allowing hyperinflation, over-regulation, production disincentives, institutional demoralization, and deterioration of human services.

This situation prompted the implementation of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1983, which even though had led to real GDP growth has left the economy still dependent upon the international price of cocoa and foreign aid. This is in contrast to Korea which in the mid-1960s under President Park successfully introduced an export-oriented economy by developing export pride, national leadership, market sustaining incentives, labour incentives, research, and technical education. To him even though both Korea and Ghana used state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the Koreans were more successful than Ghana because of the use of a performance evaluation system, which can be introduced elsewhere with the necessary political commitment and will and dealing with resistance and other associated problems of any reform effort.

In his 1994 publication, however, Werlin seems a bit charitable on Ghana. He questions some of the factors (political insecurity, authoritarianism, corruption, and clientelism) identified by Jackson and Rosberg (1982), as the contributory factors to Africa's underdevelopment. In addition, Jackson and Rosberg (1982, p. 18) noted that African leaders, in contrast to those of the Asian Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), are primarily interested in survival rather than development: "In African countries' governance is more a matter of seamanship and less one of navigation – that is staying afloat rather than going somewhere."

He emphasizes that many of the practices identified in Jackson and Rosberg also took place in South Korea (Pae, 1992, pp. 252-253). To him, the first President of the Fourth Republic, Jerry Rawlings, seemed to be far less corrupt and tyrannical than Korea's Presidents Rhee, Park, and Chun. Under Rawlings, the country implemented Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) have been widely imposed as a form of aid conditionality from 1984. The SAPs led to liberalisation of the external trade and financial sector regimes, the phasing out of price controls, measures to improve the financial performance of many state-owned enterprises, and the introduction of more competition (Kim, 2015). It also led to the stabilisation of prices, mainly through balanced budgets, market liberalisation, and public sector reform, all of which were aimed at creating a market-friendly environment (Tsikata, 2001). The record of SAPs has been described as mixed especially when it involved a series of politically costly reform measures, including a massive devaluation of the cedi, drastic cutbacks in both the public and private sector, and the introduction of more liberal economic

management leading to disaffection from the Ghana Trades Union Congress, growing inequalities and the implementation of the programmes of actions to mitigate the social costs of adjustment (PAMSCAD) (Hutchful, 1989; Konadu-Agyemang and Takyi, 2001).

In spite of progress made in Ghana with the implementation of structural adjustment and the advent of the Fourth Republic Werlin (1994) blames Ghanaian administrators, as compared to South Korean ones, as more counterproductive in policy design and implementation and concludes that development disparities will undoubtedly continue to widen between the two countries.

The views of Werlin (1994) reinforce the fact that the public sector over the years has not been able to perform its functions effectively and efficiently leading to general dissatisfaction by citizens, politicians and development partners. This incapacity has also aided the inconsistency or fluctuations in Ghana's growth path. A particular feature of this trend is that as Ghana grew, poverty did not reduce as expected (Osei et. al., 2018). Some scholars have attributed clientelism or state capture as central to understanding the country's limited success in improving the effectiveness of public institutions. For instance, Werlin (2003, p. 330) pointed out that the reform efforts initiated in the 1990s to improve the performance of the public service were not successful because "the management of financial resources continued to be weak in monitoring actual expenditures, auditing, and clearly and consistently applying regulations. All of the institutions of government were affected by pervasive clientelism and personalism (thereby undermining political software) that inevitably stoked the fires of corruption."

Kalu and Kim (2014) examine aid, state-business relations, and development in Ghana and South Korea and the key factors that explain the divergent paths of aid and development outcomes between the two countries. They reinforce the point that even though Ghana and South Korea shared approximately similar levels of GDP per capita in the 1960s, South Korea has successfully transformed itself from a major recipient to a donor country and enjoys advanced economic growth and a high standard of living while Ghana – despite visible growth in recent decades – remains a low-income and aid-dependent country. This they attributed to South Korea's design and implementation of enabling national development policies, the collaboration between state and business to achieve economic development.

In contrast, however, Ghana's local business sector was inadequately integrated as an economic development partner with the state, which explains the less than outstanding performance of various state-led development projects

in Ghana in much of the last 50 years. In addition, in South Korea, aid was used effectively to support and build local business groups, while in Ghana aid has largely failed to boost the private sector.

Kim (2015), adopting a comparative historical approach, examines the questions of why and how foreign assistance was utilised successfully in South Korea but less so in Ghana, with a focus on the role of aid in the process of state building and state transition in these two countries. The divergent paths of the two countries with special focus on the impact of foreign assistance on state transitions are explored. Contextual factors including the effect of the colonial legacy in each of these two regions in shaping modern states, and the specific characteristics of foreign assistance intervention are seen to have provided useful insights in explaining the differential impact of aid on state building and state transition in Ghana and in South Korea.

Afesorgbor (2014) seems narrow as the analysis focuses on the three main reasons why specific industrial policies of South Korea succeeded while those of Ghana failed. According to him, Korea's successfully industrialized because of three different economic schools of thought, namely, neoliberal policies, government's role and intervention and overseas development assistance. These do not apply in the Ghanaian context because the process of industrialization is quite different from the conditions existing in Korea and no amount of mimicking the Korean strategy will work in Ghana. Accordingly, successful industrialization may be more successful through a deliberate, intensive, intensive, guided and well-coordinated effort by the government of Ghana – a view long postulated by (Hirschman, p. 1982).

In addition to the comparative review articulated in the above section, it is also necessary to project in this paper, the single case studies on Ghana and Korea to which we now turn.

### 3 Single Case Studies on Ghana-Korea Relations

Notwithstanding the rather sketchy comparative studies on Ghana and Korea, there are a lot of single case studies on Ghana and Korea covering several areas including politics, governance, leadership, economy, technical cooperation and bilateral relations and culture and society (see Table below).

In addition, there are country reports on the two countries by multilateral and bilateral institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as well as government publications and documents

TABLE 1 Some key studies on Ghana and Korea

Some of the key studies on Ghana	Some of the key studies on Korea
<p>Apter 1963; Austin 1964; Owusu 1970; Killick 1978; Boahen 1989; Price 1975; Hansen and Ninsin 1989; Rothchild 1991; Shillington 1992; Chazan 1983; Pellow and Chazan 1986; Ray 1986; Ninsin and Drah 1991; Gyimah-Boadi 1993; Herbst 1993; Nugent 1995; Dzorgbo 2001; Ohemeng 2005; Whitfield 2005; Arthur 2006; Boafo-Arthur 2007; Tettey et. al. 2003; Oquaye 2004; Tsikata 2007; Eghan 2008; Ayee 2007a;b; 2013; 2017; Gyekye 2008; Aryeetey and Kanbur 2008; Killick 2010; Amamoo 2010; Danso-Boafo 2012; Ayelazuno 2013; Republic of Ghana 2016; Ohemeng and Ayee 2016; Osei et. al. 2018.</p>	<p>Park 1966; Mason et. al. 1980; Jones and Sakong 1980; Cumings 1981; Koo 1987; Amsden 1989; Jones and Sakong 1990; Vogel 1990; Woo 1991; Pae 1992; Koo and Kim 1992; Hart-Landsberg 1993; Kim 1993; 1997; Chang (2009); Chang, Park, and Yoo 1998; Woo-Cumings 2001; Lee and Taejoon 2006; Lie 1998; Vu 2007; Pirie 2008; Shin and Chang 2003; Wong 2004; Chung 2009; Chung 2007; Chung 2007; Jeong 2007; Gills 1999; Hart-Landsberg 1993; Jang 2011; Mah 2011; Kim 2011; 2012; Kim 2010; Koo 2000; Lee 2011; Jones and Urasawa 2014; Karippacheril et. al. 2016.</p>

on several sectors such as constitutional and legal framework, the economy, budget, development planning, population, culture and society, geography and history (Ministry of Strategy and Finance, 2009; National Assembly Budget Office, 2015a; b; Republic of Ghana, 1992; 2017).

Having looked at the comparative and single case study literature, the next sections will address the four thematic areas (governance and leadership; the economy; technical cooperation; and information technology (IT)) which have attracted interest and concern in the literature.

#### 4 Governance and Leadership

Studies have found that governance and leadership have largely been the key determinants in the development trajectories of Ghana and Korea (Werlin, 1991; 1994). Some of the key issues include the role of the political, technocratic, business and civil society class and policy coordination, coherence and consistency in the two countries.

In South Korea, the political leaders provided clear directions for social and economic change and created a powerful constituency among the leaderships in several domains to fully harness the economic potential of their countries. General Park Chung Hew, who came to power as President in 1961 had a clear idea of the country's strategic objectives and was very "hands on". His first concerns on acceding to power were entrenching a self-sustaining economy and self-reliance in defence matters. In his words, the first priority was that of urgently solving the economic distress of the Korean people struggling in despair and hunger, and reconstructing a self-sustaining economy (Seunghee Han, 2014, p. 47).

In Korea, political centralisation under General Park was matched by centralisation of economic decision-making in the Economic Planning Board (EPB). The EPB was established by bringing together the budget bureau from the Finance Ministry and the statistics bureau from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Bank of Korea was also brought under EPB's control. Moreover, the state also secured majority ownership in the banks, which enabled it to maintain control over credit. It was thus able to pursue "market-defying" selective industrial policies (Chang, 2010).

In Korea, a strong alliance between government and business was created through a combination of coercion and inducement, and contestation and accommodation. For instance, the Park regime persuaded key businessmen to make large contributions to the government to avoid prosecution for amassing wealth illegally (Amsden, p. 1989). The Association of Korean Businessmen, formed with government's encouragement, identified a number of key industries to invest in on the proviso that appropriate support policies were in place. The "contributions" were also invested in new plant, with the government underwriting foreign loans to ensure the necessary additional capital. In this manner, the government and the private sector recognised the importance of mutual cooperation (Haggard et. al., p. 1990).

The most important policy element in the transformation of countries which have witnessed great development is the effective coordination and intricate orchestration of economic and social policies and processes. In Korea, the main vehicle for delivering economic policy was the five-year plan, four of which were launched during its high-growth period. The Economic Planning Board (EPB) anchored the policy orchestration that produced the country's impressive development results (Seunghee Han, 2014).

The EPB chaired working-level coordination meetings on matters of economic planning and operation, with the vice minister and director-general of each economy-related ministry in attendance. At a higher level, there was

a meeting of Economic Ministers that was chaired by the EPB Minister who also served as Deputy Prime Minister. At the apex was the Monthly Economic Trend Report Meeting, the coordinating forum was chaired by the President with key ministers, senior officials and representatives from businesses and banks in attendance (Woo, 1991).

One significant thing about leadership in Korea was its capacity to bring the population to subscribe to its vision and nationalist ideology that projected national pride and extolled material advancement, and advanced the imperatives of duty, dedication, pragmatism, and innovativeness and competitiveness (Ohno and Ohno, 2009). It often deployed militarist approaches to inculcating ethical discipline and effectiveness. For instance, the organisational structure in the large heavy and chemical industries in Korea mirrored that of the army with post-military service workers working under militarist hierarchical command (Kim, 2015).

In contrast, however, governance and leadership in Ghana had not facilitated development as expected. In other words, the country has experienced weak developmental governance capacity – the values of which include coherent policy formulation and implementation; meritocratic, effective, and professional public administration; commitment to development ahead of personal aggrandizement; a unified national project that unites a diverse population; coordination and regulatory institutions that generate confidence; political, social and economic openness and inclusiveness; and formalization of juridical and administrative rules and their enforcement or compliance; and limited corruption (Pectrin, 2016).

The country unlike South Korea, had witnessed political instability with military coups in 1966, 1972, 1978, 1979 and 1981 in which the civilian governments were overthrown. The importance of political stability has been underscored in the Korean context leading to the justification of the authoritarian nature of early Korea and the other developmental state as necessary to ensure stability during the period of rapid transformation. According to Korea's President Park:

In order to ensure efforts to improve the living conditions of the people in Asia even undemocratic measures may be necessary ... It is also an undeniable fact that the people of Asia today fear starvation and poverty more than the oppressive duties thrust on them by totalitarianism ... In other words, the Asian peoples want to obtain economic equality first and build a more equitable political machinery afterward (Haggard et. al. 1990, p. 15).

This statement is not oblivious of Korea's own state of devastation and being a war-torn country in the 1950s and the political instability that followed after the cessation of the war.

Even though Ghana experienced political instability until the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1993, the leaders on their part did not provide the vision of the future and therefore did not initiate a focused agenda with rigorous plans and programmes thus creating the conditions for instability such as neopatriotism, that is, a political strategy in which allegiance and loyalty are rooted in familial or kin-based relations. The leaders pursued short-term policies and programmes to bolster their tenure in office while they were not development-oriented or transformative (Ayee, 2007). As a consequence, it became difficult to mobilize or galvanize the population to buy into their ideologies as is the case in Korea.

Ghana's first President, Kwame Nkrumah, for instance, pursued policies and programmes which will boost his political image and popularity. Accordingly, "the new factories and farms should be physically impressive, should be spread over the country and should create new jobs, and should benefit the consumer via lower prices. And just as it was necessary to impress the electorate, it was also necessary to reward party activists, so these enterprises were used as sources of party patronage" (Killick, 1978, p. 216).

Viewed in this way, leadership in Ghana may be seen as "personalistic rather than developmental" (Jackson and Rosberg, 1982). Werlin (1994) finds it hard to believe and understand why Ghanaian leaders, in contrast to their South Korean counterparts, have failed to make the same rational association of their political success with the steps essential for development. Acheampong, for example, who ruled Ghana during much of the 1970s, was so disdainful of the advice of international, as well as local economists, that he "reminds one of a drunk on a motorway driving against the flow of traffic: the crash was only a question of time" (Huq, 1989, p. 28). Even though Rawlings was considered much more rational and courageous than Acheampong or Nkrumah in this regard, his political commitment to development appeared to have been far less than that of his South Korean counterparts (Werlin, 1994).

Most of the policies and programmes designed and implemented had been over-politicized resulting in they being discontinued after a new government took over power even though this is contrary to the Article 35(7) of 1992 Constitution, which stipulates that "as far as practicable, a government shall continue and execute projects and programmes commenced by previous Governments".

Political leadership has become an intricate and integral part of Ghanaian politics and administration today. In almost all elections since the return to

constitutional rule in 1993, political leadership has always been a big issue and therefore the political parties have spent time extolling the virtues of their presidential candidates (Ayee, 2017).

Political leadership is better understood if one looks at the context which is influenced by four factors; namely, the challenges that face all political leaders; the neoliberal environment within which the leaders work; culture and the media. The challenge to political leadership in Ghana, as in other Sub-Saharan African countries, is daunting. Leaders are faced with a myriad problems including the almost insurmountable challenge of meeting expectations with meagre resources, the need to grapple with continued dependence on an unfavourable international economic order, the need to incorporate a diverse population into a workable whole, and to establish the guidelines for a distinctive Ghanaian path of not only constructive change but also socio-economic development (Pellow and Chazan, 1986; Tsikata, 2007). Such challenges are acknowledged in Chapter 6 of the 1992 Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy, which enjoins political leadership to establish a just and free society and take steps for the realization of basic human rights, a healthy economy, the right to work, the right to good healthcare and the right to education (Republic of Ghana, 1992).

The governance and leadership framework is further undermined by weak implementation of public policies and programmes and compliance and enforcement of the rule of law. Poor institutional capacity of the various ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) to formulate and implement policies for enhanced service delivery to the citizens (World Bank, 2010). This reinforces the point made that:

However, good a plan or a programme may be on paper, it is of little use unless it is implemented. This is where Ghana has largely failed. In Ghana, development plans and programmes have a very poor record of implementation ... Many people feel concerned about the waste of manpower and resources in formulating plans and programmes that are not likely to be implemented (Huq, 1989, p. 18).

The weak compliance and enforcement of the rule of law is largely due to democracy. For instance, two of the major causes for the failure of past anti-corruption strategies in Ghana are lack of effective and sustained coordination and the lackadaisical government commitment to, and limited support for, the implementation of anti-corruption strategies (Republic of Ghana, 2015, p. 20). Furthermore, limited coordination between sector ministries, departments and agencies that emphasizes the point that "one of the problems identified as

a cause of failure of past programmes is individual Ministry led programmes with ... few common linkages” (World Bank, 2010, p. 3).

## 5 The Economy

It is in the area of the economy that most studies have devoted attention to explain the reasons for the widening economic disparities between Ghana and South Korea from a 1957 level of near equal per-capita income (Werlin, 1991; 1994; Kalu and Kim, 2014; Kim, 2015; Afesorghor, 2014). South Korea was considered a basket case in the 1950s, with inept and corrupt officials, heavy dependence on US aid for survival, and poor prospects for investment (Ohno and Ohno, 2009). However, in 2016 South Korea has a GDP, GDP per capita and GDP growth rate of USD1,411 trillion, USD27,538.81 and 2.8% annual change respectively (World Bank, 2016). It is the fourth largest economy in Asia and the eleventh in the world. In contrast, Ghana ranks second fiddle to Korea with GDP, GDP per capita and GDP growth rate of USD42.69 billion, USD1,513.46 and 3.6% annual change (World Bank, 2016), which is seen as a far cry from the record high of 14.0% in 2011 and the lowest in over two decades (ISSER, 2017; Republic of Ghana, 2017). It is currently a lower middle country status achieved in 2011 and was a Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) in 2001.

Apart from South Korea having development-oriented and transformational leaders and Ghana having transactional and short-sighted leaders with little or no vision, other factors explain the disparities in the economic trajectories of both countries. First is the model of development chosen by both countries. Korea under General Park had the vision to become a developmental state, which is a state that puts economic development as top priority of government policy, and is able to design effective instruments to promote such a goal (Johnson, 1999; UNECA, 2011; Ayee, 2013). Its common features are a capable, autonomous bureaucracy, a political leadership oriented towards development, a close, often mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship between some state agencies and key industrial capitalists, successful policy interventions which promote growth and development structures that perform developmental roles (Evans, 2011; Fritz and Menocal, 2007; Routley, 2012). This entails a total transformation of the economy including agriculture with emphasis on industrialization.

Ghana, on the other hand, has vacillated between socialism or “state capitalism”, mixed economy and, currently, neo-liberal World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) prescriptions. The economy including agriculture has not been transformed and industrialization has lagged behind (Aryeetey and

Kanbur, 2008). This is because there is an apparent inability to have a national agenda for development in Ghana. Since independence, no clear path in terms of setting a policy agenda to alter the administrative role of the state was or and has been laid. The lacuna of a clear reform agenda has indeed, become the bane of Ghana's administrative life. What is obvious, however, is that administrative reforms in Ghana have oscillated from statist to market-oriented reforms (Ohemeng, 2005; Ohemeng and Ayee, 2016). Efforts have been made by the country to become a developmental state through various reforms which have, however, failed to achieve the desired results in spite of the optimism that the "good performances put up by some public services have begun to vest Ghana with characteristics of a developmental state" (Eghan, 2008: 4).

Second is the nexus between the state and the private sector. In Korea, a strong alliance between government and large business groups known as the *chaebol* was created through a combination of coercion and inducement, and contestation and accommodation. However, in Ghana, the picture is different. Even though successive governments regard the private sector as a partner in development and an engine of growth, creating the enabling environment for the private sector has always been problematic largely as a result of the tenuous alliance or relations between the government and private business groups (Arthur, 2006; Ayelazuno, 2013). Structural problems persist in spite of the number of interventions including Private Sector Development Strategy (PSDS) 1 and 2 and Trade and Investment Programme, which have been targeted at the sector over the past fifteen years. Some of the problems include the high cost of doing business (notably, high and multiple taxes), high cost of credit, lack of access to the long-term financing for businesses, high informality, bureaucratic bottlenecks and lack of support infrastructure. These have led to a generally unfriendly business environment, globally uncompetitive industries, weak private sector growth and a shrinking manufacturing sector. The slow progress made in the development of the private sector is reflected in the weakening of key growth sectors and sub-sectors of the economy, especially agriculture and manufacturing, which hold high potential for economic growth and job creation (Republic of Ghana, 2017; ISSER, 2017).

## 6 Bilateral Relations

Bilateral relations between Ghana and South Korea started in 1977 when the two countries started diplomatic relations. The legal framework for bilateral cooperation is the Technical, Economic Cooperation and Trade Promotion Agreement which was signed in June 14, 1990. Since then, succeeding

governments have promised to intensify and deepen bilateral relations and model socio-economic transformation of Ghana on the programmes used by South Korea.

The literature has shown that even though bilateral relations between the two countries have existed, they have been largely skewed in favour of South Korea (Kalu and Kim, 2014; Kim, 2015). This is because of the differences in the structure of the economies of the two countries. For instance, while Ghana largely depends on the export of primary commodities as well as grants and loans for the bulk of her foreign exchange resources, Korea exports value added goods in the form of high-tech products such as automobiles, shipping vessels, computer chips and various electronic goods. In addition, Ghana's economy is more open to the influx of foreign goods than Korea's, whose non-tariff barriers are more stringent.

In spite of the disadvantaged position, Korea's bilateral relations with Ghana cannot be described as a "one-way traffic". For instance, from 2014-2017, a framework agreement was signed between the two countries, enabling Ghana obtain a concessionary loan facility of \$200 million from the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDF). In addition, the amazing development progress of Korea has been well acknowledged and appreciated by succeeding Ghanaian leaders, who want Ghana to follow the footsteps of Korea. For instance, the current President, Nana Akufo-Addo pointed out that "many of us see your country (South Korea) as an inspiration of how, with organization, determination, hard work and creativity, a poor nation can, within a generation, transform itself to become one of the leading economies of the world ... It continues to be a beacon for us, because we all know about the parallel periods of birth of Ghana and South Korea, and, yet, Korea is one of the advanced economies, and we are still struggling." (Akufo-Addo, 2017).

In terms of technical cooperation, Ghana since 2007 has benefited from the Knowledge Sharing Programme (KSP) of Korea, which is a comprehensive policy consultation program which aims to assist partner countries in formulating and implementing national development policies by sharing Korea's economic development experience. Some of the projects include building the foundations for the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and reforming public finance management through the Ministry of Finance in the areas of linking annual budget to national development plan and Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) which has benefited from Korea's Digital Budget and Accounting System (DBAS) which is recognized as one of the most advanced integrated FMIS solutions in the world (Korea Institute for Development Strategy, 2011).

## 7 Information Technology

Even though the 21st century is regarded as the digital age, the progress of Korea and Ghana in this front shows two contrasting trends in spite of the recognition that the application of information technology (IT) to the challenges of public administration and effective service delivery has been one of the most powerful and transformative governance trends throughout the developing world (Beschel et. al., 2017).

Two reasons account for the introduction of e-governance in Korea. First, it was meant to achieve efficiency (and eventually, as the system evolved, greater transparency) in government. Second, it was part of a broader national strategy to use technology to shift Korea's economic paradigm from an industrial-based growth economy to a knowledge-based economy and information society.

The progress of Korea in digital governance has been described as phenomenal. Korea's achievements have been widely recognized by the international community for the past decade. It is instructive to note that in 2004, Korea was ranked first in the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Digital Opportunity Index. (Ahn, 2008; United Nations, 2010). In 2005, it was awarded the APEC World Advanced Award for its e-governance system. In 2006, Korea's Online Tax System was recognized by the OECD as one of the best practices in e-government. In 2007, Korea received the U.N. Public Service Award and the e-Asia Award by Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT). It also received the E-Challenge Award in 2008 and has consistently won U.N. Public Service Awards since 2011. Since 2010, Korea has been ranked as the top country in the U.N. e-government survey – a composite index that combines three important dimensions of e-governance: the provision of on-line services, telecommunication connectivity and human capacity (United Nations, 2014).

Notwithstanding these achievements, it needs to be pointed out that it is not every Korean e governance undertaking that has been successful. The country has undoubtedly experienced many of the challenges confronted by other countries – bureaucratic struggles over turf and mandates, investments that have been overtaken by subsequent technological advances, and projects that have failed to live up to their initial promise. However, the lessons from the Korean story are instructive. In particular the push to embed e-governance within a national development strategy focused on informatics and export-led growth, may be the product of a particular historical juncture and the confluence of unique factors not easily replicable in other contexts (Beschel et. al., 2017).

The Ghanaian experience with digital governance may, however, be described as an anticlimax to the intriguing progress made by Korea. The importance of ICT in national development was insufficiently acknowledged before the early years of the new millennium. It must be said that while throughout the 1990s the Ghanaian government made several attempts to develop the communication sector, ICT as a developmental tool was overlooked. Development and enhancement of infrastructure in this sector continued to be slow (Wilson, 2004). However, in 2003 the government developed the first comprehensive ICT policy, ICT4AD. The policy expressed the vision of transforming “Ghana into [an] information-rich knowledge-based society and economy through the development, deployment, and exploitation of ICTs within the economy and society” (Republic of Ghana, 2003). Some of the 14 key areas of the ICT4AD were: accelerated human development; promotion of ICTs in education, or the deployment and exploitation of ICTs in education; and facilitating government administration and service delivery (Republic of Ghana, 2003, p. 24).

ICT4AD gave birth to the eGhana project, which is regarded as a breakthrough in the area of donor collaboration to have occurred since the development of Ghana’s blueprint for ICT. It addresses, in a coordinated manner, the constraints in the deployment of ICT to promote good governance. To ensure the achievement of the objectives of the project, in 2010, the government concluded a financing agreement with the International Development Association (IDA), amounting to US\$44.7m to fill the financing gap created by the implementation of the first three components of the project. The agreement also introduced the Ghana Integrated Financial Management Information System (GIFMIS) component, under the Ministry of Finance, to improve the efficiency and transparency of the government’s financial management activities.

The GIFMIS has served as the official system of record and of processing of financial information, and to meet the budget preparation and management, financial accounting and reporting, disbursement processing, internal controls, and auditing requirements (Republic of Ghana, p. 2016). The aim is to make it easy for citizens to access government information, and know what the government is doing. Some of the initiatives embedded in the project, include the e-justice program, e-parliament, e-immigration, and e-government procurement.

These programs are seen as comprising the core governance issues when it comes to building trust and confidence in government, apart from those of public service delivery and issues relating to elections (Awotwi and Owusu, 2010).

In addition, there are developments at the service delivery level, a key aspect of which is Business Process Re-Engineering (BPR), especially with respect to the revenue agencies and the Registrar General's Department. This component of the project concerns the Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA) acting in collaboration with the Registrar General's Department (RGD) to deliver more efficient, cost effective service to increase revenue generation in an open and transparent manner as part of the project for easy tracking of taxes. The implementation of the project has led to the integration of tax administration that focuses on business registration, returns processing, exemptions, refunds, tax payer accounting and collections, revenue accounting, enforcement-compliance-debt, risk and audit-visits, while the Registrar General's Department deals with issues such as business, marriage, property, and estate registration, and MIS reports and shared services (Ohemeng and Adarkwa, 2014a; b). The initial focus on these two institutions stems from the number of complains concerning bureaucratic red tape in dealing with them, as well as concerning corruption. Currently, a number of public agencies, including the Driver Vehicle and Licensing Authority (DVLA), Passports Office, Registrar General's Department, the Food and Drugs Board. Ghana Revenue Authority and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly have fully implemented e-government services to the public. With this online service delivery system, applicants apply for services and check the status of their applications online reduce the unauthorized charging of fees for such forms by bureaucrats (Republic of Ghana, 2016).

In spite of the progress a number of challenges have been encountered in the implementation of the eGhana project and general dissatisfaction of citizens of public service delivery. They include the poor culture and attitude of public sector workers and citizens in general; the digital divide; the inability of the government to focus on the implementation of what may be described as m-government as a major option in its quest to bridge the gap between itself and the citizens; ICT infrastructure development inadequacy; the lack of the freedom of access and freedom of information that would enable citizens to fully access government; and levels of general illiteracy, as well as ICT illiteracy (Ohemeng and Adarkwa, 2014 a; b).

Three major areas significantly affected by this "illiteracy" problem are e-justice, e-parliament, and general participation in policy discussions. For example, a number of judges and lawyers are computer illiterate, so that the administration of justice continues to be slow, as judgments have to be handwritten before they are given to secretaries to type, sometimes with errors added thereafter. Parliament has yet to become fully functional in ICT, so that

the personal computers provided to members under the e-parliament program are hardly ever used. The illiteracy problem extends to the business arena as most of the people are in the informal sector, with little education, and lack the skill to file a tax return for example. Not only small-scale businesses but, even, well established ones are also challenged. Thus, even though the government has developed online tax filing, as well as continuing to put the national budget online – indicating, for example, tax exemptions – a number of these businesses are unable to access this information for their own benefit.

Finally, there is highly inadequate funding for the operation and maintenance of the Government Wide Network (GovNet) – a network consisting of all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and arrears have risen to a very high level in the eGhana project. In the absence of proper funding, there is a big risk of the GovNet collapsing which will impact all the e-Government applications and the GFMIS. In addition, even though the government mobilized additional funds from other donors such as the Rockefeller Foundation and Google for complementary ICT sector activities. there are, however, questions about the sustainability of the GovNet because the Government did not provide funds for its operation and maintenance and the failure to consult with the private sector at the design stage and with donors at the implementation stage has led to their dissatisfaction (Republic of Ghana, 2016).

## 8 Conclusion

It has not been possible to undertake an exhaustive review of the state-of-the-art on Ghana-Korea relations research in this paper. This is because of the scattered nature of the literature and the fact that some of the publications are in Korean and not English. This is therefore a modest effort to review the literature which, it is hoped, will generate more debate and interest in the area. One of the lacunae which this paper does not address is to undertake a time series review of the literature focusing on the number of publications and themes covered in each year with the aim of finding out which year has more publications and which theme has been more dominant and reasons assigned for the state of affairs. This is, however, an agenda for future research which can be taken up in a subsequent paper.

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