UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

HEADMASTERS CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING FREE SENIOR HIGH

SCHOOL POLICY AT UPPER DENKYIRA MUNICIPALITIES IN THE CENTRAL

REGION

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DECLARATION

STUDENTS DECLARATION

I, DANIEL TWUM BARIMAH, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE……………………………………….

DATE……………………………………………….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
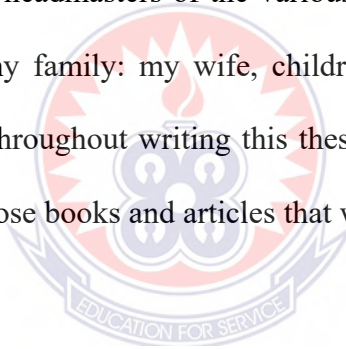
NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. LYDIA OSEI AMANKWAH

SIGNATURE……………………………………….

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my family; Prince Twum Barimah, Hannah Amoah Twum, Judith Twum, Christian

Twum, Malvin Twum Barimah and Jaden Twum Barimah (children), my sister Christian

Twum and Father, Mr. Stephen Twum Barimah.

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of the study were to find out how heads implement free Senior High School policy, identify challenges headmasters face in the implementation of the free Senior High School Policy and strategies to improve the policy. Case study design was used for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select fifteen headmasters in fifteen Senior High Schools. Semi-structured interview was the main instrument used to collect data. Data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis. The study showed that the free Senior High School policy lacked clear documented policy to guide heads in the implementation of free senior high school. The study also revealed infrastructure and lack of teaching and learning materials. It was recommended that the government should provide adequate infrastructure and resources to schools to ensure that free Senior High School education runs smoothly without compromising on quality.
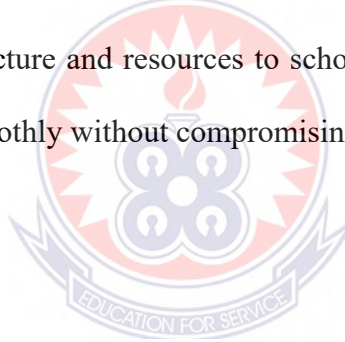
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Education plays a very pivotal role in every human life. It is fundamental in sustaining democracy, improving health, increasing per capital income and conserving environmental resources of nations (Fielmua & Bandie, 2012). Education is described as the mirror of the society, showing its strengths, weaknesses, hopes, biases and key values of its culture. Thus, education has a definite role to play in the development of people and countries (Kirk & Gallagher, 2017).

Modern education, schooling in particular, aims at imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes required by the young ones to become functional in their respective societies. Schools are therefore intended to serve as agents for developing individual citizens within a country (Pandey, 2016). In essence, schools are institutions where children are groomed to appreciate what the society in which they live stands for and are equipped in order for them to contribute to the advancement of their society.

In 2015, the Delors report to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, stressed the importance of education in coping with 21st-century global challenges through means of sustainable development and new forms of international cooperation. The report continued by claiming that education needs to adapt to the changing world by focusing on forming whole human beings that possess knowledge, aptitudes, critical faculty and an ability to act (UNESCO, 2015).

Governments all over the world have been improving their educational sector through funding programs aimed at reducing the financial burden on parents, increasing

access and quality to education. The governments of many states in the world switched their educational policy to a free senior high school policy to reduce poverty by finally eliminating the financial burdens parents face in paying their children's fees. As part of the governments' strategies to help curb down economic pressure on parents, the free senior high school policy introduced by the governments is seen by many as a step in the right direction (Togobo & Theophilus, 2018).

In a related development, quality education is crucial in Africa's strategic plans towards economic development. Quality education has become a determining factor in facilitating international support for Africa's educational expansion and developmental initiatives (Ankomah, Koomson, Bosu & Oduro, 2015). The continent explores avenues of addressing high drop-out rates, weak pupil performance, teacher shortage and insufficient instructional time among other things considered as symptoms of low quality education at different grades of educational ladder especially at the second cycle level.

As more and more children in developing countries enroll in primary school and gender gaps in primary enrollment shrink, policymakers' attention has shifted to secondary school. For instance, the first target under education for the U.N's new "Sustainable Development Goals" is "by 2030, ensure that all students complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes." In Ghana, the setting of this study, the incoming government has promised to make secondary education free (Ankomah et al, 2015).

Free senior high school education is to provide free education to all second cycle students irrespective of their status, parents, religion, tribe or grade. That is, free tuition, no library fee, no boarding fee, no science laboratory fee, no examination fee, no utility

fee, free meals for both boarders and day-students, no Parents Teachers Association (PTA) fee, and free textbooks for all at the senior high level (Pritchett, 2018). This aimed at increasing enrollment; improving quality through academic performance and most importantly reducing the burden on parents from paying their children fees (Togobo & Theophilus, 2018).

In Ghana, second-cycle education is recognized as critical to the country's quest to develop at a faster rate because it is the most accessible form of higher education today with greater potential of sustaining higher levels of literacy, increasing political awareness, strengthening democracy and producing a pool of middle-level manpower crucial to national development (Quist, 2013). Successive governments in the country have therefore, made efforts to device strategies of improving quality delivery of education through policy formulation and implementation and better still constituting committees to review or reform the educational system in the country to give it a face lift (Ankomah, Koomson, Bosu, & Oduro, 2015).

There are several studies conducted on the impact of funding on enrollment and students' academic performance. For instance, the free education introduced in South Africa, Uganda and in some areas enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school (Boatman & Long, 2016; Blanco and Meneses, 2010; Dynarski and Scott-Clayton, 2013; Garlick, 2013; Melguizo, 2011 and Taryn and Claudia, 2012). Other studies also found funding to be useful in improving the academic performance of students (Moussa, Gajigo, & Pugatch, 2015, Natasha & Michelle, 2011, Stater, 2009). Against this background, this study seeks to ascertain the challenges heads of senior high schools face in the implementation of Free Senior High School Policy Upper Denkyira Municipalities.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Headmasters' challenges of implementing free Senior High School policy have led to increasing number problems for the policy (Sekyere, 2009). In an attempt to put measures in place to curb these challenges facing headmasters, government in Ghana has formulated various policies aimed at eliminating the challenges to quality education through improving the infrastructure, logistics and human resource base of the education sector (Sekyere, 2009). Headmasters are therefore required to provide support to the free Senior High School policy as required by law (Mfum-Mensah, 2003).

The presence of support provided to headmasters in the schools serves as a motivating factor that increases headmasters' self-efficacy to respond to diversity into schools (Mfum-Mensah, 2003). With this, the free Senior High School (2018) highlights the provision of the necessary support to be provided to schools and headmasters so that they can attend to this policy. However, it seems that little has been done in this regard in the Upper Denkyira Municipalities (Nyadroh, 2017). This is because Senior High Schools found in the Municipalities are not being given the needed support by the government. It is uncertain whether these supports are kept at the regional level (Nyadroh, 2017).

Again, the free Senior High School policy section 4.1 states that supports would be provided for headmasters to equip them provide support to the free Senior High School policy (Appiah & Abdulai, 2017). However, it appears the headmasters do not have the requisite facilities they can use to support the free Senior High School policy

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and therefore they are faced with challenges in addressing the needs of the policy (Appiah & Abdulai, 2017).

In addition, it seems little research has been done in this area so this research will add to the existing literature. It is for the above reasons that the researcher considered this topic to be important to investigate into the headmasters challenges of implementing free Senior High School policy in the Upper Denkyira Municipalities in the Central Region.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore headmasters' challenges of implementing free senior school policy at Upper Denkyira Municipalities.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study:

1. to assess how heads implement free Senior High School Policy in the central region.
2. to explore the challenges associated with the implementation of Free Senior School Policy in the central region.
3. to find out strategies that could be adopted to manage the challenges of free senior high school policy in the central region.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. How do heads implement free Senior High School Policy in the central region?

2. What challenges do headmasters face in the implementation of free senior high school policy in the central region?

3. What strategies could be adopted by headmasters to overcome the challenges of implementing free senior high school policy by heads in the central region?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study unravels the challenges heads face in implementing the Free Senior School Policy in public senior high schools in Ghana. This study will enable GES officials to be aware of the challenges facing heads in implementing the Free Senior High School policy in Ghana so that they can take steps to resolve them. Also, the study will help heads of senior high schools to be aware of the problems of the free senior high school policy and adopt strategies that can help them to effectively implement the policy. More so, the study will contribute to existing knowledge on the free senior high school policy so that recommendations can be made to resolve the problems. Furthermore, the study will serves as a reference material for future researchers who may conduct a similar research in the same field.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to Senior High Schools in the Central Region. Heads of Senior High Schools were used for the study. Areas such as challenges and strategies were covered. Recommendations were delimited to heads of Senior High Schools in the Central Region.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Only Senior High Schools in the two Municipalities were used and so the findings had limited information on how other schools in the same region are responding to the free Senior High School policy addressing challenges to headmasters. Similarly, the findings could not be generalised to all Senior High Schools in Ghana, however, they serve as a basis for similar and larger studies in other schools.

1.9 Definition of Terms

Policy: Course of action taken by the government to implementation free Senior High School.

Challenges: Factors that affect the successful implementation of the free senior high school policy.

Implementation: The act of executing the free senior high school policy according to its objectives.

Effectiveness: The degree to which the implementation of fee free education successfully produces the desired results.

Physical facilities: They are classrooms, laboratories, playgrounds, desks and chairs.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study delimitation, limitations, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter two entails review of related literature. Chapter

three covers the methodology to conduct the research. This includes research design, population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instrument, pilot test, data collection procedures and data analysis plan. Chapter four presents results and discussions of data collected from the field. Chapter five presents the summary of the study, findings, conclusions drawn, recommendations made and suggestions for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The researcher reviewed literature relating to the concept of free senior high school policy and its challenges facing heads in Senior High schools, ascertain the factors causing the challenges of the free senior high school policy and the ways by which the implementation of this policy can be improved in Ghana. The review covered human capital and modernization theories related to the study. The literature review is conducted under following thematic areas:

1. Concept of Free Policy

2. Human Capital Theory

3. Modernization Theory

4. Educational Reforms in Ghana

5. Quality Education

6. Benefits of Education

7. Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana

8. Source of Funding to Senior High Schools in Ghana

9. Challenges of Implementing Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana

10. Benefits of the Free SHS Policy in Ghana

11. Strategies to manage the challenges of implementing Free Senior High School policy

12. Summary of Literature Review

2.2 Concept of Free Policy

Free Education Policy (FEP): also known as Tuition Fee Free Policy (TFFP) is a governmental directive that is implemented in elementary, primary and secondary schools. The implementation of FEP is perceived as a device for fueling the National Government's Universal Basic Education (UBE) plan (IMANI, 2018). This means that education is free when parents and students do not pay for the tuition in their schools. This study supports this view in the sense that it assesses the challenges heads face in implementing the free senior high school policy in second cycle schools in Ghana and the way forward.

Free senior high school policy is a policy in which parents are exempted from paying some of the costs of education such as; examination fees, entertainment fees, library, Students Representative Council (SRC) dues, sports fees, culture fees, science development and mathematics quiz fees, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) fees and co-curricular fees to enable their children access education in secondary level (Dynarski & Scott-Clayton, 2013).

Free senior high school policy is a programme in which the government resolves to absorb all approved fees students and their parents supposed to pay to enable them access secondary education as a means of addressing inequality and ensuring equal opportunities for all students (Stater, 2009).

Free senor high school policy is a programme which ensures free tuition, no library fee, no boarding fee, no science laboratory fee, no examination fee, no utility fee, free meals for both boarders and day-students, no Parents Teachers Association (PTA) fee, and free textbooks for all at the senior high level (Fabio & Tatiana, 2016).

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Thus, in the views of IMANI (2018), Dynarski Scott-Clayton (2013), Stater (2009) and Tatiana, Fabio and Tatiana (2016), free senior high school policy is understood to be an action by the government to relieve parents from the responsibility of paying for their wards education in the second cycle institutions. This action by the government of Ghana has made education interesting to the parents but very cumbersome for heads of the schools to implement because of some challenges they face in implementing this policy. Hence, this study advances the search for heads challenges in implementing the free senior high school policy and finding strategies that can help improve the implementation of the policy by heads of the second cycle institutions in Ghana.

2.3 Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital theorists consider education as a form of investment in people to enhance their economic productivity. To them, the development of any society relies on how educated its citizens are and how scarce resources are channeled into improvement of their education. That educated persons have strong linkages with other factors of production (land, capital and entrepreneur) to maximize productivity in society. Based on this, Olaniyan and Okemakinde supported the assertion of the proponents of the theory by Schultz that an educated population is a productive one (Schultz, 2014).

Supporting the argument further, Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997: p.102) maintain that: "Human resource constitutes the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the

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active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development".

Emphasizing the significance of improved education and its quality, Babalola (2003) cited in Olaniyan and Okemakinde agree with the advocates of Human Capital Theory that, in every surviving nation or society accumulated knowledge should be transferred into the new generation who must be taught how it could be applied in developing new products, introducing new processes and production methods as well as producing social services.

In view of this, governments world over commit about five to six percent of their Gross Domestic Products (GDP) to formal education for human resource development. The non-governmental organizations as well spend their hard earn scarce resources training and sponsoring workers to upgrade their education and to some extent educating themselves. The assumption is that, through improved and quality education, the labour force of a country is thought better ways of doing old things and acquiring new knowledge to enhance their capacity and capability (Commission of the European Communities, 1996).

2.4 Modernization Theory

The adherents of this theory associate the causes of mass poverty in the newly independent countries after the Second World War to the backwardness of their economy. They asserted that, people in this world are poor not only because of their dependence on subsistence agriculture, application of traditional method and primitive technology but also they are conservative in outlook and naturally apathetic. They also

argued that massive capital investment in industries, the application of modern technology, skills and the spirit of competitiveness and enterprise can promote economic growth and reduce poverty. The application of technological skills in knowledge acquisition features prominently in Ghana's policy on quality education. Many policy prescriptive based on this theory that have been formulated have recognized the need for social, institutional and attitudinal changes. The best known policy is the one formulated by Rostow (1960-1963) which views development as passing through five main stages namely the Traditional Society, Transitional Stage, Take Off stage, Maturity Stage and Mass Consumption Stage.

In the Traditional Society, the economy is dominated by subsistence activities, barter system of trading and agriculture is the most industry. Labour intensive is used alongside traditional methods of production. On the other hand, the transitional stage: (the precondition for takeoff). Features prominently increased specialization, development of transport infrastructure, growth in incomes, savings, investment and entrepreneurship as external trade in primary products. At the Take off Stage, labour moves from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector due to increase in industrialization. 10 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) is invested into the economy and growth is concentrated in the few regions of the country and in one or two manufacturing industries Economic transitions are also accompanied by the evolution of new political and social institutions that support the industrialization (Smith, 2011).

Drive to Maturity stage is characterized by the diversification of the economy into new areas: The economy is diversifying into new areas. Investment opportunities are diverse due to technological innovation in the economy. The growth in the economy at

this stage results in production of different goods and services and there is less reliant on imports. In the last stage, Mass Consumption, the economy is well grounded for mass consumption. The consumer durable industries flourish alongside the dominance of the service sector (Smith, 2011).

Rostow's (1960) theory of the stages of economic growth, emphasized the importance of new values and ideas favoring economic progress along with education, entrepreneurship, and certain other institutions as conditions for societies to ''take off'' into self-sustained economic growth. His insistence on new ideas and values to promote education for economic growth is in line with Smith (1976) argument that education is all sorts of improvement in addition to transfer of knowledge and skills (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

Thus, these two theories are the foundation of this study because they helped the researcher to understand why government introduces free education policy for its Ghanaians. Based on the assumptions of these theorists that education is an investment which people make reap the benefits and the modernization theorists argued that investment is made in education in order to eradicate poverty among the citizens of a country especially developing countries. These assumptions gave the researcher picture of the reasons why government implements free education. The theories helped the researcher to construct the research objectives and the research questions which guided the researcher to conduct the study.

2.5 Education Reforms in Ghana

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training or research (Wikipedia). Education is also the key to creating, adapting and spreading knowledge but the gains in access to education have been unevenly distributed, with the poor seldom getting their fair share (World Bank, World Development Report, 1998-1999). Education, again, is fundamental to enhancing the quality of human life and ensuring social and economic progress (United Nation, 1997). Education can add to value of production in the economy and also the income of the person who has been educated (Sen. 1999). Ensuring the right of education is a matter of morality, justice and economic sense (UNICEF, 1999).

Ghana's educational system has passed through many reforms as a result of attaining quality education and also making it accessible to every child in the country. Akyeampong (2007) stated that in 1957, when Ghana attained independence, the Nkrumah administration decided to make education open to all. To make education accessible to all children in Ghana, these legislation and policy initiatives include the Ten year plan for educational development (1946), Accelerated Development Plan (1951) and the Education Act (1961) were implemented. The Accelerated Development Plan introduced a six year free and compulsory basic education, which resulted in a massive increase in primary enrollment (Create, 2008). Though the policies mentioned worked to some extent, they could not yield much as expected in the educational system.

In the early 1970s, a committee was set to recommend reforms in the educational system of the country. This committee was chaired by Professor Dzobo of the University

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of Cape Coast. The committee concluded that primary education should be six years, three years Junior Secondary School and four years Senior Secondary School making pre-tertiary to be thirteen years. This reform reduced pre-tertiary education from seventeen years to thirteen years. The reforms abridged the time spent by students in school and in turn reduced the net expenditure on students by the government. Also, courses such as technical and vocational skill introduced were designed to provide students with practical skills that can equip them to become self-employed and also fit into any existing establishment (Create, 2008).

However, the policy did not work as expected due to the following problems associated with its implementation; most teachers did not know much about the subject areas, resources to support teaching and learning activities were not sufficient in the schools. By 1970, Ghana had one of the most highly developed education systems in Africa (World Bank, 2004). Gross enrolment ratios increased dramatically, 60% of teachers in primary schools were untrained, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) projected that, the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, saw a sharp economic decline and the real value of government financing for education fell sharply from 6.4% of GDP in 1976 to 1.4% in1983, and resulted in a near collapse of the education system and this affected the educational system in the country leading to decline in enrollment. By 1983 access to basic education and other levels of education were at their lowest (World Bank, 2004).

To address the issues emanating from the reforms, force successive governments to pursuit policies aimed at expanding basic education access. In the year 1987, another new educational committee was implemented which was chaired by Dr. Evans-Anfom of

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the university of Education, Winneba. The policy decision on the new structure was based on an earlier Government White Paper entitled The New Structure and Content of Education (MoE, 1974). The committee changed the structure of the educational system from seventeen years to twelve years at the pre-university level. Thus six years primary, three years Junior Secondary , three years Senior Secondary education and a minimum of four years of tertiary education. The basic education level is supposed to be free and compulsory for every Ghanaian child of school –going age. The reform eliminated the middle schools system and then also the Common Entrance used for the selection of students into secondary schools was also replaced by the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Subjects like agricultural science, pre –technical and prevocational skills were introduced as new curriculum contents by the reforms. The 1987 reform was very relevant to the development of the nation in that it would enable students to acquire training skills that would help them to engage in agriculture which is the back bone of Ghana to provide the needed raw materials to feed the industries and also provide adequate food for the nation. Inadequate funding of the education sector led to insufficient textbooks and other needed curriculum materials, lack of adequate supply of furniture and equipment. Also low patronage of the school system by children of school going age and, insufficient trained teachers were among challenges that affected the smooth running of the programme (Create, 2008).

The 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana under Article 25(1) guarantees that all persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and that basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all. It was in line with this that the government of Ghana re-launched the policy of Free Compulsory Basic

Education (FCUBE) in 1995 supported by the World Bank Primary School Development Project (PSDP). This programme was aimed at getting more children into school. As a cost sharing scheme, the FCUBE was designed to cover non tuition fee and also a part of the document of the Fourth Republican Constitution designed to make education free and compulsory for all children of school going age in Ghana by the year 2005. Article 38(2) of the constitution states that "The government shall within two years after parliament first meets after the coming into force of this constitution, draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years, for the provision of Free, Compulsory, Universal Basic Education".

The FCUBE has three primary components: improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning: Activities focus on enhancing specific teaching skills through pre-service and in-service teacher training; improving teacher motivation through incentive programmes, promoting quality of students learning and performance through curriculum reviews and improved teacher–student interaction; provision of adequate and timely learning materials to all schools, improvement of teacher –community relationships, improving Efficiency in Management; Activities focus on the re-organization and re orientation of management practices in the education delivery system. Specifically, this component strives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of management performance in the education sector. Activities address management reforms; discipline and accountability in schools, increased enforcement of effective teaching and learning; elimination of teacher absenteeism, lateness and building the morale of pre-tertiary personnel, increasing Access and Participation; Activities are designed to ensure that there is total access and retention to all school – age children in the nine –year basic

education programme, and all stakeholders participate fully in educational services/programmes within their localities. Activities involve expanding infrastructural facilities and service to enhance access; addressing issues of enrollment and retention for all school-age children; enhancing quality in the provision of educational services and facilities; ensuring good quality teaching through the setting of performance targets; encouraging all stakeholders to participate fully in educational services/programmes.

Despite the initiative, the FCUBE programme met with several problems and management weaknesses have undermined its impact which included poor supervision both at system and school levels (Fobih, Akyeampong, Koomson, 1999). Levine (2011) notes that nationwide, about 40% of six years old are not in school. This falls to 'about 10% by age 11. Above this age those who have not enrolled are unlikely to ever enroll'.

Another committee was inaugurated in 2002 by the then President, John Agyekum Kuffour to review the educational system in Ghana to suit the current challenges. Professor Jophus Anamuah-Mensah, Vice-Chancellor of University of Education was tasked to head the committee. The Anamuah-Mensah Report recommended similar structure of education just like the Evans -Anfom Report of 1986. The difference was the inclusion of two years of kindergarten education as part of basic education and apprenticeship training for Junior Secondary school leavers who are unable to continue in the formal sector. The committee maintained the three year senior secondary school but the government decided to extend it to four years and renamed the educational system of Junior High and Senior High to replace the existing Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools. This was to ensure that students have adequate

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time to exhaust the GES syllabus and prepare adequately for the West African Senior School Certificate Examination.

The Anamuah-Mensah Committee's recommendation directly informed further education reforms in 2007 (Osei, Owusu & Kotey, 2009). Hence, the new government of the National Democratic Congress reversed the four year Senior High School to three years. The entire basic education will continue to be free and compulsory and will receive highest priority of all sub-sectors. The overarching goal is to reach 100% completion rates for both males and females at all basic levels by 2015 and also to achieve a 100% net enrollment ratio. To achieve this objective, capitation grants, among other policies are key policies driving these objectives. Many school –going age in most Sub-Sahara African do not get access to education in spite of numerous international efforts to get all school going age in school, especially basic education in Sub-Sahara African (Create, 2008).

The 2010 Millennium Development Goals reports indicated that the world was likely to miss the target of the MDG on education for the reason that the education related indicators were far below the targeted values. The decision to achieve education related MDGs by the target date of 2015 is unpredictable in the sense that, the rise in primary enrollment is not sufficient. To achieve the education related MDGs by the target date, all children within the official entry age of primary school would have had to be enrolled in school by 2009 (UN, 2010). As of 2008, one out of four primary school-age children was out of school in Sub-Sahara African. This shows that, the net enrollment ratio in primary schools of Ghana gives some mixed results. For instance, while the net enrollment ratio as of 2009 (88.5%) was higher than the benchmark of Sub-Sahara African (76%), the net

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admission ratio (72%) of over the same period was lower than the average for Sub-Sahara African (Ministry of Education, 2009, UN, 2010). This trend shows retrogression in Ghana's drive to achieve the MDGs.

By 2015, NDC government led by President John Dramani Mahama implemented the Progressively Free SHS policy and lost the election to the NPP in 2016. So in 2017 the NPP government led by His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwah Akuffo Ado implemented the Free SHS policy after he won the election in 2016. Thus, this study assesses the influence of the Free SHS policy on school enrolment in the second cycle schools in Ghana and to find out strategies that can help improve the implementation of this policy to the benefit of Ghanaians.

2.6 Quality Education

There is no universally accepted definition given to the term Quality Education by educators. This is because of absence of standard methods of measuring progress or problems in education to determine whether it is of high or low quality. Nonetheless, the ability to read and write or better still understand issues quantitatively are considered as indicators of assessing achievement in education (UNESCO, 2005; Watkins, 2000).

To begin with, the World Declaration on Education echoed the significance of quality education to make it universally accessible and relevant. According to this declaration, access to quality education is a right to every child and that quality is a significant factor that determines enrolment, retention and achievement. The broad definition of quality education include the following traits, "the learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content

(relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation)" (UNESCO, 2005: p34). The limitation of this definition is that it has not given any indication of measuring the characteristics mentioned especially at the senior high level.

In a related development, Adams (1998 cited in Chapman & Adams, 2002) went further to include examination in his definition of quality education. He explains quality education in terms of "inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes". The inputs have to deal with the quantum of teachers, teacher training and textbooks while the processes are related to the duration of the instructional period and active learning and outputs involve measurement of performances (examination marks and the rate of grading). The last component which is outcome concerns the ability of individuals to use the knowledge and skills acquired to secure employment which has the potential of poverty reduction. Adams also sees quality education as attainment of specific benchmark and aims and that quality of education depends on the reputation of an institution in the programme that it pursues and the influence that the method of schooling has to bring about changes in knowledge acquisition, attitude, values and behaviour as well as ideological acquisition and usage of learning (Watkins, 2000).

In the view of Adam, quality education involves the improvement in the inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes of education. This study supports this view because the Free SHS policy in the second cycle schools in Ghana aims at improving in the access to second cycle education and therefore advances the challenges and it has on heads in public second cycle institutions (Watkins, 2000).

Similarly, Jansen (1995: p.195) asserts that, "quality education should be concerned with processes of teaching, learning, testing, managing and resourcing through

in-depth qualitative investigations of such processes".Jasen sees quality education in terms of teaching, learning, testing, managing and resourcing qualitative investigations of these processes. His view is similar to that of Adam because he talks of these processes mentioned by Jansen. This study also supports this view because the study concerns the improvement of teaching, learning, managing performance of learners in the second cycle institutions in Ghana.

UNICEF's (2000) definition on quality education touches on five key areas namely; healthy learners, healthy environment, content, process and outcome. Dilating on these elements, it emphasized that;

1. Learners should be properly catered for and supported by their parents or guardians and members of their communities in order to actively take part in learning.

2. The learning environment should not only provide maximum facilities for learning but also should be a safer and a protective place for both teachers and learners irrespective of their gender.

3. Content wise, the curriculum designed should apart from providing skills in literacy and numeracy to learners should also lead to knowledge acquisition in gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and promotion of peace.

4. Trained teachers should use child-centered approach and appropriate system of examination in the process of teaching to eliminate discrimination.

5. The outcome of learning should be provision of knowledge, skills and attitude that are relevant to national development and participation in governance. The view of UNICEF on the meaning of quality education is similar to that of Jansen and Adam because it emphasizes teaching, learning and the acquisition of knowledge and skills

but differs in the other scholars' views because it gives an elaborate definition of quality education which includes child-centred approach, attitude, curriculum and even learners' protection. This study supports this view and therefore advances the effects of the free education policy on school enrolment in the second cycle institutions in Ghana.

It is worth noting that definition on quality education changes according to the composition of major players and the growth pattern of the educational system. At no point in time will all the stakeholders unanimously agree on the components or determinants, measurement and sustainability of quality education (Chapman & Adams 2002).

Based on the above definitions or explanations and for the purpose of this research, the working definition used for quality education is, the application of resources and the creation of a conducive platform for teaching and learning to develop the brain of individuals and to equip them with the necessary tools to actively participate in decision making for the realization of their reputation and progress in life as well as societal and national goals.

2.7 Benefits of Education

Education is therefore, essential for everyone because it is indispensable part of life both personally and socially. The importance of education is undeniable due to its positive effect on human life and people need to study because it is one of the means that helps people gain knowledge and enlarge their view over the world. Apparently, people may become more useful and civilized if they are better educated. Thus, when one casts

eyes around, one can see the vast difference between residential areas where the people are educated and that of areas where the people are illiterate (Smith, 2011).

Armstrong (2016) posited that one can imagine how life would have been. Education plays important role in our society. Human civilization strives on education. As a matter of fact, everything we create today is based on the knowledge that we obtain throughout our life by way of education. The technology we see nowadays which had resulted in the invention of equipment and other devices are the results of education. Countries with high rate of education have gone high in technology and countries with low rate of education rely on the developed ones for their technology. The main social objective of education is to complete the socialization process. The family gets the child, but the modern family tends to leave much undone in the socialization process. The school and other institutions have come into being in place of family to complete the socialization process. Consequently, every child should be given the opportunity to learn and study because, the development of a country depends vastly on the standard of education and countries must do everything possible to improve its educational systems. Education gives people critical skills and tools to help them provide better for themselves and their families (Peter, 2002).

Again, education helps people work better and can create opportunities for sustainable and viable economic growth now and into the future. Further, education helps fight the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, reduces mother and child mortality and helps improve health. Education is very necessary for all of us and its implication and importance can be seen in every field of our life. Nations which gave importance to education in every field or sector in the country are ruling now (Armstrong, 2006).

They are suffering because they have not invested in their educational infrastructure. It is often said that, 'Knowledge is power'. Although there has always been a debate on this matter, the importance of education cannot be denied. The information we are constantly bombarded with, cannot be converted into knowledge without the catalyst called education. In an economy where knowledge is the most valuable commodity a person and a country have to offer, the best jobs will go to the best educated – whether they live in the United States or India or China (Obama, 2009).

Thus, the importance of education is clearly emphasized through President Barack Obama's address. Obama clearly stated that education is extremely crucial for holding a good job and for making a flourishing career. On an average, educated people have more meaningful and interesting jobs than those held by uneducated people. They are usually in a position to make decisions at work. This results in higher job satisfaction which leads to a better quality of life (Chapman & Adams, 2002).

Education empowers an individual to think, question, and see beyond the obvious. Human beings are born with a natural tendency to question. Education is the best way to satiate our curiosity, without extinguishing the burning desire to learn and explore more. Based on these scholars views about the importance of education show that indeed education brings human development, jobs and societal change in terms of skills and attitude and this study supports these that education is important and advances the challenges that heads face in implementing the free senior high school policy in the second cycle schools in Ghana (Armstrong, 2006).

2.8 Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana

The Free Senior High School Policy can be described as one of the most popular political manifesto promises in the history of Ghana's elections, as the NPP presidential aspirant held unto it in spite of the 2012 election defeat until victory in 2016. Fast forward, the programme was launched and implemented last year (2017) September. The programme benefited only first year students who were lucky to secure places in the existing public Senior High Schools (SHS) and Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) institutions across the country (Tatiana, Fabio & Tatiana, 2016).

Per the current arrangement, government has resolved to absorb all the approved fees these students were expected to pay as a means of addressing inequality and ensuring equal opportunities for all students. Typical of any government policy, its implementation has received both praise and criticism from various angles of society. For instance, while some individuals and organisations have extolled the policy for its potential to reduce both early child marriage and maternal deaths, others have questioned government on how they intend to ensure sustainability without compromising on quality (Tatiana et al., 2017).

As part of the government strategies to help curb down this economic pressure on parents, the free senior high school policy introduced by the newly elected government is seen by many as a step in the right direction. This free senior high policy replaced the progressive free senior high policy implemented in 2017.This progressive free senior policy was a form of partial funding to senior high education. Parents were exempted from paying some of the costs of education such as; examination fees, entertainment fees, library, Students Representative Council (SRC) dues, sports fees, culture fees, science

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development and mathematics quiz fees, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) fees and co-curricular fees (Tatiana et al., 2017).

The current policy on senior high school education is to provide free education. That is free tuition, no library fee, no boarding fee, no science laboratory fee, no examination fee, no utility fee, free meals for both boarders and day-students, no Parents Teachers Association (PTA) fee, and free textbooks for all at the senior high level. Both policies aimed to increase enrollment, improve quality through academic performance and most importantly to reduce the burden on parents from paying their children fees. There are several studies conducted on the impact of funding on enrollment and students' academic performance. For instance, the free education introduced in Ghana in some areas enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school in the senior high school (Boatman & Long, 2018).
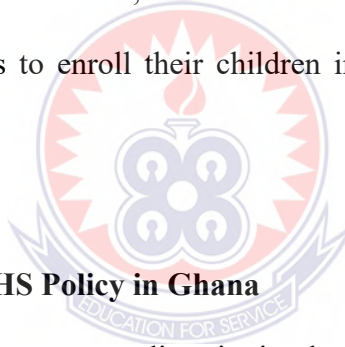
2.9 Benefits of the Free SHS Policy in Ghana

Typical of any government policy, its implementation has received both praises from various angles of society. For instance, some individuals and organizations have extolled the policy for its potential to reduce early child marriage, maternal deaths, school drop outs and increases enrolment in schools in Ghanaian secondary schools (Government of Ghana, 2018). The view of the Ghana Government on the benefits of Free SHS Policy include reduction in child marriage, maternal deaths, school dropouts and increase in school enrolment in Ghana. This study supports this view because it assesses the influence of the Free SHS Policy in secondary schools in Ghana.

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In the midst of such important debate on the prospect of the policy, IMANI has been a visible pillar in asking critical questions and offering alternative solutions with the aim of providing more sustainable means of addressing access and quality, not only at the secondary school levels but at all levels of education in Ghana. It must be stated clearly that IMANI is not against the implementation of a policy that will promote equity and access to education (IMANI. 2017). In the view of IMANI, the Free SHS Policy will promote equity and access to education in Ghana by citizens. This study also supports this view in the sense it ascertains the challenges facing heads in its implementation in Ghanaian secondary schools.

Togbo (2018), the changing dynamics within the labour market and the demand for certain skills require government to revise the existing curriculum, improve quality and prepare the students for the future of work. Entrepreneurial and digital skills training must be included in the educational curriculum as done in other countries this will help students acquire the entrepreneurial skills, digital skills and improve quality education in Ghana. In the view of Togbo, the benefits of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana include development of entrepreneurial skills, digital skills and promotion of quality education in Ghana. This study advances the influence of the Free SHS Policy on school enrolment instead of focusing on digital skills and entrepreneurial skills as posit by Togbo (2018) as the benefits of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana.

2.10 The implementation strategies of Free Senior School Policy

The implementation strategy can be assimilated to the policy's theory of change, that is, the operational plan explaining how to make the policy happen in effect, while the

policy design included mostly its theoretical underpinnings (the policy's theory of change). Some authors blend the implementation strategy with the policy itself, because they are considered parts of the policy statute that is, the document or decision(s) that frame the goals or objectives, tools, rules and targets, and structural relationships between agents for a given policy (Honig, 2006).

The policy may provide a vision the implementations strategy has to realise, but the latter is more action-oriented, and ought to be flexible enough to cope with the unexpected (Fullan, 2015). Differentiating between the two is useful, because it highlights strategic determinants of the implementation process that could be overlooked otherwise. Five elements of the implementation plan were identified across several of the selected frameworks: task allocation and accountability, objectives and tools, resources, timing, and communication and engagement strategy with education stakeholders (Honig, 2006).

A policy needs some clarity and visibility regarding who is supposed to implement what, and who is responsible in case a given step of the implementation goes wrong. The distribution of tasks and responsibility is determined first by the institutional structure in place in a given education system. Each educational policy may nevertheless require some details on who implements what. The implementation strategy usually identifies key stakeholders and their corresponding responsibilities (Suggett, 2011).

(Fullan, 2015) suggest that the policy statute can assign roles to implementing agencies based on their disposition regarding the policy that is, whether their decision rules are favourable to the policy goals. In most technical views of the policy process, the policy statute determines how much discretion key implementers may have that is, how

much change they can bring to core elements of the policy (Ingram & Schneider, 1990). In instances when countries have and publish implementation strategy documents for their education policies, key stakeholders are usually identified, with their tasks and responsibility mechanisms (GES, 2018).

The overarching goals and logic (or vision) of a policy needs to be refined in operational terms. Theorising "deliverology", Barber insists on the importance of defining and prioritizing among targets (that is, objectives tied to figures) for effective implementation (2008). Because a strategy usually involves several goals and initiatives to reach them, attention must be paid to its overall coherence and to its priorities. The OECD finds that successful implementers have to established a small number of clear, high-priority, measurable, ambitious but feasible goals focused on student outcomes, which do not distort practices within the school system (e.g. teaching to the test) (OECD, 2010). In Ontario, Canada, setting three common priorities for the Energising Ontario Education initiative (in 2004 & 2008) helped the province harness implementation efforts towards achieving its vision of a high-quality, equitable and attractive public education system (OECD, 2010).

Multiple policy tools have emerged since the 1990s, creating more options for policy designers or implementers to put education policy into effect. As the education sector became more complex, so did the instruments: top-down mechanisms of command and control (*e.g.* a mandate given by the Ministry of Education to an implementing agency) were complemented by more elaborate tools such as capacity-building or school-community partnerships to achieve the policy objectives (Honig, 2006). Choosing one policy instrument over another affects the dynamics of implementation. It may require

hiring consultants; training staff, providing financial or other incentives; or testing several tools in case actors are highly uncertain about the way to go. In the United States, Suggett (2011) finds that the Comprehensive School Reform models that were more specific about the means to reach the policy goals in the late 1990s in the United States determined the fidelity of implementation, *i.e.* how well implementation outcomes fit the policy goals (2017). In a different setting, being too specific about the tools might hinder implementation: Suggett (2011) suggests that in a context where there is high uncertainty and lack of consensus on the means to reach the policy goals, such as improving educational outcomes for all, consulting practitioners and experimenting may be a more effective strategy than specifying the tools right away.

The language of a policy may not necessarily be understood by the actors who are expected to implement it (Hill, 2006). A policy must gather political support among actors and across implementation levels if it is to be implemented (Datnow, 2000). With a large number of vocal stakeholders in the education sector, policy designers are encouraged to plan for engaging stakeholders as early as possible in the process of policy making (Haddad & Demsky, 1995) and also to communicate clearly on the goals, objectives and processes required for the policy.

Engaging stakeholders in the design process may serve several purposes: making sure the key message and logic of the policy are transmitted correctly to actors, build consensus around the objectives, tools and other means to achieve the policy goals (OECD, 2011). By doing so, it can build support for the policy, thus limiting the number of actors that may oppose the policy throughout the implementation process (OECD, 2010). Engaging with stakeholders is also a way to heed the reality of practitioners' daily

activities throughout the process, which allows for avoiding obstacles or changing courses if some measures do not align with local needs. The Rhode Island Department of Education for example successfully engaged with district leaders to monitor the implementation of the free senior high school policy race to the Top programme across Africa: a collective of district leaders would meet and produce reports regularly, based on which the State's Agency would adjust its implementation strategy. The process facilitated dialogue between the State's Agency and the districts' leaders (OECD, 2016).

The inputs necessary for education policy implementation consist mainly of the funding, technology and knowledge available to the actors, as well as their capacity to use them (Suggett, 2011). The amount, quality and distribution of these resources allocated to implementation determine to a great extent whether and how a policy is implemented (Wurzburg, 2010). A recurring issue with resources is not only about whether they are available for implementation, or in sufficient quantities, but how they are used, and what for (OECD, 2015), *i.e.* what the resource strategy is. Funding issues relevant to education policy implementation include whether there is enough funding, where it comes from, whether it is earmarked and who decides how to allocate it. According to Osei et al, (2018), there is a threshold level of funding below which implementing institutions (e.g. governmental agencies) will not be able to achieve the implementation goals. Information and communication technologies are considered a powerful lever for educational change (UNESCO, 2011) and create opportunities and threats for implementing education policy.

Fullan (2015) explains how technologies are a powerful means of accelerating "change in practice", but not an effective driver of educational change by themselves.

Grzybowski, (2013) otherwise stated that increasingly in use in schools' daily life for communication with parents, homework and school reports. Education policies thus count with or are based on such technologies that need to be functional and mastered by implementers –and especially by teachers and school staff, which creates potential obstacles to implementation.

Knowledge constitutes a valuable implementation instrument that informs decision-making, improves the dialogue with actors and contributes to process transparency. Knowledge is "assimilated information and the understanding of how to use it" (Köster & Fuster, 2016). There are various types of knowledge that can be relevant at different levels of the policy process: data on student achievement signals the academic performance of an education system, while research findings may inform best practices. A major role for international organisations such as the OECD is to make this knowledge available and usable for policy makers and practitioners. Knowledge is also a source for actors to shape and revise their beliefs, which impacts their attitude in the implementation process. Understanding the mechanisms through which actors learn and process information is crucial to manage knowledge for effective implementation. By linking models of governance to learning modes Fuster and Köster (2016) offer a powerful tool to analyse learning processes given an education system's type of governance.

The diversity in learning modes and models of governance is important to take into account when trying to replicate or adapt implementation strategies from other education systems. Context-specific and practitioner knowledge is crucial to carry out a policy at the school and district level. The data collected throughout the implementation

process allows implementers to update their strategy if needed, and may contribute to adjusting implementation according to local imperatives. Monitoring mechanisms should thus be designed to be flexible, support the policy goals, and provide public information without weighing down on school's daily activities (OECD, 2010). Too much control during the implementation process might indeed be resented by teachers for instance, who tend to see heavy monitoring mechanisms as a lack of trust in their profession (Cerna, 2014).

In complex systems, the data collected through monitoring can also serve to hold stakeholders accountable throughout the system. Up-to-date data contributes to measuring progress of the implementation process. In some contexts, studies have found that having higher accountability standards on education policy implementers resulted in a more effective and qualitative implementation. For instance the United States' School Wellness Programmes that had to be in place by 2017 were implemented more effectively and with fewer challenges when implementers were required to be transparent, subjected to careful oversight by the district and performing a systematic evaluation of the programme (Budd et al., 2018).

Accountability mechanisms can nonetheless have a negative influence over the implementation process. To be effective, they must be considered in the local context and might have to be adapted depending the stages of the process (Cerna, 2014). Datnow (2005) finds that high-stakes accountability mechanisms were more likely to hinder effective implementation if not aligned with the free education policy adopted by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. The timing and pace set for implementation determine to a large extent how the process unfolds. An implementation strategy defines a timeline common

to the main stakeholders, even though it is complex to define when implementation starts and when it stops (Hill & Hupe, 2002).

When implementing a policy, actors are called to arbitrate between acting fast to meet electoral necessities, and taking the time to polish the implementation strategy, engage with stakeholders and let the policy sink in. Such dilemma is well summarized by Barber (2008), when using "ambition", "urgency" and "irreversibility" as key words of "deliverology". The effects of timing and pace on the implementation process are uncertain, but should not be overlooked because they are directly linked with the scope of implementation, and its potential outcomes. Studies suggest that at too fast a pace, stakeholders may not be able or willing to implement; too slow, the implementation process may lose momentum or drain the system's resources. A study of the reform on education system decentralization in Ghana leans towards the shift to decentralisation leaving no time for municipalities to organize and take ownership of the reform (Osei, Owusu, Asem & Kotey, 2018).

The pace of implementation is linked to the nature of the change the policy aims for: even comprehensive reforms may start with incremental changes, before the systemic changes can be effective. The effect of timing on implementation thus depends on the degree of acceptability of the policy, and on the system's capacity to implement (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). A striking example is the Czech commitment to create consensus on the school-leaving examination (OECD, 2016): the stakeholders took fourteen years to test, modify, discuss and agree on a format that was finally introduced in 2011. Taking into account the time dimension in implementation requires policy actors to adopt a long-

term perspective on education policy, while keeping up the dynamic of the process in the short-term is not pragmatic in Ghana (Osei et al, 2018).

2.11 Source of Funding to Senior High Schools in Ghana

Garcia-Penalosa and Wald (2000) are of the view that, acquiring literacy and numeracy is a fundamental human requirement and Pettinger (2012) who argued that educating individual benefits the society more than the individual as it equips a person with social values that enhance national unity. The heightened demand for secondary education is accompanied by the need to respond to the twin challenges of increasing access to and also, improving quality and significance of secondary education. It, therefore, calls for more efficient sources of funding secondary education (World Bank, 2013). These arguments therefore make it justifiable for the financing of senior high education.

In all countries worldwide, a significant portion of national resources, both public and private, are channeled to education. The rationale for sustaining this fact is compelling. A quality education, beginning with primary education, is fundamental in endowing individuals with the capacity to successfully pursue their private goals. It also equips them with the knowledge and skills, as well as the values and attitudes, necessary to contribute effectively to the economic, social and political development of their societies (Saavedra, 2002). In the view of Saavedra, the sources of funding to secondary schools in the world are national resources including both public and private. The view of Saavedra is not different in Ghana because the funding of secondary education in Ghana comes from national resources. Thus, this study supports this view because the free SHS

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policy is a way of funding secondary education in Ghana through the national resources of the country and it advances the effect of this policy on school enrolment in second cycle schools in Ghana.

Education in Ghana is mainly financed from public resources, even though the private sector is also playing an important role. Public sources of funding comprise The Ghana Education Trust Fund, the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF), the Ministry of Education, youth and sports (MOEYS), the Student Loan Scheme, and the Scholarship Secretariat (African Development Fund, 2003). The view of ADF on the sources of funding to secondary education is in line with the view of Saavedra but ADF was able to outline the kinds of public sources and privates sources of funding secondary education in Ghana. This study supports this view because free SHS policy is one of the public sources of funding secondary education and advances the influence of free education on school enrolment in secondary schools in Ghana.

The internally generated funds and loans, grants and donations the government of Ghana gets were used in subsidizing the cost of senior high education to improve equal access for all. The Government of Ghana launched the progressively free senior high School Education in September 2015, and an amount of GH¢ 12,178,544.00 ($2,744334) was released to the ministry of Education for the first term of 2015/2016 academic year to fund the progressive free policy (MOE, 2015). The free senior high school education policy pursued currently is supposed to cover the full cost of education. An amount $ 100 million (GH ¢400 million) by the government was to absorb the cost of senior high education and make it entirely free for the 2017/2018 academic year (MOE, 2017). In the view of the MOE of Ghana, that the free SHS policy is source of funding to secondary

schools in Ghana and its view is similar to that of ADF and Saavedra. This study supports this view but advances the effects of free education on enrolment in secondary schools in Ghana.

The government of Ghana and the World Bank Group signed a $156 million financing agreement to improve equal access to secondary education in under-served districts throughout the country. The fund was to help enroll 30,000 new senior high students, improve learning outcomes for 150,000 students in low-performing schools and communities, and 2000 senior high school teachers, head teachers, and other education officials (World Bank, 2014).

Since the establishment of the Skills Development Fund (SDF) in 2010, the Danish government has been consistently supporting Ghana with $15 million every year to give more people access to technical and vocational training (MOE, 2017). In the view of MOE (2017), Saavedra (2002), World Bank (2013), Pettinger (2012) and Garcia-Penalosa and Wald (2000), sources of funding to secondary schools in Ghana include public and private sources and funding from international organization such World Bank in collaboration with Ghana government. Thus, the Free Senior High School Policy is one of the sources of funding secondary education by the government in Ghana.

2.12 Challenges of Implementing Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana

Lack of infrastructure and financial constraints have been major barriers to access to secondary education, with children from rural and poor households being the most disadvantaged. Therefore, there are existing studies that suggest that reducing the cost of attending secondary education is effective to expand access (Alvarez, 2003; Mulkeen,

2005; SEIA, 2007; World Bank, 2006; World Bank, 2007). In the view of Alvarez et al, they posit that the challenges of the Free SHS Policy are lack of infrastructure and financial constraints. This study supports this view because it assesses the challenges of the Free SHS Policy and the strategies that can help improve the implementation of the policy in Ghana.

The skewed nature of the Free Senior High School budget towards Goods and Services as against Capital Expenditure, and the recent implementation of the double track system, reveals the existing infrastructural inadequacy. Stories were told in the early days of the programme of students being compelled to sleep in classrooms and exposed to unhygienic conditions. In the midst of these, private senior high schools have also lamented over the negative effect the implementation of the policy has had on their operations (Government of Ghana, 2018). In the view of the government of Ghana, the challenges of the Free SHS Policy have shown in the infrastructure inadequacy and financial difficulties. This view is similar to the view of Alvarez et al who also see the problems of the Free SHS Policy to be infrastructural inadequacy and financial difficulties.

According to private school owners, intake has drastically reduced as a result of the policy, a situation which has compelled them to even lay off some of their staff. These are schools that have good facilities and have been licensed by the GES to operate (GPS, 2018). According to the Ghana Private Schools (GPS) Report, the challenges of the Free SHS Policy include reduction in school enrolment in the private schools and dismissal of workers in the private schools in Ghana. This study supports this study

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because assesses the influence of the Free SHS Policy in the enrolment of secondary schools in Ghana but this study focuses on the public secondary schools in Ghana.

Instead of leveraging of the facilities available at these private institutions to lessen the infrastructure burden, government has refused to rope them in citing lack of infrastructure as some of the reasons for disengagement. Meanwhile, there are about 300 private schools spread across the ten regions of Ghana with the capacity to absorb about 181,000 students. The operators of these institutions themselves have audibly indicated their willingness to accept half of what government spends on the students in the public schools (IMANI, 2018). This also emphasizes on infrastructure problem as the major challenge for the Free SHS policy.

Besides, privation of modern teaching aids, notably projectors, science laboratory equipment state-of-art computer laboratory among others, is another factor that makes the implementation of this policy impolitic. In the view of the World Bank, the challenges facing the Free SHS Policy are the wasting of resources on teaching aids and inadequate infrastructure for the students to feel comfortable and study (World Bank, 2018).

UNICEF (2017) Population explosion comes with its attendant problems in the educational sector. The consequence of not tackling the infrastructure dearth and the blatant failure to replace obsolete equipment and other relevant teaching aid is failure at the West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). This has a rippling effect on us as a country. In the view of UNICEF, the problems of the Free SHS policy are lack of infrastructure and obsolete equipment and teaching aids in the schools which teaching and learning ineffective.

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According to Barungi (2018), the challenges of free education policy include the educational policy is overly partisan, no allowance for teachers and lack of motivation for teachers, no in-service training for teachers to prepare them very well for the new policy, no independent scholarship secretariat for the less endowed schools. In the view of Barungi, the challenges of free education include partisan politics, lack of motivation for teachers, no allowance for teachers, no in-service training for teachers and no independent scholarship secretariat for the less endowed schools in the country.

If government really wants to remove the cost barrier and enhance access to disadvantaged students, then a targeted approach, through scholarship schemes and quota systems, must be applied excluding financially capable parents to pay for their wards' education. This will help relieve government of the financial burden and also give them more fiscal space to focus on other critical sectors (Togbo, 2018).

Financial experts and analyst are worried that this project may drain the country significantly; parents concerned about being passed on the financial responsibility through taxation or through other indirect ways the government may come up with (IMANI, 2018). In the view of IMANI again that one of the major challenges of the Free Senior High School Policy is that it may drain the resources of the state through high taxes that may be imposed on parents.

Analysis of senior high school report by GES for senior high school students during the period 2017 to 2019 when Ghana started the implementation of the free senior high school policy, the report revealed that in general, with access to senior high school education becoming near free in Ghana, the scheme led to 90% increases in enrolment in the second cycle schools in Ghana in 2018/2019 (MOE, 2019). Despite the success

chalked in the increased in enrolment, there are challenges of large class sizes, delay in funds transfers to schools, inadequate textbooks and teaching and learning materials, bureaucratic procedures and inadequate capacity for accounting by heads of schools in Ghana (Ampratwum & Armah-Attoh, 2019).

There is a danger in parents defining free in absurd and unrealistic terms. Tuition remains free in all secondary schools in Ghana and others such as sports, library, examination, SRC, entertainment, bed user fee, PTA and computer usage. Also the school fees, science development, staff incentive and teacher motivation, development levy, speech and prize-giving, textbooks, and supplementary literature. The rest are: exercise books, note book three and house dues. Heads of the schools in Ghana find it difficult to let students and their parents renew their National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) cards the administrative work couple with students health issues cumber in implementing the free senior high school policy in Ghana. This is because the NHIS renewal cost is included in the free senior school policy package (Akyeampong, 2018).

New priorities are emerging at the post-basic level where the demand for secondary education is fast increasing due to the free senior high school policy, but the supply of senior high schools has not kept pace. Therefore, there is an increased in the enrolment in senior high schools without a corresponding increase in the facilities and this makes it difficult for heads of second cycle schools to manage the large numbers of students given to them by the government compulsory system in Ghana (World Bank, 2017).

The free senior high school policy undoubtedly increased the demand for secondary education. Children from families, previously that could not afford to pay for

SHS are more likely to pursue secondary education, further increasing needed budget and available seats in school. Preliminary projections for 2017/2018 academic year, senior high schools enrollment were nearly 950,000 students, from an estimated 870,000 in 2016/2017. Thus, it is possible that more schools and classrooms are needed, and more qualified teachers (particularly in mathematics and science) may have to be deployed to meet this increased demand. While access to senior high schools increases due to introduction of free senior high school policy, quality education is negatively affected because of lack of pragmatic interventions to improve quality education, thus, heads of the senior high schools find it difficult to implement the policy to enhance quality education in Ghana. This affects the quality of education due to delaying in payments of funds and lack of motivation for teachers in Ghana senior high schools (World Bank, 2017).

The funds for running the free senior high school policy are not always released on time to enable heads of senior high schools to meet their financial obligations and to carry out administrative duties to ensure the smooth implementation of the free senior high school policy. Thus, the implication on the quality of education is that: some of the programmes for implementing the free senior high school policy are postponed or foregone, it caused inadequate teaching/learning facilities and also it caused lack of enough teaching personnel in senior high schools in Ghana. This makes it difficult for heads of second cycle schools to ensure smooth implementation of the policy (Togbo, 2018). It could be said that the Free Senior High School Policy has challenges that impedes its implementation in Ghana. Therefore, pragmatic measures or strategies must be taken to reduce if not eliminated these challenges that confront heads of second cycle

schools in the implementation of the free senior high school policy in order to improve the quality of education in Ghana.

2.13 Strategies to Manage the Challenges of Free SHS Policy in Ghana

According to IMANI (2018), the strategies to improve the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy are retraining of teachers, focus on practical training, no partisan politics in educational policies, allowance for less endowed schools, independent scholarship secretariat for less endowed schools and massive infrastructural development to ease the congestion in the schools. Togbo (2016), investments in teacher training, teacher training colleges and remuneration should be added to the policy 'package'. In doing so, teaching and learning should then become student-centred that is, emphasis should be placed on getting the student to understand so they can apply what has been learnt in the classroom to solve real-world problems and challenges.

However, Togbo emphasizes teacher training and remuneration for teachers as the strategies for improving the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana. His view is similar to that of IMANI but says salaries and allowances instead of remuneration for teachers.

For any educational policy to work, it must be decoupled from partisan politics. In other words, the educational policy must be national in character instead of the current unnecessary politicization of education in the country. Also, if we want to make education accessible to all, then stipends or allowances must be given to the less-endowed in society. On this score I strongly advocate the educational policy-makers create a secretariat that have an over-sight responsibility over the under-privileged in

society. This will nip in the bud problem of people dropping out of school as a result of poverty. To solve this problem, I highly recommend Educational Maintenance Allowance in the United Kingdom (Togbo, 2018). In the view of Togbo, the strategies that can help improve the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana include allowance for less endowed schools and decoupling educational policies from partisan politics.

2.14 Summary of literature

Free Senior High School Policy of education in Ghana implemented by the Ghana government has brought mixed feelings among scholars because they posit that it brings both benefits and challenges to the country. Therefore, from the scholars, increase in enrolment, reducing financial burden of parents and effective academic performance of students as the benefits of the policy but equally concluded that the policy is full of problems such as lack of infrastructure, no allowance for teachers, no training for teachers among other tangible reasons. Thus, strategies that can be implemented to help improve the implementation of the Free SHS Policy in Ghana include allowance for teachers, provision of massive infrastructure, decoupling educational policies from partisan politics, retraining of teachers and independent scholarship secretariat for the less endowed schools in the country.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology selected for the study. It specifically describes the research design, population sample size and technique. The tool for data collection, rigor, ethical consideration and mode of data analysis used for the study are all discussed.

3.2 Research Design

An, exploratory research design was used. The design is the method of choice when straight probing of a phenomenon is desired (Burns & Grove, 2014; Polit & Beck, 2016). The exploratory design explains and facilitates data collection, with a focus on understanding headmasters' challenges in free Senior High School implementation. The design investigates phenomenon to solve a research problem (Merriam, 2013). The design shows which individual would be studied, where, when and in which circumstances they will be situated (Merriam, 2013). This was adopted in order to get in-depth knowledge on the headmasters challenges of implementing the free Senior High School policy.

3.3 Population

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2015), a research population is generally a large, well-defined collection of individuals or objects with common characteristics that are the focus of a scientific enquiry. The target population of the study comprised the

headmasters from fifteen Senior High Schools at Upper Denkyira Municipalities (Upper Denkyira West and East) while the accessible population comprised headmasters of the public Senior High Schools at Upper Denkyira East and West Municipalities.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select all the Senior High School and the headmasters. Purposive sampling aims at selecting participants who have the information and experience the researcher wants to use (Maree, 2010). Best and Kahn (2016) mentioned that purposive sampling is a technique used to select certain persons, settings or events on the grounds that they can provide the necessary information. In this study, headmasters of all the fifteen Senior High Schools were purposively selected. They were chosen because they could provide relevant information about their challenges in the free Senior High School implementation. A total of 15 participants formed the sample size for the study.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

Semi-structured interview with sixteen items was used to collect data for the study. The interview guide was used to prevent bias from the both the interviewer and the interviewee. It was found appropriate to use the semi-structured interview that targeted individuals whose locations and times of meeting were scheduled outside daily events convenient and comfortable to the participants (Dicicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews is "a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions in a conversational manner

offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important" (Clifford, French, & Valentine, 2010, p. 103). This approach solves the problem of those individuals who are reserved due to the strong traditional and cultural background to open-up in focus group discussions (Clifford et at, 2010). An added reason for using semi-structured interviews is because "in situations where you would not get more than one chance to interview someone, semi structured interviewing is best" (Bernard, 2006, p. 212).

It is easy to synchronize the responses during analysis of the data. Use of interview guild allows for comparisons, since the questions used were the same with some adaptations. It allows testing the consistency of findings obtained in the research instruments (Flick, 2004).

The interview guide was in three sections: section dealt with how heads implement the free SHS policy. Section two looked at the challenges of implementing the policy and section three dealt with the strategies to improve the policy.

3.6 Trustworthiness

According to Grove, Frost and Gay (2014) trustworthiness in qualitative study is a means in which the researcher ensures the public that information obtained from the research and the interpretations are truly what the participant provided. Credibility, transferability confirmability and dependability are the major criteria for trustworthiness. To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the interview questions were made simple for the participants. The researcher moderated the interviews to ensure that quality data are collected. The recording equipment was tested to ensure good quality sound before use

and there was a backup recorder at hand throughout the interviews. All the important activities that occurred on the field were documented and used to collaborate with the transcripts.

3.6.1 Credibility:

Grove, Frost and Gay, (2014) stated that credibility refers to confidence in the truth of the data collected and interpretations of them. To ensure this the researcher selected participants that met the inclusion criteria of the study and could share detailed experiences on free Senior High School policy. The researcher did not allow perception, interest, beliefs and professional background to influence the responses of participants. Further, researcher did member checks to confirm data collected from participants. The researcher transcribed and analyzed each interview before the next interview was conducted. The accuracy of the data was ascertained by checking the information gathered with views shared by other participants.

3.6.2 Transferability

Shenton (2014) said that, the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environment and individuals and is impossible to conclude that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations. Gay, Mills & Airasian (2006) stated that, to accomplish transferability of research findings, a detailed descriptive and description of the context need to be collected. Based on the above information, the researcher was able to collected data about the study.

3.7 Data Collection procedure

The researcher presented a permission letter from University to the District Education Offices and various headmasters of the selected Senior High Schools. The headmasters were informed about the study before the interview commenced. The purpose of the research was explained to the headmasters.

The participants were provided with a written consent to complete. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous and that no participant identifier was collected. Participants were informed on how long the study would last.

Interviews were done in a quiet and convenient environment of participants to ensure participants privacy. Nonverbal cues, interruptions, personal reflections about observations made during the interviews were kept. Clarification or verification of their responses in the course of the study was checked.

Data were collected with the help of a semi-structured interview guide. During the interviews, data were recorded. Field notes were made after each session to facilitate data analysis Follow up questions were asked when clarifications were needed to obtain better understanding of responses. Interviews were conducted after participants who agreed to be part of the study, had understood the objectives of the study and informed of the right to opt out at any time during the interview without any consequence. The interview schedules were used to ask questions that required participants to formulate their views in their own words. Data collection was terminated when there was saturation of responses. All the questions were fully attended to but when participants were not comfortable answering a question, it was skipped. Where the respondents did not fully understand a question, the researcher repeated the same question to ensure proper grasp of what the

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question was all about.The issues that were covered in the interview schedules included questions on implementation, challenges of free Senior High School and strategies used to improve the policy implementation. The interview lasted for about fifteen to twenty minutes and in English language to avoid ambiguity.

3.8 Data Management

The data collected were made available to researcher. Data collected through recordings and field notes were coded to protect the information from respondents. The researcher kept records of data, time and place of interview. The recorded tapes, transcribed data, field notes and diaries were kept in a cabinet under lock and key accessible to only the researcher. The audio tape was kept on hard disc to avoid data loss.

3.9 Data Analysis plan

Data were analysed using thematic analysis. The transcribed data were read several times to identify key themes. Codes were developed for identified key themes which were then grouped into themes. Data were analysed according to the themes that were emerged. The audio-tapes were listened and transcribed verbatim.

3.10 Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Education Winneba and Ghana Education Service. Approval to conduct the study in the school was received from the Municipal Education Directorates. Participants were informed and assured of the confidentiality of the responses and the right to withdraw at

any stage. Participants were requested to give written consent to be observed, interviewed and to analyse their documents. Participants were assured that the outcome of the research would be made available to once the research is completed. Participants were identified by pseudonyms which were written in the files kept for everyone.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the qualitative data collected using semi-structured interview on fifteen (15) participants had experience on free Senior High School implementation in some selected SHS at Upper Denkyira Municipalities. The interviews centered primarily on the challenges headmasters face in free SHS, the strategies they use to improve the implementation of the free Senior High School policy and the benefits of the free SHS policy. The first section of the findings presents the socio demographic characteristics of participants. The subsequent findings are presented according to the stated objectives of the study. Major themes that emerged in this section included implementation, challenges and strategies to improve the free SHS policy. Overall, three main themes were seen. The presentations of the results are supported by verbatim quotes of the participants' responses using pseudonyms

4.2 How do headmasters implement the free Senior High School in the Central Region?

From the analysis, it was realised that most of the participants indicated that the implementation of the free SHS policy was done by using the designed policy document from the Education Ministry and sometimes personal experiences. The following sub themes emerged: management of the policy, sustainability and benefits of the policy. The headmasters were asked: "How do you manage to implement the free SHS policy in your school?" and the following are some of the responses:

"We use the document provided by the government to implement this policy though not conclusive but we try our best to use it since the policy is new" (P3, 2021).

The implementation is very difficult because little is known in this area of our educational system and because of the politics attached to it we are forced to do things just to favour the system" (P14, 2021).

Some of the participants also stated that they relied on their personal experiences to manage the free SHS policy.

"As at now, I have not received any document or training on the free SHS policy implementation so I rely on my experiences as a head of this institution to implement the policy" (P10, 2021).

"You see, headmasters we have a lot of experiences when it comes to education so we use these experiences to help the policy going" (P8, 2021).

4.3 What challenges do headmasters face in the implementation of the free Senior High School policy?

This question presents the results on the challenges headmasters faced in the implementation of the free SHS policy. The following issues emerged: lack of infrastructure, lack of TLM, lack of community support and pressure on school resources were the main challenges indicated by majority of the participants.

Lack of infrastructure

The headmasters constantly tried to provide facilities to help ease the congestion in the school. A headmaster had this to say:

"...As a matter of fact we lack infrastructure especially building infrastructure. You see these ones over (pointing to some buildings) are our dormitories they used to accommodate three hundred students but now they are accommodating six hundred and fifty students. The congestion is too much" (P1, 2021).

Another headmaster added this:

"...One thing is that, the free Senior High School should have been well planned especially when it comes to infrastructure. Our dormitories, classrooms and dining hall are all overstretched. We are hoping that, challenges are controlled as soon as possible to reduce the congestion in the school" (P3, 2021).

The argument was corroborated by another headmaster who said:

"...hmmm, Ghana, now everything is politics so if you are commenting on an issue and you are not careful the next moment you will be called to answer questions. Just imagine this small dormitory hosting about four hundred (400) students; it used to be a hundred capacity building" (P2, 2021).

Another headmaster stated this:

"...We really need extra classrooms because if we mean to divide the classes into A, B and C, where are we going to get teachers to handle them? Because the borders are fed free every student wants to be a border putting pressure on the dormitories. Some students have been made day students due to lack of infrastructure in the school" (P4, 2021).

One headmaster indicated that the schools lack teaching and learning materials particularly the science and the visual arts laboratories. Teachers and learners need teaching and learning materials to facilitate learning in class however most schools lack

these TLMs which makes teaching and learning very difficult especially among the students with special needs as some of the participants put it:

"...Because the students are many, they are not able to use the few ones we have. For instance, if you go to the science lab it takes thirty (30) students at time, so when will all the students be covered?"(P6, 2021). Another headmaster confirmed with this statement: *"...my brother, it is true oo, we have a big challenge in this school as far as the implementation of free SHS is concern. We don't have teaching and learning materials those that we have are very old and unable to serve their purposes" (P15, 2021).*

Another added that:

"...Teaching and learning materials are not enough in this school and those that we have are also very old and malfunctioning so students are not benefiting from them at all but what can we do we are no more taking school fees as we used to so we are not able to buy some of these teaching and learning materials to help our students and teachers" (P13, 2021).

Another participant also supported the assertion:

"...I won't say we don't have TLM, we have but not enough at all. Most of them are spoilt we struggle to use them. We need modern TLMs and hearing/visual aids for those who cannot hear or see well because it is expensive for their parents to be able to afford since some of the students do not take good care of their hearing aids. In fact without teaching and learning materials teachers become helpless during teaching" (P11, 2021).

Teaching and learning materials

Lack of teaching and learning materials was also a major challenge facing the headmasters.

"...Teaching and learning materials issue has become a very big challenge since the beginning of the free Senior High School policy. Government has not brought any TLM to be added to the existent ones, we can't complain because we all want the policy to be sustained (P12, 2021).

Community support

Headmasters became aware of this challenge either through personal experience or a secondary source where they get to know of the community support. Community support is crucial in the implementation of the free Senior High School policy in almost all the Senior High Schools in the Central Region due to the increase in the enrolment of the students.

"...All the community members around were help for the free SHS but they are not ready to help us in any way. We want to complete this (pointing to a building) to reduce the pressure on our dormitories and dining hall. But no one is assisting us with building materials like cement, roofing sheets etc" (P10, 2021).

Another headmaster added this:

"...Hmm our dormitory roofing got ripped of about three years ago, it is still there no assistance from the government or the community for maintenance. We have written and appealed to the community members especially the opinion leaders to help us fix the roofing but to no avail now the students are not getting a place to sleep" (P6, 2021).

One of the headmasters put it:

"...We are really suffering as headmasters because almost all the community members in this town and its surroundings want their children to be in the boarding house due to this free SHS and feeding policies but we don't have the enough facilities to do that. We

normally want to help those from far who do not know anyone here but community members would not agree they have pushed all their children to the boarding house (P8, 2021).

It also emerged that there were pressures on the school resources both human and material. The existing teachers were not able to handle the increased number of students due to the free SHS policy. The facilities were also overused example, chairs, tables, classrooms, dining halls etc. One headmaster stated:

"...The pressure is too much my brother, see we don't have enough teachers to handle these students and as you can see the students are many to be put into one class when we divide them too teachers become a challenge" (P7, 2021).

Another one also indicated this:

"...For pressure on resources, the least said about it the better because everyone knows that there is pressure on our resources ranging from physical structures to workers. The school is the government and government is supposed to post teachers and other support staff here and provision of adequate resources so there nothing we can do as employees" (P9, 2021).

Again, another headmaster corroborated the previous views with this statement:

"...Yes we have pressure here because our contact our have been increased and even the double track system is making matters worse for some teachers because they have to be for both tracks. They don't have time to rest at all always in school working" (P3, 2021).

The pressure on schools' resources was agreed by another headmaster with this statement:

"...Now because of the pressure on our facilities all of them are getting spoilt. Our two main boreholes are spoilt now we only depend on Ghana Water Company for our water supply but as u know it is not always the case that they give us enough water" (P12, 2021). Sometimes I wished I was not the headmaster because people would be calling me head we need this, head we need that but there is no money to do certain things since students are not paying for school fees and other charges and government too doesn't bring the subventions early and even they come how much are they just small" (P5, 2021).

4.4 What strategies could be adopted by headmasters to overcome the challenges of implementing free Senior High School policy?

The current theme shows the strategies used by headmasters to improve the free Senior High School Policy. The respondents outlined several strategies that were used to assist the free SHS policy in their schools. These strategies indicated that the headmasters were willing and committed to support the free SHS policy. Four subthemes emerged which were provision of infrastructure, adequate teachers, provision of TLM and improvement of community support.

Most of the participants indicated that providing infrastructure to the school could go a long way to improve the free SHS educational policy. A headmaster stated that;

"...We continuously have discussion with the appropriate stakeholders like the Ghana Education Service to provide us with facilities to contain these students. God been so good to us government is building this facility to be used as a dormitory to ease the

congestion at the dormitories and I think it's a good thing the government has done"(P3, 2021).

This was also supported by another headmaster:

"...Initially we needed teachers to handle the students I wrote to Ghana Education Service and now they have given us some teachers though not enough but it is better than before we are praying that with time more teachers would be posted here for effective teaching and learning" (P6, 2021).

One headmaster also added this:

"...For infrastructure, we have tried our best to provide some since the beginning of the free SHS but as we always say 'Oliver ask for more' so we are still asking for more facilities so that we can divide the classes into smaller ones so that teachers will have adequate control over the students. We are trying our best paaa, we have renovated some old structures to be used by the students some as classrooms and others as accommodations" (P, 9).

From the information received from the participant it was observed that the teachers were not enough at all to make the free SHS effective. One informant indicated:

"...Though we don't have enough teachers but it is better than when the free SHS started government post some NABCO teachers around to help us. Apart from the NABCO teachers, we have gotten permanent teachers too and this has helped a lot to reduce the teacher-student ratio" (P15, 2021).

This was in line with another headmaster;

"…Personally, I do teach sometimes to reduce the pressure. When a class is too full I sometimes divide them especially for mathematics and I will hand half and the teacher too will take the other part. We still need teachers" (P8, 2021).

Another headmaster also added that:

"…This situation became more serious when we started with the double track system because we needed teachers to handle the two set of students (gold and green tracks). The few teachers were doing that for us but now we have received some more teachers into the school the pressure is under control now" (P10, 2021)

This strategy was also adopted to help the students understand subject concepts in class. It was indicated by a headmaster:

"…One more thing, TLMs are very important in this regard but it seems government does not put premium on it unless we try to acquire some ourselves or sometimes the students are asked to get some themselves which is not good but what can we do that is the only way out" (P2, 2021).

This was supported by another headmaster:

"…Getting teaching and learning materials from the school's IGF is what we always do because TLM will not come from anywhere the students also need it for effective teaching and learning" (P6, 2021).

It was also revealed that TLMs were vital facilities that the schools could ignore as one headmaster stated:

"…Teaching and learning materials are very important that we cannot afford to ignore so if the school is not able to provide them the students are asked to bring their own

TLMs to assist in their learning processes. This is not punishment just that we don't have and we ask parents to help because after all they are paying school fees anymore" (P14, 2021).

"...We always use the available teaching aids to help those who cannot see or hear well in class though what we have here are enough, we improvise a lot. We always inform the government and the PTA to get us some of the teaching aids but to no avail so at end of the day these poor students would suffer" (P7, 2021).

The communities were not left out for the effective free SHS implementation. Some communities helped with some infrastructure to reduce the congestions in the schools.

"...I liaise with some of the community members especially the old students association and the PTA to come to our aid and sometimes they respond positively. The PTA has putting up a dormitory for us which was completed just last month" (P13, 2021).

Another headmaster had this to say:

"...Oh old student's association is helping us a lot, they have provided us with accommodation and some buildings for classrooms we grateful. Some community members also donated some roofing sheets to fix the ripped buildings though not enough to fix it we still appealing to them to get us more" (P5, 2021).

Another submission from one headmaster:

"...We get some community support but not enough at all. Whenever we inform them to help the school they would throw it back to us to tell the government and it is creating problem for us. The government cannot provide everything alone but the community members do not appreciate that" (P1, 2021).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study as related to the objectives relevant to challenges faced by headmasters in the implementation of the free Senior High School policy into a more comprehensible description. This work provides a broader and deeper understanding regarding the headmasters' challenges in free SHS policy. The major themes are discussed in related to the literature.

On how headmasters implement the free Senior High School policy, most of the participants indicated that they use the policy document of the free SHS policy. The results revealed that the free SHS has a guided policy document that the headmaster must follow to ensure the smooth implantation of the policy. Some of the participants also stated that they relied on their personal experiences to manage the free SHS policy.

These findings imply that though the policy may have some documented guidelines some of the headmasters rely on their personal experiences to manage the free SHS policy. This could bring diversity in the implementation process since the experiences of the headmasters are not the same. Some school may perform better than others as a result of lack of experience from some headmasters. Multiple policy tools have emerged since the 1990s, creating more options for policy designers or implementers to put education policy into effect. As the education sector became more complex, so did the instruments: top-down mechanisms of command and control (*e.g.* a mandate given by the Ministry of Education to an implementing agency) were complemented by more elaborate tools such as capacity-building or school-community

partnerships to achieve the policy objectives (Honig, 2006). This literature corroborate with findings of the current study. Choosing one policy instrument over another affects the dynamics of implementation. It may require hiring consultants; training staff, providing financial or other incentives; or testing several tools in case actors are highly uncertain about the way to go. It is also in line with the United States, Suggett (2011) who found that the Comprehensive School Reform models that were more specific about the means to reach the policy goals in the late 1990s in the United States determined the fidelity of implementation, *i.e.* how well implementation outcomes fit the policy goals (2017). In a different setting, being too specific about the tools might hinder implementation: Suggett (2011) suggests that in a context where there is high uncertainty and lack of consensus on the means to reach the policy goals, such as improving educational outcomes for all, consulting practitioners and experimenting may be a more effective strategy than specifying the tools right away.

On the improvement in parental income the results revealed that parent's income was substantially improved since they did not pay their wards school fees. Again, the results revealed that the literacy rate of the country has increased tremendously after the introduction of the free Senior High School policy. These findings mean that free SHS policy has benefited students by given them the opportunity to be enrolled in the Senior High Schools which hitherto was very difficult to access. This finding is in line with the previous study by Peter (2002) that states every child should be given the opportunity to learn and study because, the development of a country depends vastly on the standard of education and countries must do everything possible to improve its educational systems.

Education gives people critical skills and tools to help them provide better for themselves and their families.

Again, the results showed that, free Senior High School has improved parents' income. This implies that the incomes of most parents with their wards at the Senior High Schools have been improved due to the fact that they do not pay school fees anymore. If parents were to pay school fess, most of their resources would have been channeled into their children's education. This finding support a study by Armstrong (2006) which indicates that free education helps people work better and can create opportunities for sustainable and viable economic growth now and into the future. Free education helps fight poverty and other diseases, reduces mother and child mortality and helps improve health. Education is very necessary for all of us and its implication and importance can be seen in every field of our life. Nations which gave importance to education in every field or sector in the country are ruling now.

Also, the results showed that, free Senior High School increases the literacy rate of a country. This means that if majority of people enjoy free Senior High School the literacy would also be increased to bring development in the country. It is often said that, 'Knowledge is power'. Although there has always been a debate on this matter, the importance of education cannot be denied. The information we are constantly bombarded with, cannot be converted into knowledge without the catalyst called education. In an economy where knowledge is the most valuable commodity a person and a country have to offer, the best jobs will go to the best educated – whether they live in the United States or India or China (Obama, 2009). This suggests that education empowers an individual to think, question, and see beyond the obvious. Human beings are born with a natural

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tendency to question. Education is the best way to satiate our curiosity, without extinguishing the burning desire to learn and explore more.

On challenges, findings revealed that inadequate infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of community support and pressure on school resources posed challenges to heads implementation of free Senior High School policy. This means that the implementation of the Senior High School policy would be very difficult for most of the headmasters for the various Senior High Schools in the Municipalities which may lead to reverse of the new policy to the old system of 'cash and carry'. This finding is in line with Alvarez (2003) finding that the challenges of free SHS policy are lack of infrastructure and resources.

This finding also agrees with IMANI (2018) who also see the problems of the Free SHS Policy to be infrastructural inadequacy and financial difficulties to acquire teaching and learning materials and other resources. World Bank (2018) also identified teaching aids; notably projectors, science laboratory equipment state-of-art computer laboratory among others, as factors that make the implementation of this policy impolitic. In the view of the World Bank, the challenges facing the Free SHS Policy are the wasting of resources on teaching aids and inadequate infrastructure for the students to feel comfortable and study.

On strategies to improve the free Senior High School policy, findings revealed that headmasters lobbied for infrastructure, teachers, teaching and learning materials and community support. Some of the headmasters appeared depressed as they indicated that they were sad for not being able to provide the needed resources for the school. This means that if headmaster was not able to lobby for infrastructure, community support,

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TLM and others the implementation of the free Senior High School policy in that school becomes ineffective. This finding is in line with IMANI (2018) report that strategies to improve the free SHS policy are retraining of teachers, community involvement, allowance for less endowed schools, independent scholarship secretariat for less endowed schools and massive infrastructural development to ease the congestion in the schools.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations needed to help headmasters improve free Senior High School policy implementation in the Central Region

6.2 Summary of the study

The study explored three objectives namely: how headmaster implement the free Senior High School policy, the challenges faced by headmasters in the implementation of free Senior High School policy and strategies to improve the implementation of the policy in some selected schools in the region. The study adopted a purposive sampling technique to select the participants for the study. Fifteen headmasters from 15 selected Senior High Schools were used. The study utilized semi-structured interview guide. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Key findings of the study included; headmasters lacked policy documents of the policy hence most relied on their personal experiences for the implementation of the free Senior High School policy. Also, it was revealed that the policy is not sustainable according to most of the participants.

Again, headmasters had challenges such as lack of infrastructure, inadequate teachers, lack of resources and lack of community support, teaching and learning materials and community support to improve the free Senior High School Policy in the region.

The findings of this study showed that strategies such as provision of infrastructure, TLM, community support among others would improve the free Senior High School policy.

6.3 Conclusions

The policy lacks documented policy for its implementation hence most of the headmasters depend on their experiences making the free Senior High School policy unsustainable.

The challenges revealed in the study included lack of infrastructure, lack of TLM, lack of community support and lack of adequate teachers. The study concludes that if headmasters encountered these challenges the implementation of the free Senior High School policy would not be successful in the two Municipalities.

6.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government through the ministry of education should provide a clear policy document to guide the free Senior High School policy in order to bring standardization in the its implementation.

2. The government should allocate enough infrastructure and resources to schools to ensure that free Senior High School education runs smoothly without compromising on quality. In that case government should continue to build new facilities and schools to reduce the congestions in the schools. Heads should enroll students according to the resources of the school to avoid overcrowding in the schools.

3. The community members and Non-Governmental Organizations should support the headmasters to effectively implement the free secondary education policy.

6.5 Areas for Further Research

The study could be replicated in another Municipality in different region to confirm or refute the findings of this study

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section 1: How heads implement free SHS

1. How do you implement the free SHS policy in your school?

Section 2: Challenges of Implementing Free Senior School Policy

1. Do you have infrastructure to implement the policy?

2. Do you have enough teachers in this school?

3. Are there teaching and learning materials in the school?

4. Do you get support from the community?

5. Do you have any other challenge that you are facing in the implementation of the free

   Senior High School Policy?..

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Section 4: Strategies to Improve the Implementation of Free SHS Policy

1. In your view, what should be done to improve implementation of free SHS Policy?

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   Thank you for answering the questions.