

AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND  
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT, KUMASI

THE INFLUENCE OF FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL ON STUDENT  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF ATWIMA NWABIAGYA  
DISTRICT



**A Dissertation in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of  
Education and Communication Sciences submitted to the School of Graduate  
Studies, Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and  
Entrepreneurial Development, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree**

DECEMBER, 2021

## DECLARATION

### CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, AMANKWAAH BENJAMIN, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have 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 for supervision of dissertation as laid down by Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training And Entrepreneurial Development

SUPERVISOR'S NAME: DR. PHILIP OTI-AGYEN

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

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## **DEDICATION**

To my wife, Portia Asor.



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## ABSTRACT

Getting everyone into school increases quantity thus maintaining the quality of it becomes a burden and quite challenging. Globally, access to education is one of the problems facing education and the Education For All movement which was initiated by UNESCO with the aim of getting all children, youth and adult to school. This study seeks to assess the influence of Free Senior School on student academic performance in Ghana. Cross-sectional survey research design was used for the study with a population of 198. Census sampling technique was used for the participants for the study. 198 questionnaires were administered of which 163 was retrieved. The study revealed that in the year 2016/2017, the student's enrolment rate was 2617, this figure increased in the subsequent academic year 2018/2019 to 2625. The student's enrolment rate increased to 2857 in the 2020/2021 academic year. Additionally, the free SHS policy has increased access in public schools' enrollment. The study concluded that students' enrolment rate was increased as a result of introduction of free senior high school policy. Parents enrolled their students in schools because of the free primary education. The study recommended that the Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should involve private schools in computerized school placement system and boost the private sector.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The Free Senior High School (Free SHS) education policy in Ghana was a government initiative introduced in 2017 September by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. With this policy student who attend public secondary and technical second cycle schools are not made to pay school fees. They are supplied with free text books on core subjects as well as note books and exercise books. They also enjoy free meals and are supplied with school uniforms. On Tuesday 12th September, 2017 at the West Africa Senior High School, the President of the Republic of Ghana, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo launched the Free SHS education policy ushering Ghana into an era where the age old belief of “education as a right not a privilege” assumes its true meaning at the second-cycle level.

Indeed, this has been the dream of the forebears of Ghana where children will not be denied the opportunity of Senior High School education because of the inability of their parents to support them financially. It was a dawn of a new era, an era that was not only bringing to the young people of Ghana hope of a brighter future, a future with limitless and greater opportunities. It also brought enormous financial relief to the overwhelming majority of parents who found it extremely hard to finance the education of their children (UNESCO, 2015). The policy's core themes of access, equity and equality fulfil the United Nations modified Sustainable Development Goals, where member countries amalgamate those themes in their educational systems to certify adequate learning experiences for students. Respective politicians and social workers have been allocated the duty to ensure the policy's efficiency, productivity and further

development. These leaders span from varying governmental departments including Ghana's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Ghana Education Service and Ghana's Ministry of Education. Free secondary education remains limited in the developing world, where some 80% of 264 million children currently unable to access secondary education across 65 countries associated with the Global Partnership for Education are based (Ministry Of Education(MOE),2018). Despite a 2015 commitment by UN member countries to provide free secondary education by 2030, most countries with prior cost-sharing approaches are yet to achieve this goal. Ghana remains one of the few countries with a prior cost-sharing model to have rolled out 'fully' free secondary education. We broach Ghana's implementation of the policy and seek to explore the critically emergent issues and challenges facing public senior high schools.

The free senior high school policy is one of best social and economic intervention policies that openly affect both parents and students of senior high schools. Parents and guardians especially, have been left off the hook of their economic and financial burden. This study therefore looks at the effect of introducing the free senior high school policy on the economic and social lives of parents and students respectively. The study finds the introduction of the free senior high school policy as a relief to the financial burden of parents, especially guardians from rural and peri-rural settlements. Not just that, a few other public members who are fortunate, can now keep body and soul together through employment creation. A key ingredient in policy formulation and implementation is policy goals and the decision making process in achieving the goals(Zoula Lor,2015). Most certainly, the policy goals (achieving universal access and equity in education) of the Free SHS are too complex and multiple,

given the truism that the government intends to absorb all fees at a time when financial resources and manpower in the Ghanaian education system are constrained. Again, the policy is being implemented when the nation is already struggling to raise the standards of living of citizens with competing demands from other sectors of the economy.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report highlights an enormous number of children getting education but the quality of it remains far out reach. Getting everyone into school increases quantity thus maintaining the quality of it becomes a burden and quite challenging. At the same time, it stresses that it is less likely for children in poor communities to receive better education than their counterparts from high income backgrounds (Serdyukov, 2017). Globally, access to education is one of the problems facing education and the Education For All movement which was initiated by UNESCO with the aim of getting all children, youth and adult to school by 2015 was not met (Anti, 2017). Although the goal of UNESCO was not achieved, efforts are made by international agencies to improve access to education (UNESCO, 2017)

Although 'Education For All' is a positive initiative to reduce the level of illiteracy globally, there is too much focus on primary education thereby leaving some gaps in the senior high level unattended. This paradigm shift of making SHS free also releases parents from financial crisis and reduces the number of school drop outs on the streets (Daily Graphic, 2017). The positivity around making senior high level of education free in Ghana is politically appealing and most socialist government embrace this policy. The political motivation behind the FSHS was to

ease the financial burden of parents, reduce the number of school dropouts, increases human capital and technology. According to Babah, et al., (2020), before the introduction of free SHS, heads of very good and endowed schools capriciously and independently set high personal cut- off grade points and admission standards to attract only the exceptionally good and talented students to the detriment of the less brilliant and rural setting students. Some parents have to travel from far places just to secure placement in a school for their wards. In other instance, too some wards secure placement to secondary schools but due to financial challenges in payment of school fees, their wards are unable to access secondary school education. This in a way limits access to the average Ghanaian child in terms of equity to access secondary school to improve the human capital development of the nation. In view of all these challenges associated with the access to secondary education, the government of Ghana in the year 2017 implemented a free SHS policy on a free access to secondary education for all. The policy intention was to offer equity to any Ghanaian living everywhere in Ghana the opportunity to access second cycle Education irrespective of the family's financial status (Nsiah, 2018).

The introduction of the FSHS has led to substantial increase in enrolment since the main barrier (fees and other expenses) has been absorbed by the government. Available data from the Ministry of Education show an increase of 17% in 2017 and by 31% in 2018 to 472,730 (see Figure 2). The introduction of the FSHS has led to an increase in enrolment by about 90,000 students (Ministry of Education, 2018).

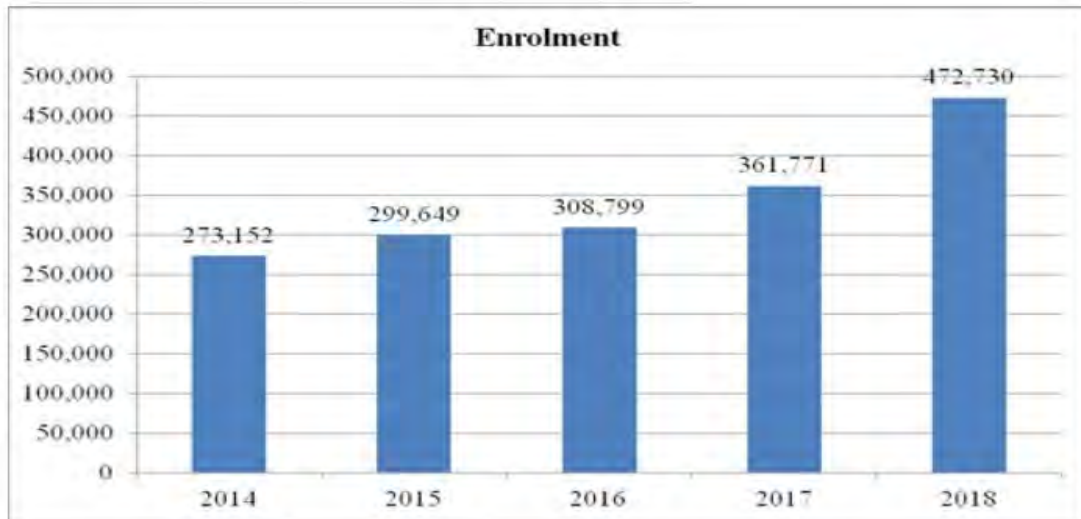


Figure 2 Enrolment Trend in SHS from 2014 to 2018.  
Source: Adopted from MOE (2018).

Although the programme is in its fourth year, studies in other places where it has been implemented indicate that the provision of free secondary education has been accompanied by numerous predicaments that impede quality education (Ministry of Education, MOE), 2018). For instance, Free Secondary Education increases enrolment and retention in secondary schools, but retention is still threatened by many socio-economic factors that lead to dropping of students out of school (Donkor, 2018). This nature of increased student enrolment according to Ferdinand (2018), has consequently caused other problems like heavy teaching loads, movement of students in and out of schools, teacher shortages and inadequate instructional materials.

However, the introduction of the policy and its implementation has left many questions and unease minds from educational analyst and policy watchers (Awal & Oduro, 2017). Several studies conducted on free SHS education has only focused on the challenges the programme is facing without looking at its effect on students' performance. This study seeks to assess the perception of the students on free senior high school and its influence on their academic performance.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to assess the perception of students on free Senior high School and its influence on their academic performance.

### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

**The specific objectives of this study are as follows:**

1. To examine how free tuition influence the academic performance of students in the Atwima Nwabiagya North District.
2. To find out how provision of free textbooks influences the academic performance of the students.
3. To examine how free meals has on the student in improving their academic performance.

### **1.5 Research questions**

**The following questions would be used for the study**

1. How does free tuition influence the academic performance of students in the Atwima Nwabiagya North ?
2. How does the provision of free textbooks affect the academic performance of the students?
3. How does the provision of free meals contribute to the academic performance of the students in the Atwima Nwabiagya?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings from the study would make available innovative information and ways of handling free SHS education programme. Additionally, the study would be useful to policy makers with regard to Free SHS education. The policy makers can make use of the findings in policy formulation and implementation on Free SHS



education. To the teachers, the findings will give them enough information to help design teacher learner resources to help improve upon the performance of the students. .

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study is geographically limited in scope to selected Senior High Schools in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. To check how free tuition contributes to the academic performance of the students in the Atwima Nwabiagya North District in the Ashanti Region. To analyze the provision of free textbooks on the academic performance of the students.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

This study was organized in six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction which would deal with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, definition terms and organization of the rest of the study. In chapter two, a related literature will be reviewed. A conceptual study was developed based on the literature review.

Chapter three will discuss the research design, population and sample and sampling procedures, the research instrument for collecting data, method of data collection and data analysis. In chapter four, the researcher will analyze the results and discuss the results based on the research objectives of the study. Chapter five would discuss the findings of the study. in chapter six, the summary of the study and the key findings which also include the conclusion drawn on the findings and recommendations as well as suggestions for further research will be worked on. Present the summary, conclusions and recommendation of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter consist of a theoretical and empirical review of literature on free Senior High School in line with the following headings:

1. Meaning of Free Senior High School
2. The Concept of Free Senior High School Education
3. The Concept of Quality Education
4. Contribution of Quality Education to National Development
5. Factors Affecting Quality Education
6. Impact of quality education on national development
7. Sustainability of Quality Free Senior High Programme

#### 2.1 Meaning of Free Senior High School

The Free Senior High School (Free SHS) education policy in Ghana was a government initiative introduced in the 2017 September during the Presidential administration of Nana Akufo-Addo. The policy's origin began as part of the President's presidential campaign during Ghana's 2016 election period, and has become an essential part of Ghana's educational system. The policy's core themes of access, equity and equality fulfil the United Nations modified Sustainable Development Goals, where member countries amalgamate those themes in their educational systems to certify adequate learning experiences for students. Respective politicians and social workers have been allocated the duty to ensure the policy's efficiency, productivity and further development. These leaders span from varying governmental departments including Ghana's Ministry of Finance and

Economic Planning and Ghana Education Service and Ghana's Ministry of Education.

## **2.2 The Concept of Free Senior High School Education**

Pressure on governments in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to expand secondary education is growing. Increasing numbers of students flowing from expanded primary education and the need to improve the educational levels of the labor force to benefit from a globalizing economy make it inevitable that governments in SSA will turn their attention to expanding and improving secondary education (Alvarez, 2013; Mulkeen, 2015( World Bank, 2015).

The dilemma these countries face is multifaceted. Many countries will need to continue to devote resources to expanding and improving primary education to achieve the goals of Education for All (EFA). A realistic conversation about greater access to secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa will need to confront the present status of education systems in terms of their capacity to sustain the growth and improvement of primary education, as well as their existing limitations in terms of capacity and financing to simultaneously expand and improve secondary education.

There is consensus in the literature that secondary education—*long neglected*—is now the fastest growing segment of the education sector (World Bank 2017; Mulkeen 2015; World Bank 2015,( Gropello 2016). In many countries, movement away from seeing primary education as the terminal level of education towards policies that envision widespread completion of junior secondary and upper secondary as the goals of education system development is well underway, but has only recently begun in Sub-Saharan Africa (De Ferranti 2013,(World Bank 2015).

Many challenges to expanding secondary education are encountered by SSA. Among these challenges are financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure and logistics as well as inadequate teachers. For instance, the Minister of Education, honorable Matthew Opoku Prempeh stated that the government of Ghana would spend 1.4 billion gh¢ to fund the free Senior High School programme in the 2018/2019 academic year to construct classroom blocks, provide mono desks and tables for teachers as well as bunk beds. He added that the absence of the needed infrastructure necessitated the introduction of the double-track system (Claude, 2018). Obeng (2012) declares:

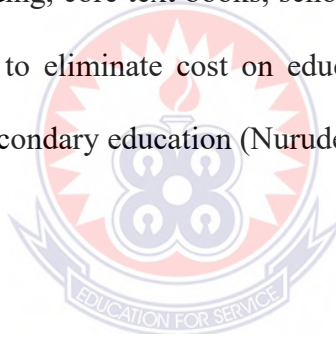
Cost of education has been identified to constitute a significant proportion of the income of most people in Ghana whose daily life are visited by abject poverty. Taking giant steps to bring economic recovery in its citizens through education, the government of Ghana has taken the burden off parents through the implementation of the capitation grant policy (p.2).

The concept of universal primary education can be traced to 1948 when the United Nations declared education as a basic right for all (United Nations, (UN), 2018). This meant that education was to be available to all irrespective of social class, sex, colour, religion, tribe and race (Mukathe, 2019). The 1948 declaration was further stressed at the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly held between 1961 and 1962, which identified illiteracy as the main barrier to social and economic growth of Third World Countries, Ghana included (Micheni, 2013). Secondary Education is currently attracting attention of nations as terminal points of free education as it pertains in Ghana.

The government of Ghana recognizing that the elimination of poverty, promotion of human rights and attainment of sustainable development are noble goals but cannot be realized without placing education at the call of national

development. As a measure to promote education for all and bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, the government of Ghana introduced the Free Compulsory Basic Education (FCUBE) as required by the 1992 Constitution. It covered 11 years of basic education which was funded from the capitation grants and School Feeding Programme. Among the objectives were equity, access and quality basic education (Nurudeen, Abdul Basit, Ming, Ahmed & Selma, 2018)

In 2017, the government of Ghana introduced the free senior high school to replace the progressively free senior high school which absorbed fees of the day students in the senior high schools and other fees such as examination fees, entertainment fees, sports fees and others. The free SHS policy however is free education for tuition, feeding, core text books, school uniforms among others. All these policies are meant to eliminate cost on education to parents by reducing poverty and promoting secondary education (Nurudeen et al., 2018).



### **2.3 Theoretical Review**

The human Capital theory underpins this research. This theory views development in terms of investment in human capital. The proponents of this theory argue that 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 Okemekinde (2018) supported the assertion of the proponents of the theory such as Schultz (2011), that an educated population is a productive one. Supporting the argument further Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (2017) maintain that human resource constitutes the ultimate basis of wealth of nations.

The human capital theory is relevant to this study as free SHS is geared towards increasing access to education through removal of cost barriers. According to the World Bank, “growth, development and poverty reduction depends on the knowledge and skills people may acquire (World Bank, 2011 P.5). Investing in the human resource to equip them with requisite knowledge, skills and values as postulated by the theory involves a lot of expenses that are sometimes difficult to be met, particularly in developing countries like Ghana (Obeng 2012). There is a positive relationship between educational funding and the poverty alleviation Joseph, Laura, Peter and Jonathan (2000) after carrying out research, suggested that the American government and other institution can relieve burdens by promoting saving and cost of college attendance through expanded aid.

Most of the literature reviewed emphasize on the benefits of educational funded and its impact on increasing access, and alleviating poverty on the part of parents and increased enrollment (Nurudeen et al., 2018). For instance, the World Bank opines that to sustain poverty reduction requires commitment to reduce inequality and improved access to educational opportunities for all citizens (World Bank, 2015).

Other studies also found funding to be useful in improving the academic performance of students. These include Denny et al. (2014); Moussa et al (2015); Natasha et al. (2011); Stater (2019) and Tatiana et al (2016). Having considered all these, it is observed that very little has been done on the impact of the free secondary education on private investment, particularly on enrollment in private schools, the infrastructural facilities that the private investors have put up and employment in these educational.

## 2.4 The Concept of 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, 2015, Watkins, 2010). 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, 2015). The limitation of this definition is that it has not given any indication of measuring the characteristics mentioned.

In a related development, Adams (1998) as cited in Chapman and 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.

Similarly Jansen (2015: 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”. UNICEF’s (2010) definition on quality education touches on five key areas namely; healthy learners, healthy environment, content, process and outcome. Dilating on these elements, it emphasised that;

◆ 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.

◆ 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.

◆ 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.

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

◆ The outcome of learning should be provision of knowledge, skills and attitude that are relevant to national development and participation in governance.

It is worth noting that definitions on quality education change 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 2012).

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 (UNICEF, 2010).

## **2.5 Contribution of Quality Education to National Development**

Quality Education has long been recognized as one of the pillars of improving the lives of the very poor as globalization proceeds. This is because its impact to national development cuts across all sectors of the economy (Hewlett Foundation 2018; Sahlberg, 2019). The relationship between quality education and the development of these variables; human capital, employment generation, economic growth, income distribution, quality health, democracy and empowerment would be the consideration of this section.

### **2.5.1 Human Capital Development**

According to Gilmore (2019), the term human capital in economic parlance means, the relationship between skills and earnings. In his contribution to education and human development, Oxaal (2017) used human Capital Theory (associated with the work of Gary Becker, Mark Blaug and many others), to re-echo the fact that,



quality education provides mental and physical skills to literates who contribute highly to the productivity of a country as compared to the low productivity from their ignorant counterparts. This informs why the advanced countries invest a large chunk of their assets in the development of their population through promotion of science and superior education. Quick advancement of some poor countries could be explained to the importance that they attached to education and sound education policies for human capital development (UNESCO 2016).

However, Gilmore (2019) argues that firms are reluctant to invest in the education of their employees because of the little assurance they have that the trained employees would not leave their firms to another one with their new but quality skills for better wages and salaries. The strategy these days is providing training to employees only relevant to the areas of operations of the firms.

### **2.5.2 Income Distribution**

Globally, governments give priority concern to SHS due to the fact that it serves as a terminal point of preparing students for the world of work or education of higher level (Sekyere 2019). Efforts are made to enhance its quality for the reason that, availability of quality educational opportunities in a country has a link with the income distribution. Quality education breaks the illiteracy barrier and provides the requisite skills which allow individuals to take part in productive and market ventures on even grounds and take advantage of economic reformation (Watkins 2010).

Furthermore, individuals with the desired skills and knowledge acquired through formal education or training, all things being equal, receive higher wages than those with lower educational background. The reason being that they are able

to escape from unemployment situation and can flexibly move from one geographical location to another seeking for jobs, as demand for their labour by employers over the course of their working life is higher (Gilmore 2019; Hanushek and Wobmann, 2010; Miller, 2010).

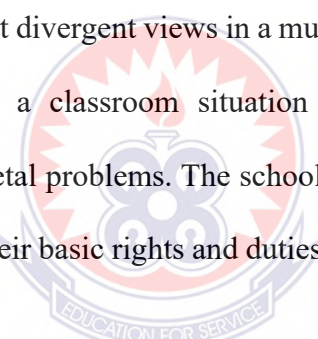
Human capital theorists argue in line with the above assertion (Oxaal, 2017). Firstly, they are of the view that, universally, there is empirically verifiable, positive relationship between the wages and salaries people receive at work and the level or quality education which they have received. In the competitive markets, employers use education as the criterion of measuring the suitability, potentiality and productivity of employees. Employees with higher but quality education are equated to higher production of a firm hence earn higher reward for the service rendered. The implication is that quality education makes employees acquire relevant knowledge which can be applied to their jobs to render them more productive to increase productivity and enhance their chances of earning more in an organization than for those with less or inferior education (Oxaal, 2017 & Blondal et al, 2011).

However, the human capitalists counter argued that the premium placed on quality education by employers is not due to the mental skills it provides to people but rather the “non-cognitive qualities and attributes inculcated at different levels of the education system”. These qualities and attributes provided by the education are answers to requirements for unskilled, middle and higher level functions in the organizations. To them education rather create systematic social classifications in an occupational environment instead of increasing productive capabilities of workers (Oxaal, 2019).

### 2.5.3 Governance/Democracy

There is no denying the fact that linkages exist between participation in decision making and education. As a result of this, UNESCO (2010) identified preparation of students for active involvement in decision making as a component of quality education. Among other things, the impact of quality education on good governance can be felt in the following ways;

Firstly, citizenry with quality education is said to be more capable of participating in multi-cultural and pluralistic society as well as the local, regional and national government (Gilmore, 2019). In both content and process, quality education inculcates democratic attitude of promoting peace, stability and how to manage conflict and respect divergent views in a multi-cultural society. Learning to manage disagreements in a classroom situation exposes students to how to collectively deal with societal problems. The school also provides an environment for people to learn about their basic rights and duties and how to defend them when abused (USAID, 2013).



Buttressing the point, Watkins (2010) stated that, provision of quality education to citizens will provide them with the skills and attitudes needed for empowerment, capacity building and participation in decision making. In a related development, report of the World Economic Forum (2015), confirms that quality education is a fundamental requirement for empowering women (vulnerable group) in all spheres of society. Failure to provide women access to education equivalent to that of the opposite sex (men) in terms of quality, content and relevance to existing knowledge and real needs, deny them participation and representation in governance to gain political influence. The report further pinpoints that the devastating consequence of

the society as a whole is the ill-preparation that future generation has to suffer for lack of women education.

#### **2.5.4 Poverty Reduction**

The overall goal that a country can achieve for using quality education or education to improve its Human Resource, Health, Income Distribution and Good Governance/Democracy is reduction of its poverty level. This has been posited in World Education Forum held in Dakar in April 2000 by the international community who pledged to use education as an avenue of eradicating extreme poverty in the world (UNESCO, 2011).

Oxaal (2017) emphasises that quality education can be a reliable source of maximizing the yields of people, particularly peasant farmers when other farming inputs are available, to minimize poverty which is high in the Agricultural sector of the developing world. The writer ascertains that an educated person stands a better chance of getting better job as well as wages and salaries to provide for himself the basic needs in life and protection against poverty. Also, the reward (earnings) for the self-employed who are educated and work either in the urban and informal sector is higher than those who are illiterate. By making reference to Correspondence theory, Oxaal asserted that advancement in schooling in the labour force promotes employment growth but not necessarily a surest way for the educated who fail to secure jobs in the formal sector to better their lot.

It is argued further by Todaro and Smith (2019) that improvement in the education of woman (the vulnerable) is not only a contributory factor to her fertility control but also beneficial to her health status and that of her family members. It is therefore, concluded by UNESCO (2011) that quality education is one of the social

interventions that has the potentials of dealing with the menace of poverty and it is also a means of wealth creation for a country socio-economic growth and national development. Quality of education of any nation or society can be obtained through concerted government policies to influence certain indicators (factors) in educational system.

## **2.6 Factors Affecting Quality Education**

This section of the chapter examines factors that influence quality education. According to Hewlett Foundation (2018), factors that influence quality education broadly include motivated and qualified teachers, appropriate curriculum, good teaching materials and well equipped library, appropriate language teaching, appropriate class size and favourable school environment, community participation, sufficient instructional period and valid and reliable method of examination.

### **2.6.1 Appropriate Curriculum**

The nature of a curriculum with an effective system of delivering it is critical in attaining higher learning outcome. A Curriculum of a school contains a country's educational goals, objectives and policy direction as well as the appropriate educational philosophies that could be adopted to address its needs (McKinsey et al 2017). It specifies the content, sequence, methodology, duration of a programme and pacing of what should be taught at each grade level. It determines the quality of teachers to be trained and Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) employed in its implementation to achieve the mission and vision of a country. What is more, it serves as a reference point of measuring the input, output and outcome of teachers, students and other stakeholders of education at a point in time (Chapman & Adams 2012).

### **2.6.2 Teaching and Learning Materials/ Well Equipped Library**

According to UNESCO (2015), the achievement of teaching and learning is influenced by the availability of resources to use for the process and how these resources are regulated. Thus, schools that have no textbooks and learning materials or well-equipped library cannot do effective and efficient work. Adeyemi (2010) citing Gibbs (2010) maintains that a well-equipped library provides assortment of material resources like books, journals and CD ROM. Thus, the library is a reference source for any school and a point of individual studies in schools where relevant information from primary and secondary sources can be extracted. Adequacy of library resources and their usage by students and teachers are therefore, associated with better learning results.

### **2.6.3 Motivated and Qualified Teachers**

A teacher has a powerful influence on students. For schools to provide opportunity to learn, they must operate regularly and teachers must be present and care about what students learn, and they should also be competent to teach the curriculum. Motivation of teachers can reduce absenteeism among them and go a long way to foster child-centred learning environment. Carnoy (2019) and Hanushek and Wobmann (2017) point out that investigations conducted in both advanced and developing world revealed that investment in physical infrastructure of the educational system does not improve performance of learners substantially than the quality of the instructor or facilitator.

Good instructors within the learning environment influence their students to perform better than those considered being poor or bad. It behoves therefore, that policy makers and the institutional arrangement of the school should provide

incentives that will encourage teachers to upgrade their academic and professional qualifications to improve lessons delivery for good results.

#### **2.6.4 Appropriate class size**

Measured pupil-teacher ratios are reasonable approximations of actual class sizes, especially, in schools. Ankomah et al (2015) asserted that education quality is much higher and improves students' achievement when the student-teacher ratio is much lower in class. A study conducted by Adams (2010) on class size in Malaysia secondary schools proves that, fewer students per teacher in a class improves the quality of interaction and for that matter raises accomplishment.

### **2.7 Empirical Review**

#### **2.7.1 The impact of Government funding on enrollment of students**

The introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Uganda (Deininger, 2013). Also in a later study, Olawande et al. (2010) assessed the effect of free Primary Education in rural Kenya, applying panel data from about 1500 households between 2000 and 2007 to check the enrollment trends. They found out that parents could enroll their students in schools because of the free primary education. This is not out only applicable to parents who are poor or live in the rural communities but also affect general enrollment in public senior high schools in Ghana.

There are also other studies conducted on the impact of funding on enrollment and student academic performance. Free education introduced in South Africa in some areas enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school (Boatman and Long, 2016; Blenco and Menses, 2010; Scot – Clayton, 2013; Gar lick, 2013; Melguizo, 2011). The free SHS policy has increased access in public schools which

has adversely affected enrollment in the private secondary schools. Consequently, facilities like classrooms, libraries, science laboratories, dormitories are either underutilized or abandoned. This has led to reduction in employment avenues to some workers.

According to the Hon. Minister of Education, the government of Ghana was to spend 1.4 billion Ghana cedis to fund the free senior high schools programme in 2018/2019 academic year due to increase in enrollment (Nyarko, 2018). The Honorable Minister outlined the enrollment trends to show that number of student enrolled in 2016 increased from 308,799 to 361,771 in 2017. Again, the percentage placed but not enrolled decreased from 26.5% in 2016 to 14.7% in 2017 indicating that more students who were placed in the various senior high schools got enrollment. (Nyarko, 2018).

The increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System. This was affirmed by Honourable Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, who stated among other things that the implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students (Nyarko, 2018).

## **2.8 Impact of quality education on national development**

In the words of Eyiah (2016),” The world over, crucial changes, quite unprecedented are taking place. Countries are more integrated in a global village affecting each other’s environment, economy and culture. The world is getting smaller and at the same time the gap between the rich and the poor countries keeps widening. Undeniably, underlying all these tremendous changes is education-good



education with relevance (P.8)” In his opinion Education has been the major facilitator and catalyst in the astonishing changes and transformation sweeping through the world today. The role of formal (school) education in the liberation of the individual mind as well as economic dependence and in national development is therefore quite obvious.

Thus, education pays off not only in literacy but also in income. Pragmatic measures need to be enforced by the Ministry of education to ensure the success of the quality education programme in Ghana. This research will unearth some of the problems associated with quality education. Since the Government of Ghana is committed to the improvement of quality in education, it will be appropriate to consider every single factor that matters in the quality education process to ensure great success and the rapid development of the nation.

Education or learning of any kind, depending on its nature, can broadly be categorized into three (3) groups namely; Formal, Informal and Non-formal. In the perception of Coombs (2013: p.11), Formal education is “the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary school through the university”. It includes what is taught in school within a certain time frame using curricula and syllabi. Kleis et al (2013) who associate themselves with the explanation of Informal Education said that this type of education is not organized and concerns itself with cultural transmission or everyday events which are passed onto the younger generations by the elders of the society. It includes all forms of no school experiences and those on the job.

Non-formal Education exists at any environment in which there is deliberate attempt to provide a methodical content of knowledge according to the desire and

aspirations of the learner. It occurs outside the school environment. A typical example of this form of education is adult literacy programme. Apart from absence of application of curriculum and syllabi for organization of education of this sort, there is also, minimization of other elements associated with formal system of education namely; roll calls, enforcement of discipline, report writing, supervision among other things (Kleis et al, 2013). The concern of this research is limited to the formal type of education since it is the line along which secondary education is organized in Ghana. Secondary schools in the country are designed to have curricula and time frame within which programmes that they pursue are completed.

## **2.9 Sustainability of Quality Free Senior High Programme**

The development of any educational system and standards will be a mirage if viable efforts and structures are not put in place to ensure continuous improvements and sustainability of the gains that have been made in terms of its quality. The interdependence pillars that come into play when educational sustainability is considered include; decentralization, developing quantifiable indicators, an in-depth understanding and equitable development of all levels of the education scheme (Heneveld, 2014). Heneveld (2014) and Horn (2012) maintain that participation in decision making by all stakeholders in the educational practices is paramount.

At the grass root level, the heads of the institutions cooperate with the community in which their schools are established to mobilize their human and material resources which will be required in the strategic planning processes for quality improvement. The educational planner at the central and local government

levels also require some amount of information from the head of institutions and communities to understand their needs which are factored into policy formulation.

Chapman and Adams (2012) are of the view that, if quality education is to be sustained, vital statistical data that is required by policy makers to prepare a checklist to monitor adequacy of facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, textbooks, class size and school environment among the few factors is provided by the schools and communities who are major players in the school supervision. The school authorities and the communities should therefore, collaborate with each other in order to provide information relevant to policy makers' monitoring and evaluation exercises of schools (Adams, 2012).

In his assessment of sustainability of quality education, Heyneman (2017) emphasised that, levels of educational system should not be analysed in isolation in a quest to attain continuous improvement. Concentration of efforts on one to the detriment of others could lead to distortion. Indeed, the training, management, excellence and effectiveness of every stage are highly determined by those traits in preceding levels. It thus connotes that the quality of students produced at the lower stage could become inputs for the middle stage that further processes them for the higher level. Whatever materials that are also produced from the higher stage have either direct or indirect effect on the lower and middle levels.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter covered the research method that was adopted by the researcher in arriving at the findings. It describes the research design, research approach, the population, sampling and sample procedures, data gathering instruments, data collection measures, data analysis and ethical consideration would also be dealt with in this chapter.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority given to set of dimensions of the research process. The researcher would use descriptive research design for the study. This refers to a research which specifies the nature of a given phenomena. It determines and reports the way things are done. Descriptive research thus involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Bryman, 2014).

The descriptive research design will help me;

1. To examine how free tuition influence the academic performance of students in the Atwima Nwabiagya North District.
2. To find out how provision of free textbooks influences the academic performance of the students.
3. To examine the effect of free meals on the students in improving their academic performance.

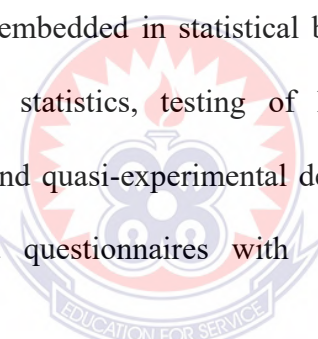
Descriptive research portrays an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations (Kothari, 2010). Therefore, the descriptive survey is deemed the best

strategy to fulfil the objectives of this study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) the basic purpose for descriptive research usually is to describe characteristics of the population of interest, make specific predictions and test associational relationships.

## **3.2 Research Approach**

### **3.2.1 Quantitative**

The research adopted quantitative research for the study. Quantitative research is regarded as the organized inquiry about phenomenon through collection of numerical data and execution of statistical, mathematical or computational techniques. The source of quantitative research is positivism paradigm that advocates for approaches embedded in statistical breakdown that involves other strategies like inferential statistics, testing of hypothesis, mathematical exposition, experimental and quasi-experimental design randomization, blinding, structured protocols, and questionnaires with restricted variety of prearranged answers.



### **3.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative and quantitative research**

Quantitative research is a systematic approach to investigation. It involves measuring or counting attributes and answers to the ‘what’ and ‘how many’ questions. According to Demand Media Inc. (2012), the research data is based on numbers which allow statistical tool to analyze it. This research method investigates the relationship between an independent variable and dependant variables to be studied. Researchers derive the hypotheses and test them with statistical tools like SPSS and SEM. However, advantages always come with disadvantages. Two disadvantages of doing quantitative research are: it ignores the natural setting like

the qualitative research method. Besides that, it requires a large sample size so that it can be run through analysis statistical tool.

### **3.2.3 Justification of the use of quantitative approach**

Researchers should bear in mind that methods used to conduct the research need to align with the research questions (Punch 2008). In other words, data which need to be collected should be enough in answering the research question. Amaratunga et al. (2012) maintained that quantitative research can help a researcher to gather strong evidence through statistical analysis on the relationship between dependent and independent variables. Undoubtedly, results obtained from statistical analysis can provide directions of relationships when mixed with theory and literature. Neuman (2007)( p.63) defined the quantitative approach as “an organized method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behavior in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic causal laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity.”

### **3.3 Population**

Mugenda (2008) describes population as the set of all groups of individuals, objects, items, cases, articles or things with common attributes or characteristics. According to Kothari (2014) a population consists of all items in any field of inquiry. The target population for the study was one hundred and Ninety Eight(198) .The teachers used in this study were the teachers in the selected secondary schools. These population was drawn from the two selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. **Table 3.1** indicates the number of respondents in each group.

**Table 3.1 Distribution of Population for the Study**

<b>School</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Total</b>
Barekese SHS (A)	86	86
Osei-Tutu SHS (B)	112	112
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>198</b>

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sample is a smaller, manageable version of a larger group. The census method was used to include all the 198 participants for the study .But during the data collection, I was able to accessed 163 questionnaire .Therefore the number of participants who participated in the study was 163.

### 3.5. Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire was used to obtain data from the respondents. The questionnaire items comprised closed - ended and open -ended items. The questions were divided into sections that covered the research objectives and research questions. The questionnaire had four main sections, which were designed in line with the research questions. The first section contained socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and included their age, gender, working experience and level of education. This was primarily to enable the researcher to have background information of respondents. Section two examined trends in students enrolment in relation to introduction of free senior high school programme in selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. Section three assessed the influence of free SHS programme on students academic performance in the selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District and section four focused on the strategies that can be employed to improve the free SHS programme.

### **3.5.1 Pre-Testing the Instruments**

Instruments pre-testing is a preliminary study conducted on small scale to ascertain the effectiveness of the research instruments, (Alila, 2011). A pre-test sample should be between 1% and 10% depending on the sample size, Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). In this study the researcher used a pre-test sample size equivalent to 10% of the study sample size, culminating into 20 respondents. Copies of questionnaire were self administered to the pre-test sample that was similar to the actual study sample in its major characteristics. This was significant as it helped to reveal aspects of ambivalence depicted by the questionnaire items that were subsequently reframed relative to the responses obtained from the respondents.

### **3.6 Validity of the Instrument**

Validity of the research instruments was reinforced by ensuring that the questionnaire items sufficiently covered the research objectives and this was subsequently confirmed by the pilot study.

Other measures put in place to address issues of instrument validity took the form of exposing the questionnaire to the experts and peers for judgement and review, respectively.



### **3.7 Reliability of the Instruments**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), reliability is a measure of the degree to which a measuring instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. In Kothari (2015), reliability of a test instrument is a measure of the consistency with which a test instrument produces the same results when administered to the group. The reliability index specifically the Kuder-Richardson (KR20), of the study subjects' scores was 0.73.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher embarked on the process of collecting data from the field upon preparation of a research proposal which was assessed, corrections effected and research permit obtained from the headmasters of the selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. With the research permit obtained, the researcher started the collections of data collection by presenting the permit to relevant authorities such as the headmasters and teachers of the selected SHSs. In order to increase the return rate, the researcher adopted the steps proposed by (Wiseman & McDonald (2010)). These steps involved preparing cover letters attached to each questionnaire disclosing the significant of the study as well as assuring the respondents of the researcher's commitment to confidentiality. In this study, the researcher self administered the data collection instruments to the respondents in batches of ten copies each, systematically until all were exhausted.

Given that the researcher was committed to collecting the desired data, the respondents were advised to complete the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher in order to address cases of misunderstandings that arose. In the event that the respondents were not prepared to complete the questionnaire due to any

other reason, arrangements was made for the questionnaire to be collected later by the researcher for purposes of enhancing questionnaire return rate.

### **3.9 Methods of Data Analysis**

The analysis of the data commenced with editing and inspection of the pieces of data in order to identify simple mistakes, items that were wrongly responded to and any blank space left unfilled by the respondents. The computer Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS version 22) was used to process all the quantitative responses from the questionnaire. The data from research question one was analysed using eg. frequencies and percentages.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

According to Resnik (2011), there are several reasons for the adhering to ethical norms in research. Norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, falsifying or misrepresenting research data, promote the truth and avoid error. Moreover, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different discipline and institutions, ethical standards promote the value that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness. For instance, many ethical norms in research, such as guidelines for relationships, copyright, and patency policies, data sharing policies and confidentiality and peer reviews are designed to protect intellectual property interest while encouraging collaborations. Many of the ethical norms help to ensure that researcher can be held accountable to the public.

William (2016) lists some of the ethical issues as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Given the importance of ethical issues in several

ways, the researcher would avoid taking any one's work and where someone's work was included, such were acknowledged. In the process of data collection, respondent's identities would be concealed and any information obtained would be handled with utmost confidence. No harm of any nature was meted out on any respondent, aspects of privacy was observed and any cruelty avoided.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of Free Senior High School on student academic performance in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. The analysis of the study was based on the following research objectives; including to analyse trends in student's enrolment in relation to introduction of free to assess the influence of free SHS programme on students' academic performance in the selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District and thirdly, to look for the strategies that can be employed to improve the free SHS programme.

The researcher sent 201 questionnaires to the field to gather primary data. Out of the 201 questionnaires sent, 163 questionnaires were received while 38 were not received. Therefore, the analysis of the study was based on 81% response rate as shown in Figure 4.1.

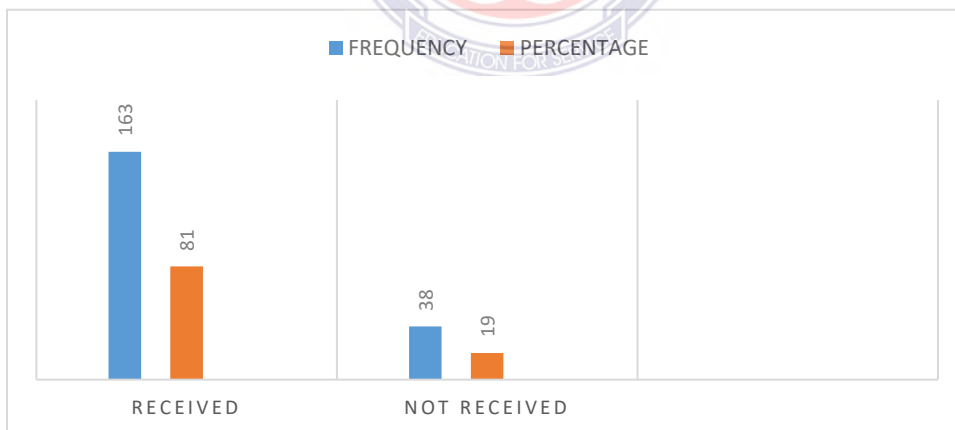


Figure 4.1: Response rate of the questionnaire

#### 4.1 Demographic information of the respondents

Table 4.1 analyzed the demographic information of the respondents including gender, age, and highest academic.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Information of the Respondents(N=163)**

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Male	86	52.8
Female	77	47.2
Total	163	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
19-29 years	19	11.7
30-39 years	39	23.9
40-49 years	42	25.8
50-59 years	46	28.2
60-69 years	17	10.4
Total	163	100.0
<b>Highest academic</b>		
Diploma	13	8
Bachelors' degree	132	81
Masters' degree	18	11
Total	163	100.0

N=163, Field survey, (2021)

Table 4.1 shows that 86 respondents representing 52.8% were males while 77 respondents representing 47.2% were females. This means that male participants dominated the sample for the study. Moreover, 46 respondents representing 28.2% were between the ages categories 50-59 years, 42 respondents representing 25.8% were between the age ranges 40-49 years, 39 respondents representing 23.9% were between the age ranges 30-39 years, 19 respondents representing 11.7% were between 19-29 years while 17 respondents representing 10.4% were between the age ranges 60-69 years. Moreover, 132 respondents representing 81% possess Bachelor's degrees, 18 respondents representing 11% had Masters degrees, while 13 respondents representing 8% hold Diplomas as their highest academic certificates.

#### 4.2 Improvement in SHS student's enrollment and class attendance rate

Table 4.2 shows the extent to which free SHS influence student enrolment rate.

**Table 4.2: Student's enrolment rate**

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>2016/2017</i>	<i>2018/2019</i>	<i>2020/2021</i>
Increase in enrolment	2617	2625	2768
Total	2617	2625	2857

**Source: Field survey, (2021),**

Table 4.2 reveals that in the year 2016/2017 the student's enrolment rate was 2617, this figure increased in the subsequent academic year 2018/2019 to 2625. Furthermore, the student's enrolment rate increased to 2857 in the 2020/2021 academic year. This implies that the student's enrolment rate increased significantly. These findings are in agreement with According to the Hon. Minister of Education, the government of Ghana was to spend 1.4 billion Ghana cedis to fund the free senior high schools programme in 2018/2019 academic year due to increase in enrollment (Nyarko, 2018). The Honorable Minister outlined the enrollment trends to show that number of student enrolled in 2016 increased from 308,799 to 361,771 in 2017. Again, the percentage placed but not enrolled decreased from 26.5% in 2016 to 14.7% in 2017 indicating that more students who were placed in the various senior high schools got enrollment. (Nyarko, 2018). Thus Ahmed's study found that free SHS Program have statistically significant positive impacts on both gross and net enrollment rates with 14.2% and 9.6% increases respectively.

### 4.3 How does free tuition influence the academic performance of students in the Atwima Nwabiagya District?

The analysis of the outcome of the questionnaires distribution are analysed below. The students' academic performance in English language, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology in the academic years 2016/2017, 2018/2019, and 2019/2020 academic years were analysed below.

<b>English Language (Academic Year)</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Total</b>
2016/2017	64	52	47	163
2018/2019	76	57	30	163
2019/2020	85	52	26	163
Total	225	161	103	489
Percentage	46	33	21	100

<b>Mathematics (Academic Year )</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Total</b>
2016/2017	54	85	24	163
2018/2019	62	71	30	163
2019/2020	59	82	22	163
Total	175	238	86	489
Percentage	35.8	48.7	15.5	100

<b>Information and Communication Technology (Academic Year )</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Total</b>
2016/2017	45	87	31	163
2018/2019	57	65	41	163
2019/2020	66	74	23	163
Total	168	226	95	489
Percentage	34.4	46.2	19.4	100

Source: Field survey, (2021)

Note: Excellent = (70%-100%), Average = (40%-69%), Poor = (<40%)

Table shows results of responses from the teachers of beneficiary pupils on the academic performance of the beneficiary pupils in English language. Out of 504

responses, majority 243 responses representing 48.2% indicated that student's performance in English language in the academic years 2016/2017, 2018/2019, 2019/2020 were excellent. Moreover, out of the 489 responses 225 responses representing 46% said that students' academic performance was average while minority 103 responses representing 21% said that student's performance in English language was poor. The increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System. This was affirmed by Honourable Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, who stated among other things that the implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students (Nyarko, 2018).

Furthermore, the study depicts results of responses from the teachers of beneficiary pupils on the academic performance of the beneficiary pupils in Mathematics subject. Out of 489 responses, majority 238 responses representing 48.7% indicated that students' performance in Mathematics subject in the academic years 2016/2017, 2018/2019, 2019/2020 were average. Moreover, 175 responses representing 35.8% passed with excellent marks, while 86 responses representing 15.5% had poor academic performance in mathematics.

Moreover, out of 489 responses, majority 226 responses representing 46.2% indicated that students' performance in ICT subject in the academic years 2016/2017, 2018/2019, 2019/2020 were average. These findings agree with Badri (2014), who asserted that it has been well documented in both developed and developing countries that school feeding with the right amount of quality ingredients have gone a long way to improve on pupil's performance. Badri (2014)



explains how in the USA the school feeding has improved on pupil's academic performance, especially in mathematics and to some extent history based on the amount of calories in the food served them. From India, Harounan *et al.*, (2012) report that the national meal program saw an increment in girls' attendance and a slight increase in school enrollment. A study conducted in Burkina Faso shows increase in enrolment of girls due to the cereals take- home rations (WB, 2012). Highlighting a similar account from Mali, Hoof (2014) indicates that SFPs especially in the Northern part of Mali witnessed a significant percentage of student enrollment. SFPs enticed pupils to get to school early since they are served with food before classes commence

**Table: 4.3 How does provision of free textbooks affect the academic performance of the students?**

Statement	SA n(%)	A n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)	Means X
The development of any educational system and standards will be a mirage if viable efforts and structures are not put in place to ensure continuous improvements and sustainability of the gains that have been made in terms of its quality.	125 (76.7)	30(18.5)	4(2.5)	4(2.5)	4.87
At the grass root level, the heads of the SHS should cooperate with the community in which their schools are established to mobilize their human and material resources which will be required in the strategic planning processes for quality improvement.	116 (71.2)	19(11.7)	16(9.8)	12(7.4)	4.65

The educational planner at the central and local government levels also require some amount of information from the head of institutions and communities to understand their needs which are factored into policy formulation.	115(70.6)	34(20.9)	7(4.3)	7(4.3)	4.32
If quality education is to be sustained, vital statistical data that is required by policy makers to prepare a checklist to monitor adequacy of facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, textbooks, class size and school environment.	128(78.5)	25(15.3)	6(3.7)	4(2.5)	3.98
The school authorities and the communities should therefore, collaborate with each other in order to provide information relevant to policy makers' monitoring and evaluation exercises of schools.	111(68.1)	30(18.6)	13(8)	9(5.5)	3.84
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.	107(65.6)	31(19)	13(8)	12(7.4)	3.72
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.	108(66.3)	26(16)	16(9.8)	13(8)	3.68

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.	116(71.2)	19(11.7)	16(9.8)	12(7.4)	3.56
Trained teachers should use child-centred approach and appropriate system of examination in the process of teaching to eliminate discrimination.	111(68.1)	30(18.6)	13(8)	9(5.5)	3.51
The outcome of learning should be provision of knowledge, skills and attitude that are relevant to national development and participation in governance.	108(66.3)	26(16)	16(9.8)	13(8)	3.48



Table 4.3 indicates that 155 respondents representing 95.2% agreed that the development of any educational system and standards will be a mirage if viable efforts and structures are not put in place to ensure continuous improvements and sustainability of the gains that have been made in terms of its quality, while 4 respondents representing 2.5% strongly disagreed, and disagreed respectively with a mean score of 4.87. Thus, education pays off not only in literacy but also in income. Pragmatic measures need to be enforced by the Ministry of education to ensure the success of the quality education programme in Ghana. This research will unearth some of the problems associated with quality education. Since the Government of Ghana is committed to the improvement of quality in education, it

will be appropriate to consider every single factor that matters in the quality education process to ensure great success and the rapid development of the nation. Moreover, 135 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that at the grass root level, the heads of the SHS should cooperate with the community in which their schools are established to mobilize their human and material resources which will be required in the strategic planning processes for quality improvement, 16 respondents representing 9.8% disagreed, while 12 respondents representing 7.4% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 4.65. At the grass root level, the heads of the institutions cooperate with the community in which their schools are established to mobilize their human and material resources which will be required in the strategic planning processes for quality improvement. The educational planner at the central and local government levels also require some amount of information from the head of institutions and communities to understand their needs which are factored into policy formulation.

Furthermore, 149 respondents representing 91.5% agreed that the educational planner at the central and local government levels also require some amount of information from the head of institutions and communities to understand their needs which are factored into policy formulation, 7 respondents representing 4.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with a mean score of 4.32. Buttressing the point, Watkins (2010) stated that, provision of quality education to citizens will provide them with the skills and attitudes needed for empowerment, capacity building and participation in decision making. In a related development, report of the World Economic Forum (2015), confirms that quality education is a fundamental requirement for empowering women (vulnerable group) in all spheres of society. Failure to provide women access to education equivalent to that of the

opposite sex (men) in terms of quality, content and relevance to existing knowledge and real needs, deny them participation and representation in governance to gain political influence. The report further pinpoints that the devastating consequence of the society as a whole is the ill-preparation that future generation has to suffer for lack of women education.

To add more, 153 respondents representing 93.8% agreed that if quality education is to be sustained, vital statistical data that is required by policy makers to prepare a checklist to monitor adequacy of facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, textbooks, class size and school environment, 6 respondents representing 3.7% disagreed, while 4 respondents representing 2.5% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.98. A teacher has a powerful influence on students. For schools to provide opportunity to learn, they must operate regularly and teachers must be present and care about what students learn, and they should also be competent to teach the curriculum. Motivation of teachers can reduce absenteeism among them and go a long way to foster child-centred learning environment. Carnoy (2019) and Hanushek and Wobmann (2017) point out that investigations conducted in both advanced and developing world revealed that investment in physical infrastructure of the educational system does not improve performance of learners substantially than the quality of the instructor or facilitator.

Moreover, 141 respondents representing 86.7% agreed that the school authorities and the communities should therefore, collaborate with each other in order to provide information relevant to policy makers' monitoring and evaluation exercises of schools, 13 respondents representing 8% disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 5.5% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.84. The study revealed that 138 respondents representing 84.6% agreed that 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, 13 respondents representing 8% disagreed respectively, while 12 respondents representing 7.4% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.72. Good instructors within the learning environment influence their students to perform better than those considered being poor or bad. It behoves therefore, that policy makers and the institutional arrangement of the school should provide incentives that will encourage teachers to upgrade their academic and professional qualifications to improve lessons delivery for good results.

Moreover, 134 respondents representing 82.3% agreed that 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, 16 respondents representing 9.8% disagreed, while 13 respondents representing 8% agreed, strongly disagreed and were neutral respectively with a mean score of 3.68. According to UNESCO (2015), the achievement of teaching and learning is influenced by the availability of resources to use for the process and how these resources are regulated. Thus, schools that have no textbooks and learning materials or well-equipped library cannot do effective and efficient work. Adeyemi (2010) citing Gibbs (2010) maintains that a well-equipped library provides assortment of material resources like books, journals and CD ROM. Thus, the library is a reference source for any school and a point of individual studies in schools where relevant information from primary and secondary sources can be extracted. Adequacy of library resources and their usage by students and teachers are therefore, associated with better learning results.

To add more, 135 respondents representing 82.9% agreed that 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, 16 respondents representing 9.8% disagreed, while 12 respondents representing 7.4% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.56. The nature of a curriculum with an effective system of delivering it is critical in attaining higher learning outcome. A Curriculum of a school contains a country's educational goals, objectives and policy direction as well as the appropriate educational philosophies that could be adopted to address its needs (McKinsey et al 2017). It specifies the content, sequence, methodology, duration of a programme and pacing of what should be taught at each grade level. It determines the quality of teachers to be trained and Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) employed in its implementation to achieve the mission and vision of a country. What is more, it serves as a reference point of measuring the input, output and outcome of teachers, students and other stakeholders of education at a point in time (Chapman & Adams 2012).

Furthermore, 141 respondents representing 86.7% agreed that trained teachers should use child-centred approach and appropriate system of examination in the process of teaching to eliminate discrimination, 13 respondents representing 8% disagreed, while 9 respondents representing 5.5% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.51. According to Hewlett Foundation (2018), factors that influence quality education broadly include motivated and qualified teachers, appropriate curriculum, good teaching materials and well equipped library, appropriate language teaching, appropriate class size and favourable school environment,

community participation, sufficient instructional period and valid and reliable method of examination.

Also, 134 respondents representing 82.3% agreed that the outcome of learning should be provision of knowledge, skills and attitude that are relevant to national development and participation in governance, 16 respondents representing 9.8% disagreed, while 13 respondents representing 8% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.48. It is therefore, concluded by UNESCO (2011) that quality education is one of the social interventions that has the potentials of dealing with the menace of poverty and it is also a means of wealth creation for a country socio-economic growth and national development. Quality of education of any nation or society can be obtained through concerted government policies to influence certain indicators (factors) in educational system.

#### 4.3 How does the provision of free meals contribute to the academic performance of the students?

**Table 4.4 SHS students' school enrollment**

<i>Statement (s)</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>
	<i>n(%)</i>	<i>n(%)</i>	<i>n(%)</i>	<i>n(%)</i>	<i>X</i>
1. Parents could enroll their students in schools because of the free primary education.	119(73)	19(11.7)	17(10.4)	8(4.9)	4.56
2. The implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that	113(69.3)	27(16.6)	13(7.9)	10(6.1)	4.48



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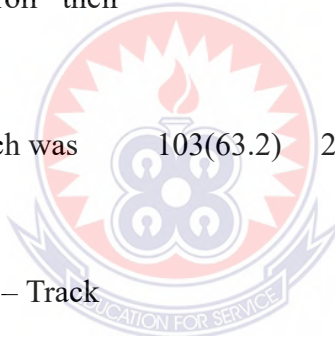
the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students.

3. The free SHS policy has increased access in public schools which has adversely affected enrollment in the private secondary schools.

The introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Ghana.	110(67.5)	22(13.5)	16(9.8)	15(9.2)	3.89
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Free education introduced in Ghana enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school.	105(64.4)	33(20.2)	17(10.5)	8(4.9)	3.72
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The increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System.	103(63.2)	24(14.7)	22(13.4)	14(8.6)	3.68
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SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

N=163, Field survey, (2021)

Table 4.3 shows that, 138 respondents representing 84.7% agreed that Parents could enroll their students in schools because of the free primary education, 17 respondents representing 10.4% disagreed, while 8 respondents representing 4.9% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 4.56. The development of any educational system and standards will be a mirage if viable efforts and structures are not put in place to ensure continuous improvements and sustainability of the gains that have

been made in terms of its quality. The interdependence pillars that come into play when educational sustainability is considered include; decentralization, developing quantifiable indicators, an in-depth understanding and equitable development of all levels of the education scheme (Heneveld, 2014). Heneveld (2014) and Horn (2012) maintain that participation in decision making by all stakeholders in the educational practices is paramount.

Moreover, 140 respondents representing 85.9% agreed that the implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students, 13 respondents representing 7.9% disagreed, while 10 respondents representing 6.1% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 4.48. To add more, 132 respondents representing 81% agreed that the free SHS policy has increased access in public schools which has adversely affected enrollment in the private secondary schools, while 31 respondents representing 19% disagreed with a mean score of 3.96. Chapman and Adams (2012) are of the view that, if quality education is to be sustained, vital statistical data that is required by policy makers to prepare a checklist to monitor adequacy of facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, textbooks, class size and school environment among the few factors is provided by the schools and communities who are major players in the school supervision. The school authorities and the communities should therefore, collaborate with each other in order to provide information relevant to policy makers' monitoring and evaluation exercises of schools (Adams 2012).

Also, 132 respondents representing 81% agreed that the introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Ghana, 16 respondents representing 9.8% disagreed, while 15 respondents representing 9.2%

strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.89. Furthermore, 138 respondents representing 84.6% agreed that free education introduced in Ghana enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school, 17 respondents representing 10.5% disagreed, while 8 respondents representing 4.9% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.72. The introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Uganda (Deininger, 2013). Also in a later study, Olawande et al. (2010) assessed the effect of free Primary Education in rural Kenya, applying panel data from about 1500 households between 2000 and 2007 to check the enrollment trends. They found out that parents could enroll their students in schools because of the free primary education. This is not out only applicable to parents who are poor or live in the rural communities but also affect general enrollment in public senior high schools in Ghana.

The study results revealed that 127 respondents representing 77.9% agreed that the increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System, 22 respondents representing 13.4% disagreed, while 14 respondents representing 8.6% strongly disagreed with a mean score of 3.68. In his assessment of sustainability of quality education, Heyneman (2017) emphasised that, levels of educational system should not be analysed in isolation in a quest to attain continuous improvement. Concentration of efforts on one to the detriment of others could lead to distortion. Indeed, the training, management, excellence and effectiveness of every stage are highly determined by those traits in preceding levels. It thus connotes that the quality of students produced at the lower stage could become inputs for the middle stage that further processes them for the higher level. Whatever materials that are also produced from the higher stage have either direct or indirect effect on the lower and middle levels.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of Free Senior High School on student academic performance. The descriptive research design was used for the study. This study adopted a quantitative inquiry. The population for the study was four hundred and twenty-three (423). The population was drawn from a sample of headteachers, teachers, students, and parents from the selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District. Random sampling techniques were used to select 201 participants for the study. Questionnaire was used to gather data for the study. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 22) was used to process all quantitative responses from the questionnaire.

#### 5.2 Summary of Major Finding

**.Trends in student's enrolment in relation to how free tuition influence the academic performance of students in the Atwima Nwabiagya District.**

The study result shows that, 84.7% agreed that Parents could enroll their students in schools because of the free primary tuition. Moreover, 85.9% agreed that the implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students.

To add more, 81% agreed that the free SHS policy has increased access in public schools which has adversely affected enrollment in the private secondary schools. Also, 81% agreed that the introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Ghana. Furthermore, 84.6% agreed

that free education introduced in Ghana enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school.

The study results revealed that 77.9% agreed that the increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System.

**Find out how provision of free textbooks influences the academic performance of the students.**

The study findings show that 95.2% agreed that the development of any educational system and standards will be a mirage if viable efforts and structures are not put in place to ensure continuous improvements and sustainability of the gains that have been made in terms of its quality. Moreover, 82.9% agreed that at the grass root level, the heads of the SHS should cooperate with the community in which their schools are established to mobilize their human and material resources which will be required in the strategic planning processes for quality improvement. Furthermore, 91.5% agreed that the educational planner at the central and local government levels also require some amount of information from the head of institutions and communities to understand their needs which are factored into policy formulation. To add more, 93.8% agreed that if quality education is to be sustained, vital statistical data that is required by policy makers to prepare a checklist to monitor adequacy of facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, textbooks, class size and school environment.

Moreover, 86.7% agreed that the school authorities and the communities should therefore, collaborate with each other in order to provide information relevant to policy makers' monitoring and evaluation exercises of schools. The study revealed that 84.6% agreed that 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.

Moreover, 82.3% agreed that 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. To add more, 82.9% agreed that 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.

Furthermore, 86.7% agreed that trained teachers should use child-centred approach and appropriate system of examination in the process of teaching to eliminate discrimination. Also, 82.3% agreed that the outcome of learning should be provision of knowledge, skills and attitude that are relevant to national development and participation in governance.

**To find out how provision of free meals contribute to students academic performance in the Atwima Nwabiagya District.**

The study result reveals that in the year 2016/2017 the student's enrolment rate was 2617, this figure increased in the subsequent academic year 2018/2019 to 2625. Furthermore, the student's enrolment rate increased to 2857 in the 2020/2021 academic year. Thus Ahmed's study found that free SHS Program have statistically significant positive impacts on both gross and net enrollment rates with 14.2% and 9.6% increases respectively.

### 5.3 Conclusion

The study result concluded that student's enrolment rate increased. Parents enrolled their students in schools because of the free primary education. Moreover, the implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students. To add more, the free SHS policy has increased access in public schools which has adversely affected enrollment in the private secondary schools. Also, the introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Ghana. Free education introduced in Ghana enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school. The increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System.

Furthermore, the free SHS programme has drastically reduced enrollment in private Senior High Schools. To add more, some heads of private senior high schools have since the introduction of the free SHS programme appealed to the government to extend the policy to their institutions. Also, most private SHSs have had to deal with almost empty classrooms since the programme kicked off. The study findings showed that students enrollment in public schools increased while enrollment in private schools decreased. To add more, classrooms with electricity, laboratories, libraries, computer room, computers with internet connection, text books, and scientific equipment for teaching science were inadequate in both public and private schools.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

According to the major findings of the study, the researcher recommended that;

1. Increase in enrollment has led to inadequate classrooms in the public SHS therefore, Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service must put up more infrastructures to check the high enrollment of students.
2. The Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should provide enough textbooks to the various schools at the right time in order to ensure the quality of teaching and learning.
3. There is the need for the government to provide well-stocked food items and ingredients to the various schools on time to avoid shortages.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

According to the limitations of the study, the researcher suggested that a similar study should be conducted to investigate the challenges affecting the implementation of the Ghana school feeding programme using the entire basic schools in the selected SHSs in the Atwima Nwabiagya District as a case study.



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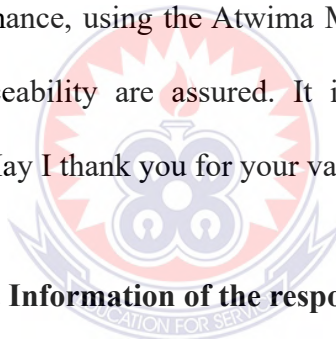
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**AKENTEN APPIAH-MINKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND  
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS AND  
HEADMASTERS**

The researcher is a student of AKENTEN APPIAH-MINKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT conducting a piece of research to assess *the influence of Free Senior High School on student academic performance: case study of Atwima Mponua District*. I respectfully request that you form part of this research by completing the attached questionnaire. This is to solicit your opinion on the influence of Free Senior High School on student academic performance, using the Atwima Mponua District as case study. Anonymity and non-traceability are assured. It is my fervent hope that you participate in the study. May I thank you for your valuable cooperation.



**Section A: Demographic Information of the respondents**

1. What is your gender?

Female [ ] Male [ ]

2. What age range do you belong?

Below 18 years [ ] 19-29 years [ ] 30-39 years [ ] 40-49 years [ ] 50-59 years  
[ ] 60-69 years [ ] above 70 years [ ]

3. What is your highest educational background?

Diploma [ ] Bachelors' degree [ ] Masters' degree [ ] PhD [ ]

**SECTION B: Trends in student’s enrolment in relation to introduction of free senior high school programme in selected SHSs in the Atwima Mponua District.**

**What is the SHS students’ school enrollment rate in your school?**

Please tick  as appropriate

What is the school’s student’s enrollment at the beginning 2016/2017 academic year?

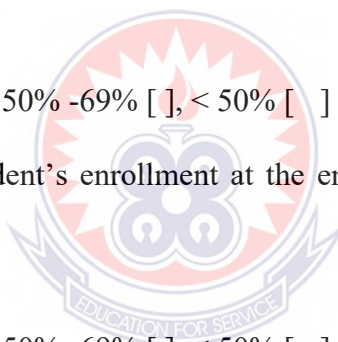
{>90% , 70% -89% , 50% -69% , < 50%  }

What is the school’s student’s enrollment at the end 2018/2019 academic year?

{>90% , 70% -89% , 50% -69% , < 50%  }

What is the school’s student’s enrollment at the end 2020/2021 academic year?

{>90% , 70% -89% , 50% -69% , < 50%  }



Please tick  as appropriate

Where; 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

Statement(s)	1	2	3	4	5
The introduction of the free primary education led to the poor enrolling their children in schools in Ghana.					
Parents could enroll their students in schools because of the free					



primary education.					
Free education introduced in Ghana enabled poor parents to enroll their children in school.					
The free SHS policy has increased access in public schools which has adversely affected enrollment in the private secondary schools.					
The increase in enrollment which was over and above the existing infrastructure led to the Double – Track System.					
The implementation of the double track system is to allow government to cater for excess enrollment in order to ensure that the free senior high school is available and accessible to all eligible students.					



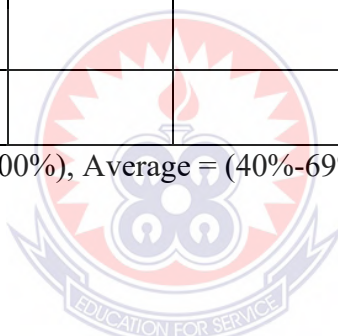
**Section C: The influence of free SHS programme on students’ academic performance in the selected SHSs in the Atwima Mponua District.**

Please, assess your students’ examination score in core subjects (English Language, Mathematics and ICT) in the promotion (third term) examinations for the 2016/2017, 2018/2019, and 2019/2020 academic years. Please tick.

Core Subject	Students’ Academic Performance				
	2016/2017	2018/2019	2019/2020		Average Performance
<b>English language</b>					
Excellent					
Average					

Poor						
Total						
<b>Mathematics</b>						
Excellent						
Average						
Poor						
Total						
<b>Information and Communication Technology (ICT)</b>						
Excellent						
Average						
Poor						
Total						

Note: Excellent = (70%-100%), Average = (40%-69%), Poor = (<40%)



**SECTION D: The strategies that can be employed to improve the free SHS programme.**

Please rate using a scale of 1-5 where 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represent disagree, 3 represents uncertain, 4 represents agree, 5 represents strongly agree.

Statement(s)	1	2	3	4	5
The development of any educational system and standards will be a mirage if viable efforts and structures are not put in place to ensure continuous improvements and sustainability of the gains that have been made in terms of its quality.					

<p>At the grass root level, the heads of the SHS should cooperate with the community in which their schools are established to mobilize their human and material resources which will be required in the strategic planning processes for quality improvement.</p>					
<p>The educational planner at the central and local government levels also require some amount of information from the head of institutions and communities to understand their needs which are factored into policy formulation.</p>					
<p>If quality education is to be sustained, vital statistical data that is required by policy makers to prepare a checklist to monitor adequacy of facilities, teacher qualification, instructional materials, textbooks, class size and school environment.</p>					
<p>The school authorities and the communities should therefore, collaborate with each other in order to provide information relevant to policy makers' monitoring and evaluation exercises of schools.</p>					
<p>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.</p>					
<p>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.</p>					

<p>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.</p>					
<p>Trained teachers should use child-centred approach and appropriate system of examination in the process of teaching to eliminate discrimination.</p>					
<p>The outcome of learning should be provision of knowledge, skills and attitude that are relevant to national development and participation in governance.</p>					

Where; 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= not sure, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

