
THE POLITICS OF FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL POLICY IN GHANA: IMPACTS, REALITIES, AND THE WAY FORWARD

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to find out the impact of Ghana's Free Senior High School Program, the realities and the way forward. The key driving force behind this study is the Ghanaian government's aim in 2016 to boost secondary school attendance in order to "achieve equitable access to secondary education" for all pupils in the country. The study used a purposive sampling technique to collect data from authorities and students with practical experience, knowledge, and grasp of the Free SHS policy, utilizing a qualitative and quantitative research approach.

The primary data gathering instrument was a questionnaire, and secondary data for the study came from documents and web articles. In five schools in Ghana's Ashanti region, data was collected from students, instructors, and the headteachers.

According to the findings of the survey, students, teachers, and headteachers' opinions on the benefits and problems of the free senior high school policy range from agree to neutral or indifferent. Respondents attested to the fact that they agreed that free senior high school has improved enrollment, under burden of parents/guardian and helped the poor to enroll. Furthermore, respondents agreed that inadequate Accommodation and lavatories facilities, Inadequate teaching personnel and heavy workload on teacher were challenges.

It was however recommended that challenges (inadequate Accommodation and lavatories facilities, Inadequate teaching personnel and heavy workload on teacher) which respondents agreed they existed should be looked into and addressed by policy makers, particularly the government needs to build more accommodation facilities, the government needs to employ more teaching staff and since the number of teachers will increase when many are employed the workload of teachers will decrease. This will on the average also address position of the respondents. Also benefits which the respondents neither agreed nor disagree should also be looked into and addressed accordingly.

Policy makers should work around the factors measuring the challenges and the benefits for a better improvement in the free senior high school policy.

KEYWORDS: Secondary Education, Free Senior High, Government of Ghana, Impact.

1. INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming significance and extricable role of education in socioeconomic development of states can hardly be overemphasized nor gainsaid. Education has been dubbed a social leveler and a driver of social, economic and political survival and competitiveness of both advanced and third world economies and emerging markets globally (Tan, Low, & Hung, 2017).

Enhancing universal access to quality and equitable education is a fundamental human right, which play a profound role in sustainable poverty alleviation, reduction of marginalization and inequality with improved access to equal opportunities for all citizens. However, recent rapid widespread adoption and implementation of social intervention policies including Free Senior High School by governments of developing economies and emerging markets in which Ghana is no exception, has been considered a revolutionized step towards improving human capital development through universal access to equitable and quality education with improved learning outcomes. (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021).

In response to this, and in order to provide equitable access to and high-quality secondary education in Ghana, the government established the **free Senior High School (Free SHS or FSHS) initiative** in 2017 to eliminate all financial barriers to secondary education. The overall goal is to make secondary education accessible and affordable to all people, regardless of their financial situations.

The government's goal is to make Secondary Education the primary type of education in Ghana, and the free Senior High School will help achieve that goal. During its implementation, the initiative will contribute to access and equity in all secondary education in government schools. Nonetheless, after years of policy implementation, various hurdles have been reported as limiting policy implementation. The program's effectiveness and long-term viability have become hotly debated topics in the media. Based on stated challenges and successes in raising the number of students participating in the Free SHS program. **The goal of this study is to learn more about the free Senior High School program and evaluate its impact, realities and way forward.**

By examining the impediments to the program's effective implementation at both the district and national levels, this study will contribute to policy development at the Free SHS Secretariat by providing insight and restructuring into the program's administrative functions, which will benefit Ghana's quality education. Following that, the findings will be utilized to inform policymakers about the program's issues and possible remedies. The findings of this study will reveal progress made in terms of enrolment and attendance, as well as poverty reduction, among parents whose children have been beneficiaries of the policy since its start, which will aid in its implementation.

1.2 The Politics of Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana

Secondary education is still a problem in most poor countries, including Ghana (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). Various governments are continuing to increase their efforts to address these challenges. "Any authorized methods, including the eventual implementation of free education, must be used to make secondary education in all of its aspects, especially vocational and technical, readily available and achievable to everyone," says the report, according to Article 25(1b) of Ghana's Constitution. In order to meet this constitutional responsibility, former President of Ghana, His Excellency John Dramani Mahama, and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government published a study targeted at a road map for the progressive adoption of free secondary education in Ghana, as required by the 1992 Constitution. In terms of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government's commitment, His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo made a clear manifesto promise in 2008, 2012, and 2016 campaign manifesto pledges to implement Universal Secondary Education by making secondary education free for every Ghanaian child, which was to be delivered through free tuition, free admission, free textbooks, free science center, free computer, free utility, and free library, among other things (Adu-Ababio & Osei, 2018).

The New Patriotic Party's (NPP) national elections in 2012 and 2016 focused heavily on education. The NPP has declared education to be a top priority, promising to launch a bold, creative, imaginative, and all-encompassing plan to revamp Ghana's educational system. According to the NPP, if elected to form the next government from 2017 to 2021, it would implement a policy of free education for all Ghanaian children up to Senior High School and increase education quality at the elementary and senior high school levels. As a result, the NPP intends to expand primary education to include Senior High School (SHS), including vocational, agricultural, and technical schools, and will be open to all Ghanaians.

After winning the 2016 elections, the New Patriot Party (NPP) government's critical education program, the Free SHS, was eventually implemented. It has sparked a public debate about its merits and long-term viability. Under the Free SHS, the government would be responsible for all bills related to first-year students admitted in the 2017/2018 academic year, including food fees, tuition fees, and any other charges. This indicates that families, particularly those who cannot afford to cover their children's school tuition, will be relieved of their financial strain. In effect, parents' disposable income will rise, allowing them to save money for their children's Senior High School education over the next three years. Parents could put such funds aside and utilize them to pay for their children's university education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE STUDY

2.1.1 CONCEPT OF EDUCATION REFORMS

Education has traditionally been seen as a solid foundation for any country's economic, social, and political progress (UNESCO, 2005; World Bank, 1998). Education investment, according to the World Bank (1998), has a significant impact on economic growth, can boost productivity, improve social and national development, and reduce societal inequality. As a result, education has become one of the most significant indicators of progress (UNESCO, 2005). Education is now widely acknowledged as a basic human right. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that "everyone has the right to education, and that education shall be free, at least in the primary and fundamental stages."

Education is defined as the process of passing on knowledge within the kind of experiences, ideas, skills, standards, and values from one generation to the subsequent (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh & Addo, 2016). Reform refers to changes in policy or organizational procedures. As a result, reforms are defined as purposeful or implemented measures to unravel a known problem. In line with Psacharopoulos (1989), educational reforms, also referred to as educational policy, are aimed to change some or all areas of schooling in society. This study defines educational reforms as "changes and policies implemented to boost a country's educational structure or systems" (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016).

2.1.2 SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORMS

2.1.2.1 SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORMS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

The greatest challenge that countries face today is teaching their students to be active citizens, get employment in a fast-changing workplace, and survive and adapt to change (World Bank, 1998). Various advanced countries have taken appropriate measures to address this issue, with the goal of improving the capacity and long-term development of their youth. The emphasis has been on secondary education.

Secondary education has traditionally been considered a subset of higher education in affluent countries. According to the World Bank, it has influenced policy, provider selection, curricular decisions, teacher recruitment and training, evaluation, accreditation, and certification (2005).

In the twentieth century, countries such as the United States and Russia enacted educational policies that resulted in secondary education models that aspired to build enormous systems with open access and universal coverage. According to Goldin, the tremendous growth of secondary education in the United States happened 40 to 50 years before analogous expansion in Europe (2001). The US model included public finance and provision, an open and forgiving system (selective, with no early specialization or academic segregation), an academic yet practical curriculum, a large number of small, economically autonomous school districts, and secular oversight of schools and school funds (Goldin, 2001).

In developed nations, secondary or obligatory education is mostly or totally sponsored by the government. Moon and Mayes (1994) demonstrated that the UK government completely pays for secondary school education. In this circumstance, parents must simply ensure that their children attend school. Section 7 of the 1944 Act requires the Education Authority and the Central Government of the United Kingdom to ensure that educational facilities are provided.

Japan's fiscal policies ensure that secondary school education is free. School children have no choice but to go to school in order to receive a government-funded education (Nyaga, 2005). In the United States, the federal government also funds public education (US). Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution grants the government the ability to levy taxes and collect revenues for the purpose of supporting education, with Congress establishing the scope of such support (Nyaga, 2005).

2.1.2.2 SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Secondary education has received a lot of attention and reform in most emerging countries as a result of global trends (World Bank, 2005). African countries are heading toward compulsory secondary education as a result of international practices. According to the World Bank, the multinational pledge to universal basic education and free universal primary education has necessitated secondary school reform in Africa and other developing countries (2008).

In every state in Sub-Saharan Africa, secondary education is becoming increasingly vital. Though life expectancies have remained steady, according to Verspoor (2008b), there has been a significant increase in the number of basic school graduates wanting a secondary school seat between 1999 and 2005. According to Ledoux and Mingat (2007), as cited in Verspoor (2008b), if the graduation rate increase, the number of primary school graduates in some Sub-Saharan African nations might triple by 2030. This poses a significant challenge for the secondary education program, which must be developed not just to meet the predicted rapid increase in demand, but also to ensure the availability of employees with the higher levels of education and training that a developing and modernized economy requires" (Verspoor, 2008b).

Thus, according to Lewin (2008), the budget required to expand secondary school access shows that at the present cost per unit, increasing enrolment will be challenging. Due to the limited public funds, African countries have adjusted to rising secondary education needs by allocating the same resources to a large number of students (Verspoor, 2008a).

In reality, essential resources like teaching materials are frequently in short supply, resulting in overcrowding, book shortages, inadequate libraries, and the need to work double or triple shifts while using school facilities.

Charitable contributions are particularly essential in states where public education is largely free. However, according to Lewin (2008), fees, and contributions from parents fund more than half of the total cost per student in Uganda, Zambia, and Tanzania. When the Kenyan Board of Governors could not fill teaching positions due to a lack of state teachers, income generated from fees was used to hire more instructors. Due to the introduction of the Academic Production Unit in Zambia in 1996, students who were previously unable to enroll in the fee-paying afternoon sessions taught by lecturers can now do so. Around 80% of Rwandan students are said to be enrolled in private schools, with about 40% receiving no state financing and relying only on tuition (Verspoor, 2008a).

In Benin, approximately most secondary school teachers are local contract instructors who are paid monthly by parents. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, parents cover more than 80% of the costs of both public and private schools (World Bank, 2005). The government pays a minimum of two teachers to each newly established higher secondary school in Burkina Faso. Community members and other partners must also contribute additional local contract teachers as needed. According to the World Bank, half of Chad's junior secondary school teachers are community teachers, who are mostly supported by parents (World Bank, 2007).

2.1.2.3 SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORMS IN GHANA

The fundamental grounds for constructing the Senior High School reforms were to overcome the previous reforms' shortcomings and deficiencies. The restructuring was also incorporated for the following reasons: human capital development for economic development and increasing competitiveness; the ability to use advances in science and technology, particularly information and communication technology (ICT); drastic transformation in the realm of workforce participation; and the promotion of traditional authenticity and traditional indigenous understanding and creativity.

The reform aims to assure universal primary education access, prioritize technical/vocational education and training, and increase instructional quality while staying flexible enough to accommodate a wide range of student abilities. The report proposed a similar educational system to the Evans-Anfom Report of 1986.

The three-year Senior Secondary School was suggested to be preserved by the committee. Nevertheless, to substitute the Senior Secondary Schools, the government decided to extend it to four years and rename it Senior High School. So, when NDC came to power in 2009, it opted to amend several of the recommendations made by the Anamuah-Mensah committee. One of the most notable was the transition from a four-year to a three-year SHS program. Despite the fact that the review committee opted to keep the three-year SHS program after considerable thought, the NPP government decided to make it four years. When the National Democratic Congress (NDC) came to power in January 2009, it decided to shorten the program's duration to three years, igniting a discourse in which the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) and the Conference of Heads of Assisted Senior High Schools (CHASS) took opposing sides on the program's prospective duration. Regardless of the fact that now the NPP is in power, the three-year SHS program is still being implemented

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

The human capital theoretical framework, developed by economists such as Gary Becker, models the role of education and training in building an individual's human capital and its impact on their productivity. Human capital theory assumes that individuals invest in education and training to strengthen their human capital. This investment leads to an improvement in skills, knowledge and abilities, resulting in an increase in productivity and employability. The theory emphasizes the long-term benefits of education and argues that it is an investment that pays off in the form of higher incomes and better career opportunities (Becker, 1964).

The theory identifies various components of human capital, including formal education, on-the-job training, and health. Under the free SHS policy, the focus is on formal education and its contribution to the development of students' human capital. Ghana's free SHS policy aims to remove financial barriers to education, thereby enabling a larger proportion of the population to access further education. This is consistent with human capital theory, as improving access to education is viewed as an investment in human capital. In addition, under the free SHS policy, students have the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge through formal education. The theory states that the acquisition of cognitive and practical skills during secondary school promotes the development of human capital and makes individuals more productive in the long term (Becker, 1964).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was drawn on a quantitative and qualitative research approach to addressing the research problem and arriving at its findings and conclusions. Qualitative and Quantitative methods are suitable for an assessment of a social dimension of this nature. The primary data comprise in-depth questionnaires collected from selected individuals involved in the policymaking and implementation process of the free Senior High School policy in Ghana. Secondary data, on the other hand, was obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, archive material covering policy documents, evaluation reports on the Free Senior High School policy, Cabinet papers and committee reports, statements by Ministers, minutes of meetings, published interviews, and Party-Political Manifestos. The target demographic for this study, however, was students, teachers, and head teachers of public second-cycle schools in the Ashanti Region. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. Factor Analysis (FA) is an exploratory technique that was used to uncover underlying factors (subsets of variables) from which observed variables were formed. The goal of the factor analyzer is to identify each element as a theoretical factor. As a result, many factor analysis reports are intended to aid in the interpretation of the factor. Factor analysis was used to identify the key variable that contributed to the free senior high school program. It was used to scale down the benefits and challenges, which are key in influencing the free senior high school policy.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

the result of the data collected relating to the assessment of the impact of free senior high school policy in Ghana. Preliminary analysis involving descriptive and identifying the factors that really measure the impact through factor analysis. Descriptive statistics such as tables and graphs are used briefly to enable better understanding of previously existing data.

4.1.1 PROOF OF ENROLLMENT

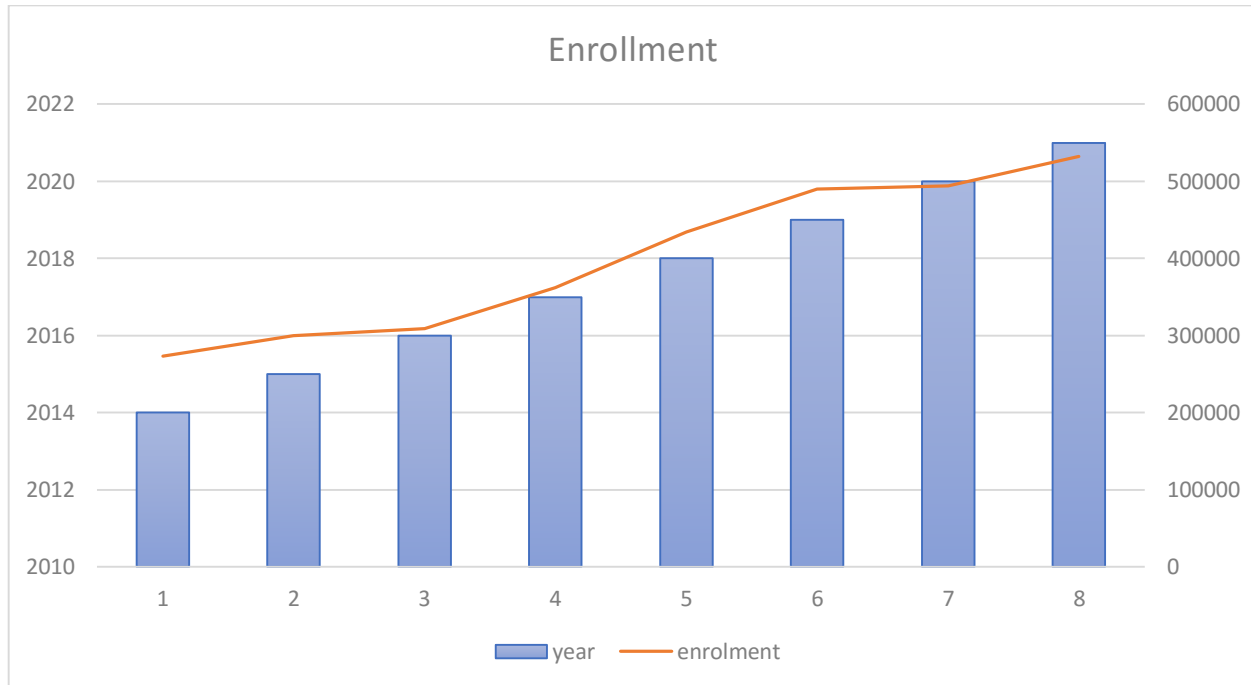


Figure 4.1.1 Senior secondary student enrollment captured from the year 2014 to 2021 in Ghana. (Source: GES).

From the figure above, it can be seen that enrollment has increased every year from 2014 to 2021. This rise was progressive from 2014 to 2016. The enrollment took a sharp rise from 2017 since the inception of the free senior high school education to 2020. It can also be observed that senior secondary school enrollment further increased in 2021, recording its highest of 532,164 students

4.1.2 RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS

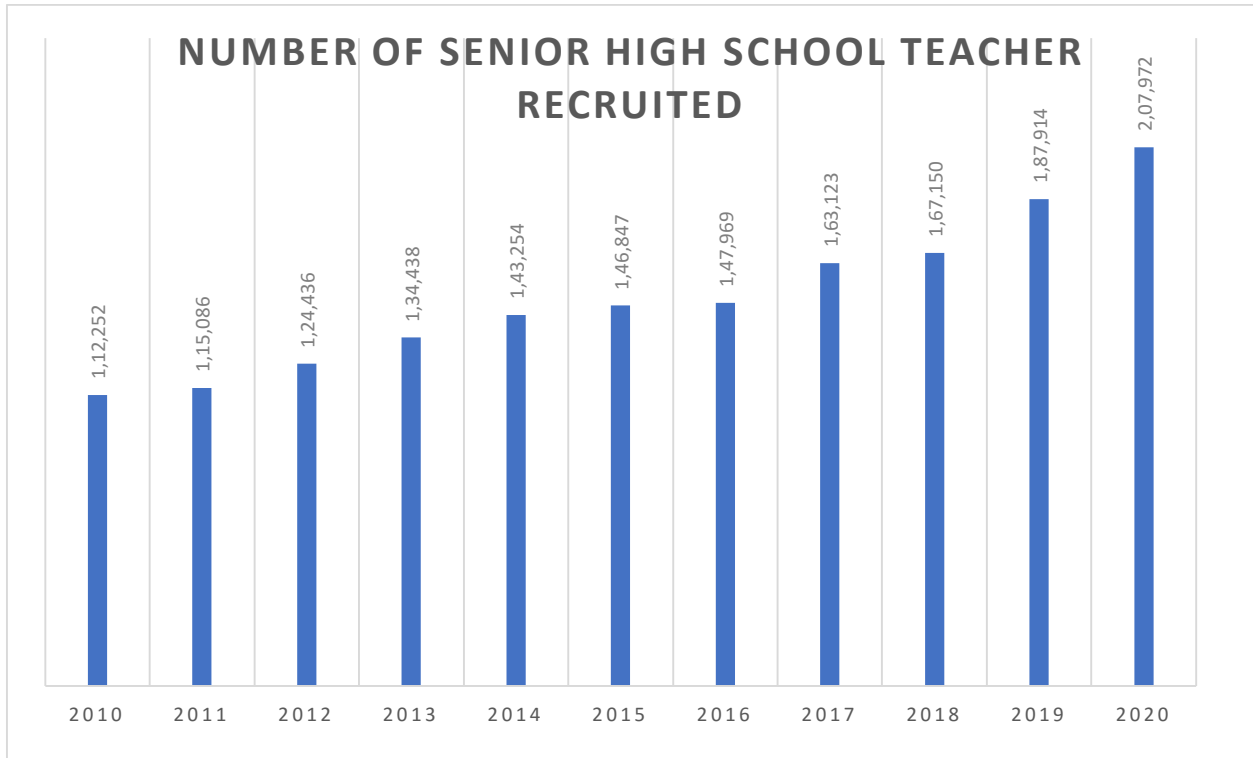


Figure 4.1.2 Number of senior High school teachers recruited (Source: GES and Statista 2024)

From figure 4.1.2, there has been a significant increase in recruitment of senior high school teachers, due to the fact that free SHS program has seen a surge in student enrollment. More teachers are needed to manage this influx and ensure all students receive proper guidance and instruction

4.1.3 EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

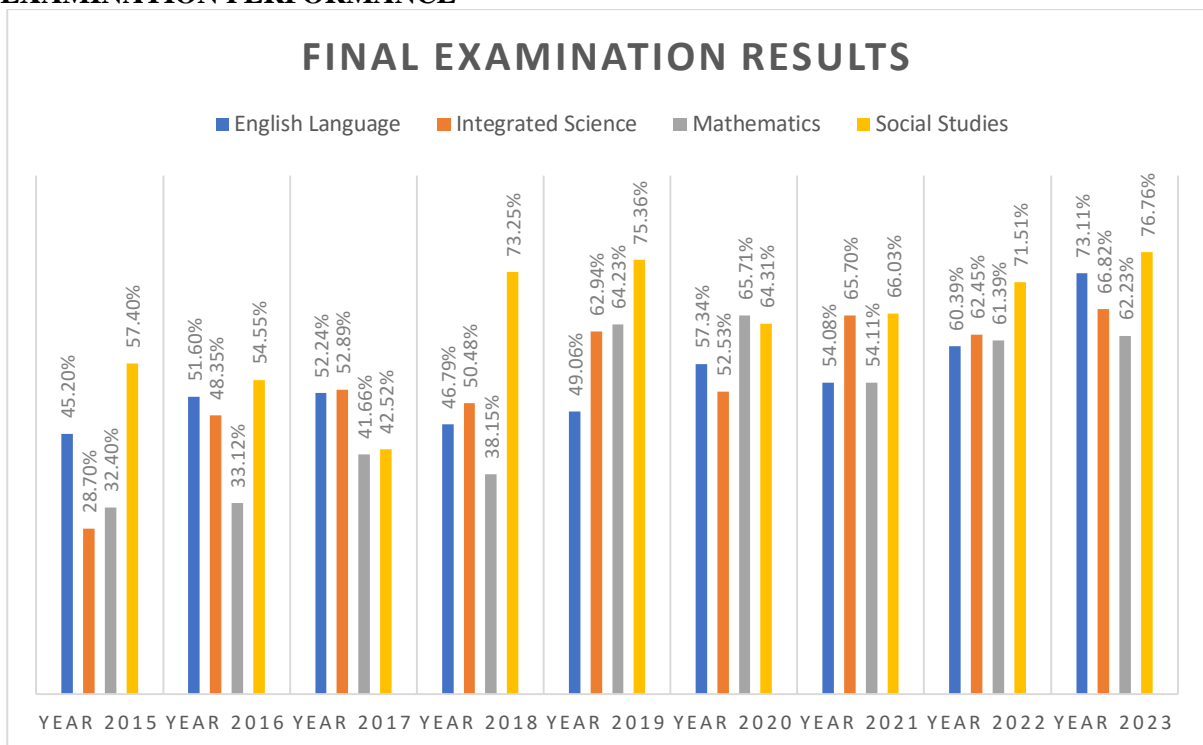


Figure 4.1.3 EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE (Source: GES)

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From the figure above, the majority of students had a great performance in the English language, with over a million (1,019,457) students recording a score between A1-C6 in 2014. Also, several students performed with A1-C6 in social studies, while a couple of students averaged a pass mark in mathematics and integrated science in 2014. A similar situation was observed in 2015, with a high number of students recording A1-C6 in English and social studies, whereas several students struggled to pass in mathematics and integrated science. The worst score was recorded in 2016, with over half a million students performing poorly in social studies with the result of F9. English and integrated science were highly performed by students, with most recording A1-C6 and D7-E8.

A large number of students performed well in 2017, with most recording A1-C6 across all the major indicated subjects. The second-best performance of D7-E8 was recorded in English, mathematics, and integrated science, while social studies had an equal number of students recording an average performance in social studies.

In 2018, the majority of students obtained a higher result of A1-C6 in all of the indicated subjects, with social studies being the highest. Also, a high number of students recorded a passing score of D7-E8 in all indicated subjects with the exception of mathematics. The situation improved in 2019, with over 150,000-200,000 students recording A1-C6 in all the indicated subjects. Also, a high number of students recorded D7-E8 over the period across all the indicated subjects, while a few students recorded F9. In 2020, the majority of students recorded A1-C6 in all the indicated subjects. A high number of students recorded D7-E8 in English, mathematics, and integrated science, with the exception of social studies, which had a high number recording F9. Lastly, 2023 recorded an improvement in student examination by reporting the highest result of A1-C6 in all subjects. Also, a high number of students recorded D7-E8 in English, social studies, and integrated science but not mathematics, where F9 was high. Comparing previous years, this represents a great improvement in the examination results of students since the introduction of the free SHS policy.

2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 are the Free SHS Graduates and the only years in the past 9 years that MORE THAN 50% of candidates obtained A1-C6 in ALL Core subjects and the 2023 results is the best in 9 years.

Table 4.1.1: Missing Values, Outliers and Normality

	No	Missing	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
BT1	1	0	3.560	4	1	5	1.062	-0.478	-0.191
BT2	2	0	3.260	4	1	5	1.295	-0.449	-0.858
BT3	3	0	3.400	4	1	5	1.196	-0.567	-0.362
BT4	4	0	3.410	3	1	5	1.139	-0.329	-0.437
BT5	5	0	3.330	3	1	5	1.188	-0.173	-0.775
BT6	6	0	3.130	3	1	5	1.193	-0.056	-0.867
BT7	7	0	3.280	3	1	5	1.252	-0.173	-0.945
BT8	8	0	3.520	4	1	5	1.178	-0.167	-1.131
BT9	9	0	3.220	3	1	5	1.090	0.152	-0.557
BT10	10	0	3.190	3	1	5	1.245	0.007	-0.984
BT11	11	0	2.720	3	1	5	1.360	0.283	-1.066
BT12	12	0	2.900	3	1	5	1.212	0.034	-0.698
CH1	13	0	3.460	4	1	5	1.142	-0.416	-0.490
CH2	14	0	3.010	3	1	5	1.062	0.158	-0.618
CH3	15	0	3.050	3	1	5	1.035	-0.169	-0.454
CH4	16	0	3.260	3	1	5	1.181	-0.060	-0.956
CH5	17	0	3.210	3	1	5	1.217	-0.079	-0.896
CH6	18	0	3.640	4	1	5	1.209	-0.362	-0.972
CH7	19	0	3.270	3	1	5	0.977	-0.034	-0.288

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CH8	20	0	3.170	3	1	5	1.083	-0.322	-0.440
CH9	21	0	3.070	3	1	5	1.085	0.013	-0.560
CH10	22	0	3.130	3	1	5	1.101	-0.116	-0.671
CH11	23	0	3.090	3	1	5	1.061	-0.052	-0.562
CH12	24	0	2.900	3	1	5	0.978	-0.147	-0.242
CH13	25	0	3.380	4	1	5	1.298	-0.368	-0.946

From table 4.1.1, this involves a five-point likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The skewness and kurtosis figures show enough evidence that the data is normally distributed, with the standard deviation also depicting the data (responses) are not far from the mean response. The views of teachers and head masters on the free senior high school policy regarding its benefits and challenges indicates that respondents' opinion vary between agree and neutral or indifferent. Respondents agree to statements (BT1, BT2, BT3, BT8) and are indifferent to statements (BT4, BT5, BT6, BT7, BT9, BT10, BT11, BT12) regarding the benefits of the free senior high school policy.

Furthermore, respondents agree that (CH1, CH6, CH13) are the challenges facing the policy and are indifferent about (CH2, CH3, CH4, CH5, CH7, CH8, CH9, CH10, CH11, CH12).

On the average, it is evident that respondents neither agree nor disagree to the benefits and challenges pointed out in the free senior high school policy.

Table 4.1.2: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure and Bartlett's Test

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.797
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	979.019
	Df	136
	Sig.	0.000

From table 4.1.2, the KMO test of 0.797 indicates that, the sample selected is adequate for the factor analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity also tests the hypothesis (H_1) that, the factors are related. From the test, a significance level of (0.000) means that we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that indeed the factors are related.

Table 4.1.3: Summary of Total variance Explained in Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.433	37.183	37.183
2	2.666	14.812	51.995

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis

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From 4.1.3, two factors were extracted as indicated in the questionnaire after the EFA in assessing the impact of free senior high school policy. These components explain 51.995% of the total variation in the data.

Table 4.1.4: Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

Items	Component	
	1	2
Benefits of Free Senior High School Policy		
BT1		0.698
BT2		0.679
BT3		0.775
BT4		0.681
BT5		0.805
BT7		0.530
BT12		0.572
Challenges of Free Senior High School Policy		
CH1	0.664	
CH2	0.612	
CH4	0.494	
CH5	0.754	
CH6	0.678	
CH7	0.620	
CH8	0.628	
CH9	0.598	
CH10	0.560	
CH11	0.534	
CH13	0.713	

From table 4.1.4, in the initial EFA, five factors relating to the benefits of the free senior high school policy were removed (i.e, BT6: The free senior high policy covers all students in senior high schools, showed no factor loading, BT8: The FSHS has helped the needy to enroll in secondary education, BT9: Parents are now willing to send their wards to school than before due to FSHS, BT10: An abolishment of the FSHS will reduce enrollment, BT11: Reduction in social vices among the youth, were all removed for loading onto components other than its underlying components). Also, with respect to challenges of the free senior high school policy, two factors were also removed (i.e, CH3: Teacher are able to deliver quality teaching to students and CH12: Ghana Education Service acting in the interest of your school were also removed for no loading).

In effect seven and eleven factors measure the benefits and challenges of free senior high school policy as these factors loaded well in the benefits and challenges respectively. These factors explain the benefits and the challenges of the policy.

4.2 DISCUSSIONS

The study looked at assessing the impact of the free senior high school policy implemented by the Ghana government since the year 2016 to date. Upon findings regarding to the preliminary analysis, it was evident that,

the data drawn passed the normality test. Evidence from the skewness and kurtosis figures which lies between -2 and +2.

Regards to the benefits, respondents attested to the fact that they agree that free senior high school has improved enrollment, under burden of parents/guardian and helped the poor to enroll. In a similar fashion, respondents were indifferent as in paying less for their wards, quality and access, coverage of the policy in all senior high schools, reducing enrollment if it is abolished, reduction in social vices among the youth and the policy been better than the previous education system.

It was also a fact that, they agreed the policy has inadequate teaching personnel, heavy workload on teachers, accommodations and lavatories facilities challenges. They were not in agreement nor disagreement relation to feeding, quality teaching, learning facilities, capitation grant inadequacy to finance budget, delay in funds disbursement, PTA and other stakeholders not helping, inadequate supervision by GES, capitation grant used for different purpose, poor communication channel, GES acting in the school's interest as challenges faced. However, on the average, respondents were indifferent to the benefits and challenges as a result of the implementation of the policy.

From the further analysis, an exploratory factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis and a varimax rotation. The KMO test which test the sampling adequacy proved to be middling and the Bartlett's test of sphericity also indicated that the factors are related. After passing these tests, the factors were grouped into two components using the eigen value (>1) criterion which account 51.995% of the variation in the data.

Using the factor loading to select the measurement of each construct, it is found, as indicated in table 4.1.4 that benefits of free senior high school policy is measured by seven factors as against the proposed twelve factors in the questionnaire. Also, the challenges of free senior high school policy were also measured by eleven factors against proposed thirteen.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the conclusions drawn and the suggested recommendations formed from both the preliminary and the further analysis after assessing the impact of free senior high school policy in Ghana. After a careful analysis of the data from the various schools, we arrived at the following:

5.1.1 Summary

Data was collected from students, teachers and headteachers in five sampled schools in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of free senior high school policy in Ghana. Descriptive statistics was employed to assess the opinions of the respondents regarding the benefits it has brought as well as its challenges. Factor analysis was also used to identify the factors that measure these benefits and challenges identified by factors with high loadings (≥ 0.40) as the cutoff point.

5.1.2 Conclusions

We can therefore come to a conclusion that, respondents views on the individual benefits and challenges were from been indifferent to agree. But averagely, respondents had neither agreed nor disagreed to the benefits and challenges in the event of assessing the free senior high school policy implemented by Ghana Government.

More also, it was found that both the benefits and challenges can be measured by seven (BT1, BT2, BT3, BT4, BT5, BT7, BT12) and eleven (CH1, CH2, CH4, CH5, CH6, CH7, CH8, CH9, CH10, CH11, CH13) factors respectively.

5.1.3 Recommendations

From the analysis, challenges which respondents agreed they existed should be looked into and addressed by policy makers. This will on the average also address position of the respondents. Also benefits which the respondents neither agreed nor disagree should also be looked into and addressed accordingly.

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Also, policy makers should work around the factors measuring the challenges and the benefits for a better improvement in the free senior high school policy.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire for the Study

This Questionnaire is used to undertake research on the assessment of the impact of free Senior high school program in Ghana.

1. Gender [1] Male [2] Female

2. Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree		1	2	3	4	5
Benefits of Free Senior High School						
BT1	Free SHS has improved the enrollment in various SHS					

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BT2	Free SHS has taken away the burden of parents/guardian						
BT3	Without FSHS my child could not have enrolled into senior high school						
BT4	Under the progressive SHS policy, I paid less for my child						
BT5	Free SHS policy has improved the quality and access to senior high education						
BT6	The free senior high policy covers all students in senior high schools						
BT7	The free senior high policy has improved quality of education						
BT8	The FSHS has helped the needy to enroll in secondary education						
BT9	Parents are now willing to send their wards to school than before due to FSHS						
BT10	An abolishment of the FSHS will reduce enrollment						
BT11	Reduction in social vices among the youth						
BT12	FSHS policy better than previous education system						
	Challenges of Free Senior High School						
CH1	Inadequate teaching personnel						
CH2	Students are not properly fed (adequate balanced diet)						
CH3	Teacher are able to deliver quality teaching to students						
CH4	Inadequate facilities to enhance learning (classrooms, books, laboratories etc.)						
CH5	Capitation fund insufficient to finance school budget						
CH6	Heavy workload for teachers						
CH7	Delay in the disbursement of funds						
CH8	Reluctant of PTA and other stakeholders to help school due to the perception of FSHS						
CH9	Inadequate supervision by GES						
CH10	Capitation grant not used for the intended purpose						
CH11	Poor communication channel to address the grievances of your school						
CH12	Ghana Education Service acting in the interest of your school						
CH13	Inadequate accommodation and lavatories facilities to house students						