COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE DOUBLE-TRACK POLICY IN GHANA; CHALLENGES, PROSPECTS AND PERCEIVED SUCCESS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Almighty God.

In honour of my dearly departed parents, who would have been overjoyed to witness the day of this accomplishment for which they devoted their valuable time and effort.

This work is also dedicated to my siblings, Emmanuella Dzifa Antwi.

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

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Comprehensive Review of the Double-Track Policy in Ghana; Challenges, Prospects and Perceived Success.

ABSTRACT

In September 2017, the Ghanaian government decided to implement a policy of offering complimentary secondary school education to all individuals who have successfully completed Junior High School. The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy was anticipated to yield benefits for a significant number of students upon their completion of secondary education. The provision of a high-quality education for all students in Ghana is a fundamental objective which has been addressed through the implementation of the Free SHS policy. However, the implementation of Free SHS policy has resulted in a significant surge in high school enrolment within recent years necessitating the introduction of the double track policy. There is a prevailing concern among Ghanaians regarding the potential implementation of double track policy, as it is feared that it may lead to a decline in the standard of secondary education. This made this study necessary and pivotal. The main objective of this study was to examine the potential for implementing a dual track secondary education system in Ghana. Several research sub-questions were created to help achieve the goal. Advocacy Coalition Framework served as the theoretical foundation that underpinned this study. A descriptive research design was selected for this study. Both interpretivist and positivist paradigms were used. The methodology of choice for gathering and analysing both sets of data was qualitative and quantitative. MS Excel was used to analyse data. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect the data. Heads, teachers and students from various selected Senior High Schools were used in the study. In addition, a simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents. Data produced were imported into Microsoft Excel for quantitative data analysis while qualitative data was analysed thematically. The results demonstrated the difficulties and opportunities that are encountered when implementing the double track policy. The results highlighted different approaches adopted by stakeholders to carry out its effective implementation as well as problems resulting from their decisions. The findings also identified and described elements that enhanced or hampered the government's ability to effectively implement the double track policy. The recommendations were used to develop an empirical framework that emphasises key factors that must be considered concurrently to successfully

implement the Free SHS policy as well as the double track policy. This was a remarkable accomplishment despite all the obstacles encountered. In conclusion, this case study offered insightful information about the challenges involved in the implementation of double track policy. The goal of the study was to develop a framework for the effective implementation of the double track policy to positively influence the quality of Senior High School education in Ghana. It was designed with four objectives in mind: assessing the views of teachers, head teachers and students on the quality of teaching and learning in the SHSs, examining the effect of the double track on the quality of education at the SHS level, analysing the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the double-track in SHSs and exploring the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education. All stakeholders in the educational sector may find general use for the study's findings.

Key terms: Free SHS; double track; quality education, Ministry of education, Senior High Schools, students, teachers, head teachers, assistant headmasters/mistresses, public policy, Free SHS policy, policy implementation, municipality, education sector, New Patriotic party, National Democratic Congress, FCUBE, educational reforms, Africa, Ghana, Greater Accra, enrolment, development, progamme, La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina, Adenta, Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, Presbyterian Boys SHS, GES, SHS level, WASSCE results, teaching and learning, government.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FSHS   Free Senior High School

MoE   Ministry of Education

FSHSP   Free Senior High School Policy

ACF   Advocacy Coalition Framework

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

ADP   Accelerated Development Plan

NSCE   New Structure and Content of Education

GoG   Government of Ghana

NPP   New Patriotic Party

CPP   Convention People's Party

NDC   National Democratic Congress

SHS   Senior High School

NRC   National Redemption Council

GES   Ghana Education Service

BECE   Basic Education Certificate Examination

FCUBE   Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

WASSCE   West African Secondary School Certificate Examination

JHS   Junior High School

MDG   Millennium Development Goals

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Disregarding this notion would be tantamount to underestimating the transformative capacity of education in shaping one's life circumstances. According to Evans (2019), individuals who aspire to maximise the value of their financial resources should prioritise investing in their own personal development by means of education. Education is not only considered a fundamental entitlement of all individuals, but it also plays a crucial role in the achievement of any global endeavour. The foundation of a nation's educational progress lies in its unwavering commitment to achieving academic excellence. The prioritisation of student success and the enhancement of educational standards is of utmost significance in all regions, including economically disadvantaged nations (De Grauwe, 2017). Prior to attaining independence, the Ghanaian government had demonstrated a steadfast dedication to enhancing the nation's educational infrastructure. According to the Ministry of Education (2015), it is mandated by law that primary and secondary education be made available to all children without any cost.

According to Darvas and Balwanz (2014), the implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) project by the government of Ghana resulted in a significant doubling of student enrolment in basic education within the country. In September 2017, the Ghanaian government decided to implement a policy of offering complimentary secondary school education to all individuals who have successfully completed Junior High School. The Free SHS (FSHS) policy was anticipated to yield benefits for a significant number of students upon their completion of secondary education. The provision of a high-quality education for all students in Ghana is a fundamental objective which has been addressed through the implementation of the Free SHS policy. According to the Ministry of Education (2018), the implementation of the Free SHS resulted in a total enrolment of 424,092 students during its first year of operation, which spanned from 2017 to 2018.

The implementation of Free SHS policy has resulted in a significant surge in high school enrolment within recent years. There is a growing trend in American high schools where students are being given the opportunity to concurrently enrol in both high school and college (Darvas & Balwanz, 2014). As a result of the implementation of the Double Track policy, it will be necessary for teachers to operate in two separate shifts. The students are divided into two groups, with one group attending classes while the other group enjoys free time. This arrangement is reciprocal, with the groups alternating between class attendance and free time. The initial track is named the Green track, whereas the subsequent track is referred to as the Gold track. Based on the Ministry of Education's guidelines, it is anticipated that SHSs will accommodate approximately 30% more students than their previous capacity allowed. It is possible that secondary schools in Ghana have the capacity to accommodate an additional 30% of students who possess commendable academic qualifications. In accordance with the Ministry of Education (2018), it is posited that this approach has the potential to compensate for the observed decline in enrolment. There is a prevailing concern among Ghanaians regarding the potential implementation of this plan, as it is feared that it may lead to a decline in the standard of secondary education. Hence, my inquiry was centred on this particular domain.

1.1   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The significance of this study can be evaluated through the examination of research, policy implications and practical applications. The incorporation of the results from this study into the current body of literature will provide valuable support to the Ghanaian government in formulating enduring strategies aimed at enhancing the efficacy of policy implementation. These findings will be advantageous for researchers who have a focus on educational public policy. The findings of this study have the potential to provide benefits to academics and researchers. This study is anticipated to provide impetus for further investigation into the identified areas of deficiency.

This study holds significant importance for the government of Ghana as it has the potential to enhance the efficacy of the country's dual track SHS programme. Over time, it is expected that the SHS Double Track in Ghana will exhibit increased transparency and viability. The evidence provided in the suggestions will be utilised to shape policy recommendations. The results obtained from this research will be utilised to enhance the effectiveness of Ghana's SHS Double Track Policy. One perspective postulates that a well-designed educational programme should incorporate a dual-level framework for evaluating the calibre of a school's educational offerings.

Over the years, Ghana's education system has gone through many educational reforms to improve the standard of education for social and economic development of the country. In spite of the efforts by successive governments, there is continuous criticism from various stakeholders about the low quality of education at the Senior High School (SHS) level, which is the link between the primary and tertiary stages of learning. In recent times, the falling standards have been attributed to the free senior high school policy (Partey, 2018). The implementation of the Free SHS policy by the government of Ghana in September, 2017 led to an increase in enrolment by 33.2% (MoE, 2018). The implementation of this policy has however, been fraught with the challenge of absorbing the large number of students in the various Senior High Schools. In an attempt to salvage the situation, the government of Ghana through the ministry of education and Ghana education service introduced a double track system. Ghana has undergone a myriad of educational interventions. However, the introduction of the Free Education at the SHS level and the double track system in the SHS seems paramount.

The implementation of the double track is to allow government to cater for the excess enrolment, in order to ensure that, the Free SHS is available and accessible to all eligible students. The double track system has the capacity of absorbing more students into the same school. For instance, a school with a population of eight hundred (800) students can increase its enrollment by some 30% to 1040 students and have 520 students on each track compared to the entire eight hundred (800) students on a single track. Though the double track system

seeks to deal with enrollment deficits, Educational stakeholders and other Civil Society Organizations as well as NGOs have expressed various concerns about the increased enrolment and its ramifications for educational administration and management of Senior High Schools and quality of education in the country. In view of this, the current study sought to explore stakeholders perceptive about the implementation of the double track and comprehensively review this policy, assessing its prospects and challenges associated with the policy in order to make suggestions on how this educational policy can be enhanced to improve the quality of secondary education in Ghana.

The primary purpose of this study is, first and foremost, to provide an answer to this main research question: "To what extent can Ghana's double track system in secondary schools enhance the quality of education at the SHS level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta?"

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to investigate the extent that Ghana's double track policy in secondary schools can enhance the quality of education at the SHS level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta. The objectives of this study were to:

1.   Assess the views of teachers, head teachers and students on the quality of teaching and learning in the SHSs.
2.   Examine the effect of the double track on the quality of education at the SHS level.
3.   Analyse the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the double track in SHSs.
4.   Explore the best practices of the double track on the quality of education.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research sub-questions serve as the foundation for the main research question:

1.   What are the views of teachers, head teachers and students on the quality of teaching and learning in SHSs?

2.   What is the effect of the Double Track on the quality of education at the SHS level?

3.   What are the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the Double Track in SHSs?

4.   What are the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study holds significance across three dimensions: research, policy and practice. This study aimed to make a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature on public policy implementation in Ghana, as well as explore sustainable approaches to improving the efficacy of these policies. This research endeavour will contribute to the existing corpus of knowledge pertaining to public policies. The study will also serve as a valuable reference material for academicians and researchers. Moreover, the study's findings will serve to identify additional areas of research that can stimulate the generation of knowledge by other scholars.

Consistent with established policy, this study aimed to provide insights that can contribute to policy-making efforts focused on enhancing teaching and learning in SHSs, specifically in relation to the Double Track Policy implemented in Ghana. The results of this study will provide valuable insights to inform policy development regarding public policies in Ghana, with a specific focus on the SHS Double Track Policy. Policymakers can find recommendations to be highly valuable when developing well-informed and evidence-based policy proposals. This study aimed to offer valuable feedback and insights to educators, senior high school administrators and educational stakeholders in Ghana regarding sustainable strategies for enhancing teaching and learning within the context of the Double Track Policy.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study pertains to the domain of the education sector as it aims to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the double track policy on the quality of secondary

education in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, specifically within the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina, and Adenta. To ensure an adequate amount of data, the researcher limited the scope of the study to encompass only six (6) public SHSs located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The six institutions in question are Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS. The study's scope is constrained owing to its focus on a specific sample of six (6) public SHSs located exclusively within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study involved soliciting the participation of all educators employed at the selected schools. The research and class discussions centred around the examination of concepts and theories pertaining to public policy within the domain of education.

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

i. **Convention People's Party:** A socialist political organization in Ghana that was founded on the principles of Kwame Nkrumah, the country's first president. Following Nkrumah's split from the United Gold Coast Convention, the CPP was established in June 1949.

ii. **Double track:** It is a practice or system of schooling, where a shift system is introduced into the second cycle institutions where junior high school graduates go to school in batches.

iii. **Free senior high school policy:** It is a principle of action which has been adopted by a country or an institution where the learners do not pay a fee for feeding, teaching, utility and learning materials at the SHS level.

iv. **FCUBE**: Represents the concept of Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education. The programme in question is a comprehensive initiative that has been specifically developed to ensure the provision of high-quality education to all children in Ghana who are of school-going age, encompassing the levels of Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior High School (JHS).

v. **Ministry of Education:** Ghana's Ministry of Education is a multi-portfolio government ministry in charge of overseeing and managing the country's educational system. It is in charge of the national education curriculum, which is mostly implemented by the Ministry's Ghana Education Service.

vi. **National Democratic Congress:** Jerry Rawlings, the former Head of State of Ghana from 1981 to 1993 and President of Ghana from 1993 to 2001, created the National Democratic Congress, a social democratic political party in Ghana.

vii. **New Patriotic Party:** In Ghana, the New Patriotic Party is a liberal-conservative centre-right political party. It has been one of the two major political parties in Ghana since the country's democratization in 1992, with the National Democratic Congress, a centre-left party, serving as its main adversary.

viii. **Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development:** Founded in 1961 with the goal of promoting global commerce and economic advancement, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development is an intergovernmental organization with 38 member countries.

ix. **Quality of SHS education:** It is an education provided at the SHS level that centres on a degree of excellent learners, excellent learning environment, excellent content, excellent processes, and excellent academic outcomes.

x. **WAEC:** The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) is an examination board that was created by law to decide which exams are necessary for the public good in the English-speaking West African countries, to administer the exams, and to provide certificates that are on par with those from other examining bodies across the globe.

1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE

There is a total of five sections to the report. First chapter constitutes a brief overview of the study's importance, scope/delimitation, limitations are found in this section. It also includes a summary of the problem. This study's second chapter, the literature review, focuses on both theoretical and empirical literature reviews. The third chapter, Methodology, discusses the selection of a sample, data gathering methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter, the study's data analysis and presentation, examines how the study's data were analysed and discussed concerning the study's goals. The final part, chapter five summarised

the study's major findings, conclusions, recommendations, and opportunities for future research.

1.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This section of the study serves as the introductory phase. This chapter offered a background understanding of Ghana's double track system and its influence on the quality of education at the SHS level. The problem was stated in this chapter, with research objectives and questions highlighted. The chapter also presented the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations as well as a summary of how the subsequent chapters were organised.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the study dealt with the review of related literature to the work. The review of the related literature (theoretical, conceptual and empirical) is to provide the needed insight as well as theoretical background knowledge related to the research topic. Theoretically, the study was grounded in the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) developed by Sabatier and Henry (2011). Under the conceptual review, the key concepts of the study were reviewed while the empirical review focuses on works done by other researchers in the subject area.

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) by Sabatier and Henry, (2011) underpinned the study. The advocacy coalition framework (ACF) specifies that there are sets of core ideas about causation and value in public policy; these coalitions are formed because certain interests are linked to them. It is possible to map these networks of actors within a policy sector. Change comes from the ability of these ideas to adapt, ranging around a whole series of operational questions and what works in any one time or place (John, 2013).

Policy change occurs through interactions between wide external changes or shocks to the political system and the success of the ideas in the coalitions, which may cause actors in the advocacy coalition to shift coalitions. The model is composed of several parts. The relatively stable system parameters (these can be within and outside the sub-system) influence the external system events. Both impact the constraints and resources of sub-system actors. The policy sub-system is composed of different advocacy coalitions with their own beliefs and resources, and their own strategies. Policy brokers are concerned with keeping the level of political conflict within acceptable limits and reaching some reasonable solution to the problem (Sabatier & Henry, 2011).

The decisions by policy-makers influence governmental programmes and thus affect policy outputs as well as policy impacts. This framework is of huge significance to the study because education policy implementation is a multifaceted, evolving process that implicates many stakeholders and can result in catastrophe, if not well focused. Unarguably, a number of factors can inhibit implementation process and make it ineffective, such as unclear definition of policies; lack of stakeholder engagements, resource constraints etc. It is therefore, essential to apprehend it, explain its elements and explore ways in which it can be more apparent and effective.

In the views of Burns, Koster, and Fuster (2016) challenges to implementing education policy include co-ordination issues, inadequacy of organizational resources, actors' capacity or reactions against reforms. The education sector has become more complex, the challenges of putting change into practice have also evolved. Education stakeholders are increasingly diverse and growing more vocal and ambitious about what education systems should look like. If policy makers and stakeholders want policies to be effective and improve education, they need to share a common understanding of implementation to be able to work together on the process (McLaughlin, 2014).

Educational change cannot be reduced to the question of resistance to reform or the outcome of policy implementation, however, the process of implementation in itself is an opportunity to engage stakeholders, which can benefit them and the education system overall (OECD, 2016). Studying education policy implementation is therefore, closely linked with understanding what determines education systems ability and actors' willingness to engage and change. Moreover, these change processes take place in education systems that are increasingly complex, and require more elaborate strategies than the traditional top-down policy making (OECD, 2016).

The double track senior high school education policy is implemented by Ghana Education Service. School administrators, head teachers and teachers, thus making them central to the implementation process, these various stakeholders contribute to shaping the process and the outcomes of policy implementation.

2.1.1 Democracy and Social Policy

According to Abdulai and Hickey (2016), various political institutions and arrangements exhibit a tendency to support specific social policies owing to their varying capacities to extract resources required for financing social policy. Therefore, the classification of political regimes, such as colonialist/nationalist, democratic/authoritarian, elitist/populist, right fascist/Stalinist, etc., carries significant consequences for the implementation of social policies. In democratic societies characterised by a considerable degree of economic advancement, the populace frequently exerts pressure for the establishment and growth of welfare systems, thereby creating the essential prerequisites for social well-being (Lee & Vivarelli, 2016).

Democracy and the principle of social policy are mutually reinforcing dynamic and enduring processes. While one is motivated by power dynamics and the quantitative accumulation of social interests, the other is propelled by the endeavour to minimise societal needs. The universal suffrage and temporal dynamics inherent in a democratic system have a significant influence on social policy. This influence manifests in the promotion of social policy expansion and its alignment with the interests of well-organised groups, thereby fostering vertical solidarity (Zacher, 2010).

Democratic political institutions play a crucial role in creating the necessary incentive structures to encourage improved policy decision-making. As the progression of democracy unfolds, the composition of electorates undergoes systematic transformations, encompassing shifts in both the degree of political polarisation and the origins of such polarisation. Furthermore, it can be observed that citizens demonstrate a heightened capacity to utilise elections as a mechanism for substantial political decision-making, thereby, aligning with the fundamental aim of democratic electoral processes (Dalton, 2018). According to Zacher (2010), the determination of social policy problems and issues is contingent upon their alignment with the electoral issue attention cycle, rather than being solely based on social needs. For instance, electoral systems refer to the mechanisms through which votes are

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translated into legislative seats during a general election. These systems have a significant impact on various dimensions and dynamics of governance.

Electoral systems play a significant role in influencing politicians' decision-making processes regarding policy choices. Additionally, these systems offer distinct incentives that influence politicians' strategies in appealing to the electorate. The nature of these appeals, whether they are narrow or broad in scope, is contingent upon the electoral system's propensity to foster the emergence of multiple political parties. It is crucial to comprehend electoral incentives to gain insight into the manner in which institutional rules of the political process interact with various stakeholders, both in terms of those who demand political outcomes and those who supply them (Birch, 2017).

2.1.2 Electoral Politics and Social Policy

The electoral process serves as a mechanism through which society can collectively assess the efficacy of past governmental policies and determine the desired trajectory for future governance. Frequently, electoral processes serve as a platform for the contestation of interests among various groups within a given nation. According to Abdulai and Hickey (2016), political competitions and the elimination of incompetent politicians are two mechanisms through which accountability is fostered. Additionally, these mechanisms provide an incentive for those in power to exert effort, thereby, enhancing the efficiency of governance.

It is widely believed that elections serve as a mechanism to incentivise effective governance. Governments, in addition to their primary objectives, possess an additional incentive to reaffirm their legitimacy through the periodic occurrence of elections. Hence, the influence of electoral pressure may prompt politicians to engage in strategic manipulation of social policy with the aim of enhancing their prospects of securing re-election. According to Baumgartner et al. (2014), empirical research has demonstrated a positive correlation between elections and a surge in public spending, coupled with a decline in revenues, resulting in a substantial budget

deficit during election years. Moreover, Abdulai and Hickey (2016) argues that in developing nations, a significant portion of policymaking during election periods focuses on the expenditure aspect. This is owing to the fact that augmentations in public spending have a direct and immediate effect on the well-being of voters.

The populace possesses various needs and interests that they anticipate the government to acknowledge and cater for. Consequently, individuals have emerged as engaged and capable actors with whom the state engages in discussions regarding the structure of policies to be implemented, as well as the establishment of rights and responsibilities (Baumgartner et al, 2014). In democratic societies, political parties play a crucial role in consolidating the demands of various groups and formulating public policy alternatives to address them. Elections afford citizens the chance to exercise their democratic right by selecting from a range of political parties, each presenting unique policy proposals aimed at addressing the various needs of society.

According to Abdulai and Hickey (2016), political parties fulfil an intermediary function by exerting control and influence over public policy. They serve as a crucial link between citizens and their representatives, while also serving as the primary means through which the government is held accountable for its performance. According to the National Democratic Institute, the process of party policy development, which involves the formulation and implementation of governmental proposals by political parties, plays a crucial role in ensuring the effective operation of a representative democracy. Political parties encounter various challenges when it comes to fulfilling their role in policy formulation. In nascent democracies, political parties may exhibit certain characteristics that hinder their effectiveness. These include a lack of well-defined ideologies, an inability to articulate coherent policy proposals, weak organisational structures that are only active during election campaigns, limited and fluctuating support bases based on personal, regional or ethnic affiliations, and difficulties in coordinating actions within the parliamentary setting (Abdulai & Hickey, 2016).

2.1.3 Public Policy Cycle Framework

The government endeavours to strategically meet the interests, aspirations and desires of the general public by establishing and formalising political mechanisms (Hill, 2013). In contemporary discourse, the term "public policy" has emerged as a descriptor for the activities undertaken by decision-makers operating within or in proximity to governmental and political institutions, with the aim of shaping the political system (John, 2013). According to Hill (2013), various actors including politicians, public pressure groups, free-use specialists, and individuals who perceive themselves as passive recipients of strategy, all bear responsibility for their involvement in a given situation. Furthermore, Nagel (2011) argues that a comprehensive examination of public policy necessitates an interdisciplinary methodology, encompassing the exploration of its historical context, underlying reasoning and subsequent outcomes. Against this background, this study underscores the significance of the "policy domain or sub-system" as a crucial focal point for conducting research.

There are four key stages in the process of policy implementation. The first stage is known as "plan setting," where authorities introduce issues to the public for their consideration. The second stage is "arrangement definition," during which authorities develop strategies to address the identified issues. The third stage is "approach reception," wherein all relevant parties agree to the proposed strategies. Finally, the fourth stage is "approach execution," where authoritative units combine financial and human resources to effectively achieve the goals of the system.

During this phase of the procedure, the focus shifts towards the identification of issues and concerns that necessitate attention and resolution. The initial stage in influencing policymakers to initiate action is to designate a particular matter as a problem. The subsequent phase involves raising awareness of the subject matter among the general population, thereby, facilitating comprehensive deliberation (agenda-setting). The sole focus of the agenda pertains to the "issues and concerns that are presently garnering substantial attention from political leaders, as well as individuals outside of government who maintain close associations with

said authorities." The responsibility for recognising and addressing a social issue is shared between the general public and the media. The utilisation of media coverage has been suggested as a strategic tool for the purpose of problem definition. When establishing the agenda, numerous decisions must be made. The ultimate phase of the policy cycle entails the organisation of the policy matter in relation to prospective resolutions and instruments.

An essential component in establishing the agenda involves the shift from acknowledgment, often expressed by relevant organisations or affected stakeholders, to the formal process of political deliberation. Given the constraints of limited resources for problem identification and resolution, the procedure is divided into multiple stages. Each stage entails the selection of a fresh set of issues to be examined. Moreover, problem-solving in liberal democracies is commonly observed to occur in transparent settings, such as the media, or at the very least within specialised professional groups that possess expertise in a specific domain. The importance of public opinion and participation from diverse stakeholders in determining agenda priorities has been emphasised by Howlett et al. (2016).

According to Hood (2012), governments occasionally encounter situations where they are compelled to make difficult decisions. In such cases, instead of disregarding public sentiment out of concern for potential loss of legitimacy or credibility, governments are compelled to acknowledge the significance of the issue and address it accordingly. Several factors play a crucial role in determining the extent to which a policy issue ascends to the forefront of the priority list. When analysing problems and formulating policies, it is crucial to consider not only the material context of policy-making, such as the rate of economic growth, but also the influence of ideas and ideologies (Pressman & Wildavsky, 2015). The alignment of interests among pertinent actors, the responsiveness of accountable institutions, the cyclical nature of public problem perception, and the interventions pertaining to individual issues, all assume crucial significance in this context (Winter, 2017).

2.1.4 Policy Formulation and Adoption

During this phase of the procedure, the government officially embraced the concerns, recommendations and requests that have been expressed by the general public. In the context of policy formulation and implementation, it is essential to consider various factors, including the identification and establishment of the objectives of the policy (Dye, 2012). It is important to note that certain authors differentiate between the "formulation" and "final acceptance" of a policy to ensure comprehensiveness (Stone, 2012). In the realm of public policy formulation, the involvement of government bureaucrats and other high-ranking public servants assume a paramount significance. To ensure a comprehensive and inclusive policy-making process, it is imperative to incorporate the participation of elected members of parliament, their allies, organised interest groups, as well as cabinet departments and the units within ministries. This involvement should occur prior to the finalisation of any decision. This encompasses the engagement of cabinet departments in the policy-making process. Ultimately, the entities accountable for determining such a course of action are the institutions themselves, primarily comprising cabinet ministers and parliament.

Once a decision has been reached pertaining to a specific course of action, the formal governmental institutions assume prominence. In Western democracies, political actors assume substantial roles in the process of policymaking, although these roles are not deemed indispensable (Stone, 2012). Policymakers face challenges in ensuring the precise implementation of their articulated plans. Government agencies have the obligation to ensure compliance with policies, although instances of non-compliance do occur. There are three distinct approaches to examining the implementation of policies: a top-down perspective, a bottom-up perspective or a hybrid approach that combines elements of both (Sabatier & Weible, 2014).

Advocates of the top-down approach contend that its efficacy relies on the policymakers' capacity to establish and adhere to specific objectives, while also supervising the execution process. Nevertheless, there are notable distinctions when commencing from a lower position

and progressing upwards. According to Williams and Onibon (2016), proponents of the "network of implementers" framework perceive local bureaucrats as crucial actors in the effective execution of policies. To reconcile the divergent perspectives of both factions, it is advisable to explore the formulation of a hybrid theory.

Nevertheless, it is imperative that any policy implementation framework incorporates three essential components. According to Blackman (2014), it is imperative to commence the implementation of a policy by providing a comprehensive description of the policy that will be executed. Who should be responsible for the supervision of the policy, and what strategies should they employ to execute their plan effectively? The allocation of resources is a critical component of an effective policy implementation process. The allocation of financial resources serves as an illustrative instance, as it delineates the operational procedures undertaken by policy personnel on a daily basis. Both individuals in operational positions and the management team are impacted. In summary, it is imperative for the optimal policy implementation mechanism to consider the decision-making processes across diverse contexts.

2.1.5 Policy Implementation

Adopting a program and carrying out a selected course of action do not guarantee that the actions taken will be carried out in a way that perfectly reflects the objectives and intentions of the decision-makers. The execution of a policy by responsible institutions and organisations, many of which are associated with the public sector, but not always, is the phase of policy implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2012). Three primary theoretical stances inform the execution of policy: the bottom-up model (Sabatier & Weible, 2014), the top-down model (Pressman & Wildavsky, 2015), and a hybrid approach that incorporates aspects of both models (Winter, 2017).

According to Pressman and Wildavsky (2015), advocates of the top-down model prioritise the capacity of decision-makers to establish clear policy objectives and exercise control over the implementation process. In contrast, the bottom-up model diverges in its approach. According to Williams and Onibon (2016), proponents of the bottom-up approach perceive local bureaucrats as the primary agents responsible for policy delivery. They conceptualise policy implementation as a series of negotiation processes that occur within networks of implementers. Hybrid theories endeavour to bridge the gap between the aforementioned approaches by integrating components from top-down, bottom-up and alternative theoretical frameworks (Winter, 2017).

Hill and Hupe (2012) propose three fundamental components that should be included in a policy implementation framework. Firstly, it is suggested that an optimal approach to policy implementation should encompass the explicit delineation of policy particulars. Therefore, it is imperative to consider the manner in which the policy should be implemented and the specific agencies or organisations that should be responsible for its execution. What is the appropriate method of interpretation for the law/ policy? Additionally, it is imperative that an optimal policy implementation process incorporates a comprehensive framework for the allocation of resources. This encompasses the allocation of budgets and the implementation of the policy by personnel. The issue also pertains to the organisational units responsible for implementation. Finally, it is imperative that an optimal policy implementation process includes a comprehensive delineation of the specific procedures that will be employed to execute decisions pertaining to individual cases.

2.1.6 Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The proper functioning of the political process and discourse is contingent upon the regular incorporation of policy assessment. The reason for this distinction lies in the fact that scientists are not typically involved in the execution or production of public administration evaluations. Consequently, a distinct separation exists between scientists and individuals responsible for political evaluations, including the general public and media sources (Winter, 2017). Official publications, public conversations and acts undertaken by political parties are susceptible to

substantial levels of criticism. The logic and incentives of political processes have an impact on two crucial aspects of evidence-based policymaking: the attribution of blame and the assessment of research (Hood, 2012).

The perceptions, reactions and responses of actors to policy outcomes and results can be influenced by their respective positions, interests and values. Politicians have gained a reputation for employing self-congratulatory tactics as a means of deflecting attention from their errors subsequent to a subpar performance. The effectiveness of evaluations can be impeded when policy goals and objectives are inadequately defined. Governments are strongly motivated to evade complete accountability for evident shortcomings, leading them to refrain from openly expressing their objectives.

2.1.7 Social Policy Implementation

According to Egonmwan (2019), the implementation of social policy refers to the systematic conversion of resources into desired outcomes. Various resources can manifest in diverse forms, encompassing monetary assets, data, tools, personnel, and other goods and services. Therefore, successful implementation of social policy requires policies to be responsive to and shaped by the specific circumstances in which they are put into practice. The evidence presented in this study suggests that the implementation phase of a policy's lifecycle holds significant importance (Egonmwan, 2019).

2.1.8 Policy Content

A policy's particulars may be heavily influenced by the competing interests of those who stand to gain and lose from its implementation (Bell & Stevenson, 2015). Since competition and strife are always a possibility, this may be hard to put into practice. So, the success of the social policy depends on how much of a shift in behaviour can be reasonably expected among the population at large. Policies with long-term benefits may be more difficult to implement than those with shorter-term gains (Egonmwan, 2019). An idea is not usually proposed

because elections are close or the ruling coalition wants to impose its agenda. Both the implementation of the policy and the acceptance of it by its constituents are aided by a thorough familiarity with the problem's characteristics and the way policymakers weigh these concerns (Bell & Stevenson, 2015).

Therefore, the way a policy is presented, the implication of the link between the problem and the solution and the policy's practicality, all play significant roles in determining whether or not it is adopted and how it is implemented (Nilsen, 2015).

2.1.9 Policy Context

The environment in which policy implementation occurs includes, but not limited to, pre-existing policies and events that arise from outside the implementing system and have a direct influence on policy implementation (Fullan, 2015). According to research conducted by Fullan (2015), the implementation phase in an institutional setting is governed by several constraints. The extent and speed to which a policy can be implemented in a given country depends on many factors, including the laws, norms, traditions, standards, and customs of that country (OECD, 2016). When it comes to policymaking and implementation, the State plays a bigger role in a centralised government, while in a decentralised government, local governments and ancillary organisations and departments share this responsibility (OECD, 2016). Institutional frameworks also affect the procedures that are used to make and implement policy decisions.

Williams and Onibon (2016) acknowledge that the implementation of government social policies is influenced by bureaucracy. The government entities tasked with implementing policies should be highly skilled and efficient if those policies are to be effectively implemented. Complex policies, especially ones that affect a large number of people, can be difficult to coordinate in decentralised organisations. Its negative consequences include squandered resources, stalled development, policy chaos, and policy inconsistencies (Fullan, 2015). The context also includes the extent to which a policy is compatible with other policies in the same field. It is, therefore, essential to learn about the after-effects of policy

complements' adoption and its long-term viability. However, when there is a misalignment, it becomes extremely difficult to implement (OECD, 2016). The implementation of policies can also be affected by societal trends and events.

A policy's effectiveness in accomplishing its legislative aims may be affected by factors as diverse as politics, society, the economy, and the population (Wurzburg, 2017). Policymaking is influenced by the "socio-political environment," (Wurzburg, 2017). Educational issues and policy options are filtered and rendered socially acceptable through the lens of sociocultural influences (OECD, 2016). Therefore, the means through which these problems are addressed will have an impact on implementation policies. These concerns also affect and restrict actors' strategies and plans for implementation.

2.2 POLICY STRATEGY

Communication, resources, disposition/attitude, and effective bureaucratic institutions all play a role in the successful implementation of social policy.

2.2.1 Communication Strategy

Upon acquiring additional knowledge, certain individuals may alter their perspectives and perceive the process of implementation in a more favourable manner. To facilitate efficient knowledge management, it is imperative to possess a comprehensive understanding of individuals' cognitive processes in acquiring and utilising novel information (Fuster & Keste, 2016). It is imperative to uphold effective channels of communication among all stakeholders engaged in the execution of a social policy. According to Hill (2013), there is potential for individuals tasked with implementing a policy's directives to misinterpret the language used in the policy. To convey the message and rationale of the policy to relevant stakeholders proficiently, it is imperative to establish a consensus regarding the policy's goals, strategies and other mechanisms employed to attain those goals (OECD, 2016). To ensure the successful implementation of this policy, it is imperative that the relevant personnel are provided with

unambiguous and consistent instructions. The potential for confusion may arise when individuals tasked with the implementation of standards lack a comprehensive understanding of said standards.

The absence of clear, unambiguous and consistent directions for implementation can exert a substantial influence on the execution of the policy. The presence of highly intricate regulations possesses the capacity to impede the progress of innovation and hinder the ability to adapt. Owing to the intricate nature of these regulations, there is limited scope for exercising discretion or engaging in interpretation by the individuals responsible for their implementation.

2.2.2 Resource Strategy

To implement a policy successfully, it is imperative that stakeholders possess the necessary access and competencies to efficiently leverage a diverse array of resources. The successful implementation of policies relies on the presence, productivity and efficacy of the resources assigned to them (Wurzburg, 2017; OECD, 2016). The availability of resources is not the sole determinant of their effective utilisation (OECD, 2016). Resources encompass a wide range of assets, including individuals and financial capital. The presence of a proficiently trained and adequately staffed organisation is imperative for the successful execution of policies according to their intended objectives. Material assets encompass various resources, including but not limited to land, buildings and monetary funds. Insufficient allocation of financial resources results in the non-enforcement of laws, the lack of provision of services and the absence of dissemination of valuable guidelines.

2.2.3 Timing Strategy

The effectiveness of an individual's strategy will be contingent upon the ease and expediency with which it can be implemented. According to Hill and Hupe (2012), the formulation of an implementation plan facilitates the establishment of a well-defined timetable for all

stakeholders, despite the potential challenges associated with determining the precise commencement and conclusion of the implementation process. The extent of implementation and its potential consequences are significantly influenced by the speed and timing of implementation. The process of incorporating even minor modifications into the system may be time-consuming, particularly following the implementation of major changes. Two significant factors that influence the timeline for adoption are the popularity of the policy and the feasibility of its implementation within a realistic timeframe. Therefore, it is imperative to strike a balance between consistent implementation and a comprehensive long-term policy outlook (Hill & Hupe, 2012).

2.2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

The integration of monitoring and evaluation within the initial design of a policy is crucial to accurately assess its effectiveness and outcomes. The utilisation of monitoring data can serve as a means to verify the compliance of all participants within a multifaceted system in fulfilling their respective responsibilities. Monitoring progress on implementation can be achieved by utilising existing information. Numerous empirical findings across various contexts indicate that the imposition of more stringent criteria for policy implementers has a positive impact on the overall quality and effectiveness of policy implementation (Budd et al., 2012). To achieve the intended outcomes of social policy, it is imperative to maintain a continuous and collaborative endeavour (Brauns, 2014).

Aminu et al. (2012) highlight the presence of diverse viewpoints regarding the assessment of efficacy in social projects. Consequently, it establishes a comprehensive framework that is impartial in its perspective, facilitating the process of reporting and criticism. Jones (2011) posits that businesses can gain insights into their human resource capacity challenges by closely monitoring social policy. Owing to increased data accessibility, a larger number of individuals will have the opportunity to contribute their perspectives on the utilisation of such data to address challenges related to policy implementation (Aminu et al., 2012). Most

checking and evaluating procedures typically employ five primary criteria. The policymaker carefully considers multiple factors prior to making crucial decisions.

i. Impact: Measures of the policy under review's anticipated and unanticipated positive and negative changes to society and consequences on it.

ii. Effectiveness: Determines how much the goal has been accomplished or how likely it is to be accomplished.

iii. Efficiency: Measures how well outputs match inputs, taking into account expenses, implementation time, and financial and economic outcomes.

iv. Relevance: Determines how much the policy at a given moment makes sense in light of the organisation's development aims and external environment (OECD, 2016; Ijeoma, 2018).

According to Roux (2019), the characteristics of a policy play a significant role in influencing the extent of engagement from various stakeholders. The involvement of stakeholders in the process of policymaking seems to be closely linked to their vested interests, as suggested by the available data. The execution of social initiatives is significantly influenced by the intrinsic qualities of individuals and organisations, as well as their interconnectedness with other variables (Nilsen, 2015). The implementation of social policy involves a diverse array of stakeholders, each with their own distinct interests in the programme.

The actors involved in this context may encompass both formal and informal entities, such as labour unions and implementation agencies, including parents and political coalitions. The actors involved in the policy-making process encompass a wide range of individuals and groups, including government officials, mediators, service providers, interest groups, constituencies of policy beneficiaries or users, as well as the media and policy evaluators. The personnel and labour organisations of central governments, encompassing entities tasked with the evaluation, examination and enhancement of educational institutions, national bodies for leadership in education or teaching, and governmental departments overseeing education, are additional participants in the formulation of policies. To ensure accurate understanding and

interpretation by stakeholders, it is imperative to consider the interests of actors when implementing policies (OECD, 2016).

 The exercise of implementers' discretion is substantially influenced by their personal attitudes and emotions towards the policy they are tasked with implementing. In alternative terms, the degree of achievement will be contingent upon the manner in which the policies are construed by the individuals responsible for their execution. According to Ejere (2011), the direction of education policy outcomes is influenced by the attitudes and actions of public officials, particularly when a policy negatively impacts their income, sense of self-worth or position. Sufficiently positive impacts on individuals' reputation, income, or self-esteem serve as effective incentives for maintaining adherence to the policy. The interests of actors may potentially conflict with those of other actors, other interest groups, or even the organisation to which they are affiliated. The presence of political motivations can hinder the successful execution of policies. Therefore, the presence of interests, which significantly influence the implementation process through political manoeuvres and conflicts, allows for considerable latitude in discretionary decision-making at every phase of implementation.

 Hence, the capacity and inclination of individuals to employ their resources (such as their social standing, networks and personal characteristics) as a means of exerting political influence, ascertain the degree to which they can impact the execution of policies (OECD, 2016). The potential of a school or organisation can be significantly impacted by the composition and quality of its human resources as well as the prevailing organisational climate. According to Bell and Stevenson (2015), the manner in which an organisation responds to a policy is influenced by its values, structures and internal procedures. When implementing a strategy, it is crucial to consider the individuals and organisations involved, along with their respective positions of authority and strategic approaches. The effectiveness of a policy's implementation is contingent upon the agency's access to resources and funding, as well as the level of support it receives from political leaders. This support encompasses both the agency's activity and knowledge, as well as the financial assistance it receives. The

compliance culture of individuals has a significant impact on both their implementation and response (Egonmwan, 2019).

2.2.5 Exploring Free Education in Africa: The Policy Trends

The concept of formal education has undergone a transformation and is now widely recognised as a global benchmark for assessing a country's level of advancement. According to Lotte (2019), the current state of education encompasses a comprehensive structure that promotes standardised notions regarding various aspects of existence, including individuals' lives, children, knowledge, and prosperity. The underlying justification is to employ education as a contemporary strategy for facilitating developmental transformation, with the aim of breaking the cycle of poverty. This approach seeks to equip children with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the intricate networks of change at both local and global levels (United Nations, 2015). Lotte (2019) characterises this approach as an "optimistic model of planned change". Given the widespread optimism surrounding the transformative potential of formal education, its incorporation has emerged as a crucial topic in both global and national policy discussions.

In light of this, there has been a growing consensus among international organisations, governments and community leaders to urge nation-states to implement educational policies that promote sustainable and inclusive access to education (Yeboah & Daniel, 2019). Lotte (2019) asserts that the education policies in question establish the legal parameters that determine the eligibility criteria and the conceptual framework for defining an educated individual. The global adoption of inclusive educational policies, including Africa, is a significant development (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Africa has demonstrated significant dedication to the promotion of formal education through comprehensive policies since the 1960s (Glewwe & Kremer, 2016).

According to Chanimbe and Dankwah (2021), scholarly literature indicates that Africa has experienced a rise in student enrolment over the course of several decades because of the implementation of diverse education policies. The observed increase in student enrolment over the past few decades can be attributed to the prevalence of free education initiatives within reforms and policies in education in Africa. In the years since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were introduced in 2000, a number of African nations have shown a commitment to realizing these educational objectives by putting in place free education laws (Obiero, 2012). This point is highlighted by Oketch and Rolleston (2017) in their contention that the MDGs and Education for All (EFA) initiatives significantly increased the adoption of free primary education policies in sub-Saharan Africa. In this context, a number of nations stand out, including Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021).

Recent empirical and theoretical studies, such as the work conducted by Brenyah (2018), have provided evidence of the implementation of free education policies in African countries. These policies have been introduced with the aim of increasing school enrolments. Empirical evidence supports the notion that free education has consistently served as a driving force behind increased rates of enrolment (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021; Matey, 2020). The existing body of literature on the topic of free education in Africa demonstrates a predominant emphasis among African nations to improve school enrolments by implementing fee-free education initiatives, whether at the primary, secondary or tertiary education levels (Brenyah, 2018). Ghana experienced a notable increase in Net Enrolment Rates (NER) in 2005 following the implementation of its FCUBE programme, which was introduced in accordance with the MDGs (Brenyah, 2018).

Brenyah (2018) asserts that the implementation of free primary education in Ghana yielded significant results in terms of enrolment. Specifically, between 2005 and 2015, the country experienced substantial increases in its Net Enrolment Rate, with a rise of 65.5% in 2005 and a remarkable 91.1% in 2015. The profound effects of free education initiatives are likewise

evident in Kenya's implementation of the free primary education policy in 2003. According to Brenyah (2018), Kenya achieved a peak enrolment rate of 86.3% in 2007 because of its implementation of free primary education. The scope and approach of free education policies, particularly in Africa, exhibit notable variations despite the growing interest in enrolment. This ultimately pertains to the specific educational issue within a given context, which takes precedence over economic factors. For example, South Africa, following the persistence of a racially segregated education system and economic disparities among racial groups in 1994, recognised the imperative to offer cost-free primary education in accordance with the provisions of the South African constitution (Ahmed & Sayed, 2019).

The South African educational reforms have demonstrated a pro-poor trajectory, prioritising the needs of disadvantaged individuals, particularly through the implementation of the fee exemption policy in 2006 (Ahmed & Sayed, 2019). The fee exemption policy in South Africa adopts a limited perspective on providing free education, in contrast to various African nations such as Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Tanzania (Brenyah, 2018; Ruff, 2016).

Countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, and Tanzania have opted for a comprehensive approach in their efforts to provide free education (Brenyah, 2018; Ruff, 2016; Sakaue, 2018). Sakaue (2018) provides an example of Uganda's pioneering efforts in implementing an inclusive approach to achieving universal education by enacting a policy in 1997 that abolished school fees. According to Sakaue (2018), the implementation of this comprehensive strategy for eliminating school fees resulted in an increase in the availability of primary education. In a similar vein, Ghana has made significant progress in its pursuit of an all-encompassing free education agenda during the fourth republic, which commenced in 1992. This has been achieved through the implementation of various initiatives, including the FCUBE programme in 1994, the Free SHS Policy in 2015, and subsequent developments in 2017 (Inoue & Oketch, 2018; Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

2.2.6 Glance at the Challenges of Free Education in Africa

The creation of the social and structural frameworks needed for an effective free education policy or program in Africa has mainly remained difficult. Thus, even with the availability of these free education reform frameworks, the main obstacle to resolving educational marginalisation remains (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015). Dohoue and Bornman (2014) elucidate that this phenomenon could be tackled through the establishment of a connection between the structural systems that form the foundation of free education initiatives, specifically the nature and extent of reforms, and the encompassing social system.

According to Donohue and Bornman (2014), the phenomenon of educational exclusion, despite the presence of free education systems, can be seen as a manifestation of the societal fragmentation and inequality that pervades society as a whole. The ineffectiveness of these free educational initiatives in addressing the deeply ingrained discriminatory practices that have led to significant disparities in educational access and quality has been highlighted by Donohue and Bornman (2014).

Empirical studies provide ample evidence to support the correlation between discriminatory societal practices and educational inequities in the context of free education reforms. Empirical research indicates that the majority of free education reforms are ineffective in addressing educational inequalities based on factors such as disability (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015; Morojele, 2011), and low-income households (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021). In the context of educational disparities related to individuals with disabilities, Donohue and Bornman (2014) examine the issue in their research, revealing that in South Africa, a significant proportion of school-aged children with disabilities, approximately 70%, remain excluded from educational institutions. This persistent exclusion persists despite more than ten years of efforts to promote inclusive education for all children.

Shifting focus from the issues surrounding free education in relation to social systems, it is important to acknowledge that the challenges encountered are contingent upon specific contexts. This implies that there are variations in their characteristics across various contexts, both within and between countries (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). The existing body of literature has established that the challenges associated with providing free education vary across countries, primarily owing to differences in contextual circumstances. In the study conducted by Sakaue (2018), the author examines the challenges faced by Uganda in managing the widespread implementation of unofficial user fees in public schools, subsequent to the introduction of a policy aimed at eliminating fees to attain universal primary education.

The quantitative study conducted by the researcher reveals a noteworthy exponential rise in both the frequency and magnitude of informal user charges. Specifically, the study indicates that these charges increased from 40% during the period of 2005/2006 to 80% in 2011/2012. It is noteworthy to observe that Uganda perceives the proliferation of informal user charges as a policy obstacle, whereas Kenya, on the contrary, considers the payment of informal fees as a necessary condition for the effective implementation of its FSE policy. For example, Adan and Orodho (2015) and Kilonzo (2017) have identified a significant issue regarding the reluctance of certain parents to fulfil informal fee obligations. This poses a challenge as fee payment is considered a joint responsibility within the context of FSE.

However, despite the empirical observation that the challenges of implementation differ in various contexts, it is also evident that there are common challenges that consistently arise across all contexts. Chanimbe (2021) situates the phenomenon under investigation by highlighting the prevalent challenge of insufficiency, encompassing limited financial, human and material resources, which frequently hinders the successful implementation of free education reforms in the African context. As previously indicated, the implementation of free education policies leads to sudden increases in the number of students enrolling in schools (Brenyah, 2018; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). However, these surges give rise to the

problem of inadequacy, which has an impact on both school administration and the learning process (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021).

African countries, including Kenya and Tanzania, have encountered a shared challenge characterised by inadequacy (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021; Kalunda & Otanga, 2015). For example, scholarly research conducted by Kalunda and Otanga (2015) and Huylebroeck and Titeca (2015) provide supporting evidence regarding the problem of inadequate resources in Kenya and Uganda, respectively. Both studies demonstrate that the implementation of FSE policies has resulted in various challenges, including an excessive teaching workload for educators a shortage of teachers to accommodate the growing student population, and a lack of sufficient instructional materials (Kalunda & Otanga, 2015; Huylebroeck & Titeca, 2015).

2.2.7 Making Senior High Education Free in Ghana

The issue of disparities in the access to secondary education continues to pose a significant obstacle for many developing nations, Ghana included. According to the findings of Chanimbe and Dankwah (2021), a significant proportion of 264 million children, approximately 80%, face challenges in accessing secondary education. This predicament is observed across a total of sixty-five (65) countries participating in the Global Partnership for Education programme. The existence of concerning disparities in equity is widely recognised as a significant challenge to worldwide progress, prompting the international community to refocus its efforts on the significance of secondary education within developing nations (Adu-Ababio & Osei, 2018; Andrés, Asongu, & Amavilah, 2015; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). Nevertheless, it is important to note that achieving equitable access to senior high education in Ghana has proven to be a significant challenge over the years, as the availability of such education remains restricted (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021; Adu-Ababio & Osei, 2018).

This phenomenon can be attributed, in part, to the inability of Ghana, similar to many other developing nations, to adequately address the increased need for secondary education resulting from the substantial influx of primary school graduates (Kiprop et al., 2015; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). According to the findings of Mohammed and Kuyini (2021), the implementation of the FCUBE policy in Ghana resulted in a situation where 50% of children were unable to obtain access to secondary education. In response to both international and national demands for increased accessibility to senior high education in Ghana, the development and implementation of Free SHS policies have been a subject of significant interest and political discourse. As previously discussed in the first chapter, the implementation of a fully subsidised SHS policy in 2017 was preceded by a public discourse regarding the most appropriate strategy for achieving free SHS education. This discourse took place within both the political and academic spheres, as evidenced by the works of Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018) and Mohammed and Kuyini (2021). The academic discussion surrounding Free Senior High education encompasses two primary arguments regarding the implementation of cost-free secondary education, advocated by the two prevailing political parties in the political arena – Progressive Free Senior High Education and absolutely Free Senior High Education (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018; Tamanja & Pajibo, 2019).

The initial proposition put forth by the NDC advocates for Progressive Free Senior High education, which supports a gradual and incremental approach to providing free education. The basis for this approach is primarily derived from Ghana's constitutional provision, which emphasises the phased implementation of a fully subsidised secondary education (Tamanja & Pajibo, 2019). Consequently, the government led by the NDC implemented the Progressive Free SHS Policy in 2015 as a step towards achieving universal FSE in Ghana (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

The scope of the Progressive Free Senior High Policy, as outlined by Chanimbe and Dankwah (2021), can be characterised as a cost-sharing approach to providing FSE. This policy entails the assumption of expenses for day students and the provision of fee waivers for various items, including examination fees, entertainment fees, library fees, Students Representative Council (SRC) dues, sports fees, cultural fees, science development and mathematics quiz fees,

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) fees, and co-curricular fees. This initiative specifically targets day students attending public SHSs, as highlighted by Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018) and Tamanja and Pajibo (2019).

Conversely, the second proposition advocates for a comprehensive approach to free education, encompassing a wide range of individuals or groups. In September 2017, the NPP government, holding a distinct perspective on the provision of free SHS education, introduced a revised financing model to replace the Progressive Free Senior High Policy (Huylebroeck & Titeca, 2015; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). Nevertheless, the substitution was necessitated by the deficiencies inherent in the cost-sharing methodology employed by the Free Progressive SHS Policy (Huylebroeck & Titeca, 2015; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). Moreover, the implementation of this initiative was undertaken as a means of honouring a commitment to redefine the scope of primary education to encompass SHSs, which encompasses vocational, agricultural and technical institutions, and to ensure its accessibility to all citizens of Ghana without financial constraints (Asumadu, 2019).

2.2.8 The Case of Ghana's Free Senior High School Policy: Are the Challenges a threat to Quality Education and Empowerment?

During the initial stages and even prior to the implementation of the Free SHS Policy, there were numerous concerns raised regarding the potential difficulties that the policy was expected to encounter, considering its approach. Regrettably, the discussion surrounding the effective execution and strategy of the initiative was primarily characterised by numerous inquiries rather than providing solutions to prevent a recurrence of the unresolved issues pertaining to free education in Ghana (Cudjoe, 2018; Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021; Chanimbe & Prah, 2020).

Cudjoe (2018) issued a cautionary statement emphasising the importance of engaging in realistic dialogues regarding the implementation of the policy. While IMANI, as a think tank,

does not oppose the policy, it is crucial for policy actors to acknowledge and address the current limitations and capacity of the policy. Cudjoe (2018) posits that the implementation of this approach will facilitate the attainment of sustainable growth in enrolments and effectively address the issue of enhancing secondary education. Taking into consideration the anticipated challenges that may arise in the implementation of the Free SHS Policy, the academic community has observed numerous empirical studies that have examined the practical aspects of the policy, focusing specifically on the difficulties it presents. Several studies have been conducted on this topic, including Addo (2019), Asumadu (2019) and Matey (2020), among others.

Nevertheless, a noteworthy observation derived from these studies is that the majority of empirically established challenges appear to be recurrent, with only a limited number of intriguing variations. Therefore, it can be inferred that the overall findings of the available research either support one another or contribute to the current body of knowledge. In general, the Free SHS Policy has been found to present a range of empirically substantiated challenges. These challenges include substandard learning and living conditions, an excessive workload resulting from a shortage of teachers, deficiencies in funding, inadequacies in infrastructure, concerns regarding the quality of education, the imposition of unauthorised fees, and instances of both student and teacher indiscipline (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018; Addo, 2019; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021).

The documented challenges suggest that the policy failed to adequately address certain significant issues, leading to the perception that mistakes were made in its formulation. In their assessment of the policy, Mohammed and Kuyini (2021) expeditiously characterised the initial implementation of the policy as unsuccessful, despite the policy receiving favourable reception from the general public. According to Mohammed and Kuyini (2021), the difficulties encountered in the policy can be attributed to the implementation strategy as carried out by the individuals responsible for executing the policy. Policy actors prioritised the political aspect of the policy to gain voter support, which had negative consequences for

the appropriate decision-making processes during the policy's adoption, formulation and implementation stages. The problem was perceived as lacking a clear definition, with policy actors neglecting to explore other feasible alternatives and solutions (Mohammed & Kuyini 2021). Additionally, there were deficiencies in the implementation of certain crucial stages.

From a critical standpoint, it is imperative to examine the potential ramifications of the challenges associated with the Free SHS Policy on the overall quality of education provided through this initiative. The literature clearly elucidates the challenges associated with the implementation of the Free SHS Policy. Nevertheless, there is still ambiguity surrounding the potential risk that the policy poses to the delivery of quality education. In the absence of empirical substantiation of the quality concerns associated with policy, both in theoretical and practical contexts, the policy objectives, particularly those pertaining to the provision of quality education, will remain illusory rather than tangible achievements. Cudjoe (2018) boldly asserts that the expansion of secondary education would be futile in the absence of a substantial enhancement in educational quality, resulting in a squandering of resources and a failure to realise the anticipated advantages (Cudjoe, 2018).

Despite the abundance of empirical research conducted on the Free SHS Policy, there exists a notable deficiency in the academic literature pertaining to matters of educational quality. The majority of empirical discussions have primarily centred around matters pertaining to access, the framework for implementation and the associated difficulties, while considering the content and anticipated outcomes, specifically the quality of education (Essuman, 2018). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that only a small number of empirical studies have tangentially examined the anticipated influence of policy issues on the educational quality provided by the Free SHS Policy (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021; Tamanja & Pajibo, 2019; Essuman, 2018).

2.2.9 Coping with the Challenges: A mission impossible?

Coping, in essence, serves as a valuable resource for individuals in their day-to-day existence. Therefore, the consideration of coping with reform challenges is an essential aspect of reform

analysis that should not be disregarded. The effectiveness of an operational reform or policy in responding to its challenges is contingent upon the proactive efforts of policy stakeholders to mitigate these challenges through the utilisation of coping mechanisms (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). According to the findings of Subair and Talabi (2015), effectively managing the challenges associated with educational reforms in schools is not an insurmountable task. It is the responsibility of institutional management to recognise and tackle unfavourable circumstances and deficiencies within a particular reform, necessitating the implementation of coping strategies.

In light of Subair and Talabi's perspectives, it is important to note that existing empirical research has demonstrated that stakeholders have consistently employed various coping strategies in the management of schools during specific reforms (Werner, 2011; Kaguri, Ibuathu, & Kubaison, 2014; Godda, 2018). However, there is a dearth of literature examining this aspect of reform analysis in relation to Ghana's Free SHS Policy. The presence of this gap in the existing body of literature regarding the importance of coping mechanisms can be deemed as justified. This gap highlights the prevailing dominance of discussions pertaining to access, enrolment and challenges associated with the Free SHS Policy within the literature. The sole empirical study available for my review concerning coping strategies in relation to the adverse conditions of the Free SHS Policy is the research conducted by Chanimbe and Dankwah (2021).

However, Chanimbe's (2021) study primarily focused on coping strategies at the institutional and management levels, overlooking coping mechanisms at the individual level. According to Chanimbe (2021), it is determined that certain actors made routine contributions that indirectly influenced the policy, while others provided direct assistance to address the challenges associated with the Free SHS Policy. Chanimbe (2021) conducted a study that exhibits certain parallels with the Kenyan study conducted by Kaguri et al. (2014). In both studies, school principals demonstrated a similar approach by seeking direct assistance

through the procurement of goods on credit from suppliers in situations of inadequate resources.

2.3 Implementation of Educational Policies in Ghana: Issues and Trends

Since attaining independence, Ghana has implemented various modifications to its educational system with the aim of enhancing its capacity to cater for the nation's requirements. Various governmental bodies and international stakeholders have exerted influence on educational policy throughout history. Education reform has been advocated for by both democratic and military populist regimes, aiming to enhance educational access for economically disadvantaged students residing in rural regions, elevate the overall quality of education and uphold and enhance existing educational standards. Nkrumah's Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) implemented in 1951 exhibited a preference for supply and demand-driven strategies, which were deemed more revolutionary in nature. Consequently, a significant influx of newly recruited and trained lecturers has been observed. The ADP implemented by Nkrumah included the development and implementation of a novel pedagogical approach in the field of education.

Following the attainment of independence in 1957 and the subsequent enactment of the Education Act in 1961, the levying of fees for middle school education was abolished. Scholarships covering full or partial tuition were provided to students from the Northern and Brong-Ahafo regions, enabling them to pursue education at public or private secondary schools or universities. According to Akyeampong and colleagues (2017), the primary focus of the SHSs Educational Policy was to increase student recruitment prior to the implementation of this modification. After 1966, there was a shift in educational policy that placed emphasis on enhancing the quality of education provided to enrolled students. The expeditious preparation of high school students for college and the workforce could be effectively facilitated through the implementation of a two-year academic track. Individuals who were not chosen were required to undergo an additional two-year period of education in a pre-vocational institution.

By 1972, there was a shift in public opinion towards advocating for higher standards and more affordable goods, as it became evident that this policy was predominantly advantageous to the affluent while imposing costs on the middle class. According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), a significant proportion of children hailing from low-income households, upon successfully completing their elementary education, express intentions to pursue further academic endeavours, with a considerable number aspiring to attend college or university.

The New Structure and Content of Education (NSCE) policies were implemented in 1974. The promotion of an interdisciplinary stage of education was proposed for students in elementary school and the initial three years of Junior Secondary School (JSS). Furthermore, the NSCE also proposed a transition towards a curriculum that emphasises practical skills in primary and secondary education. From 1987 to 1996, the National Society for the Promotion of Childhood Education (NSCE) put forth a comprehensive plan for educational restructuring. The primary objectives of this framework were to enhance the enrolment rates in early childhood education programmes of superior quality and to tailor curricula to cater for the requirements of contemporary students.

Scholarship programmes have been implemented with the aim of enhancing gender parity within professional environments, specifically targeting female students. In addition to a monetary remuneration, professors are provided with housing accommodations and afforded various avenues for professional development. In the mid-1990s, a notable occurrence took place when the inaugural junior high school cohort exhibited subpar academic performance, thereby, reigniting the discourse surrounding educational standards. The FCUBE programme was authorised only subsequent to the passage of a constitutional amendment in 1996. According to Article 38 (2) of the Constitution of 1992, a requirement was established for the implementation of a decade-long strategy aimed at providing compulsory and cost-free primary and secondary education to every member of the population.

According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), each state and territory within the USA has incorporated mandatory elementary education into their respective constitutions. As a consequence of this, there was a notable surge in political determination to enact the aforementioned modifications in 1987, which in turn led to an augmentation in the allocation of financial resources for foreign aid. According to Kosack (2013), the implementation of reforms was facilitated by the provision of enhanced professional development opportunities for educators.

According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the increasing student population posed challenges to teachers owing to significant technological obstacles and a shortage of both inexperienced and experienced educators. Several pedagogical modifications were implemented during the administration of the fourth republic, in response to the significant political implications of the elections. Following the assumption of power by the NPP in 2000, concerted endeavours were undertaken to enhance the prevailing educational framework.

The aforementioned action was undertaken to fulfil a campaign commitment and ascertain the necessary measures to rectify the state of Ghana's educational system, with the aim of generating a form of education that fosters personal development and contributes to the economic advancement of the nation within a highly competitive global marketplace (Akyeampong et al., 2017). Since 1951, with the sole exception of one year, it has been observed that every political party's platform has consistently incorporated development issues that possess the capacity to enhance their electoral prospects. The Communist Party of the Philippines' (CPP) manifesto in 1951 advocated for the provision of free primary and secondary education, the promotion of industrialisation and the facilitation of job opportunities.

The CPP diligently fulfilled these commitments with the aim of attaining triumph in the electoral process and acquiring a legitimate authority to govern. During their campaign, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) placed significant emphasis on their intentions to implement substantial reforms to Ghana's educational system in the event of their electoral victory, as

outlined in the NPP Manifesto of 2000. In 2001, subsequent to the electoral triumph and acquisition of authority by Jophus Anamuah-Mensah's political party, a commission was established with the purpose of evaluating the comprehensive educational system of the nation and implementing necessary revisions to align it more effectively with the demands of the contemporary economy and society. When conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the educational system, it is essential to consider various factors such as the educational philosophy, SHS/Technical/Vocational Education, teacher training, and school budget (Akyeampong et al., 2017).

A division emerged within the parliamentary body, stemming from the investigation's outcomes, involving the two predominant political parties in the nation, namely, the NPP and NDC. Following an extensive period of deliberation within the legislative body, the Education Act of 2008, officially designated as Act 778, was ultimately ratified. An illustration of the influence of politics on education policy can be observed in the case of the 2007 polarisation of education reform. This occurred subsequent to the parliamentary approval of a four-year SHS plan, which subsequently prompted preparations for its implementation. In 2001, John Agyekum Kuffour, who was the leader of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) during that period, implemented a four-year SHS policy.

In 2008, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) altered their stance and reinstated the maximum term limit of three years, citing a change in government leadership as the reason for this decision. During the period preceding the parliamentary elections in December 2008, both the NDC and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) presented comparable pledges. In contrast to the NDC's focus on early childhood education, teacher preparation and the expansion of technical institutions, the NPP placed a greater emphasis on promoting quality and standards across all sectors. According to Djangmah (2019), the existing educational framework commences at the age of six and encompasses a span of 12 years, comprising six years of primary education, three years of intermediate education, three years of secondary education, and four years of tertiary education.

The educational system's inconsistencies in Ghana can be attributed to the phenomenon of "hyper politicisation" within the government. To guarantee equitable access to high-quality education for all individuals residing in Ghana, it becomes incumbent upon the political parties in authority to execute the reforms they deem essential (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh & Addo, 2016).

2.3.1 Ghana Educational Reforms after Independence

Successive governments after independence have implemented a range of educational policies aimed at establishing a robust and efficient educational system for the people of Ghana. The aforementioned reforms and policies encompass a range of initiatives, e.g., the Education Act of 1961 and the ADP of 1951; National Liberation Council Reforms; New Structure and Content of Education of 1974; Education Reforms of 1987; Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Program of 1995; New Educational Reform of 2007; and the Double Track Policy System of the Free SHS of 2017.

2.3.2 The Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and Education Act of 1961

The primary objective of the 1951 ADP for basic education was to ensure universal access to a six-year primary education for all children within the appropriate age range for schooling. According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the educational framework outlined a comprehensive structure for basic education, encompassing a six-year primary education programme and a four-year middle school programme, which includes both terminal and continuing education. According to Sackey (2018), it is suggested that continuing students have the option to pursue technical education, enrol in teacher training colleges, attend secondary schools for a duration of six years, or complete a two-year sixth form education to gain access into tertiary education. The prevalence of a significant quantity of inadequately trained pupil teachers became a prevailing trend, resulting in a decline in the proportion of trained teachers in primary and middle schools from 52% to 28% (Godwyll, 2013). According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the implementation of the 1961 Education Act and the government's dedication to providing free and mandatory primary and middle school education were highlighted.

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According to Agbenyega (2017), it is important to recognise the role played by the 1961 Act in addressing the policy objective of promoting educational access, as highlighted in the Basic Education Division of Ghana Education Service's Report (2014). Adamu-Issah and colleagues (2017) provide empirical evidence supporting the implementation of a policy that offers tuition-free education along with complimentary textbooks. According to the Basic Education Division of Ghana Education Service's Report (2014), the lack of adequately trained teachers poses a significant risk to the quality of education. According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the criticisms of the educational plan resulted in the British administration allocating educational facilities in a manner that overlooked the significant outcomes of educational development. The implementation of this system has resulted in a decline in academic standards in primary and middle schools. However, the introduction of immediate teacher training programmes has facilitated a rapid recovery of the system, particularly in terms of enrolment rates.

According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), a significant proportion of teaching staff at the primary level consisted of untrained teachers, reaching up to 65%. Additionally, the secondary level experienced a notable presence of emigrant teachers. However, it is important to note that the education system at that time was primarily focused on academic pursuits, with students typically completing their general education before graduating from middle school. According to Adamu-Issah et al. (2017), it was suggested that early educational policies aimed at enhancing educational opportunities, should prioritise both expansion and quality improvements to achieve equitable outcomes. Fobih et al. (2010) report that stakeholders examined the importance of quality education and increased accessibility to education. They also conducted assessments on the plans for expanding education at an accelerated pace, with a particular emphasis on the provision of high-quality education.

2.3.3 Reforms of the National Liberation Council

Major AA Afrifa and General EK Kotoka led the National Liberation Council in toppling Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's government on February 24, 1966. Following this, not many significant

decisions were made in the field of education in order to restore the nation's precarious economic situation. On March 7, 1966, the Mills-Odoi Commission and the Kwapong Education Review Committee, led by Prof. Alex Kwapong of the University of Ghana, were tasked with reviewing the educational system. The education reform committee of 1966 suggested extending primary schooling to eight years (Government of Ghana, 2004).

According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the researchers found that certain individuals were chosen to pursue an additional four years of secondary education, while those who were not selected underwent an additional two years of continuation classes that focused on pre-vocational education. During the period spanning from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, primary education was perceived as a preparatory phase aimed at facilitating the transition to either secondary education or middle schools, with the ultimate goal of early workforce integration. Middle school graduates have the option to pursue their education at technical and vocational schools, as well as four-year post-primary teacher training colleges. According to Chapman and Adams (2012), the issue of unequal access to secondary education emerged during the early 1970s. The concept of continuation schools has been subject to criticism owing to its perceived promotion of substandard education for the general population. Additionally, it has been observed that Ghanaian children tend to prefer secondary schools as their educational institutions of choice (Akyeampong et al., 2017).

2.3.4 The New Structure and Content of Education of 1974

The National Redemption Council (NRC), under the leadership of Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, assumed power following the Busia government. Subsequently, in 1972, a committee was established with the purpose of formulating recommendations regarding the reformation of education, both in terms of its structure and content. These proposals were intended to be presented to the general public for discussion. The Dzobo Education Review Committee, led by Professor NK Dzobo from the faculty of education at the University of Cape Coast, has proposed a revised framework and curriculum for education. According to Tagoe (2011), the Ministry of Information and National Orientation Ministry of Information

and National Orientation implemented education reforms in 1974 which included the implementation of a 13-year pre-tertiary education system. This system consisted of six years of primary school, three years of JSS, and three years of Senior Secondary School (SSS). In 1974, the Ghana Teaching Service (GTS) underwent a name change and became known as the Ghana Education Service (GES) to facilitate the implementation of a range of policies and reforms.

The educational system implemented a curriculum focused on nursery and kindergarten education, specifically targeting children between the ages of 18 and 24 months. The educational system consisted of Basic School, which spanned a duration of nine years and was both free and mandatory. Following this, students progressed to Secondary School for four years. Additionally, vocational courses, pre-university level education and various extracurricular activities were offered to engage students. The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) serves as a determining factor for a student's progression to SSS.

According to Tagoe (2011), the BECE, which serves as a determinant for a candidate's progression to the next level, was introduced in 1974 as a replacement for the common entrance examination. The duration of SSS spanned four years. The committee took into consideration subjects that are preliminary to technical and vocational education. According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), an effort was undertaken to develop a comprehensive JSS curriculum that accommodated diverse talents and equipped students with practical skills. The 1974 educational reforms were introduced in a trial format during a period characterised by a downturn in the Ghanaian economy.

According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), it was observed that the monthly earnings index experienced a decline from US$ 315 to US$ 62, while the per capita income was found to be 30% lower than the level recorded in 1970. During this particular period, there was a widespread scarcity of teachers, textbooks and instructional materials across schools throughout the country (Akyeampong et al, 2017). The educational policies were not

implemented by the regime led by General Acheampong. However, according to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the establishment of experimental schools in 1986 was limited to only 118 JSSs.

2.3.5 The 1987 Education Reforms

The primary objective of the 1987 education reforms was to enhance the availability of fundamental education and establish the nationwide implementation of the 1974 reforms. The GES underscored the importance of integrating quality, efficiency and equity into the education sector. According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the system facilitated increased access to advanced general academic training for all primary school students. It was stated that comprehensive technical and vocational instruction in practical skills was offered to all school-aged children.

The Curriculum Research and Development Division of the GES proposed that in order to equip the majority of children who have completed their formal education at the Junior Secondary level for the workforce, the curriculum should integrate both academic studies and practical skills training activities, as outlined in the Ministry of Education report (2018). According to Akyeampong (2017), the JSS workshops designed for skills training in pre-vocational and pre-technical education did not achieve their intended objectives owing to a lack of adequately trained technical and vocational instructors.

2.3.6 FCUBE Programme of 1995

The acronym FCUBE represents the concept of Free, Compulsory Universal Basic Education. The programme in question is a comprehensive initiative that has been specifically developed to ensure the provision of high-quality education to all children in Ghana who are of school-going age, encompassing the levels of Kindergarten, Primary, and Junior High School (JHS). This policy on education is one of the initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Education. The FCUBE programme bears similarities to the ongoing educational reform programmes at

the basic level. It is imperative to enhance these programmes in order to effectively tackle the primary challenges encountered by educational reforms at the elementary and middle school levels. According to Agbenyega (2017), the 1992 constitution of Ghana recognises education as a fundamental human right for all citizens of Ghana, ensuring its provision and support.

According to Tagoe (2011), the implementation of the FCUBE reform from 1995 to 2005 aimed to address the deficiencies identified in the previous reform of 1987. Tagoe (2011), as suggested by Sackey (2018), posits that the objective of the policy is to enhance the efficacy of teaching methodologies and educational outcomes, strengthen the ability to effectively administer the foundational education system and enhance the accessibility of basic education, particularly for marginalised groups such as girls and individuals from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds. According to Sackey (2018), the pre-tertiary education system in 1996 consisted of two years of optional kindergarten, six years of primary education, three years of JSS, and three years of SSS (SSS). This restructuring effectively reduced the duration of pre-tertiary education from 17 years to 12 years.

Upon the culmination of JSS, students are presented with various alternatives, such as technical/vocational schools, training colleges, polytechnics, or universities. In accordance with the findings of Akyeampong et.al (2017), the 1995 FCUBE reform encountered comparable obstacles to those of preceding reforms, particularly in terms of the strategies employed to maintain initial progress in enrolment rates and achieve universal access to basic education. According to Bame (2019), the challenges identified were associated with an excessive focus on material resources rather than the attitudes and behaviours of teachers within the current education system when it comes to addressing unfamiliar pedagogical issues inherent in the revised curriculum.

2.3.7 Educational Reforms of 2007

Following its victory in Ghana's 2000 national elections, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) took over the political apparatus. Two years later, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba, Professor Josephus Anamuah Mensah, led a committee that the

government formed. This committee's main goal was to carry out an extensive assessment of the educational system. The implementation of this reform is driven by a number of important tenets. These values include advancing science and technology, protecting traditional indigenous knowledge and creativity, and developing human resources to support industrial expansion.

The administration under the leadership of John Agyekum Kuffour implemented a revised education system that not only re-evaluated the curriculum but also prolonged the duration of SHS from three years to four years. It is imperative to acknowledge that the initial year in SHS is primarily focused on the study of fundamental subjects, including English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Information Communication Technology (ICT), and Social Studies. The findings of the Anamuah Mensah report indicated a lack of discernible distinction when compared to the outcomes of the 1987 reforms. The sole distinction lies in the addition of two years of Kindergarten to the Universal Basic Education programme, thereby extending its duration to a total of 11 years. According to Akyeampong et al. (2017), the Universal Basic Education is organised into two years of kindergarten, six years of primary education, and three years of Junior High School (JHS).

According to Adamu-Issah et al. (2017), the educational reforms implemented in 2007 involved the adoption of Ghanaian Language as the medium of instruction for kindergarten and lower primary levels. Furthermore, significant importance was given to the domains of Literacy, Numeracy and Creative Arts at the foundational level, alongside the transition from a three-year duration of SSS to a four-year duration of SHS (SHS). The committee's rationale for implementing this alteration in the academic calendar of SHS is to guarantee that educators are capable of completing the prescribed curriculum while affording students sufficient time to adequately prepare for the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). It is noteworthy that the 2008 general elections witnessed the NDC reversing the decision made by the NPP regarding the duration of four years in SHS, reverting it back to three years. Regardless of the expected alterations in educational policies owing to changes in

political administration, each successive government in Ghana has consistently placed significant importance on education as a primary tool for achieving rapid social and economic progress. Nevertheless, this emphasis on education resulted in numerous educational reforms.

2.3.8 Free SHS Policy

The Free SHS (Free SHS) policy was implemented in September 2017 during the tenure of the NPP government. The policy created a conducive atmosphere wherein all Ghanaian children who have successfully completed JHS are granted access to second cycle institutions. This initiative aims to concurrently diminish the prevalence of street children, child labour, school dropouts, and related issues within the nation. The Free SHS Policy was implemented with the aim of enhancing accessibility, ensuring quality, and promoting equality in secondary education for all school-aged children in Ghana. The implementation of the double track in Ghana was a response to the significant increase in the number of Ghanaian children being admitted to second cycle institutions throughout the country. The Ghanaian government implemented the Double Track policy within the Free SHS, with a projected duration of five to seven years.

According to an article published in the Ghanaian Times on 20 June 2019, the Ghanaian government implemented a system on 11 September 2018. This system initially targeted green track students who were enrolled for the academic year 2018/2019. The introduction of this system sparked a debate regarding the feasibility of accommodating a larger number of students in SHS while simultaneously reducing class sizes. According to an article published in the Ghanaian Times on 20 June 2019, the purpose of the system was to address the issue of a significant number of eligible candidates who were previously unable to enrol in the Free SHS programme owing to insufficient classroom capacity. The Double Track consists of two sessions, namely, the Green Track and the Gold Track. The Green Track refers to the initial group of students who attend school for one semester, while the Gold Track follows during the vacation period of the Green Track students, as per the academic calendar. The implementation of a semester-based system has been introduced in second cycle institutions

throughout Ghana, replacing the previous termly system. The system implemented a modification in the duration of the instructional period, increasing it from six hours to eight hours per day. The duration of the vacation period for each track in the system is approximately 41 days, which has raised concerns among parents.

2.3.9 Free SHS Policy: Clientelist or Programmatic Policy

Governments are often perceived to exhibit clientelist tendencies when formulating and implementing policies. According to Fox (2014), there exists a trade-off between political rights and social advantages. The concept of clientelism posits that patrons and clients engage in a reciprocal exchange of favours or rewards to secure political support from each other. This form of association is not permissible in accordance with democratic principles. This political ideology emphasises the primacy of an individual's material wealth over their political convictions. Clientelism can potentially lead to the victory of subpar candidates in elections, provided they possess the capability to effectively coordinate and distribute sufficient incentives to their constituents.

Consequently, the concept of programmatic politics, wherein a candidate's perspectives are embraced by the wider populace through democratic electoral endeavours, is often subject to misinterpretation. Understanding the distinction between clientelist and programmatic policies is essential in gauging public support, despite the fact that these two approaches may exhibit a limited degree of overlap. Food subsidies can serve as a means of leveraging political support in clientelist campaigns, particularly when the government allocates them to the communities that played a role in their electoral victory. This scenario exemplifies the aforementioned phenomenon. When governments commit to providing food subsidies to all residents, they are engaging in programmatic policy. In this context, food subsidies serve as the specific policies implemented to fulfil this commitment.

The Free SHS initiative serves as an exemplary illustration of programmatic policy. Nevertheless, there are critics who argue that it functions primarily as a political tool strategically employed to secure electoral victories. Nevertheless, the act of voting or abstaining from voting does not have any bearing on the accessibility of the Free SHS policy, as it is universally accessible to all individuals without any cost. From both a theoretical and practical perspective, it can be argued that the Free SHS policy does not align with the characteristics of clientelism and cannot be accurately linked to attempts to buy votes.

There is no requirement for the policy's beneficiaries or the wider populace to undergo any form of assessment to determine their alignment with the political party responsible for its proposal. Although the NPP currently holds governmental authority, it would be inappropriate to assert that the policy exhibits patronage networks, as there is no implicit coercion to withhold benefits in the event of not voting for NPP.

2.4 ANALYSIS OF THE FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL POLICY

The policy assessment dimensions proposed by McConnell (2010) are employed in the analysis and evaluation of the Free SHS Policy. The six- policy evaluation dimension proposed by Dunn (2012) is utilised to comprehensively encompass all aspects of the policy dimensions. The six dimensions encompassed in this framework are effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. The utilisation of these thematic elements would facilitate comprehensive discussions and analysis of the policy in its entirety.

2.4.1 Effectiveness of the Free SHS Policy

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which a policy is able to accomplish its intended objectives. The primary objectives of the Free SHS Policy encompass the elimination of economic obstacles to education, facilitation of widespread enrolment in secondary education, enhancement of quality and fairness in the expansion of educational infrastructure, and provision of indispensable skills for socioeconomic progress (Essuman, 2018). This section

examines the extent to which these goals have been achieved based on secondary data. Regarding the financial obstacle, the government has assumed the initial expenditure for first-year students, as stipulated by the established policy.

All recurring expenses for students enrolled in day and boarding programmes, including meal costs for both boarding and day students, are also covered. According to Essuman (2018), the government has made a commitment to allocate GHS 20.00 per student annually to substitute the portion of the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) fees designated for teacher motivation. This implies that the Free SHS Policy is currently, and will persistently remain, significantly costlier in comparison to the Progressively Free SHS Policy implemented by the previous government. If the government has successfully incorporated and covered all the cost elements in the Free SHS Policy, as outlined in Dunn's (2012) framework, then one can infer the effectiveness of the policy.

2.4.2 Efficiency of the Free SHS Policy

Efficiency is the measure of the level of effort required to attain a specific degree of effectiveness. The financial implications of that endeavour are evident (Dunn, 2012). The Free SHS Policy is deemed ineffective owing to various factors. For instance, the policy does not differentiate between individuals who possess the financial means to fund their children's SHS education and those who lack such resources. According to Mohammed and Kuyini (2021), there is a lack of differentiation that has resulted in a significant number of students, whose parents have the financial means to afford their SHS education, being included in the "uniform fee-free policy." The researchers collected primary data through an interview, during which the interviewee from the GES confirmed this situation.

In response to spatial constraints, an educational framework has been established that incorporates a dual-track system comprising cohorts of students categorised as green and yellow. The educational system employs a rotational schedule where students are divided into

two tracks, namely, the 'green track' and the 'yellow track'. Each track attends school for half of the academic year, allowing for a seamless transition between the two groups. Parents incur supplementary expenses to ensure the consistent attendance of their children in educational settings. One example of such a cost is the expense associated with transportation fare. The act of commuting to and from school poses a challenge for students, particularly those who are day students. This difficulty has been observed to negatively impact parents, serving as a deterrent to the majority of parents and guardians.

Moreover, it can be argued that the efficacy of the Free SHS Policy is compromised because certain students, despite being granted SHS placement, encountered difficulties in the process of enrolment (Zindzi, 2018; The Finder News Paper, 2018). The Ministry of Education (2018) reports that a significant proportion, specifically over 25%, of students who are assigned to SHS via the Computerised School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) do not proceed to enrol. This issue arises owing to the allocation of resources towards the establishment of educational environments, while enrolment barriers persist, resulting in class sizes falling below the ideal threshold for maximising educational outcomes. In addition, it has been observed that the disbursement of capitation grants for Free SHS placements is not conducted in a timely manner, as reported by the Ministry of Education in 2018. This delay in the allocation of funds hinders the ability of school administrations to effectively execute their plans for the timely provision of educational services. As a result, many principals of SHSs express dissatisfaction with the delayed disbursement of the capitation grant, as it has a negative impact on the schools' timetables, resulting in a delay of approximately two weeks in the commencement of classes.

In contrast, teachers who were not involved in the appropriately postponed commencement of the academic term receive compensation. The aforementioned situation is deemed inappropriate and may be interpreted as indicative of inadequate allocation of resources, as the opportunity to make up for lost instructional contact hours is seldom realised (Nurudeen & Abdul, 2018). The absence of collaboration between government and private SHS

education providers is a significant obstacle that hinders the successful execution of the Free SHS Policy. This collaborative partnership would enable the state to leverage the resources offered by private institutions to effectively tackle infrastructural challenges within public schools. In Ghana, the distribution of private schools is observed across all 16 regions, amounting to approximately 300 establishments (Cudjoe, 2018; Nurudeen & Abdul, 2018). These schools collectively have the capacity to accommodate a student population of 181,000. Although the proprietors of these privately-owned SHSs have expressed their readiness to accept 50% of the government's expenditure on public school students (Cudjoe, 2018), the government has not yet embraced this proposition. Collaboration between the government and private SHS education providers has the potential to improve operational effectiveness.

2.4.3 Adequacy of the Free SHS Policy

The concept of adequacy pertains to the extent to which a particular level of effectiveness aligns with the demands, principles or potentialities that gave rise to a problem (Dunn, 2012). The results indicate that the Free SHS Policy is insufficient in providing widespread access to SHS education, as a significant portion of the population still faces barriers to entry. According to a study conducted by Mohammed and Kuyini (2021), a significant proportion of participants (87 percent) indicated that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are the primary beneficiaries of the Free SHS Policy, constituted the majority of individuals who were unable to secure admission slots subsequent to the policy's implementation. The explanation indicates that the denial of access was attributed to insufficient space. The implementation of the Double Track was devised in response to the aforementioned predicament, which demanded a resolution, leading to the enrolment of students in cohorts.

Another aspect of adequacy is the financial burden associated with education, which serves as a barrier to participation. Based on a report published by the World Bank in 2017, it was found that individuals residing in rural and impoverished areas of Ghana face a significantly reduced likelihood, approximately 5-6 times lower, of accessing free SHS education. This disparity in educational opportunities cannot be solely attributed to economic challenges, as

other factors also play a significant role. For students hailing from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, the decision to pursue a Free SHS education entails an opportunity cost. Additional factors to be considered include the potential economic return associated with pursuing such educational endeavours. In this particular scenario, conducting a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis pertaining to the provision of Free SHS education holds significant importance for families in question. If the cost of the insurance significantly exceeds its benefits, there is a high likelihood that the student will not be covered.

Certain parents believe that education is a commodity associated with luxury, and they place great importance on personally funding their children's access to this luxury. Consequently, parents are unable to financially support the exclusion of their children from engaging in remunerative endeavours. The implication is that there are supplementary cost factors or familial financial constraints that hinder the complete utilisation of the Free SHS initiative, consequently restricting the achievement of sufficient educational outcomes. To fully achieve the objective of ensuring the sufficiency of a Free SHS Policy, it is imperative to augment the level of social assistance, whether in monetary form or through tangible resources, that is extended to economically disadvantaged households.

2.4.4 Equity of the Free SHS Policy

Equity is the term used to describe the allocation of effects and efforts across various societal groups. The concept is closely interconnected with both legal and social rationales (Dunn, 2012). The presence of both boarding and day schools creates an unequal educational environment, thereby, undermining the principle of equity. The rationale behind this phenomenon lies in the alleviation of commuting-related stress for students residing in boarding facilities, the facilitation of collaborative learning and idea-sharing, as well as the availability of teachers for additional support in comprehending the curriculum. In contrast, day students are not afforded the same opportunities, despite the fact that they will be subjected to the same examination (Nurudeen & Abdul, 2018). The presence of bias undermines the effective implementation of equity.

Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that urban schools tend to have a higher concentration of highly competent instructors, while rural schools typically have a greater presence of teachers with average skills and competencies. Consequently, it is expected that students attending urban schools consistently demonstrate superior performance compared to their counterparts in rural areas in the WASSCE. In the context of the 2016 WASSCE, notable disparities were observed in the attainment of grades A1 to C6, both across various regions and within them. According to the Ministry of Education (2018), when comparing regions such as Greater Accra and Brong Ahafo, it was found that the three northern regions exhibited notably lower scores across all four core disciplines. According to the Ministry of Education (2018), the enrolment rate for females in tertiary education is 20%, which is lower compared to the enrolment rate of boys, which stands at 26%.

Moreover, as indicated by the World Bank (2017), the WASSCE outcomes reveal that a minority of SHSs yield more than 90% of students admitted to tertiary education, whereas the remaining SHSs account for a range of 60% to 90% of exam failures. Moreover, there is substantial variation in textbook-student ratios across different locations, which has implications for the equitable distribution of educational resources.

2.4.5 Responsiveness of the Free SHS Policy

The concept of responsiveness, as defined by Dunn (2012), pertains to the extent to which a policy meets the requirements, preferences, or values of particular groups. There is empirical evidence suggesting that the Free SHS Policy lacks effectiveness, as it fails to adequately cater for the educational needs of the socioeconomically disadvantaged students who stand to benefit the most from a fee-free senior high school education. There are also disparities in the development of school infrastructure and amenities, as well as the availability of teachers and auxiliary staff, between urban and rural environments.

Nevertheless, the education minister expressed in a distinct platform that in 2016, prior to the commencement of the Free SHS Policy, a total of 111,336 students who had completed their Junior High School education were allocated placements in SHSs but were unable to enrol owing to inadequate financial resources. Nevertheless, he asserts that following the implementation of the Free SHS Policy, this number experienced a significant decrease, reaching a total of 62,453. According to Essuman (2018), the minister has reached the conclusion that the Free SHS Policy demonstrates a sufficient level of responsiveness.

2.4.6 Appropriateness of the Free SHS Policy

Appropriateness, as defined by Dunn (2012), pertains to the value or utility of a policy's objectives, as well as the soundness of the assumptions that form the basis of these objectives. The primary objective of the Free SHS Policy is to enhance the accessibility and universality of SHS education. Additionally, it seeks to foster the development of human capital, facilitate the maturation of young individuals into responsible adults and align educational practices with the specific developmental requirements of Ghana. The aforementioned objectives are deemed appropriate owing to the adverse consequences that an illiterate youth population can have on children, their parents and society at large.

The presence of a significant number of individuals lacking literacy skills and exhibiting limited productivity in the labour force, coupled with diminished adult wages, substandard health conditions, and the prevalence of a complacent and uninformed societal mindset, are all consequences stemming from a substantial populace comprising individuals with limited education (Dunn, 2012). Consequently, implementing an intervention aimed at enrolling all eligible students in SHS education is a commendable policy. Nevertheless, the crucial factor for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the policy lies in identifying its financial source. The current policy's dependence on revenue generated from oil is not viable in the long-term. In the event of oil depletion, the sustainability of the policy would be contingent upon the identification and acquisition of alternative financial resources, which are currently severely limited (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021).

2.5 DOUBLE TRACK AS AN EDUCATION INTERVENTION

The concept of a double/multi-track system as an educational intervention was initially conceptualised by school administrators as a strategy to manage issues of overcrowding in schools (Rule, 2019). The author additionally argues that this educational system facilitates schools in educating a greater quantity of students without necessitating the construction of supplementary infrastructure. According to Chaika (2019), the implementation of the double/multi-track system provided schools with the capacity to accommodate a greater number of students compared to what would have been possible under a single-track system, given the limitations of the existing infrastructure. Numerous multi-track educational systems are accessible on a global scale.

Rule (2019) presents several proposed options, including the 45-15 Single Track Plan, the 45-15 Multi-Track Plan, the 60-20 Plan, the 90-30 Plan, the Concept 6 Plan, the Flexible All Year Plan, the Four Quarter Plan, the Quinmester or Five-Track Plan, and the Orchard Plan. The educational system in Ghana, known as the multi-track senior high system or the Double Track, follows a semester plan consisting of 81-41 tracks. The implementation resulted in the establishment of a biannual educational calendar consisting of two semesters per year. In this particular educational system, each semester spans a duration of 81 days, with an additional 41 days allocated for vacation periods specifically designated for sandwich classes. According to Rule (2019), this system entails the placement of school children in alternating vacation sequences, ensuring that one track is consistently on vacation. Therefore, this proposition presents educational administrators with increased classroom availability, thereby enabling schools to accommodate a larger number of students compared to their typical capacity.

2.5.1 Advantages of the Double Track

Previous studies have demonstrated numerous benefits associated with the implementation of a double/multi-track educational system. According to Warrick-Harris (2015), a notable benefit of implementing multi-track education systems is the potential to expand the pool of students eligible for participation in diverse sporting and extracurricular endeavours within

schools. According to Ballinger (2010), the primary rationale behind implementing a multi-track education system is to address the significant loss of learning that takes place during the summer break. In their research on the distributional impacts of a multi-track year-round educational system, McMullen et al. (2015) employed a quantile regression methodology to assess the effects of multi-track calendars in Wake County, North Carolina, United States. The study conducted by the researchers revealed a significant correlation between the implementation of a year-round educational calendar and the enhanced academic performance of students who were initially performing at lower levels.

In their study, Palmer and Bemis (2012) have provided a comprehensive analysis of the benefits associated with multi-track education. These advantages encompass enhanced academic performance, improved attendance rates for both teachers and students, a decrease in disciplinary issues, a reduction in teacher stress levels, heightened motivation among educators and learners owing to more frequent breaks, and an increased availability of enrichment opportunities during intercessions. In addition, proponents of multi-track education systems have identified several advantages, including the ability to manage overcrowding, decrease class sizes, provide year-round employment opportunities for teachers, and optimise facility utilisation, potentially resulting in cost savings (Palmer & Bemis, 2012).

2.5.2 Challenges Involved in the Double Track

In addition to the numerous advantages of multi/double-track education, scholars have also identified several challenges that are associated with such systems. McMullen et al. (2015) argue that the implementation of multi/double-track education system may entail additional operational expenses, pose challenges for certain teachers, result in increased workload for administrative staff, limit the time available for school property maintenance, and potentially lead to missed school activities for students during off-track periods. According to Haser and Nasser (2013), the scheduling of in-service and staff development programmes for teachers posed challenges owing to the varying schedules of individual teachers. Consequently,

reduced communication among teachers could potentially lead to curriculum redundancy. According to Graves (2010), the implementation of a multi-track year-round calendar is associated with a decrease of 1-2 percentile points in national ranking for reading, mathematics, and language scores when compared to a traditional calendar.

2.6 THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY IN EDUCATION

There is a lack of consensus among experts in the field of education regarding a universally accepted definition of "quality education." The absence of universally accepted criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of educational policies is the underlying cause of this situation. The assessment of a student's intelligence continues to be influenced by their proficiency in written and oral communication, as well as their mathematical abilities (UNESCO, 2015). The World Declaration on Education, in its affirmation, underscores the significance of ensuring universal, equitable access to high-quality education. The declaration acknowledges the significance of a child's access to and engagement in a superior educational system as a crucial determinant of their enrolment, continuity and achievement in school. The learners' resource allocation, as delineated within the broader framework of high-quality education (UNESCO, 2015), comprises the subsequent constituents.

Chapman and Adams (2012) propose an extended conceptualisation of "excellent education" that incorporates the inclusion of evaluations. The concept of a quality education is defined by various factors, including inputs, processes, outputs, and results. Inputs in the educational context encompass various factors, such as the quantity of teachers, the calibre of their training and the accessibility of pertinent course materials. Processes, on the other hand, pertain to the extent and comprehensiveness of instruction provided. Outputs, in terms of assessing students' advancement, can be exemplified by examination scores and the pace at which grading is conducted.

The final component outcome underscores individuals' capacity to apply their recently acquired knowledge and skills by actively seeking employment opportunities that have the potential to uplift them from poverty. Furthermore, it is posited that the school's standing

within its respective academic discipline and the efficacy of its pedagogical approaches have a significant influence on the perceived calibre of the educational encounters. This, in turn, shapes students' cognitive growth, personal maturation and ethical obligations. Jansen (2012) argues that in order to achieve quality education, it is essential to conduct comprehensive qualitative evaluations of various educational processes, including teaching, learning, assessment, control, and resource allocation.

As per the definition of quality education provided by the United Nations International Children's Educational Fund (2010), emphasis should be placed on five fundamental aspects: student health, school climate, curriculum, teaching methods, and student outcomes.

It elaborated on these ideas, stressing that:

- Students are more likely to be engaged in their education when they get care and encouragement from their families and neighbours;

- All students and educators, regardless of their gender, need to feel comfortable and secured in the classroom;

- In addition to teaching students' basic reading and writing skills, a well-rounded curriculum will also help them learn about issues related to gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the promotion of peace;

- To eradicate discrimination in the classroom, trained educators should employ a child-centred approach to teaching and an assessment system that is suitable for the subject matter being covered; and

- The outcome of learning should be the provision of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are connected to national development and involvement in government.

It is imperative to bear in mind that the conceptualisation of a high-quality education is shaped by the characteristics of key stakeholders and the historical development of the educational framework. The issue of defining and assessing quality education, as well as its sustainability, remains a subject of perpetual disagreement among individuals (Chapman & Adams, 2012). The researcher's operational definition of "Quality Education" refers to the allocation and

utilisation of resources, as well as the establishment of an enabling environment for the purpose of instruction and learning. This aims to foster intellectual development in individuals, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and competencies to actively engage in decision-making processes that have implications for their personal achievements, as well as the prosperity of their communities and nations (UNICEF, 2010).

2.6.1 Quality Issues in Education

A plethora of scholars have extensively explored the subject matter pertaining to the failure of educational policies. Ali (2016) is particularly noteworthy among the individuals mentioned as he contends that the government's insufficient commitment to the complete implementation of educational policies is the fundamental factor contributing to its failure. The proposal put forth by Aissat and Djafri (2011) suggests that the compensation of teachers, principals and other school administrators and managers should be linked to the academic performance of their students. This approach aims to tackle the inefficiencies present within the education system. The significance of parental engagement in school activities, including decision-making, has garnered renewed attention from policymakers in response to the findings of Goodall and Montgomery, who assert that parents play a vital role in the effective execution of educational reforms and policies.

In the aforementioned context, it was discovered by Turney and Kao (2019) that educational administrators frequently neglect the requirements of families when formulating strategies for facilitating communication between the home and the classroom. According to Crozier and Davies (2017), it is argued that advocating for universal strategies to enhance parental involvement may not be advisable owing to the unique needs, goals and routines that vary across different families. Moreover, the government of Ghana is currently contemplating the implementation of a policy that would provide free and compulsory education to all school-aged children, while also aiming to enhance the quality of education provided (Ntim, 2014). According to Baidoo (2015), a columnist, there is a well-defined conceptualisation of the ideal structure and characteristics of a free education. According to Baidoo, relying solely on government funding for education policies will have a significant impact on the educational

system. In the context of Ghana's current economic instability, Baidoo contends that free education is not advantageous. According to Amoah (2015), it was anticipated that the discourse surrounding the implementation of free education in Ghana would negatively impact the training industry. The ongoing debate surrounding this matter further substantiates this prediction.

Obeng-Asamoa (2016) asserts that it is imperative to provide students with disabilities equal educational opportunities, ensuring they have access to the same learning experiences as their non-disabled peers. In a study conducted by Mwin (2016), the author expresses appreciation for the government's initiatives aimed at helping children with disabilities. According to Mwin, the implementation of an inclusive education policy would significantly contribute to the identification of suitable instructional strategies for students with learning disabilities. According to Kuyini and Mahama (2014), it is asserted that each child in Ghana possesses the entitlement to receive formal education. In recent years, there has been a renewed emphasis on the education of young women owing to the observed gender disparity in the proportion of men and women who have successfully attained formal education.

According to Charnor (2015), the implementation of reforms to the FCUBE Policy in Ghana has facilitated the inclusion of girls and marginalised individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, in primary and secondary education. In 2010, the total number of students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade was 646,608. According to data from The Statistical Institute of Ghana (2012), it was found that as of 2010, a total of 256,955 children, accounting for approximately 38.5% of the total population, had enrolled.

The current circumstances may have undergone alterations. However, until a fresh census is conducted, it is advisable to regard these approximations as dependable. According to Yusif and Yussof (2010), there was an observed improvement in enrolment figures for primary schools, JHS and SHS in Ghana from 2001 to 2008. Students are required to bring various educational essentials such as books, backpacks, uniforms, stationery, and other related items,

which necessitate financial responsibility from their parents or guardians. Numerous children are compelled to discontinue their education owing to a lack of access to essential learning resources. Poku, Aawaar and Worae (2013) attribute the failure of many educational reforms in Ghana to incorrect implementation strategies and inadequate supervision. In accordance with previous scholarly investigations, Earley, Bubb, Eddy-Spicer, Crawford, and James (2016) assert that although principals hold a pivotal position in the realm of supervision, they necessitate the assistance of external advisors to fulfil the role of vigilant overseers.

The deficient implementation of educational policies can frequently be attributed to a dearth of political determination to ensure their successful implementation. Furthermore, the situation in educational institutions deteriorates further when governmental entities involve themselves in partisan politics regarding the matter, exemplified by downplaying the gravity of the issue (Siewobr, 2015). According to Cox (2013), an increasing number of parents are opting to enrol their children in low-cost private schools owing to a loss of confidence in the public education system. The emergence of this phenomenon has posed difficulties, as private educational institutions are progressively seeking financial assistance from governmental entities (Ayanful, 2016). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education (2015) has made a commitment to allocate funds for the enhancement of educational opportunities. The commendable nature of investing in education is supported by Abdallah, Fuseini, Abudu, and Nuhu's (2014) argument that such investment is conducive to development.

According to Lamiell (2012), there is evidence to suggest that developing nations have the potential to gain valuable insights from the experiences of more economically advanced countries. The Malaysian government has allocated significant resources towards the development of the education sector, leveraging its potential to contribute to the country's economic growth. According to Danso (2013), it is imperative for politicians to engage in consultations with teachers regarding educational policy as a means to enhance student achievement. To ensure the successful implementation of policies, it is imperative to secure the active involvement of all individuals within a given organisation, ranging from lower-level employees to top-level executives (Danso, 2013).

2.6.2 Sustainability of Quality Education

The progress achieved in the development of an educational system and its standards would be insufficient if there were no effective measures and mechanisms implemented to ensure continuous improvements and the sustained preservation of quality advancements. When considering the concept of educational sustainability, it is crucial to acknowledge the interrelatedness of decentralisation, the establishment of quantifiable metrics, a comprehensive knowledge repository, and the fair and inclusive growth of all tiers within the educational framework (Chapman & Adams, 2012). According to Heneveld (2017), the inclusion and consideration of all stakeholders in educational processes is of utmost importance when making decisions. To engage in strategic planning and enhance quality improvement, school administrators actively engage in collaborative efforts with the surrounding community.

To address the diverse needs within their respective jurisdictions, federal and state educational planners necessitate the involvement of community and school leaders. Chapman and Adams (2012) assert that the involvement of schools and communities is crucial in upholding the provision of a high-quality education to students. This involvement entails the provision of statistical data, which policymakers rely on to develop a comprehensive checklist for monitoring various facets pertaining to school conditions. To facilitate the endeavours of policymakers in monitoring and evaluating educational initiatives, it is imperative for schools and their neighbouring communities to collaborate in the gathering of pertinent data (Chapman & Adams, 2012).

In their study on the sustainability of a high-quality educational system, Chapman and Adams (2012) assert that assessing the different levels of the system in isolation is not a beneficial approach for fostering continuous improvement. If differential attention is given to the work of individuals, it can lead to biased outcomes. Moreover, the success of each subsequent phase is heavily dependent on the demonstrated attributes of the preceding phases, particularly in terms of training, management, excellence, and efficiency. This implies that the information

generated at the lower level may serve as the input for the processing conducted at the middle level, subsequently utilised by the higher level. The materials produced at different levels exhibit varying degrees of influence on those manufactured at lower and intermediate levels.

2.6.3   Contribution of Quality Education to National Development

The provision of an excellent education has traditionally been regarded as a fundamental means of assisting individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in navigating the consequences of global integration. The pervasive impact of its influence on various industries is attributed to this phenomenon (Sahlberg, 2014). According to Sahlberg's (2014) study, various factors such as human capital, job creation, economic growth, wealth distribution, healthy lifestyles, representative government, and individual agency are examined. Additionally, the study explores the influence of a high standard of education in facilitating the realisation of these outcomes.

The concept of "human capital" in economics refers to the causal relationship between education and income (Holmwood, 2011). Jones (2011) employed Human Capital Theory, which is associated with the research of Gary Becker, Mark Blaug and other scholars, to reinforce the notion that individuals with higher levels of education make a greater overall contribution to the national economy compared to those with lower levels of education. Owing to this rationale, developed nations allocate significant financial resources towards the advancement of education and scientific research and development within their respective populations. Certain countries that were previously impoverished have witnessed significant economic growth, which can be attributed, at least partially, to their commitment towards and implementation of innovative educational policies (UNESCO, 2015).

According to Holmwood (2011), companies exhibit reluctance in allocating resources towards the educational development of their employees owing to concerns regarding the potential departure of these individuals to alternative organisations that can provide more attractive compensation and benefits packages. In the contemporary business landscape, corporations

prioritise the provision of training programmes that are closely aligned with their fundamental areas of expertise.

- **Education and Health**

Todaro and Smith (2019) posit compelling justifications for the notion that the acquisition of high-quality education can enhance an individual's quality of life. Investing in the health of children can yield favourable financial outcomes in the realm of education, as health significantly influences both school enrolment rates and academic performance. The practical application of knowledge acquired in educational settings is of paramount importance in numerous professions within the health care sector. For example, within a proficiently managed educational establishment, students have the opportunity to pursue medical studies with the aim of enhancing their understanding and practice of hygiene.

According to Watkins (2010), there is a correlation between a mother's educational attainment and her fertility rate. Furthermore, when examining the data, it becomes evident that mothers who possess higher levels of education exhibit a reduced average family size in comparison to their counterparts with lower levels of education. Therefore, educational attainment of a mother has significant positive implications for both her and her children.

- **Income Distribution**

Governments worldwide hold secondary education, or its comparable alternative, in high esteem owing to its crucial role in equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge for future employment or further academic pursuits (Sekyere, 2019). Given the established relationship between the quality of a nation's educational system and the level of income inequality within that nation, measures have been implemented to tackle this concern. A sound educational foundation mitigates the inherent drawbacks of illiteracy and equips students with the necessary competencies to engage in productive endeavours on an equitable basis, thereby, enabling them to reap the advantages stemming from economic transformations (Watkins,

2010). Individuals who possess a greater degree of educational attainment are likely to experience higher levels of income, assuming all other variables remain constant. According to Miller (2010), individuals in this profession are less susceptible to unemployment and more inclined to relocate in pursuit of improved employment opportunities, owing to the increased demand for their services by businesses.

Supporters of the Human Capital Theory put forth arguments that bear resemblance to the ones outlined earlier (Jones, 2011). To begin with, it is believed that there is an objective correlation between an individual's educational attainment and their capacity to generate higher income. In contemporary highly competitive job markets, business owners and managers are progressively regarding a candidate's educational background as an indicator of their appropriateness, capability and effectiveness.

Workers with higher levels of education tend to receive more equitable remuneration for their labour. According to Jones (2011), individuals with higher levels of education are thought to possess a competitive edge in the job market owing to the practical skills they have developed during their academic pursuits. In contrast, proponents of human capitalism argue that employers are inclined to place greater importance on a candidate's non-cognitive abilities and traits, which are instilled through various educational stages, rather than solely on their academic knowledge. Education plays a crucial role in equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills and character attributes essential for fulfilling a wide range of occupational roles spanning from entry-level positions to managerial and executive positions. Consequently, education effectively addresses the demands of the business sector. According to Jones (2011), there is a belief that education exacerbates the pre-existing social stratification within the labour market, rather than improving workers' ability to generate income.

- **Governance/Democracy**

The links between having a say and gaining new knowledge are too strong to disregard. Consequently, UNESCO (2015) acknowledges that part of providing quality education is preparing students to actively participate in decision-making. The following examples illustrate how a high-quality education contributes to efficient governance: It is generally accepted that people who have received a good education are more engaged in and provide more value to their communities and governments at the local, state and federal levels (Holmwood, 2011).

Instilling a democratic mindset that supports peace, stability and the ability to handle disagreement and respect a variety of viewpoints in a multi-ethnic society, quality education does so through the content and methods it employs. Students who have learned strategies for resolving conflicts in the classroom are better prepared to address broader societal issues. A school is a safe place where people can learn about their rights and responsibilities and practice self-defence (United States Aid for International Development (USAID, 2013). Watkins (2010) adds credence to the idea by pointing out that if people have access to a high-quality education, they will be better equipped with the information, perspective and drive to participate in and make meaningful contributions to decision-making processes.

Another recent event demonstrates the importance of quality education in empowering women (a disproportionately oppressed group) in all facets of society (World Economic Forum, 2015). The right to vote and hold public office are hampered when women are denied the same kind of education enjoyed by their male counterparts in terms of intellectual rigour, breadth of subject matter and relevance to the world's most pressing problems. The study concludes that the most tragic aspect of women's low educational attainment is the harm it causes to future generations.

- **Poverty Reduction**

Research has demonstrated that allocating resources towards the enhancement of a nation's education system yields favourable outcomes in terms of poverty reduction. This is achieved through the amelioration of the country's human capital, healthcare provisions, income distribution, and the promotion of good governance and democracy. During the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000, attendees made a commitment to utilise education as a means to address global poverty (UNESCO, 2015).

According to Jones (2011), the availability of alternative farming inputs suggests that a high-quality education can serve as a dependable means for enhancing the productivity of individuals, particularly those engaged in peasant farming. Poverty is particularly prevalent among the agricultural labour force in developing countries. As an individual's level of education rises, their probability of securing lucrative employment and avoiding the risk of impoverishment also increases. Individuals who possess higher levels of education and work experience generally exhibit superior financial outcomes when engaging in self-employment, particularly within urban and informal economic settings.

Based on the Correspondence theory, as referenced by Oxaal (2017), the acquisition of higher education has been found to contribute to the expansion of employment opportunities within the labour market. However, it is important to note that pursuing higher education may not always be the optimal choice for college graduates who encounter difficulties securing employment within the formal economy.

According to Todaro and Smith (2019), the provision of educational opportunities for women can have positive effects on both the health of women themselves and the well-being of their families. According to UNESCO (2015), it is asserted that the allocation of resources towards education of superior quality is a social intervention that holds the potential to mitigate poverty and foster a nation's socioeconomic advancement and well-being. The enhancement of a

nation's educational system can be achieved through the implementation of specific government policies aimed at increasing various metrics.

2.7 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Review of literature on the subject of Free SHS, double track and quality education in Ghana suggests that several researchers have been preoccupied with assessing the influence of this policy on the quality of education. This section of chapter two provides pertinent literature of prior studies on Free SHS policy, comprehensive review of the Double Track in Ghana; challenges, prospects and perceived successes.

2.7.1 Social Policy Implementation

One of the main issues facing developing nations is the implementation of social policies, as several earlier studies have confirmed. For instance, Ahmed and Dantata (2016) in a study on issues and difficulties with implementing policies for national development determined that implementing policies successfully and effectively is essential for national growth. It is an essential component of socioeconomic and political advancement and can only be attained by sustained political commitment and in addition to a sincere dedication to eliminating corruption at all levels of government, as well as through precise assignment of roles and coordination.

Ojha (2013), in his study, also explored instructors, parents, and students in certain rural schools about the problems and difficulties associated with implementing the right to education of Haryana. After two years of the policy's implementation in Haryana, he discovered that the only areas with considerable progress were enrolment and basic infrastructure. However, the state has not made much progress in ensuring that students receive a high-quality education. Regarding its knowledge and comprehension among its different stakeholders, this is also the case. The study, consequently urges the government to act quickly to reinforce the policy's operational component.

In the context of Ghana, Oppong (2013) explored with a particular emphasis on the politics of policy implementation of Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund). The study revealed that conflict has arisen between opposing groups as a result of its execution, including disputes, mistrust, and attempts to elude frontline organisations and those in charge of managing the money. The study's focus on political meddling has made it more difficult for the Fund to achieve its goals. Therefore, the study recommends a depoliticization of the GETFund application procedure to release it from the influence of bureaucrats and politicians.

The study by Ahmad et al. (2012) titled: "Implementation gaps in educational policies of Pakistan: critical analysis of problems and way forward", revealed the lack of consistency in the policies of succeeding administrations, corruption, insufficient funding, inadequate human resource training, a lack of visionary leadership, and a lack of political will on the side of succeeding governments, poor monitoring systems, inadequate policy evaluations, a centralised implementation approach, a lack of political stability, and deteriorating institutional disciplines are the primary factors that have hampered the implementation of educational policies in Pakistan. The study's conclusion, based on this critical examination, is that Pakistani education "faces weak institutional structures" despite its consistently declared policy aims being splendid and perfect and regular political interventions for the reasons mentioned above. The intended outcomes are not attained and the policies remain unfulfilled.

Ahmad et al. (2012), therefore, offer a number of recommendations. Firstly, before, during, and after the stages of policy design, implementation, and evaluation, policymakers and policy implementers must be involved. This will result in a strong sense of dedication, determination, and institutional and individual support for the policies' execution. Second, funding for educational initiatives should be expanded in order to enhance their implementation process provided that it is carried out with a strong sense of professionalism, a zero-tolerance policy for corruption in any form, and a professional zeal.

Other studies such as Makinde (2015) also investigates the problems of policy implementation in developing nations – presenting the Nigerian experience. The study found that a few implementation issues stem from a lack of consistency in government policy, corruption, and a shortage of both people and material resources. As a result, the study came to the conclusion that it is evident that policies are implemented frequently in developing countries, but typically without the intended outcomes.

Oppong (2013), in his study underlined that democratic reform procedures frequently go hand in hand with hopes of social welfare benefits. This was especially true for health policy in Ghana and Cameroon. The study's findings demonstrated that democracy can, in fact, contribute to the development and reinforcement of social programs. Politicians now have more motivation to devote increasing attention to policies targeted at wide segments of the electorate, if not exclusive attention, thanks to the growth of the public sphere and democratic politics. In this environment, the formulation of health policy ceased to be the sole domain of the government and charitable organizations, quickly becoming a politicised subject that gained significant public attention and eventually became a crucial election issue.

It is quite evident that poor social policy implementation has been a long-standing issue in developing nations, according to several studies. National development, according to Ahmed and Dantata (2016), relies heavily on good policy implementation. With a long-term political commitment, clearly defined roles and an unrelenting dedication to eliminate all forms of government corruption, progress in both the economy and politics can only be achieved."

Ojha's study also looked at how teachers, parents and students in rural Haryana schools were impacted by the right to education's implementation. "After two years of policy implementation in Haryana, only enrolment and basic infrastructure have been developed," he discovered. Compared to this, the state has made little progress in ensuring that pupils receive high-quality instruction. When it comes to the many stakeholders, the same holds true.

The report, consequently, recommends an immediate government action to enhance policy implementation.

Inconsistencies in government directives and dishonesty, inadequate funding, insufficient human resources training, and political indifference have all contributed to poor policy implementation. No matter how lofty and idealistic Pakistani education policy goals may be, they are bound to fail owing to the country's ill-equipped institutions and the frequent political intervention they confront, according to the results of this critical examination. Owing to the fact that policies' objectives are not being accomplished, the intended results are not being realised. There are several considerations to keep in mind (Ahmad and colleagues, 2012). All policymakers and implementers must be participating in the procedure of developing, carrying out and assessing a policy from the beginning. There must be a strong feeling of commitment, strong will, motivation, and support from both individuals and institutions to execute the policies.

As long as education programmes are implemented with "professional zeal," professionalism and devotion by exhibiting no room for forgiveness for corruption of any type, more money should be allotted for them. For instance, Makinde's (2015) study focused on the difficulties that developing nations have in putting policies into practice. Several implementation challenges were traced back to corruption, a lack of consistency in government policy, and a scarcity of people and material resources, among other things. According to the study, policies are routinely enacted in developing countries, but generally speaking they fail to attain their expected results.

GETFund as a case study, Oppong (2013) examined Ghana's public policy implementation politics (Ghana Education Trust Fund) and found that the implementation of the fund has caused arguments, mistrust and attempts to circumvent the institutions and persons in the front lines charged with its management, according to the conclusions of the research. Study findings show political involvement has hampered aims of the Fund. GETFund should be

criticised to shield it from the influence of politicians and their bureaucratic friends. They wanted to see if the Free SHS Policy that will replace the prior Progressive Free Policy was an adequate substitute in their study. According to available evidence, there were more seats filled with the Free SHS Policy than with the pre-existing Progressive Free Policy

2.7.2 Educational Policy Implementation

Addo (2019) evaluated Ghana's educational policies and the consequences they have for education leadership in underdeveloped countries. The applicable framework and policy-planning of Wadi Haddad for education, according to the findings, despite the policy's potential to address issues of fairness and accessibility, there were still worries regarding quality. Prior to implementing new educational policies, decision-makers should first assess and evaluate the ones in place. Therefore, educational leaders must actively engage in policy formation processes by carrying out effective evaluations and research on educational policy. In emerging nations, higher education institutions must provide educational leaders with professional and academic preparation.

Teachers at Ghana's Effutu Municipality and Gomoa East Districts were also interviewed for their thoughts on the Double Track SHS policy, which Mensah conducted research into (Mensah, 2019). All 95 teachers in Ghana's Central Region were surveyed, including those from the Effutu Municipality and the Gomoa East Districts, respectively. As a result of the Double Track SHS policy more students are enrolled, class sizes are lowered, contact time is enhanced, and additional instructors are employed.

The execution of the Double Track SHS policy in the survey region was hampered by a lack of stakeholder participation, limited government logistics and funding, reduced educational quality, and the possibility of syllabus incompletion, owing to an increased number of holidays. Teachers are the ones who put policies into action; so, policymakers (such as those in the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service) were urged to include them in

their deliberations. To ensure the success of government initiatives, resources and logistics must be supplied by the government.

Bonsu (2019) reveals that the demonstration of the strength of democracy may be seen in the widespread calls for improved social safety nets, particularly in the areas of health and education. However, there must be a chance that enough people can mobilise and that political mobilisation matters in order for widespread demands to become law. Bonsu (2019) affirms once more that the robustness and calibre of democracy allow civil society, popular organisations, and political parties to arise and grow into entities capable of organizing voters and bringing forward demands for social safety networks. Therefore, within the framework of Ghana's educational policy, he conducted research to: i) investigate the impact of electoral politics on the adoption and execution of the Free SHS education policy; and ii) analyse the new issues related to the Free SHS education policy's implementation.

To accomplish these goals, the study used a qualitative research methodology. Interviews with important players in the execution of Ghana's Free SHS education policy were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. These participants were specifically chosen from a range of management positions in second cycle institutions, public sector organisations, civil service societies, and political parties. After doing a thorough content analysis on the collected interview data, the study discovered that the free SHS education policy was a crucial political instrument for securing electoral victories. Even though the free SHS social policy was constitutionally guaranteed, in accordance with the national development strategy, and a 1992 constitutional clause, its establishment and implementation were mostly seen as a political ploy to attract support.

The implementation success of the policies is hampered by a number of problems that can be broadly classified as either institutional or structural, despite the policies' significance for reducing inequality and fostering national growth. As a result, the politicisation and excessive centralisation of the administration of the Free SHS education policy have caused a delay in

the attainment of intended results. The provision of logistics and budgetary limitations as a result of delayed school grant payments to suppliers and school administrators are additional infrastructure problems. Therefore, this study suggests, among other things, that in order to ensure successful implementation, stakeholder collaboration be reinforced and that clear policy guidelines be produced and distributed to all pertinent stakeholders.

Tamanja and Pajibo (2019) also noted that there is no way to overstate the importance of education as a true tool for fostering national development. Poor policy execution, however, is the scourge of educational growth, both nationally and institutionally. They investigated Ghana's Free SHS Policy and related Double Track using proof and analysis from publicly available data. Researchers discovered that the primary obstacles to both the double track and Free SHS were limited resources and the method used to assign students to the tracks. They came to the conclusion that, in terms of policy, ensuring free education for all Ghanaians is a laborious undertaking with scant evidence of its long-term viability. Therefore, in order to provide infrastructure, supplies, and teacher compensation, we suggest raising the Value Added Tax exclusively for the purpose of funding the Free SHS policy. This is a more dependable and long-term funding source. As an alternative, the government should make use of the resources and capabilities of private schools by providing coupons to all eligible kids and giving parents the freedom to choose the senior high school for their children.

2.7.3 Free Senior High School Policy

According to Yirper and Ziem (2020), With the implementation of numerous policies and programmes throughout the years, GES has undergone numerous revisions with the goal of providing its inhabitants with accessible, high-quality education. The Free SHS policy, which aims to increase student enrolment and performance, was just implemented at the secondary level. As a result of the rise in enrolment, the Double Track was implemented to address the issue of insufficient infrastructure that the majority of these second cycle institutions are grappling with.

Yirper and Ziem (2020), therefore, recorded the effects of the Free SHS policy in Ghana's present implementation, namely in the districts of Nkoranza North and South. It was discovered through both structured and semi-structured interviews that the policy has led to more student enrolment, smaller class sizes, better teacher-student contact hours, and more holidays for adequate rest. On the other hand, it was noted that the Double Track was beset with several difficulties. These included poor meal quality, delayed fund disbursements, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate stakeholder consultation, and an increase in the financial load on parents. In light of these considerations, the report suggests that the government creates long-term funding sources, expand infrastructure dramatically, communicate with a wider range of stakeholders regarding the viability of policies, and demonstrate political commitment to implementing them.

Matey (2020) observed that One of the best social and economic intervention programs that directly impacts parents and their wards in SHS is the Free SHS policy. This realisation is made in light of the policy's contribution to relieving parents of their financial and economic load. Matey (2020) examined the impact of the Free SHS policy on the social and economic spheres of parents and students, respectively. The study involved 336 parents of students enrolled in three senior high schools located in the Upper East and North East regions of Ghana.

Study findings verified that parents' financial burdens, particularly those of guardians from remote areas, were lessened with the implementation of the Free SHS program. Additional difficulties with execution resulted from insufficient stakeholder consultation. Another issue was the waiting period for the payment of supplies for education and food. Governments must ensure that the educational system has long-term funding sources and that the Double Track is regularised into a single-track by building more academic user facilities and staffing senior high schools with a greater number of teaching and non-teaching personnel.

In the words of Osei-Owusu and Akenten Appiah (2021), education in recent times has earned acceptance as a means of raising living conditions and accomplishing developmental objectives. Therefore, the Ghanaian government implemented the double track as an intervention tool to assist in resolving issues related to the Free SHS policy program. The goal of their study was to determine the Double Track 's advantages and disadvantages in Sekyere Central District High School. In senior high schools in the Sekyere Central District, a random sample of 150 teachers, 300 students, and 150 parents provided data for the study using a descriptive cross-sectional survey and quantitative technique.

The Double Track has improved the teacher-student ratio, expanded contact hours, made effective use of school resources, and resulted in the hiring of new instructors, according to the study's findings. Conversely, the study found that the main obstacles to the Double Track's implementation were inadequate stakeholder consultation before it was implemented, inadequate government funding and logistics, incomplete curricula due to the increased number of holidays, and challenges in maintaining school facilities due to year-round use. Furthermore, due to a number of setbacks, the majority of instructors believed that the intervention had not improved the quality of education at the senior high school level, although the majority of parents and students believed that the intervention had. Therefore, it was suggested that the government provides a sufficient quantity of resources for the efficient administration of this program at the different senior high schools.

Mohammed and Kuyini (2021) assessed the Ghana's Free SHS Education Policy's procedures, programmes, and political aspects. The data provided evidence that the programme and its political aspects were prioritised over the process dimension. One of the program dimension's criteria, effectiveness, was somewhat emphasised. The remaining five standards, which included responsiveness, efficiency, and equity, were disregarded. Since the policy's launch had been well received and had increased trust in the political regime overall, the political aspect was, overall, the most widely supported focus. A few of the five process dimension steps, such agenda formulation and setting, were either poorly done or ignored, and there were

several obstacles to overcome throughout implementation, like a lack of funds and a small amount of space. Consequences for the Multiple Streams Model and the success or failure of policies.

Amponsah and Stonier (2021) further sought to examine and critically assess Ghana's Free SHS education policy and its effects on the populace since its implementation in September 2017. Upon further examination of the policy, they found that the political and policy aspects are prioritised above the process dimension. One of the main campaign issues was the Free SHS education policy, which was heavily pushed to Ghanaian voters in an attempt to get them to support one of the parties. There is no denying that poverty exists in Ghana and throughout Africa, and most impoverished and vulnerable people are unable to pay for their children's education, particularly that of the second cycle. They employed McConnell's (2010) policy assessment aspects in their analysis and evaluation of the Free SHS programme.

Dunn's (2012) to properly capture all of the elements of the policy dimensions, an assessment dimension consisting of six programs was also included. The Free SHS policy was analysed using six dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and appropriateness. These dimensions helped to identify the programme's implications and related problems. Additionally, certain implementation inefficiencies in the policy were found using these dimensions. It was possible to have in-depth conversations and analyse the policy as a whole by using these topic components. Following a careful examination and study of the policy, some important suggestions were made to help lessen, if not totally eradicate, some of the problems that would arise when it was put into effect.

According to Kwegyiriba (2021), equity in education occurs when all students have access to the tools necessary to learn the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math. The gross enrolment rate in upper secondary education was less than 45% in 2014, with significant variations in access, according to Kwegyiriba (2021), despite the fact that Ghana has nearly universal access to elementary and lower secondary education. The Ghanaian government

introduced the free SHS programme in 2017, allowing everyone to receive secondary school at no cost.

Kwegyiriba (2021), therefore, aimed to look into how Ghana's Free SHS policy affected educational equity and access in secondary education. For this investigation, the document analysis method was chosen. The results showed that secondary school attendance rates have indeed increased due to the Free SHS programme. The researcher went on to suggest that it is the duty of parents, educators, administrators, policy analysts, and other pertinent stakeholders to present alternate ideas and to do so in a way that advances and enriches the policy dialogue.

Kyei-Nuaman and Larbi (2022) revealed that Ghana's "pro-poor" Free SHS policy has grown into a significant rights-based social democratic project. Both scholars and the general public have significant faults and positives of the policy. Therefore, using secondary data from the official websites of Ghana's presidency, the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service-Education Management Information System (GES-EMIS), and the Ghana Living Standards (GLSS 7) Report, their study examined the policy's outcomes and implementation inputs to its purposes in real-time. The study used document analysis, "text" and "discourse" techniques, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in accordance with Ball's policy. The strategy has improved academic achievements for pupils, increased enrolment in both genders and locations, reduced household load, and a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 20:1. Delays in finance and policy input distribution are additional obstacles. To improve policy progress, the report recommended that financing mechanisms be expanded and that parents and school administrators receive deeper policy education.

Further studies were also conducted by Abdul Rahim et al. (2022) to assess the impact of the Free SHS Policy on the quality of education in Ghana using the case of the Kintampo SHS. 303 pupils, 97 instructors, 3 headmasters (including two assistants), one matron, and two officers from the Kintampo education directorate who were purposefully and simply randomly picked provided data for this study, which used a convergent parallel mixed method technique.

The findings of the study demonstrated considerable improvement in schooling following the adoption of the Free SHS policy. The government pays for all other associated fees (73.59%), resources, and tuition (84.26%). Sixty-three percent of students were able to continue their education in the institution of their choice. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in academic performance (from 15% to 96.6%), teacher adequacy (84.21%), and student enrolment (87.45%).

The few issues raised were related to the size of the classes and the requirement for additional boarding facility expansions in order to handle the growing enrolment of students. The paper makes the case that the private sector ought to back the government by helping to finance the nation's numerous second cycle institutions' growing infrastructure needs. Additionally, in order to consistently guarantee that the implementation of the Free SHS policy does not undermine the quality of education, a quality education system needs to be institutionalised.

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2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter deals with the review of related literature to the work. The review of the related literature is to provide the needed insight as well as theoretical background knowledge related to the research topic. This chapter discussed theories relating to educational policies and quality education. The chapter also reviewed the key concepts of the study. This study's chapter further examined other researchers' efforts on the Free SHS Policy, the Double Track, and other educational policy initiatives, as well as how these interventions have affected education quality overall and at the SHS level in particular.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methods that were used in this study. The chapter presents details of the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to analyse the data as dictated by the research objectives and hypotheses. Wilson (2012) asserts that qualitative research is conducted through an unstructured research methodology, involving a limited number of meticulously chosen participants to generate non-quantifiable understandings of behaviour, motivation, and attitudes. According to Ritchie and Lewis (2013), qualitative research is characterised by its naturalistic and interpretative nature. It aims to comprehend the significance individuals attribute to their actions, decisions, beliefs, values, and other aspects within their social environment. Additionally, qualitative research seeks to understand the cognitive processes through which respondents make sense of and interpret the world surrounding them.

Qualitative research is frequently employed to address inquiries pertaining to the "how" and "why" aspects, as opposed to inquiries regarding "who," "what," and "when." The primary emphasis lies in the investigation of the underlying motivations and factors that drive individuals to exhibit specific behaviours, rather than solely quantifying their frequency or prevalence. Qualitative research is an empirical research approach that emphasises the exploration and comprehension of the subjective experiences of individuals. In contrast to quantitative research, which utilises statistical analysis and mathematical models, qualitative research places emphasis on the intricacy and multifaceted nature of human behaviour and

social interactions. This idea is widely used in the social sciences, which includes fields like education, sociology, psychology and anthropology.. A fundamental characteristic of qualitative research lies in its reliance on the researcher's subjective interpretation of the collected data. This phenomenon implies that various researchers may interpret identical data in divergent manners. Therefore, qualitative research is distinguished by its utilisation of open-ended questions, enabling participants to furnish elaborate and nuanced responses.

Conversely, quantitative research entails the systematic acquisition of information and data through numerical measurements and quantification. The research methodology employed in this approach is characterised by a focus on observation, utilisation of statistical analysis, computational techniques, and mathematical modelling to formulate and refine theoretical frameworks. The approach employed is solely based on scientific and experimental methodologies, devoid of subjective opinions. This particular research methodology relies extensively on the formulation of theories regarding events or phenomena through the process of quantification, prior to arriving at a conclusion.

The rationale behind incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in this study was to comprehensively examine the data. The deductive nature of the quantitative research method is exemplified by its reliance on statistical hypothesis testing to derive conclusions, which subsequently inform broader generalisations about population characteristics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, the outcomes of quantitative research have the potential to be utilised in the domains of prediction, explanation and hypothesis validation (Ishtiaq, 2019; Iphofen, & Tolich, 2018). The quantitative approach is employed to examine and offer a rationale for a phenomenon by employing objective measurement and statistical analysis of numerical data. Qualitative methodology can effectively address research inquiries pertaining to the "how" and "why" aspects. The utilisation of qualitative research methods facilitates a more profound comprehension of various phenomena, including experiences, contexts and natural events. Moreover, it enables the exploration of inquiries that cannot be quantitatively formulated, thereby, enhancing the

understanding of human experiences (Bhandari, 2022). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2019) assert that the hybrid approach possesses inherent strengths, as it allows the mitigation of weaknesses associated with individual approaches. They further argue that the adoption of hybrid approaches can be justified owing to their applicability across various research activities, irrespective of the underlying paradigm. This is suggested as a rationale for the adoption of the hybrid approach.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study employed a combination of positivist and interpretivist research paradigms. The positivist paradigm encompasses a research framework that is rooted in the scientific method of inquiry, as recognised in research methodology. Comte argues that experimentation, observation, and logic based on actual data should serve as the cornerstones for understanding human behaviour and expanding knowledge and understanding (Johnson, 2014). In its purest form, the scientific method includes a methodical approach to experimentation aimed at investigating observations and providing answers to inquiries. The research conducted within this particular paradigm is grounded in the use of deductive reasoning. It involves the development of hypotheses, which are subsequently tested through the application of operational definitions, mathematical equations, calculations, extrapolations, and expressions. These analytical tools are employed to derive conclusions from the data gathered (Crotty, 2018). The primary objective of this endeavour is to offer elucidations and formulate prognostications grounded in quantifiable results.

Moreover, based on the objectivist epistemology, the positivist paradigm is a methodological philosophy used in quantitative research. This approach entails the application of natural science methods to explore the realm of social science. The measurement and support of phenomena in reality must be achieved through the acquisition of evidence (Hammersley, 2013). When examining phenomena, scientists use causal inferences to determine how one or more dependent variables relate to an independent one. This is accomplished by using experimental designs, in which researchers work to maximise the influence of the independent

variable on the dependent variable and related events (Cohen, 2017). This paradigm offers positivist researchers a means to gain a clear understanding of objects by employing empirical techniques and procedures like measurement, focus groups, sampling, and questionnaires. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2014), the aforementioned statement implies that positivist researchers offer valuable insights that exhibit a high standard of validity and reliability, thereby, enabling generalisability to a larger population.

The positivist paradigm is rooted in the philosophical perspective of natural scientists that make generalisations based on observable phenomena in society. Positivism is concerned with the importance of objective information in general and places special focus on the evaluation of factual evidence and raw data while minimising the impact of human bias and subjective interpretation (Cohen, 2017). Within the framework of a positivist paradigm, it is imperative that the phenomena under investigation are subjected to observation and measurement, with the ultimate goal of enhancing the credibility and relevance of the information acquired. Moreover, finding causal correlations among the data that have been gathered is the researcher's goal, thereby,facilitating the development of generalisations applicable to the domain of law, akin to those formulated by scientists. Furthermore, the investigator would utilise and integrate basic global laws and guidelines to substantiate and elucidate the analysed behaviour or occurrence within organisational contexts. It important however, to state that due to criticisms against positivism, researchers have adopted a variation of positivism, which is post-positivism. Post-positivism rejects the positivist approach that a researcher can be an independent observer of the social world. Post-positivists argue that the ideas, and even the particular identity, of a researcher influences what they observe and therefore, impacts upon what they conclude. Post-positivism pursues objective answers by attempting to recognise, and work with, such biases with the theories and knowledge that theorists develop.

The interpretivist paradigm is grounded in the fundamental distinction between the methods employed for comprehending knowledge compared to those used in the physical sciences, in the field of human and social sciences. This divide results from the fact that humans are inherently able to perceive their environment and then act upon it, but the outside world is

incapable of doing so (Hammersley, 2013). Consequently, interpretivists reject a definition of truth that can be determined through measurement and instead adopt a relativist ontology that recognises the potential of numerous interpretations for one experience. Interpretivists view research as an effort to get a deeper comprehension of a phenomenon and all of its details within a particular context, as opposed to trying to extrapolate their findings to the entire population (Creswell, 2017). Similarly, Hammersley (2013) underscores the significance of recognising the existence of multiple interpretations within human relationships. Accordingly, interpretivist researchers are urged to comprehend "the varied perspectives and encounters of individuals across different contexts and cultures" and strive to minimise bias when studying events and individuals by refraining from imposing their own interpretations.

The interpretivist paradigm prioritises the analysis of complex variables and factors in a particular situation. It acknowledges that humans are capable of creating deeper levels of meaning, which sets them apart from physical occurrences. This paradigm functions on the presumption that studying humans cannot be done in a way that is comparable to studying physical events. (Hammersley, 2013). This paradigm also considers variations such as cultural diversity, contextual factors and historical periods, with the aim of establishing definitive and universally applicable principles that can be generalised to individuals irrespective of certain influential variables and factors. The interpretivist paradigm demonstrates a heightened sensitivity towards individual interpretations and contributions. Nevertheless, interpretive research has its detractors because it calls into question the validity of established knowledge and undermines the idea of a law that applies to everyone. It also requires a different set of standards that are not compatible with positivist principles (Creswell, 2017). Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm postulates that reality is individualised and subjective. Therefore, it follows that participants in study are unlikely to provide general conclusions. Adopting the interpretivist paradigm would also lessen the possibility of extrapolating the results of the data collection and analysis. This is because a specific context, viewpoint, and set of values were the main sources of reliance for the data.

According to Creswell (2017), social scientists in the field of educational research generally recognise three prominent research paradigms. They are pragmatism, positivism, and interpretivism. According to some, while undertaking mixed method research, pragmatism is the most acceptable epistemic perspective to adopt (Creswell & Plano Clark 2018). Once more, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) proposed that the epistemological viewpoints that are employed in mixed research approaches include pragmatism, positivism, and interpretivism, which are used in quantitative methods, qualitative approaches, and mixed approaches. Feilzer (2018) defines pragmatism as the paradigm analysis that supports and encourages the use of mixed approaches in research, with the primary focus being on the facts, data, and validity of the findings. Pragmatism rejects the dichotomy between anti- realism and realism.

The "what," "why," and "how" of the research issues were answered by pragmatism. The study will be situated within the pragmatic paradigm, which is the philosophical foundation of mixed methods research and is supported by Creswell (2017). According to Creswell (2017), pragmatism promotes the use of a range of strategies, such as different theoretical frameworks, methods for obtaining and analysing data, and interpretations of findings. This investigation will centre on the research problem and the approaches taken to meet it in light of the current paradigm. In other words, a pragmatic approach to research can help increase the validity and dependability of the study's conclusions.

3.3 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

A population refers to the complete set of elements and individuals that satisfy the criteria for the specific group under investigation, from which a sample is selected to conduct a more comprehensive analysis. The target population of this study consists of teachers, head teachers and students in public SHSs located in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina, and Adenta within the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

3.4 SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE SIZE

Sampling refers to the systematic procedure of choosing a subset of individuals from a larger population to be included in a study. Sampling technique in a study basically involves methods that are adopted by the researcher to select a sample from the target population. For the purpose of this study, a convenient and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select participants for this study. The participants in this study were selected from public SHSs located in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina, and Adenta in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure equitable representation of the population. The selected SHSs for this study include Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS.

According to its definition, a survey sample refers to the specific subset of the population that actively engages in the survey. For a representative sample to be deemed suitable for further comprehensive investigation, it is imperative that all constituents, individuals or entities comprising the study population meet specific criteria. Given the prevailing conditions, the results of the research could be extrapolated to a broader demographic. The study includes educators, school administrators and students who were selected from specific educational institutions in the La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina, and Adenta municipalities situated in the Greater Accra Region. To conduct a research project, a specific subset of the entire population was selected to serve as respondents. The population of students for the six (6) selected SHSs are as follows:

Labone SHS - 3,900 students.

La Presbyterian SHS – 2,056 students

Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School - 1,843 students

Accra Girls SHS - 2,474 students.

West Africa SHS – 2,737 students.

Presbyterian Boys SHS - 3,870 students.

The population of teachers for the six (6) selected SHSs are as follows:

Labone SHS – 176 teachers.

La Presbyterian SHS – 93 teachers.

Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School – 85 teachers.

Accra Girls SHS – 140 teachers.

West Africa SHS – 169 teachers.

Presbyterian Boys SHS – 178 teachers.

The population of Head teachers for the six selected SHSs are as follows:

Labone SHS – 4 head teachers.

La Presbyterian SHS – 4 head teachers.

Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School – 4 head teachers.

Accra Girls SHS – 4 head teachers.

West Africa SHS – 4 head teachers.

Presbyterian Boys SHS – 4 head teachers.

The sample size for teachers, teachers and students in this study was determined using the sample size determination formula of Yamane (1967) which is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample Size   N = Population size e^2 = Margin of error (at a confidence level of 95%; thus, margin of error (e) is 0.05.

SAMPLE SIZE CALCULATION FOR STUDENTS

West Africa SHS $\quad n =$ $$\frac{2737}{1+ 2737 \,(0.05)^{2}}$$

Therefore, sample size = 348 students

Presbyterian Boys SHS $\quad n =$ $$\frac{387}{1+ 3870 \,(0.05)^{2}}$$

Therefore, sample size = 360 students.

Labone SHS $\quad n =$ $$\frac{3900}{1+ 3900 \,(0.05)^{2}}$$

Therefore, sample size = 363 students.

La Presbyterian SHS $\quad n =$ $$\frac{2056}{1+ 2056 \,(0.05)^{2}}$$

Therefore, sample size = 335 students.

Ghana Armed Forces SHS $\quad n =$ $$\frac{1843}{1+ 1843 \,(0.05)^{2}}$$

Therefore, sample size = 329 students.

Accra Girls SHS $\quad n =$ $$\frac{2474}{1+ 2474 \,(0.05)^{2}}$$

Therefore, sample size = 344 students.

SAMPLE SIZE CALCULATION FOR TEACHERS

West Africa SHS $n =$ $\dfrac{169}{1+ 169\,(0.05)^2}$

Therefore, sample size = 119 teachers.

Presbyterian Boys SHS $n =$ $\dfrac{178}{1+ 178\,(0.05)^2}$

Therefore, sample size = 123 teachers.

Labone SHS $n =$ $\dfrac{176}{1+ 176\,(0.05)^2}$

Therefore, sample size = 122 teachers.

La Presbyterian SHS $n =$ $\dfrac{93}{1+ 93\,(0.05)^2}$

Therefore, sample size = 76 teachers.

Ghana Armed Forces SHS $n =$ $\dfrac{85}{1+ 85\,(0.05)^2}$

Therefore, sample size = 48 teachers.

Accra Girls SHS $n =$ $\dfrac{140}{1+ 140\,(0.05)^2}$

Therefore, sample size = 104 teachers.

Since there are four head teachers in each of the selected SHSs, that is, the main headmaster or headmistress with three assistants, Hence, all the head teachers (main and assistants) were interviewed. The interviews represented the qualitative data.

3.5 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

To collect data, the researcher employed qualitative research methods such as conducting interviews and distributing questionnaires. Given their suitability for measurement and statistical analysis, questionnaires were selected as the primary research instrument for this study. To enhance the convenience of the participants, the survey encompassed a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions. In Section A, participants, comprising both teachers and students, provided essential demographic details pertaining to their personal backgrounds. Section B of the questionnaire sought the perspectives of both teachers and students regarding the calibre of education provided to the students. In the third section (C) of the survey, participants were asked regarding the impact of the dual enrolment option on their educational experiences, specifically targeting students and teachers. The survey's fourth section was dedicated to examining the academic performance of students in the classroom both prior to and following the introduction of the double track in SHSs.

An interview is a form of interactive conversation where one individual asks probing questions to another individual and obtains corresponding answers. The purpose of interview instructions is to establish a standardised and comprehensive approach to collecting data from each respondent, thereby, ensuring its inclusion in the study. To gain further insights into the double track education, this study employed interview guidelines. There are multiple justifications for employing an interview guide. These include, firstly, the assurance of comprehensive coverage of all relevant topics. Secondly, the guarantee that the scope and trajectory of questioning align with the research objectives. Lastly, the provision of supplementary inquiries in instances where additional information is deemed necessary (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). During the course of the interview process, it is ensured that

every participant is allotted sufficient time to respond to significant inquiries and explore for information that cannot be acquired through the use of questionnaires.

To fulfil the fundamental ethical obligation of a study, authorised entities facilitated access to a range of SHSs. Written permission was acquired from the principal of each chosen SHS, accompanied by a cover letter and a form for data collection. The collection of data took place at the schools in accordance with the researcher's formal request for permission. Subsequently, the participants were apprised of the research aims and provided with the assurance that their data would be treated with utmost confidentiality. The data for the study were collected through interviews with all of the principals of the schools, employing a convenient sampling technique. The data for the study were collected via interviews and self-administered questionnaires.

The initial segment, denoted as Section A, of the interview questionnaire gathered biographical data from the participants, specifically the head teachers. The second section of the interview questionnaire, referred to as Section B, encompassed questions that were centred around the viewpoints of head teachers regarding the standard of instruction and educational attainment within SHSs.

The interview guide included a specific section, namely Section C, which aimed to gather the perspectives of the participants, who were head teachers, regarding the comprehensive review of the double track policy, challenges, prospects and perceived successes on education at SHSs in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The interview guide's fourth section, denoted as Section D, encompassed inquiries pertaining to the academic achievements of students both prior to and subsequent to the implementation of the double track system in Ghana's SHSs.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

After the distribution of the questionnaire, the data were coded and entered into Microsoft Excel to facilitate the generation of analytically useful information. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise, characterise or reduce the size of extensive datasets. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically measures of central tendency and dispersion. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were employed to present the quantitative data.

The qualitative data collected from the study were subjected to thematic analysis. Following the completion of data collection, all of the recorded responses were transcribed in an exact and unaltered manner. Multiple themes emerged through a thorough examination of the transcripts, followed by a thematic analysis that was conducted to analyse the content of the data. The themes were subjected to a comparative analysis with the responses to ascertain prevalent patterns, commonalities and discrepancies. Several themes were generated after careful multiple readings of the transcripts after which a thematic analysis was done based on the data content. Themes were compared with the responses to identify common trends, similarities, and contrasts. The thematic data analysis offered the opportunity to identify, analyse and report patterns within data and helped to organise and describe the data in rich detail. The study results were presented under specific broad themes based on the objectives of the study and key subjective views of the participants were presented using quotations. Thematic data analysis provided a valuable opportunity to discern, examine and present recurring themes within the data, thereby, facilitating the systematic arrangement and comprehensive depiction of the data. The findings of the study were organised and presented according to overarching themes, and the participants' subjective perspectives were conveyed through the use of direct quotations.

3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY/CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Validity pertains to the extent to which a research instrument accurately captures the intended data it purports to measure. Validity, as defined by Mugenda and Mugenda (2015), refers to

the accuracy and importance of the conclusions drawn from the findings of a study. Accordingly, the researcher conducted an evaluation of the content and face validity of the instruments utilised in this study. The instruments were provided to fellow students for the purpose of evaluation to ascertain their validity in the research phase. The research instruments underwent revisions in response to the input provided by the supervisor, with the aim of accurately reflecting the objectives of the study. Consequently, conventional methods such as questionnaires and interview guidelines were employed to obtain the requisite data. Instruments that exhibit consistent results over time and accurately represent the entire population under investigation are considered reliable (Easwaran & Singh, 2019).

The reliability of a measurement is determined by its ability to consistently produce accurate and consistent results across multiple instances. The participants of this study underwent a preliminary assessment to determine their responsiveness to the research instruments. In this study, pre-testing tools were utilised to assess the validity of the instruments. The sample consisted of 20 teachers who were randomly selected from Accra SHS. Following the pilot test, it was postulated that the reliability coefficient of the instrument amounted to 0.70. Van Griethuijsen et al. (2014) stated that an alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is indicative of acceptable internal consistency.

In contrast, Lincoln and Guba (1985) devised a set of rigorous criteria, namely, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, to ascertain the trustworthiness of qualitative data in research. The term "the Four-Dimensions Criteria" is used to denote this concept in this thesis. Establishing credibility is the initial aspect that must be prioritised. Establishing trustworthiness is widely regarded as the foremost aspect or criterion. The notion of credibility concerns the researcher's capacity to make a definitive link between the research study's conclusions and the reality it seeks to depict, thereby verifying the veracity of those conclusions.

This study aimed to enhance the credibility of qualitative data through the implementation of triangulation, a method that involves gathering data from multiple sources. To achieve this, respondents from diverse populations were interviewed at various intervals throughout the study. Furthermore, the data, interpretations and conclusions were disseminated to the participants to facilitate the clarification of their intentions, rectify any errors and offer supplementary information if deemed necessary. The attribute of dependability holds significance in relation to trustworthiness, as it serves to establish the research study's findings as consistent and capable of being replicated. This study employed meticulous data collection techniques and procedures to ensure the reliability of the findings. Additionally, the ultimate conclusions were subjected to verification to ascertain their consistency with the collected raw data. The purpose of this practice was to establish a level of consistency in the findings, interpretations and conclusions derived from the data to facilitate reproducibility and enhance the credibility of the research for future researchers. It is crucial to ensure that no aspects were overlooked in the research study, and that the researcher did not deviate from the intended findings in the final report.

Confirmability pertains to the degree of assurance that the outcomes of a research study are derived from the accounts and expressions of the participants, rather than being influenced by potential biases of the researcher. Confirmability in this study, refers to the establishment of comprehensive documentation of the procedures employed to verify and double-check the data at various stages throughout the study. Ultimately, the establishment of transferability hinges upon the provision of evidence to readers that the findings of the research study possess applicability across various contexts, situations, times, and populations. Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge that the researcher lacks the ability to definitively establish the applicability of the research study's findings. Nevertheless, it is imperative for the researcher to furnish substantiating evidence to demonstrate its potential applicability. Transferability, also known as generalisability or external validity, is a concept that is closely associated with quantitative research.

3.8 RESEARCH ETHICS/ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical principles governing research practices significantly influence the worth of the individuals participating in the study, as well as the integrity of the data they generate. It is imperative to establish ethical protocols in research endeavours to consistently uphold the rights of participants (Huberman & Miles, 2014). The primary objective of ethical protocols in research is to safeguard the welfare of participants (ibid). This study addressed ethical considerations in the subsequent manner. Prior to granting their consent for this investigation, all elements of the study that could potentially impact a participant's decision to participate were thoroughly revealed. The identities and feedback provided by the participants of the survey were maintained in an anonymous manner, in accordance with their explicit consent. Plagiarism was mitigated through the diligent inclusion of proper citations and references in the survey.

The researcher initially obtained ethical approval from the GES Ethics Review Committee, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines. Furthermore, the study's objectives and rationale were effectively communicated to all relevant stakeholders. The assurance of participant confidentiality and anonymity were upheld through the non-disclosure of their identities to any external entities. The act of participating in the study was optional, and individuals faced no consequences for declining to take part. The research utilised a methodology that ensured the absence of any physical or emotional distress. The data collected were analysed exclusively for the purpose of the study, and greater care was taken to handle the personal information provided with the utmost discretion.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

A general framework for the research was presented in this chapter, which also covered the research methods employed in the study. The study approach, research paradigm, population, sampling, data collection tools, validity and reliability of instruments, and ethical considerations are all covered in detail in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The study's results from the data collection and analysis are presented in this chapter as discussions. In keeping with the study's goals, this chapter describes data that were gathered from the field based on respondents' opinions. Data collected from the field were shown in the tables and figures. Questionnaires and interview guides were administered to students, teachers and headmasters of six (6) public SHSs located in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. As a result, presentation, analysis and conclusion of the study are based on responses from the administered questionnaires as well as responses based on the interviews of the headmasters and assistant headmasters of the selected SHSs.

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The responses provided by the sampled population served as the basis for the analysis and discussions in this section from the selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra (Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS) on the comprehensive review of the double track policy in Ghana; challenges, prospects and perceived successes at the SHS level. In all, a total of two-thousand and seventy-nine (2,079) students were sampled with 348 from the West Africa SHS, 360 from the Presbyterian Boys SHS, 363 from the Labone SHS, 335 from the La Presbyterian SHS, 329 from the Ghana Armed Forces SHS, and 344 from the Accra Girls SHS.

In all, a total of 592 teachers were sampled with 119 from West Africa SHS, 123 from Presbyterian Boys SHS, 122 from the Labone SHS, 76 from La Presbyterian SHS, 48 from Ghana Armed Forces SHS, and 104 from Accra Girls SHS.

There is one headmaster/mistress and three assistant headmasters/mistresses in each of the selected SHSs (Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS. That is, the main headmaster or headmistress with three assistants. Hence, all the headmasters/mistresses and assistants were interviewed. The interviews represented the qualitative data.

4.2 RESPONSES FROM THE TEACHERS (QUESTIONNAIRE BASED)

A total of 592 teachers were sampled with 119 from West Africa SHS, 123 from Presbyterian Boys SHS, 122 from Labone SHS, 76 from the La Presbyterian SHS, 48 from Ghana Armed Forces SHS and 104 from Accra Girls SHS. The tables and figures represent responses given by the teachers on their demographic data as well as their opinions on the various questions posed by the researcher. Tables (4.1-4.4) represents the demographic characteristics of teachers in the study which are their gender, age, highest educational qualification and the number of years they have been working in the education sector.

Table 4.1: Gender Distribution of Teachers

Gender	No.	%
Male	362	61.1
Female	230	38.9
Total	**592**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.1 presents the gender distribution of the sampled teachers from the six selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra (Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior

High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS). Three-hundred and sixty-two (362) of the respondents representing 61.1% of the sampled teacher population were male while two-hundred and thirty (230) respondents representing 38.9% of the population were female. Gender distribution from the selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra shows that there are more male teachers than female teachers in the SHSs.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Teachers

Age	No.	%
18-30	97	16.4
31-40	127	21.5
41-50	236	39.9
Above 50	132	22.3
Total	**592**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.2 presents the ages of the teachers, 97 respondents representing 16.4% of the sampled teacher population were between the ages of 18-30 years, 127 teachers representing 21.5% of the population were between the ages of 31-40 years, 236 respondents representing 39.9% of the population were between the ages of 41-50 years while 132 respondents represent 22.3% of the population were above 50 years.

Table 4.3: Highest Educational Qualification of Teachers

Highest Educational Qualification	No.	%
Bachelor's Degree	264	44.6

Master's Degree	328	55.4
Total	**592**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.3 also presents the highest educational qualification of the teachers sampled for the study. Two-hundred and sixty-four (264) respondents representing 44.6% of the sampled population held a Bachelor's degree as their highest educational qualification while 328 respondents represent 55.4% of the sampled population held a Master's degree as their highest educational qualification. Reponses from the respondents on their highest educational qualification also showed that a majority of the teachers from the selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra region are Master's degree holders.

Table 4.4: Number of Years Working in the Education Sector

Number of Years	**No.**	**%**
1-5 years	121	20.4
6-10 years	186	31.4
Over 10 years	285	48.1
Total	**592**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.4 represents the number of years the teachers have been working in the education sector. One-hundred and twenty-one (121) respondents, representing 20.4% of the sampled population, indicated that they have been working in the education sector between 1-5 years. In addition, 186 respondents, representing 31.4% of the population, indicated that they have been working in the education sector between 6-10 years while 285, respondents representing

48.1% of the population, indicated that they have been working in the education sector over ten years. Responses showed that a majority of the teachers from the selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra have been working in the education sector for a long time.

The second part of the questionnaire was designed specifically to assess the general views of teachers on various issues relating to the effect of the double track on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. The first section in this part of the questionnaire (Section B) was focused on questions regarding the quality of teaching and learning in SHSs. The subsequent figures represent responses given by the teachers on the questions posed by the researcher.
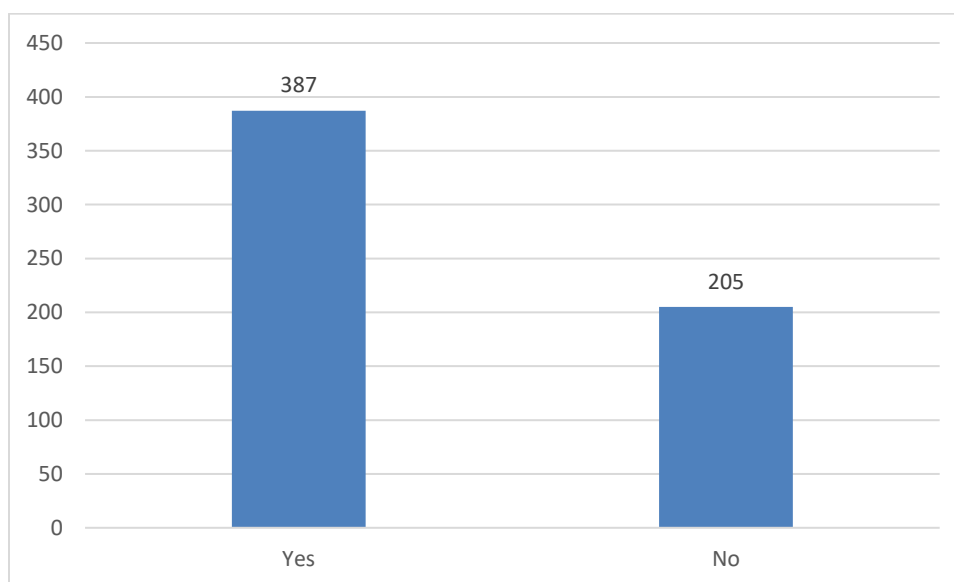
Figure 4.1: Concerns Regarding Teaching and Learning at the Senior High Level

Figure 4.1 represents the responses of teachers on whether they have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the SHS Level. Three-hundred and eighty-seven (387) which is 65.4% answered in the affirmative indicating that they have some concerns regarding teaching and learning in the SHS Level while 205 making 34.6%, gave a negative response indicating that they do not have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the SHS Level. The respondents who answered in the affirmative to this question proceeded further to state some of their concerns regarding teaching and learning in the SHS Level, as they suggested some cases of classroom indiscipline on the part of some students, lateness to class by some

students, absenteeism, instances of some teachers missing their lesson periods as some of the things that tend to affect teaching and learning in the SHSs.
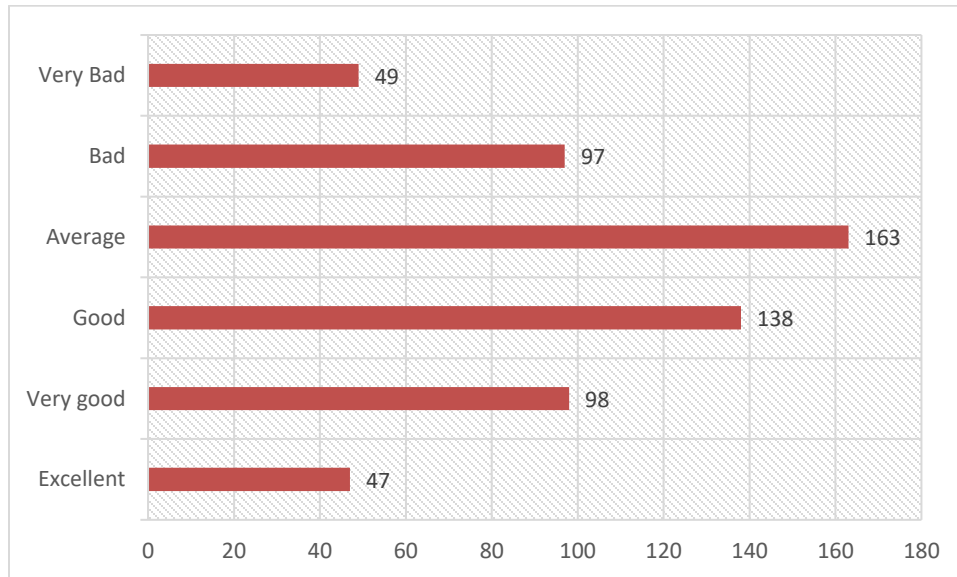
Figure 4.2: General Assessment of Teaching and Learning at the SHSs

Figure 4.2 represents the responses of teachers on their general assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs. Forty-seven (47) respondents that is 7.9% indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is excellent. Furthermore, 98 of the participants, signifying 16.6%, indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is very good. One-hundred and thirty-eight (138) making 23.3% indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is good. One-hundred and sixty-three (163) which is 27.5% also gave their assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs as being on the average. Ninety-seven (97) that is 16.4%, indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is bad while 49 respondents making 8.2%, indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is very bad. Responses from the teachers on their personal assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs showed that to a very large extent, the state of teaching and learning currently in SHSs is satisfactory.
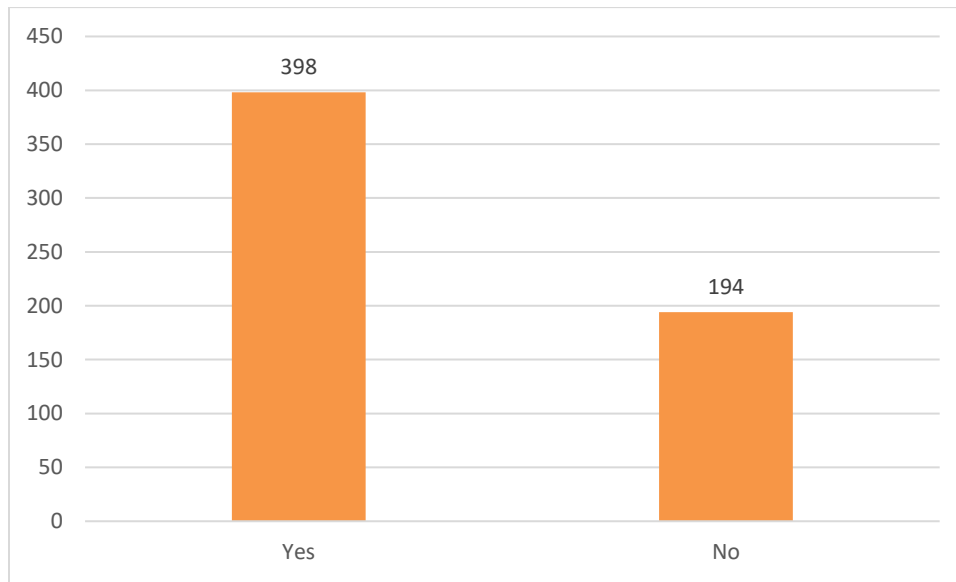
Figure 4.3: Effective Teaching and Learning in the SHSs

Figure 4.3 represents the responses of teachers on whether they would say there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs. Three-hundred and ninety-eight (398) that is 67.2% of the sampled population, answered in the affirmative indicating that there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs while 194 that is 32.8%, of the sampled population gave a negative response indicating that teaching and learning in SHSs is not effective. Responses given by the teachers clearly indicated that to a very large extent, there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs.
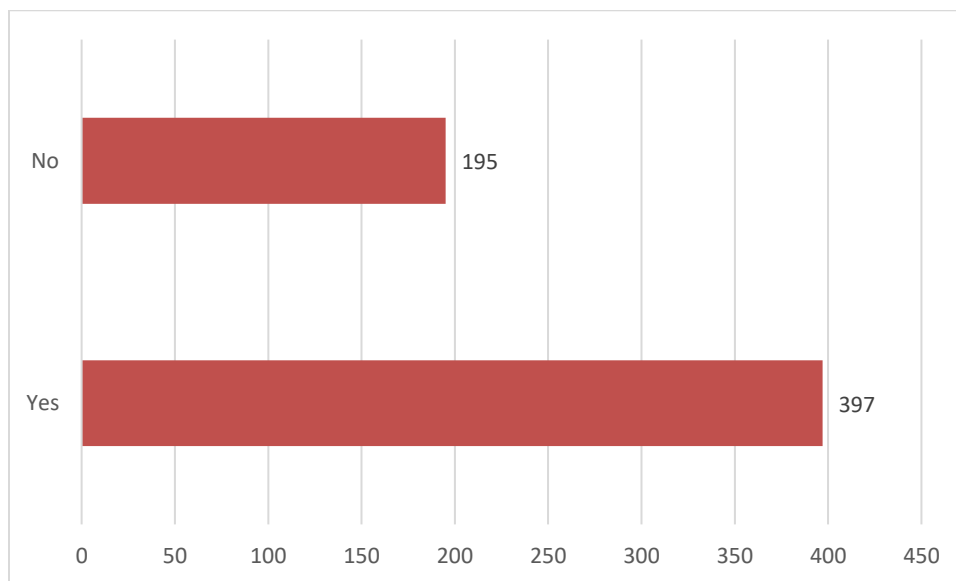
Figure 4.4: Shortfalls with Regards to Teaching and Learning in the SHSs

Figure 4.4 represents the responses of teachers on whether they have identified any shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in the SHSs. Three-hundred and ninety-seven (397) making 67.0% answered in the affirmative, indicating that they have identified some shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in SHSs while 195 making 32.9%, gave a negative response indicating that they have not identified any shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in SHSs. Responses given by the teachers clearly indicated the existence of some shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in SHSs. Teachers who answered in the affirmative further suggested instances of inadequate teaching and learning materials, library facilities needed to accommodate the current number of students in SHSs, inadequate housing facilities especially in the boarding schools to accommodate all students on campus to ensure that students are always in school on time, also indiscipline acts among Senior High students were suggested as a practice that interfered with effective teaching and learning in the SHSs.

The next section (Section C) sought the views of the respondents on the comprehensive review of the Double Track Policy in Ghana; challenges, prospects and perceived successes on the quality of education at the SHS level. The first question in this section found out from the teachers about their general views on the double track policy. Specifically, the respondents were asked to indicate whether the double track policy is a good policy. Responses to this question are captured in Figure 4.5.

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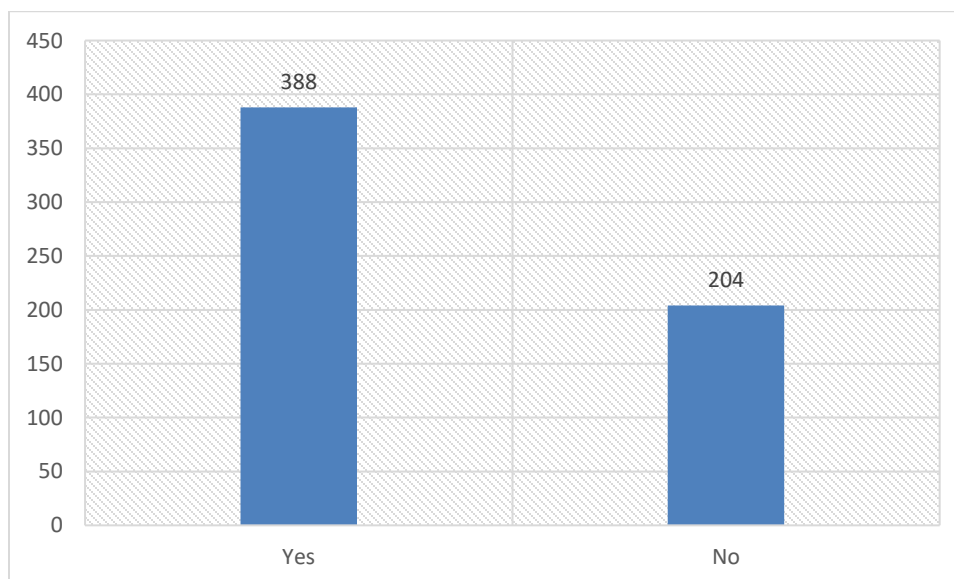
Figure 4.5: Views of Teachers on the Double Track Policy

Figure 4.5 represents the responses of teachers on whether the double track policy is a good policy. Three-hundred and eighty-eight (388) making 65.5% answered in the affirmative indicating that the double track policy is a good policy while 204 making 34.5% gave a negative response indicating that the double track policy is not a good policy.

The second question in this section found out the teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on enrolment. Their responses to this question are also captured in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: Influence of Double Track Policy on Enrolment

Figure 4.6 represents teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on enrolment. In answering this question, all 592 teachers unanimously indicated that the double track policy has drastically increased student enrolment. Responses from the teachers indicated that student enrolment had increased more than 50% as compared to the enrolment before the Free SHS policy. The introduction, therefore, of the double track is an effort by government to absorb the excess number of students in the SHSs. The Double Track System has divided the students' population into two: the green track and gold track to handle the situation with

increased enrolment. These responses from the teachers corroborates Shields and Oberg's (2010) assertion that a multi-track school system results in increase in school enrolment.

The third question in this section also sought the teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on class size. Their responses to this question are captured in Figure 4.7.

Reduced Class Sizes

Figure 4.7: Influence of Double Track Policy on Class Size

Figure 4.7 represents teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on class size. In answering this question, all 592 teachers unanimously indicated that the double track policy has reduced the class size of students. The teachers indicated that the introduction of the Free SHS policy at the initial stages led to some exponential increase in the enrolment figures and, therefore, increasing the number of students in class. This situation caused congestions in classrooms as most students could not even have desks to sit on with teachers also struggling to even have the space required to teach the students. However, the introduction of the double track policy has led to a reduction in the class sizes since students are now rationed and do not all have to be in school at the same time. Hence, the teachers indicated that there has been a comparative reduction in class sizes. Moreover, the teachers indicated that they now have less than 50 students in a class compared to about 70 to 90 in the previous years. Most of the classrooms have seen reduction in the number of students per class. The finding supports Inger

(2014) who believes that a multi-track educational system, as opposed to year-round instruction, is a tactic for overloaded schools in reducing class numbers.

The next question in this section found out teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on contact hours. Responses to this question are highlighted in Figure 4.8.
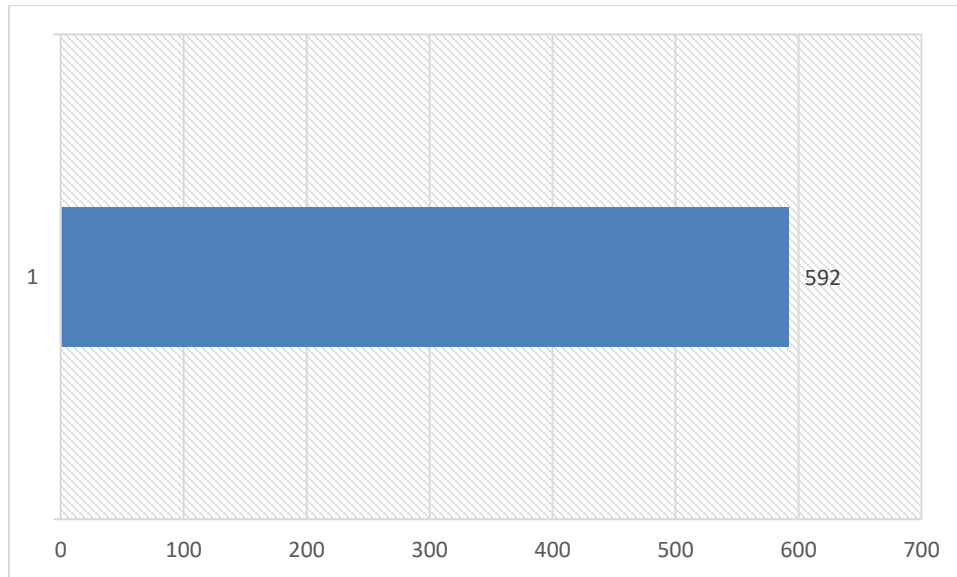
Figure 4.8: Influence of Double Track Policy on Contact Hours

Figure 4.8 represents teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on contact hours. In answering this question, all 592 teachers, unanimously indicated that the double track policy has increased contact hours. Since the double track only permits one group of students to be in school at a particular time, there is quite a limited time for teachers to cover the entire syllabus to make way for the other group. In view of this, lesson periods have been extended from 14gmt to 16gmt for teachers. This gives room for more interaction between teachers and students. The teachers indicated that for instance, a teacher who has two periods will have to teach for two hours continuously. While having enough instructional time is a good thing, poorly managed time can interfere with successful teaching and learning. Additionally, instructional hours have risen from six to eight hours a day since the Double Track was implemented. These responses also support the view of Gorsuch (2017) who posits that a multi-track educational system results in increased instructional periods.

The researcher also found out teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on school facilities. Figure 4.9 captures the views of the teachers on this statement.
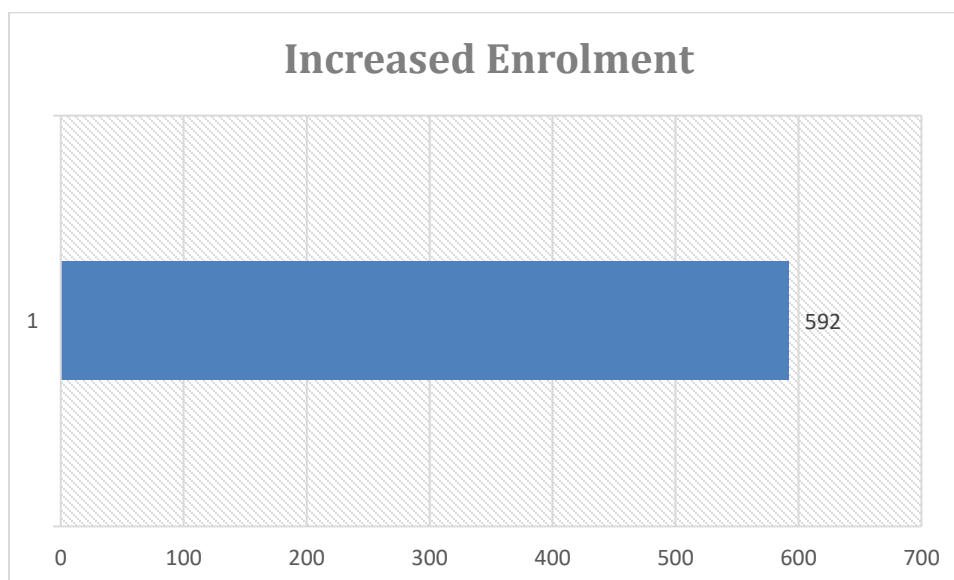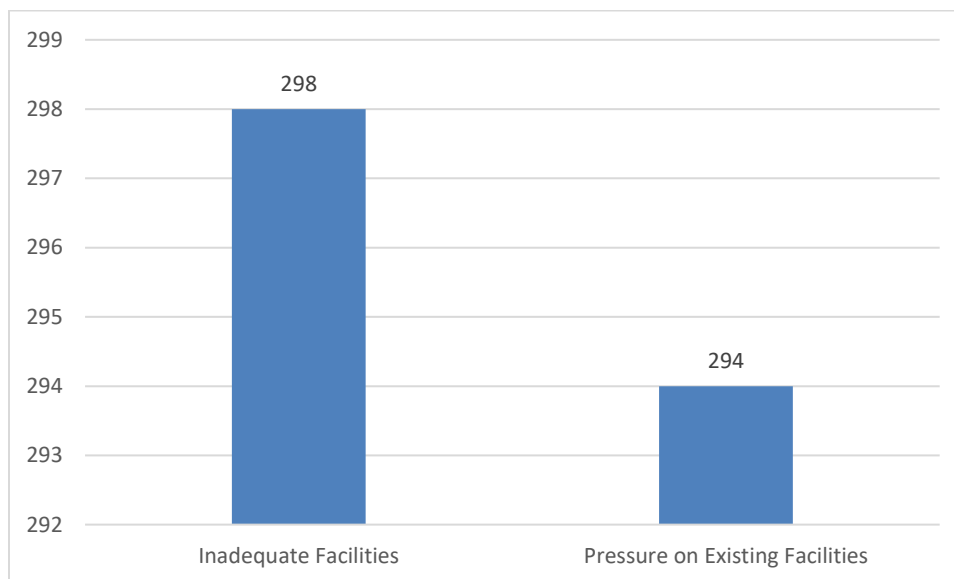

Figure 4.9: Influence of Double Track Policy on School Facilities

Figure 4.9 represents teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on school facilities. Two-hundred and ninety-eight (298) teachers, representing 50.3% of the sampled population, indicated that the double track policy has resulted in some adequacies in school facilities since the same infrastructure is serving a dual purpose by accommodating both tracks. Two-hundred and ninety-four (294) respondents, representing 49.7% of the sampled population, also indicated the Double Track has put pressure on the existing school facilities since the policy ensures maximum usage of all facilities on school campuses because at any point in time, one track is in school. Even though from economics point of view, it would be optimally utilised, this puts pressures on such facilities. For instance, there is always pressure on school facilities like desks, boarding facilities among others.

Further in this section, the researcher found teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on teachers. Responses to this question are illustrated in Figure 4.10.
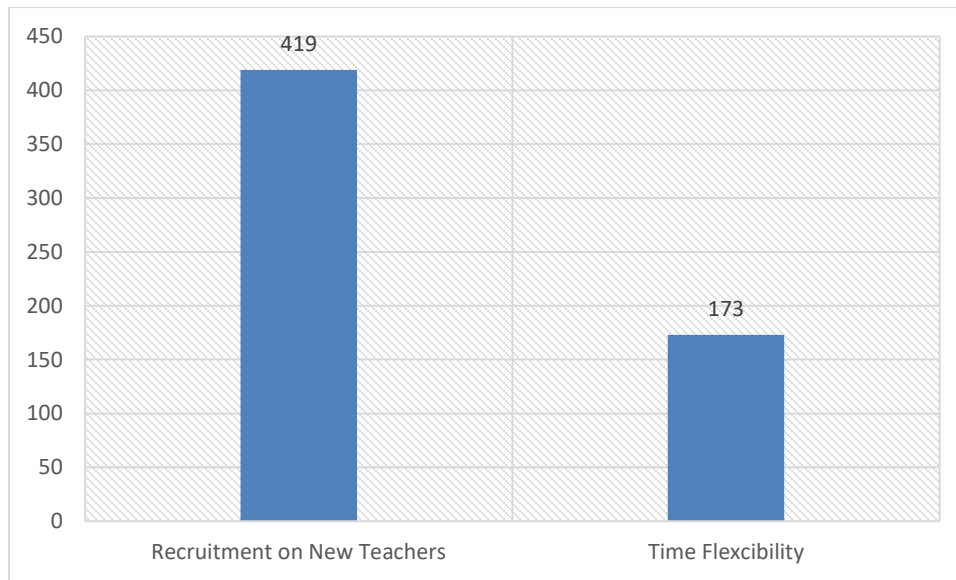
Figure 4.10: Influence of Double Track Policy on Teachers

Figure 4.10 represents teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on teachers. Four-hundred and nineteen (419) making 70.8% indicated that the double track policy has led to the recruitment of new teachers. Since it would be difficult for a single teacher to teach both tracks, more teachers were needed and the government has done that by recruiting more teachers so that teachers would not be deprived of their holidays. One-hundred and seventy-three (173) that is 29.2% indicated that the double track policy has resulted in the teachers having some flexibility since they are only in school based on the track they have been assigned to. In view of this, when a particular track a teacher has been assigned to is on vacation, the teacher has enough time to rest, rejuvenate, do more research and adequately prepares for his/her time to teach on the assigned track.

The researcher subsequently sought the teachers' overall assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation. Responses to this statement are also captured in Figure 4.11.
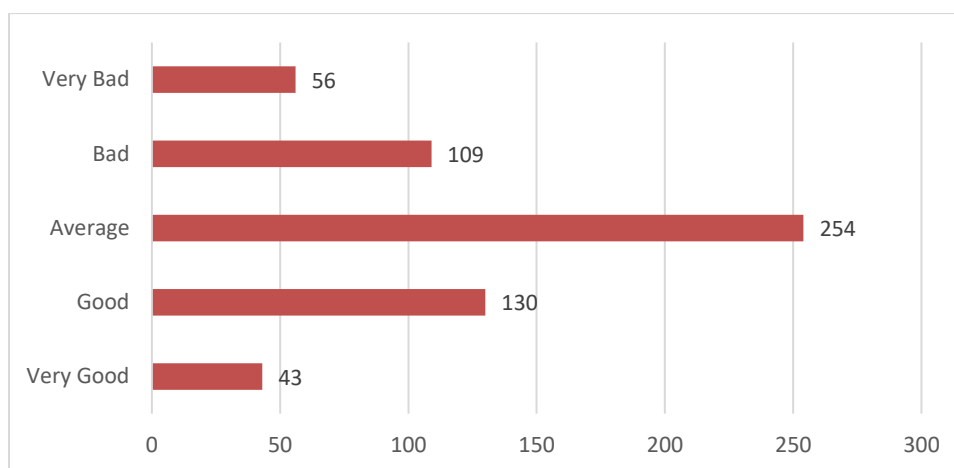
Figure 4.11: Assessment of Government's Performance with the Double Track Policy Implementation

Figure 4.11 presents the responses of teachers on the assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation. Forty-three (43) that is 7.3% indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been very good. One-hundred and thirty (130) which is 22.0% indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been good. Two-hundred and fifty-four (254) making 42.9%, indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been average. One-hundred and nine (109) making 18.4% indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been bad while 9.5% indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been very bad. These responses from the respondents indicated that to a very large extent, government's performance with the double track policy implementation is quite commendable.

The researcher further sought the views of the teachers on the quality of education in Ghana at the moment. Responses to this question are highlighted in Figure 4:12.
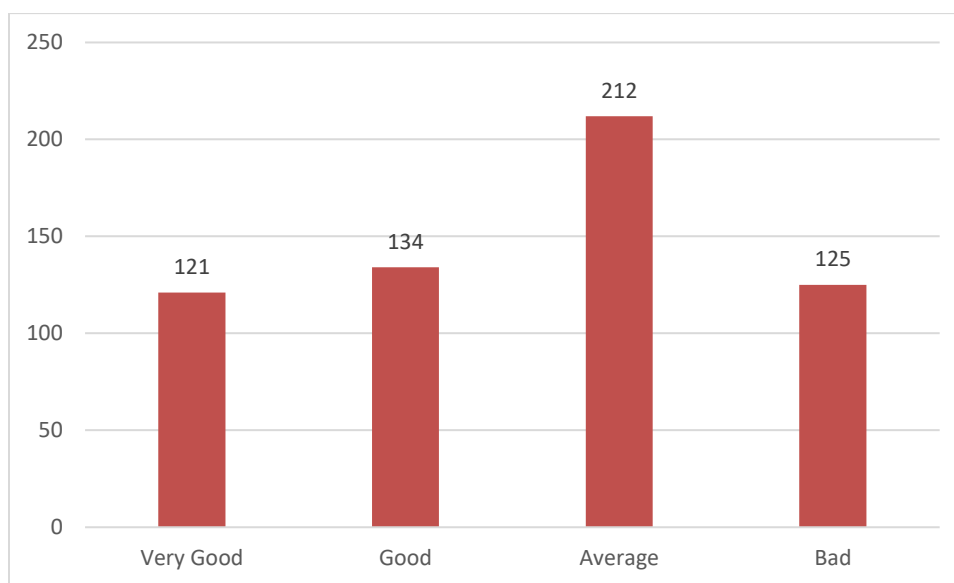
Figure 4.12: Assessment of the Quality of Education in Ghana at the Moment

Figure 4.12 represents the responses of teachers on the quality of education in Ghana at the moment. One-hundred and twenty-one (121) teachers indicated that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is very good. One-hundred and thirty-four (134) indicated that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is good. Two-hundred and twelve (212) responded that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is average while 125 indicated that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is bad. These responses from the teachers indicated largely, that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is quite satisfactory.

The researcher further asked the teachers whether they would say the double track policy has had any influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. Responses to this question are illustrated in Figure 4.13.
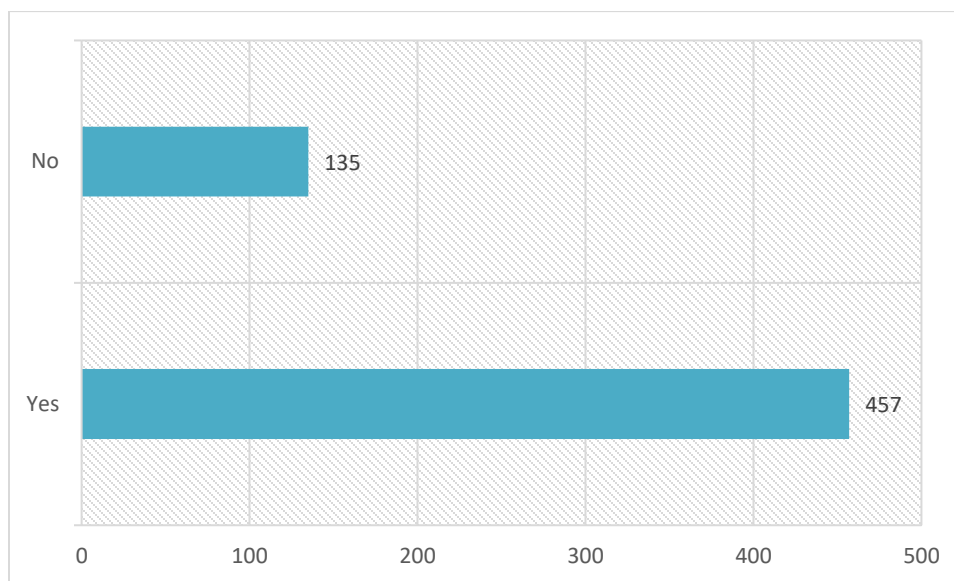
Figure 4.13: Influence of Double Track on Quality Education in Ghana

Figure 4.13 represents responses given by the respondents on what should be done about the double track policy. Four-hundred and fifty-seven (457) indicated that the double track policy has had some influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana while 135 indicated that the double track policy has had no influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. The teachers who indicated that the double track policy has had some influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana elaborated further by asserting that the double track has led to some inadequacies in teaching and learning materials needed to facilitate effective and efficient teaching and learning. Also, as a result of the Free SHS Policy, some less endowed students with poor grades are getting admission under the policy. The teachers indicated that students who should have re-sat the Basic Education Certificate Examination because they had poor grades ranging from 40 to 52 have all been admitted and as the saying goes "garbage in garbage out" and as expected, such students are not likely to excel.

The researcher then sought the views of the teachers on whether, what should be done about the double track policy. The views of teachers in line with this is captured in Figure 4.14.

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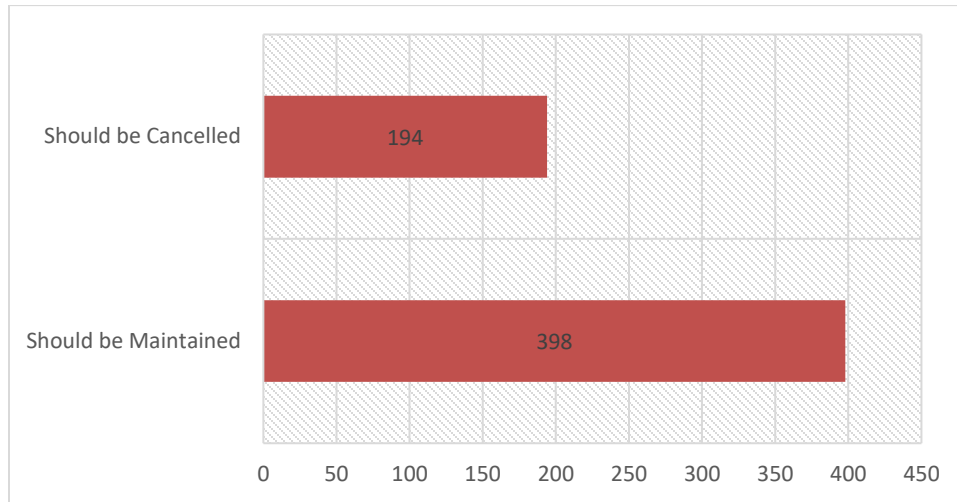
Figure 4.14: What Should be Done about the Double Track Policy

Figure 4.14 represents the responses of teachers on what should be done about the double track policy. 67.2% of the respondents are of the view that the double track policy should be maintained while 32.8% indicated that the double track policy should be cancelled. These responses clearly indicated that majority of the teachers in the SHSs are in favour of the continuous implementation of the double track policy. It is, therefore, imperative that steps are taken by the relevant stakeholders to ensure that the challenges are mitigated for its smooth running.

The researcher subsequently sought the views of the teachers on the challenges associated with the implementation of the double track policy. The respondents were then asked to enumerate challenges they have identified with the implementation of the double track policy. Views of the teachers are captured in Figure 4:15.
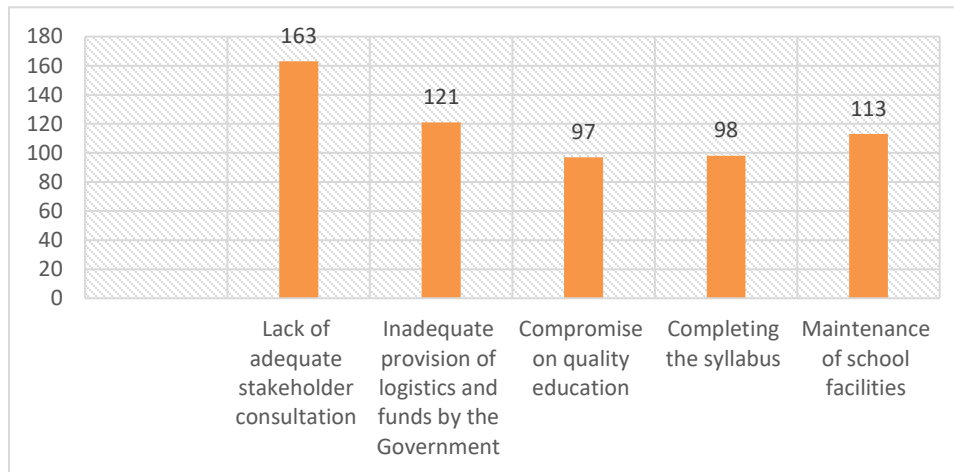
Figure 4.15: Challenges Associated with the Implementation of the Double Track Policy

Figure 4.15 represents views of the teachers on challenges associated with the implementation of the double track policy. 27.5% suggested the lack of adequate stakeholder consultation as a challenge. The teachers indicated that they were not briefed adequately about the double track policy in the senior high schools. 20.4% suggested inadequate provision of logistics and funds by the government as a challenge. These included the needed amount of teaching and learning materials. 16.4% suggested the compromise on quality education as a challenge. The teachers indicated that even though the Free SHS Policy is good, it is affecting the quality of education as a result of Less endowed students with poor grades getting admission under the policy. 16.6% suggested the challenge of most teachers possibly completing the syllabus owing to the increased number of holidays as a result of the policy while 19.1% suggested the maintenance of school facilities as a challenge of the double track policy since there is pressure on school facilities as a result of one track being in school at any point in time. These responses are in consonance with Ballinger (2015) who advocates the need for educational change to be made collaboratively.

In suggesting ways by which challenges associated with the double track policy could be addressed, the teachers made the following suggestions captured in the Figure 4:16.
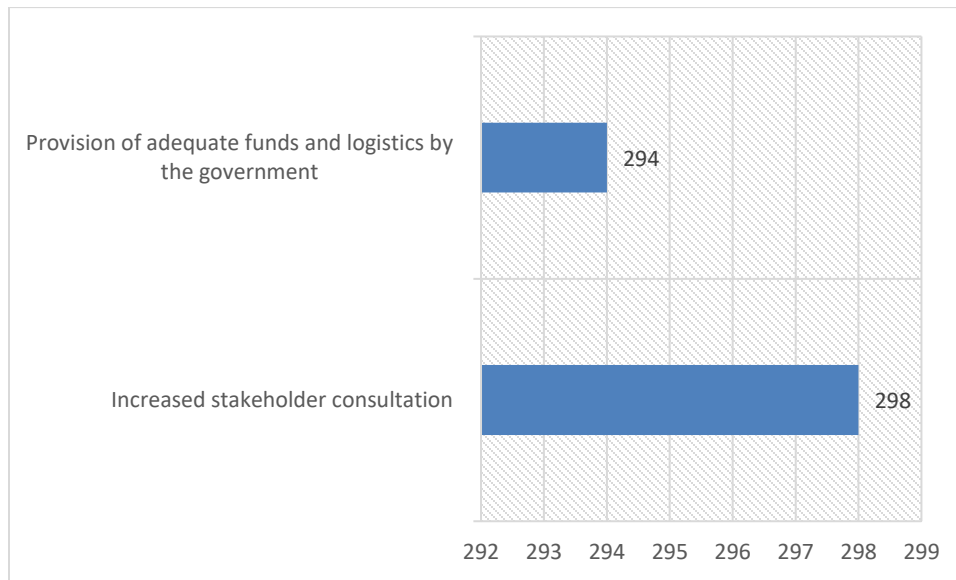
Figure 4.16: Ways of Addressing Challenges Associated with the Double Track Policy

Figure 4.16 represents views of the teachers on the ways by which challenges associated with the double track policy could be addressed. Two-hundred and ninety-eight (298) suggested the need for increased stakeholder consultation while 294 respondents suggested the need for the provision of adequate funds and logistics by the government to address challenges associated with the double track policy implementation.

The next section (Section D) sought the views of the respondents on the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the double track in SHSs. The first question in this section sought teachers' views on students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in recent years. Responses to this question are highlighted in Figure 4.17.
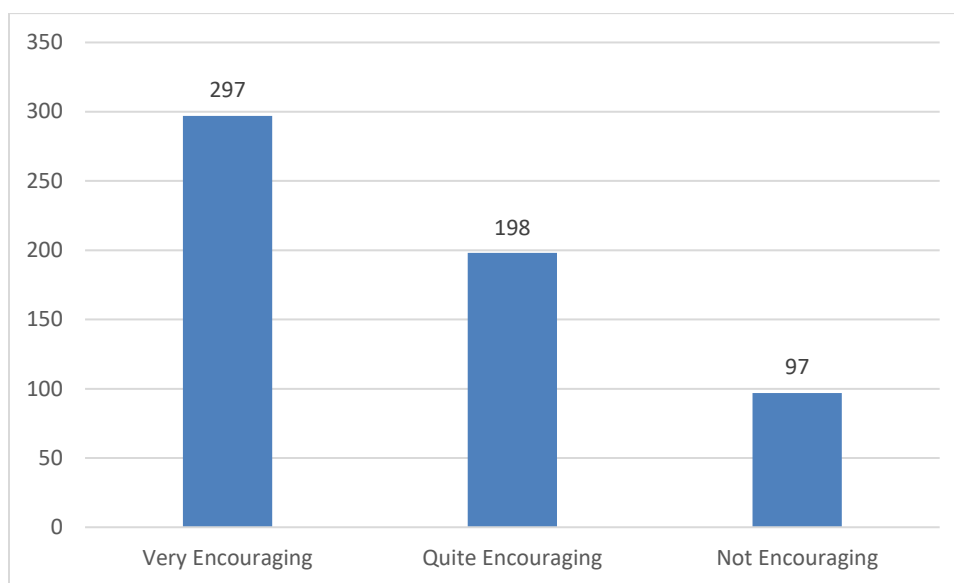
Figure 4.17: Views of Teachers on Students' Performance in the WASSCE in Recent Years

Figure 4.17 represents the teachers' views on students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in recent years. Two-hundred and ninety-seven (297) indicated that students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in recent years has been very encouraging. One-hundred and ninety-eight (198) indicated that students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in recent years has been quite encouraging while (97) indicated that students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in recent years has not been encouraging. These responses from the teachers clearly indicated that students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in recent years has generally been very encouraging to teachers in the SHSs.
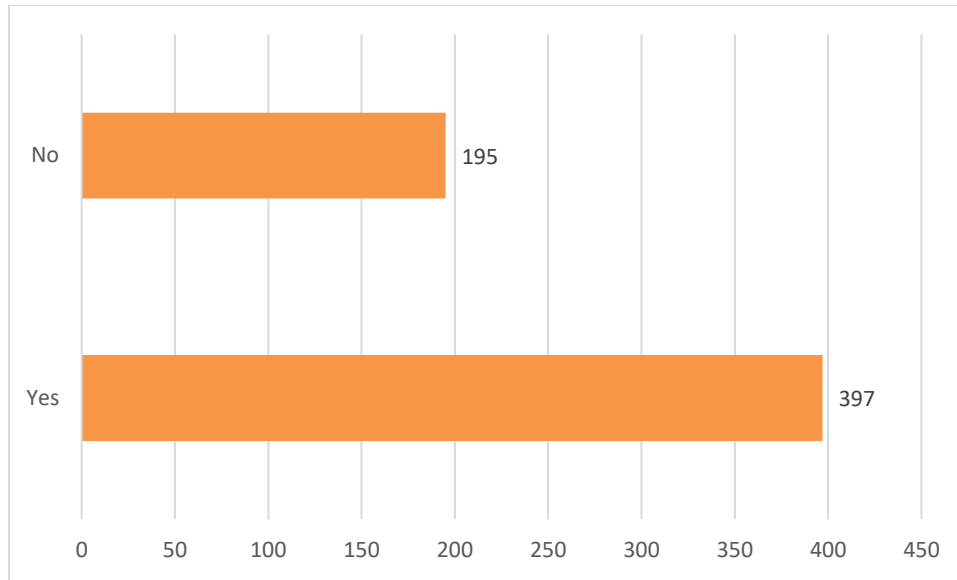
Figure 4.18: Double Track Has Influenced Students' Performance in the WASSCE

Figure 4.18 represents the responses of the teachers on whether they think that the Double Track has influenced students' performance in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination in anyway. Three-hundred and ninety-seven (397) indicated that the Double Track has had some influence on students' performance in the WASSCE while one-hundred and 195 indicated that the Double Track has had no influence on student performance in the WASSCE. These responses largely indicated that the Double Track has had some form of influence on students' performance in the WASSCE. The teachers further indicated that the best WASSCE results in most subjects especially the core subjects have been recorded across SHSs with the student batches of the Free Senior High and subsequently Double Track Policy.
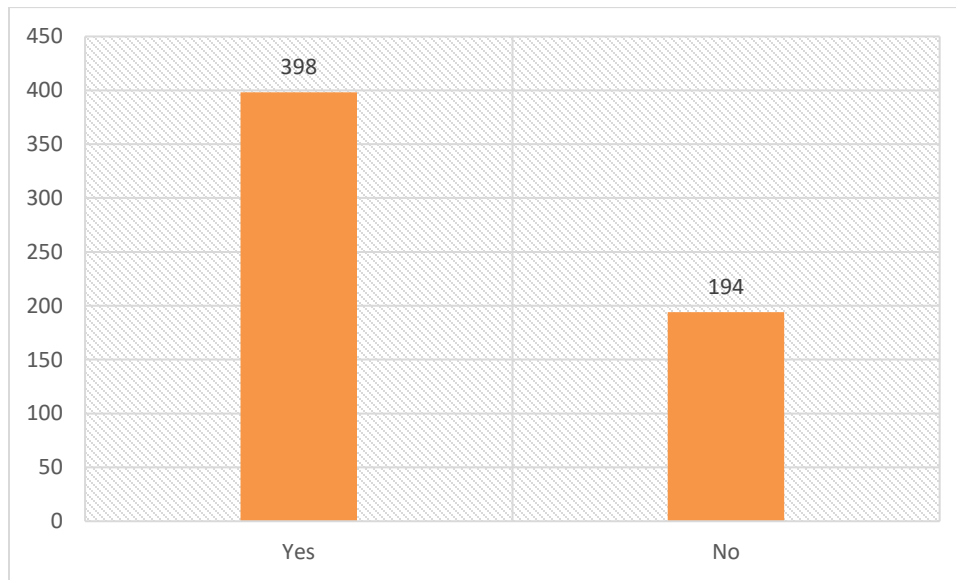
Figure 4.19: Performance Trend in Students' WASSCE Results Before and After the Introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track

Figure 4.19 represents the responses of the teachers on whether they have identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track. Three-hundred and ninety-eight (398) indicated that they have identified some performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track while 194 indicated that they have not identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track. These responses largely indicated that there are some identifiable performance trends in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track. The teachers indicated that the students who sat for the WASSCE during the implementation of the Free SHS Policy and Double Track Policy did very well as compared to students who wrote the WASSCE.

The last section (Section E) sought the views of the respondents on the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education in SHSs. The first question in this section found out from the teachers whether they have identified any best practices associated with the Double Track. Responses to this question are seen in Figure 4.20.
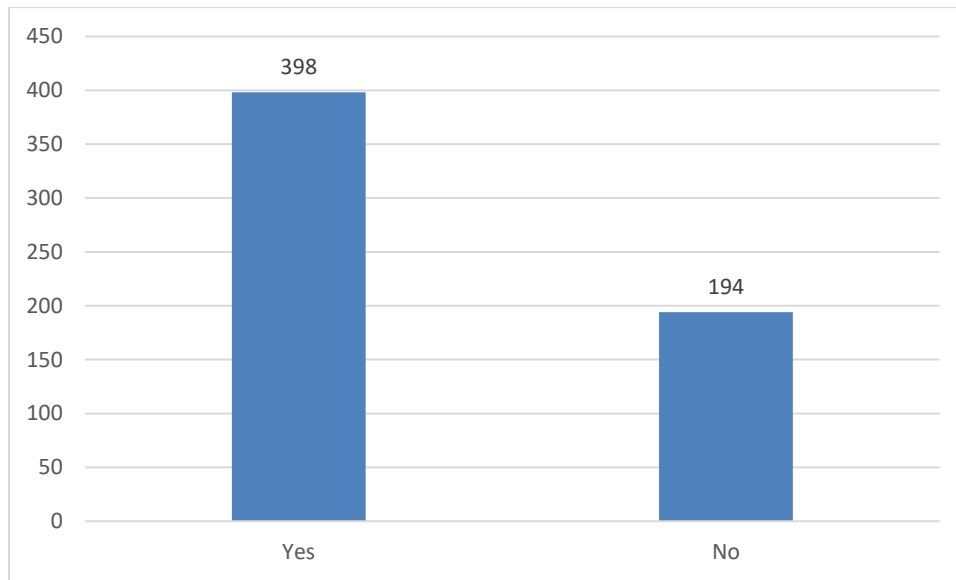
Figure 4.20: Best Practices Associated with the Double Track

Figure 4.20 represents the responses of the teachers on whether they have identified any best practices associated with the Double Track. 67.2% of the respondents answered in the affirmative to this question while 32.8% gave a negative response to this question. The respondents who answered in the affirmative further elaborated on the best practices associated with the Double Track. According to the teachers, the best practices of the Double Track include the supply of free text books to students, the supply of free uniform to the students, the payment of water and light bills for students, feeding the borders free with three (3) hot meals daily and day students with one (1) free hot meal daily, building of additional classrooms and the non-payment of school fees.

The next question in this section found out the teachers' views on whether the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana. Responses to this question are captured in Figure 4.21.
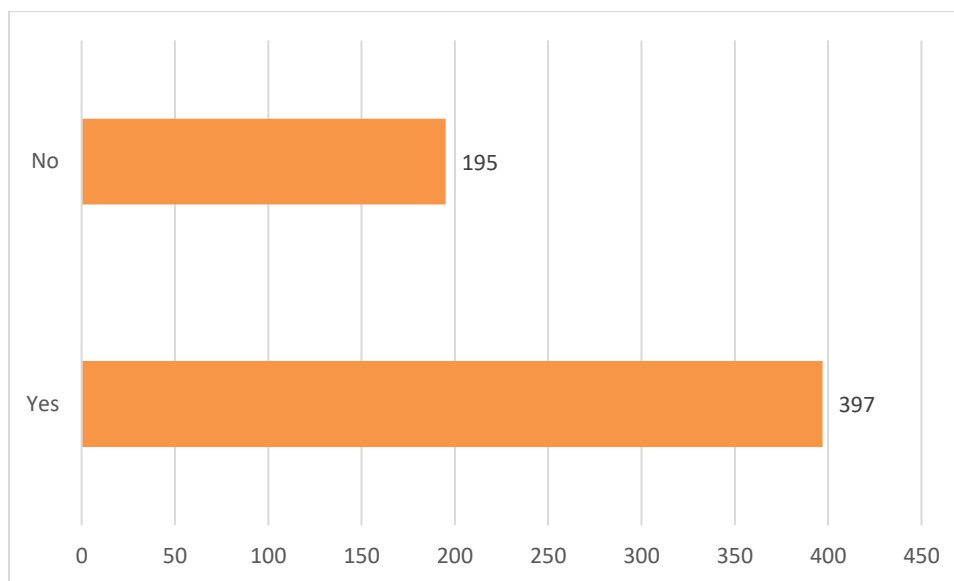
Figure 4.21: Influence of Best Practices of Double Track on Quality Education

Figure 4.21 represents the responses of the teachers on whether they think that the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality of education in Ghana. Three-hundred and ninety-seven (397) said "Yes" to this question indicating that the best practices associated with the Double Track has had some influence on quality of education in Ghana while 195 said "No" to this question, indicating that the best practices associated with the Double Track has had no influence on quality of education in Ghana. These responses largely, indicated that the best practices associated with the Double Track has influenced quality of education in Ghana. On how these best practices influenced quality education, the teachers revealed that, for instance, the provision of free text books helps the students with their studies and also gives them the opportunity ahead of lessons and do better in terms of their academics.

The final question in this section found out the teachers' suggestions on other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana. Responses to this question are seen in Figure 4.22.
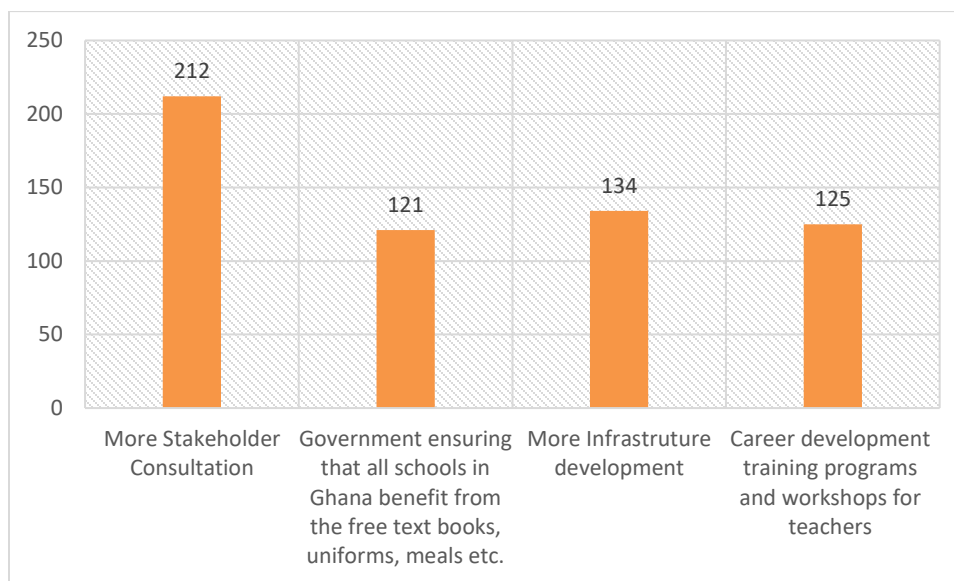
Figure 4.22: Teachers' Suggestions on Other Best Practices that can be Inculcated in the Double Track to Improve the Quality of SHS Education in Ghana

Figure 4.22 represents the responses from the teachers' suggestions on other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana. 35.8% suggested the need for more stakeholder consultation. 20.4% of suggested the need for government to ensure that all schools in Ghana benefit from the free text books, uniforms, meals etc. 22.6% suggested the need for more infrastructure development while 21.1% suggested career development training programmes and workshops for teachers.

4.3 RESPONSES FROM THE STUDENTS (QUESTIONNAIRE BASED)

In all, a total of 2,079 students were sampled with 348 from the West African SHS, 360 from the Presbyterian Boys SHS, 363 from Labone SHS, 335 from La Presbyterian SHS, 329 from Ghana Armed Forces SHS and 344 from the Accra Girls SHS. The following tables and figures represent responses given by the students on their demographic data as well as their opinions on the various questions posed by the researcher. Tables 4.5 presents the demographic characteristics of students in the study which are their gender, age and their form in school.

Table 4.5: Gender Distribution of Students

Gender	No.	%
Male	947	45.6
Female	1132	54.4
Total	**2079**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.5 represents the gender distribution of the sampled students from the six selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra (Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS). In addition, 947 of the respondents representing 45.6% of the sampled student population were male while 1132 respondents, representing 54.4% of the student population, were female. Gender distribution from the selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra showed that there are more female students than male students in the SHSs.

Table 4.6: Age Distribution of Students

Age	No.	%
15-17	1,103	53.1
18-20	836	40.2
20-22	118	5.7
Above 22	22	1.1
Total	**2079**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.6 represents the ages of the students, 1,103 were between 15-17 years. Eight-hundred and thirty-six (836) students were between 18-20 years. One-hundred and eighteen (118) were between 20-22 years while twenty-two (22) were above 22 years. Age distribution from the selected public SHSs in the Greater Accra showed that majority of the students in the SHSs fell between the age brackets of 15-17 years.

Table 4.7: Form of Students

Form	No.	%
Form One	675	32.5
Form Two	1,028	49.4
Form Three	376	18.2
Total	**2079**	**100**

Source: Field data (2023)

Table 4.7 also represents the forms of the students sampled for the study. Six-hundred and seventy-five (675) which represented 32.5% were in Form one. One thousand and twenty-eight (1,028) representing 49.4% were in Form two while three-hundred and seventy-six (376) representing 18.2% were in Form three. Reponses from the respondents also showed that a majority of the students sampled for this study were in Form two (second year in High School).

The second part of the questionnaire was designed specifically to assess the general views of the students on various issues relating to the comprehensive review of the double track policy in Ghana; challenges, prospects and perceived successes on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. The first section in this part of the questionnaire (Section B) was focused on questions regarding the quality of teaching and learning in SHSs. The subsequent figures represent responses given by the students on the questions posed by the researcher.
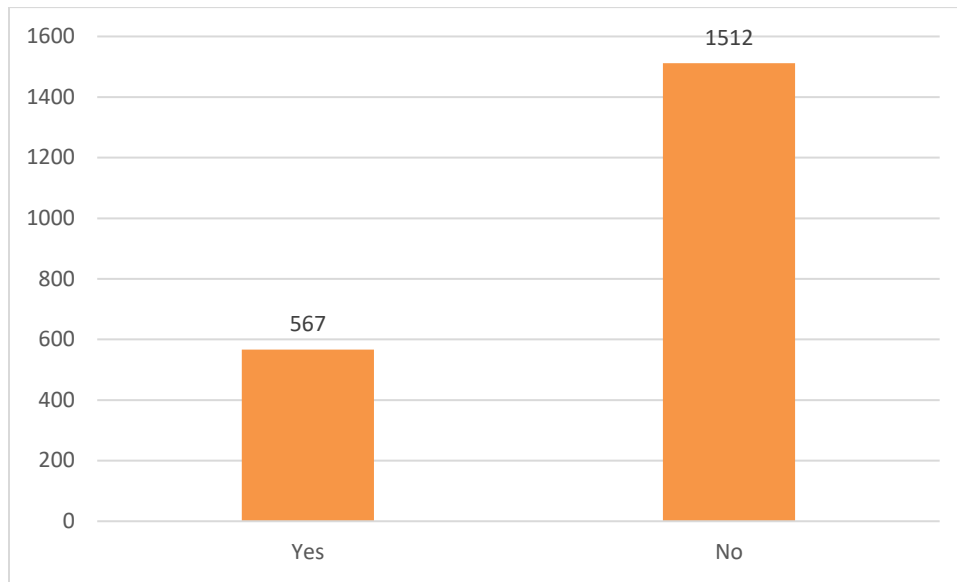
Figure 4.23: Concerns Regarding Teaching and Learning in the Senior High Level

Figure 4.23 represents the responses of the students on whether they have any concerns regarding teaching and learning at the Senior High Level. Five-hundred and sixty-seven (567) answered in the affirmative while 1,512 gave a negative response. These responses largely indicated that the students do not have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level.
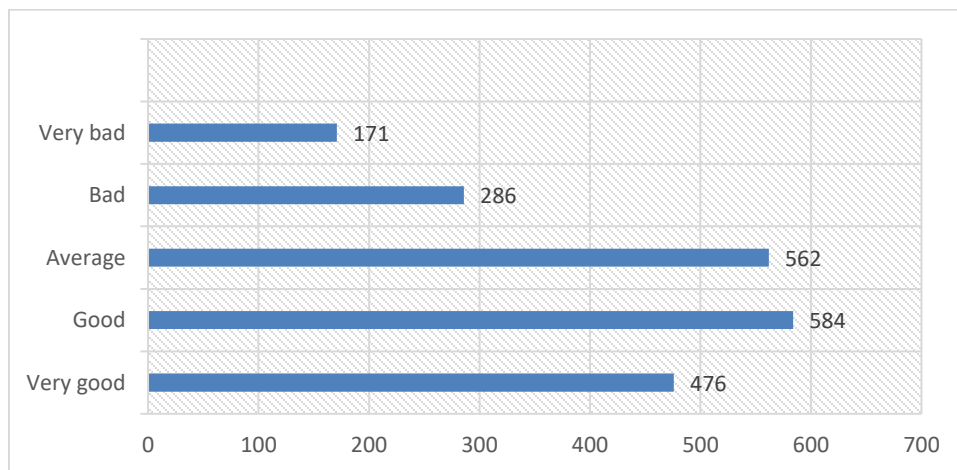
Figure 4.24: General Assessment of Teaching and Learning in SHSs

Figure 4.24 represents the responses of students on their general assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs. 13.8% indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is excellent. 22.9%

indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is very good. 27.0% indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is good. 28.1% also gave their assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs as being on the average. 5.0% indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is bad 3.2% indicated that teaching and learning in SHSs is very bad. These responses from the students' perspective of teaching and learning in SHSs showed that to a very large extent, the state of teaching and learning currently in SHSs is commendable.
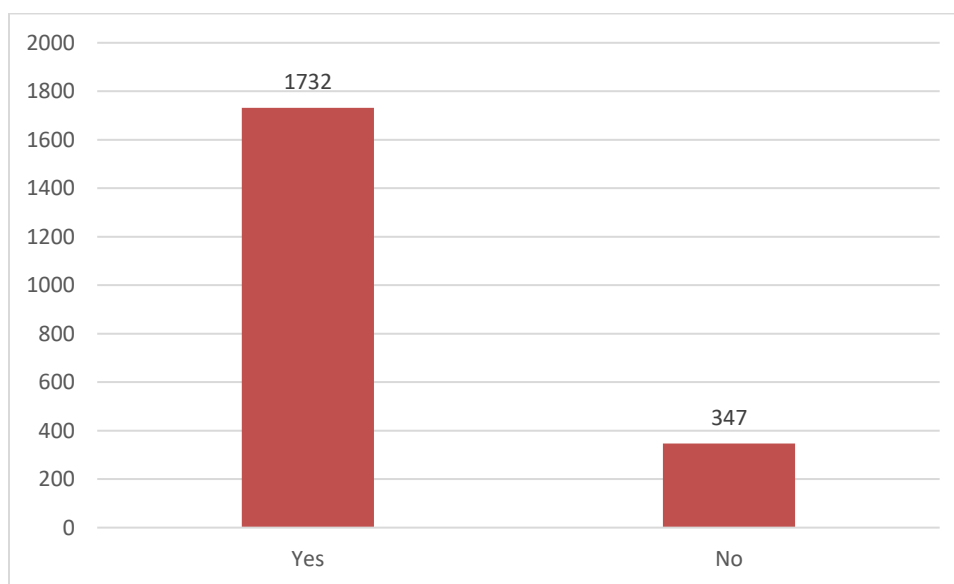
Figure 4.25: Effective Teaching and Learning in the SHSs

Figure 4.25 represents the responses of students on whether they would say there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs. One thousand, seven-hundred and thirty-two (1,732) representing 83.3% answered in the affirmative indicating that there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs while 347 16.7% gave a negative response indicating that teaching and learning in SHSs is not effective. Responses given by the students clearly showed that there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs.
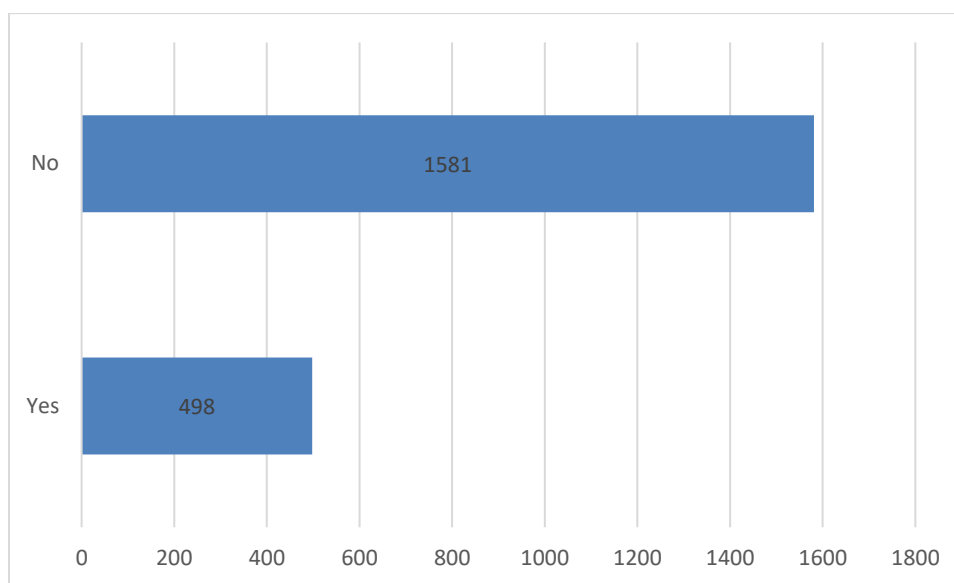
Figure 4.26: Shortfalls with Regards to Teaching and Learning in the SHSs

Figure 4.26 represents the responses of teachers on whether they have identified any shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in the SHSs. Four-hundred and ninety-eight (498) answered in the affirmative indicating that they have identified some shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in SHSs while 1,581 gave a negative response indicating that they have not identified any shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in SHSs. The students who answered in the affirmative further suggested inadequate teaching and learning materials and inadequate infrastructure like classrooms and housing facilities to accommodate boarding students.

The next section (Section C) sought the views of the respondents on the comprehensive review of the Double Track Policy in Ghana; challenges, prospects and perceived successes on the quality of education at the SHS level. The first question in this section found out from the students their general views on the double track policy. Specifically, the students were asked to indicate whether the double track policy is a good policy. Responses to this question are captured in Figure 4:27.
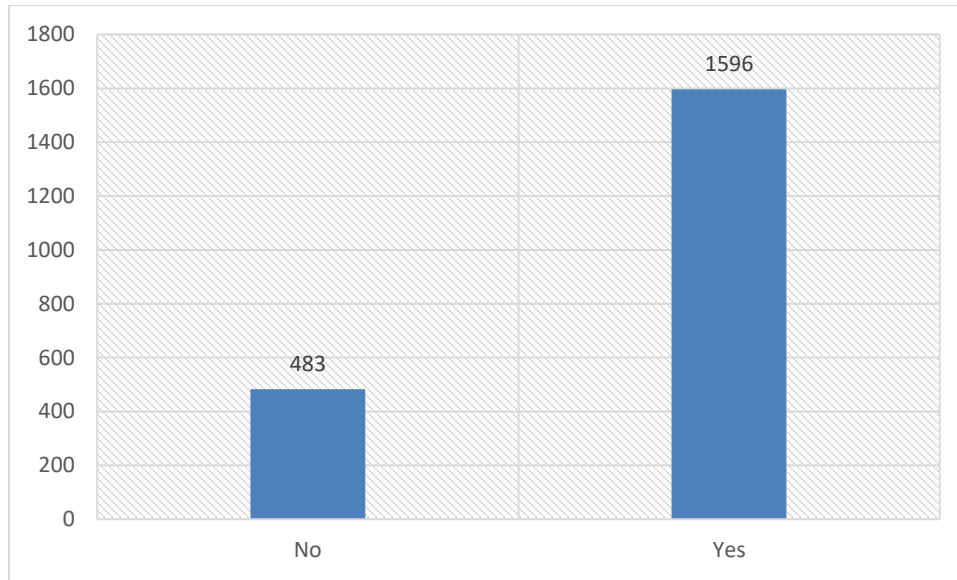
Figure 4.27: Views of Students on the Double Track Policy

Figure 4.27 represents the responses of students on whether the double track policy is a good policy. One thousand, five-hundred and ninety-six (1,596) answered in the affirmative indicating that the double track policy is a good policy while 483 gave a negative response indicating that the double track policy is not a good policy. These responses indicated that the majority of the students in SHSs think that the double track policy is a good policy.

The second question in this section found out the students' views on the influence of the double track policy on enrolment. Their responses to this question are also captured in Figure 4.28.
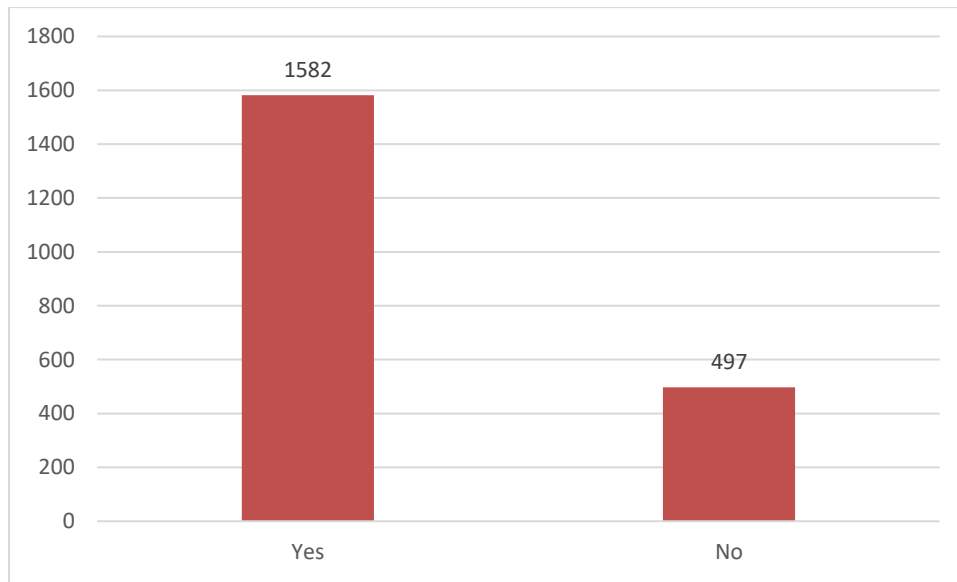
Figure 4.28: Influence of Double Track Policy on Enrolment

Figure 4.28 represents students' views on whether the double track policy has influenced enrolment. One thousand, five-hundred and eighty-two (1,582) answered in the affirmative indicating that the double track policy has influenced enrolment while 497 gave a negative response indicating that the double track policy has not influenced enrolment. These responses indicated that the double track policy has had a major impact on student enrolment.

The third question in this section also sought the students' views on the influence of the double track policy on class size. Their responses to this question are captured in Figure 4.29.
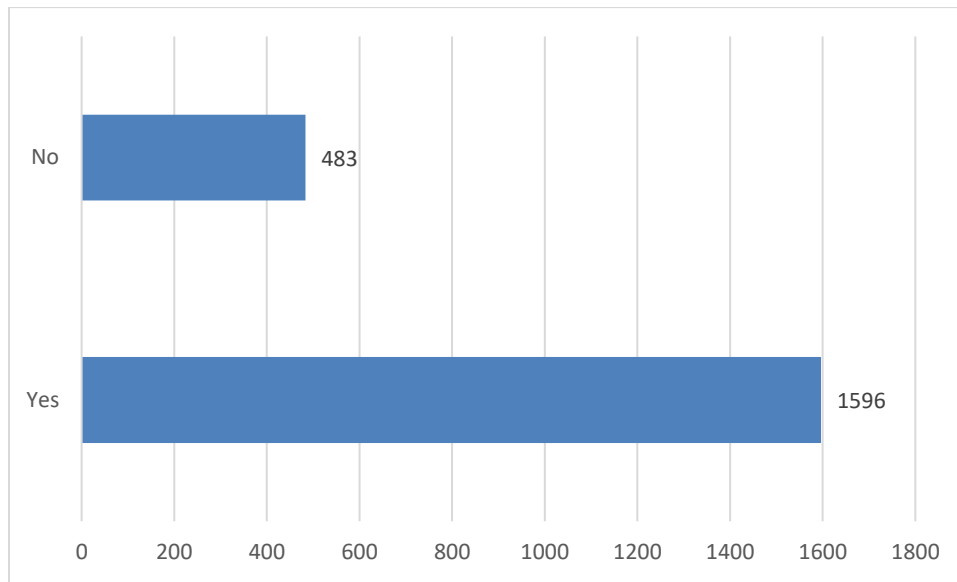
Figure 4.29: Influence of Double Track Policy on Class Size

Figure 4.29 represents teachers' views on the influence of the double track policy on class size. In answering this question, 1,596 answered in the affirmative indicating that the double track policy has influenced class sizes while 483 gave a negative response indicating otherwise. These responses from the students showed that the double track policy has significantly influenced class sizes in SHSs.

The next question in this section found out students' views on the influence of the double track policy on contact hours. Responses to this question are highlighted in Figure 4.30.
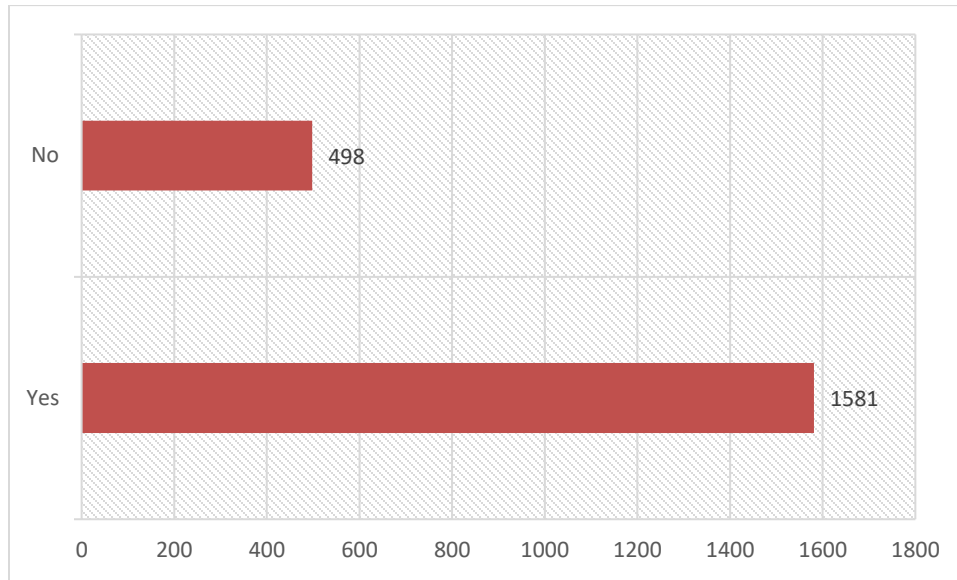
Figure 4.30: Influence of Double Track Policy on Contact Hours

Figure 4.30 represents students' views on the influence of the double track policy on contact hours. One thousand, five-hundred and eighty-one (1,581) answered in the affirmative indicating that the double track policy has influenced contact hours while 498 gave a negative response. Their responses are indications that the double track policy to a very large extent has influenced contact hours.

The researcher also found out students' views on the influence of the double track policy on school facilities. Figure 4.31 captures the views of the teachers on this statement.
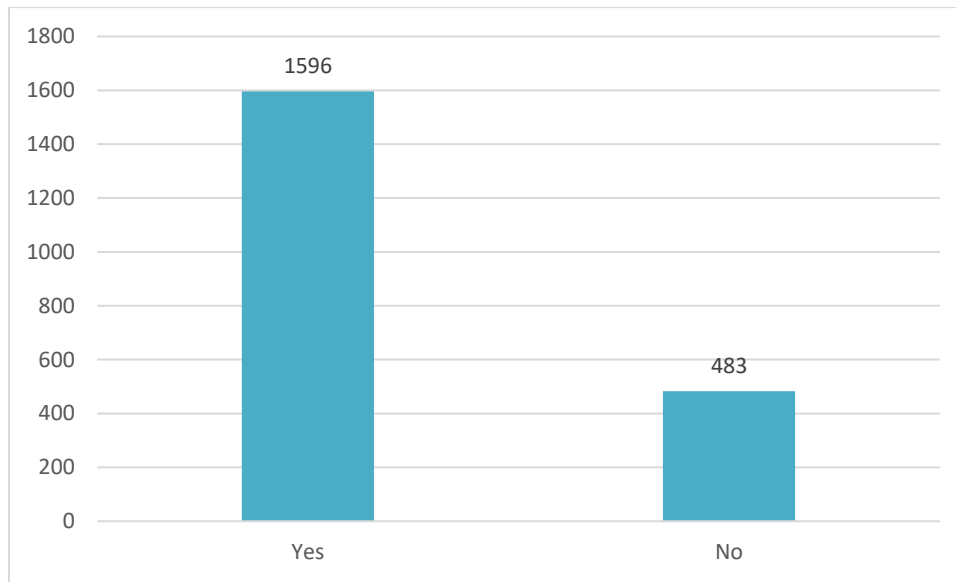
Figure 4.31: Influence of Double Track Policy on School Facilities

Figure 4.31 represents students' views on the influence of the double track policy on school facilities. One thousand, five-hundred and ninety-six (1,596) answered in the affirmative indicating that the double track policy has had some influence on school facilities while 483 gave a negative response indicating the reverse situation. These responses from the students showed that the double track policy has had some major influence on SHS facilities.

The researcher subsequently sought the students' overall assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation. Responses to this statement are also captured in Figure 4.32.
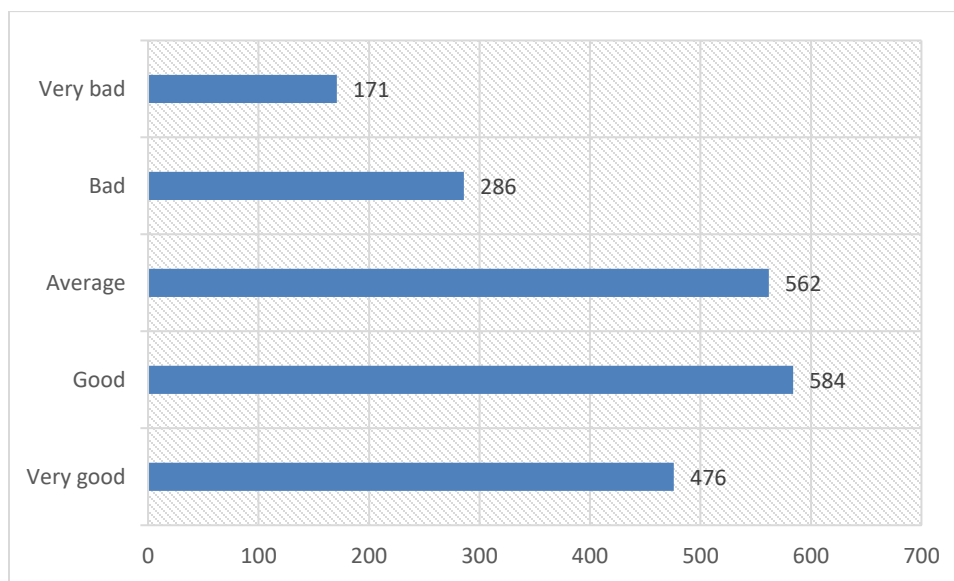
Figure 4.32: Assessment of Government's Performance with the Double Track Policy

Implementation

Figure 4.32 represents the responses from the students on the assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation. 22.9% indicated that government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been very good. 28.1% indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been good. In contrast, 27.0% indicated that government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been average. 13.8% indicated that government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been bad while 8.2% indicated government's performance with the double track policy implementation has been very bad. Responses from the students' perspective showed that government has done well with the implementation of the double track policy.

The researcher further asked the students whether they would say the double track policy has had any influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. Responses to this question are illustrated in Figure 4.33.
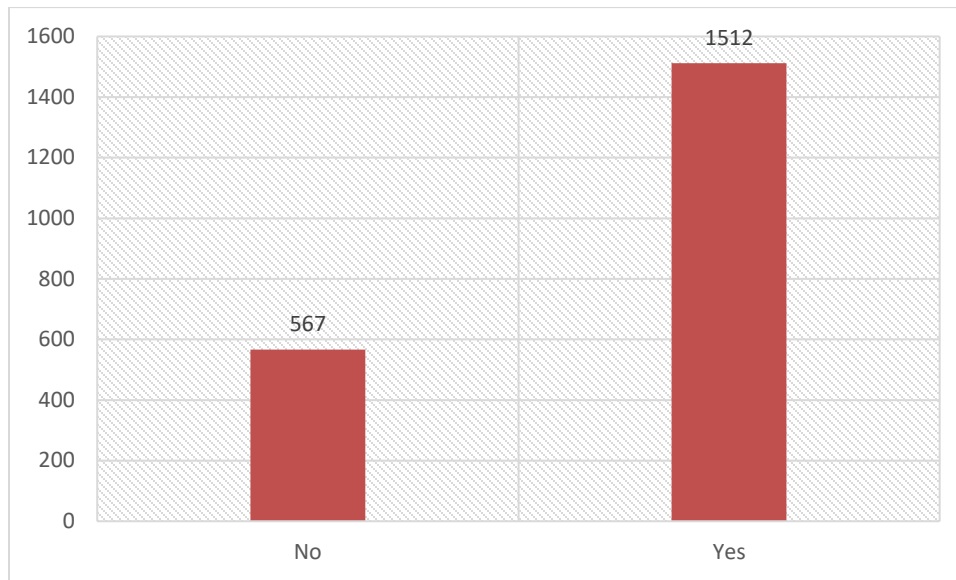
Figure 4.33: Influence of Double Track on Quality Education in Ghana

Figure 4.33 represents responses given by the respondents on what should be done about the double track policy. One thousand, five-hundred and twelve (1,512) answered in the affirmative while 567 of the respondents gave a negative response. These responses largely indicated that the double track policy from the perspective of students has largely influenced the quality of SHS education in Ghana.

The researcher then sought the views of the students on what should be done about the double track policy. The views of teachers in line with this is captured in Figure 4.34.
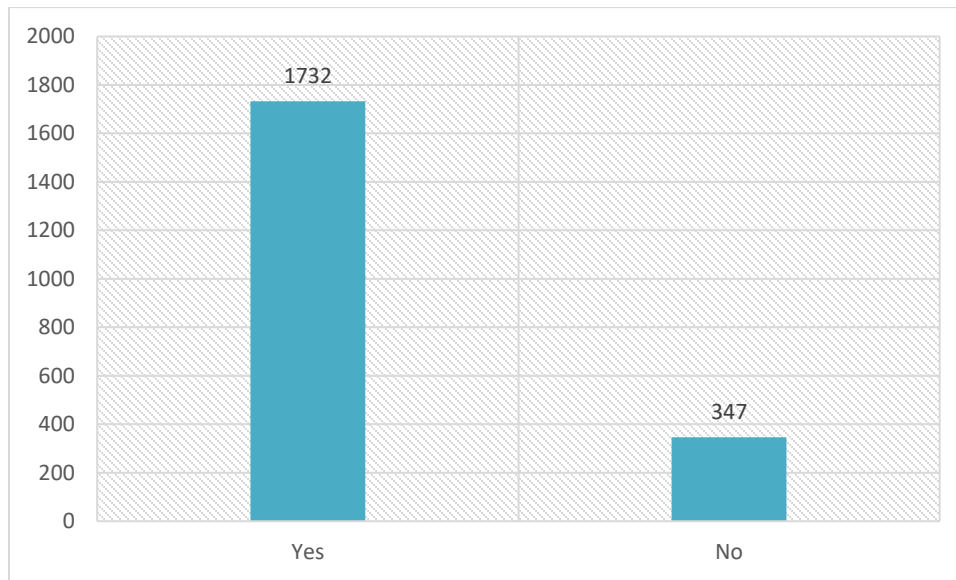
Figure 4.34: What Should be Done about the Double Track Policy

Figure 4.34 represents the responses of students on what should be done about the double track polity. One thousand, seven-hundred and thirty-two (1,732) indicated that the double track policy should be maintained while 347 indicated that the double track policy should be cancelled. Responses given by the students clearly showed that majority of the students in the SHSs are in favour of the continuous implementation of the double track policy.

The next section (Section D) sought the views of the respondents on the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the double track in SHSs. The first question in this section sought students' views on student's performance in the WASSCE in recent years. Responses to this question are highlighted in Figure 4.35.
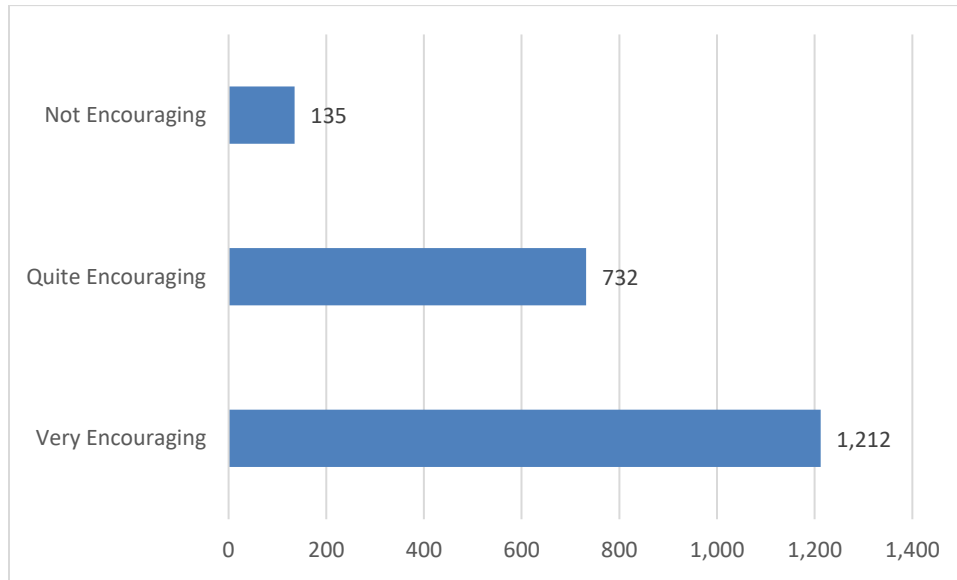
Figure 4.35: Views of Students on Students' Performance in the WASSCE in Recent Years

Figure 4.35 represents students' views on their performance in the WASSCE in recent years. One thousand, two-hundred and twelve (1, 212) indicated that students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years has been very encouraging. Seven-hundred and thirty-two (732) indicated that students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years has been quite encouraging while 135 indicated that students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years has not been encouraging. These responses clearly indicated that students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years has generally been very encouraging.
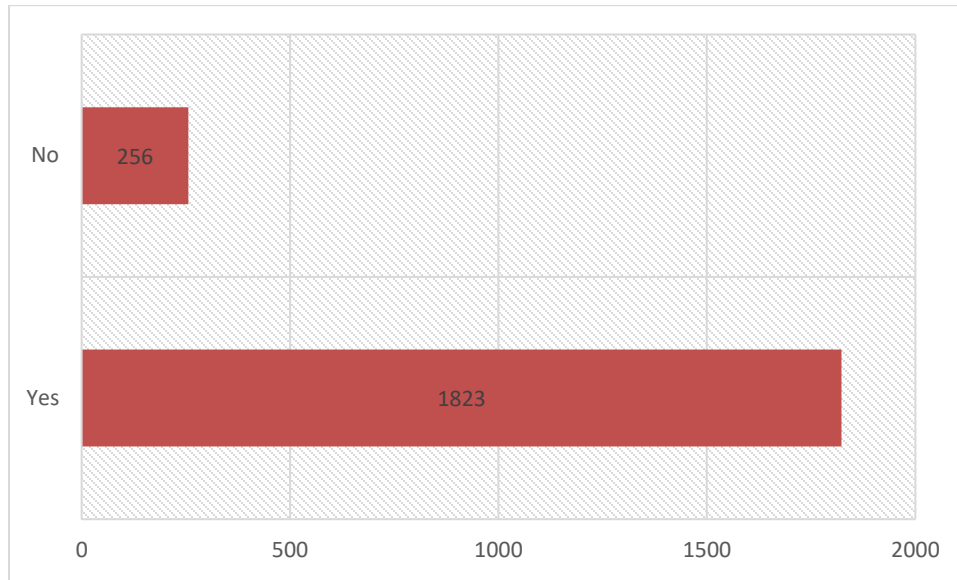
Figure 4.36: Double Track has Influenced Students' Performance in the WASSCE

Figure 4.36 represents the responses of the students on whether they think that the Double Track has influenced students' performance in the WASSCE. One thousand, eight-hundred and twenty-three (1,823) indicated that the Double Track has had some influence on student performance in the WASSCE while 256 indicated that the Double Track has had no influence on students' performance in the WASSCE. These responses largely indicated that the Double Track has had some significant influence on students' performance in the WASSCE.
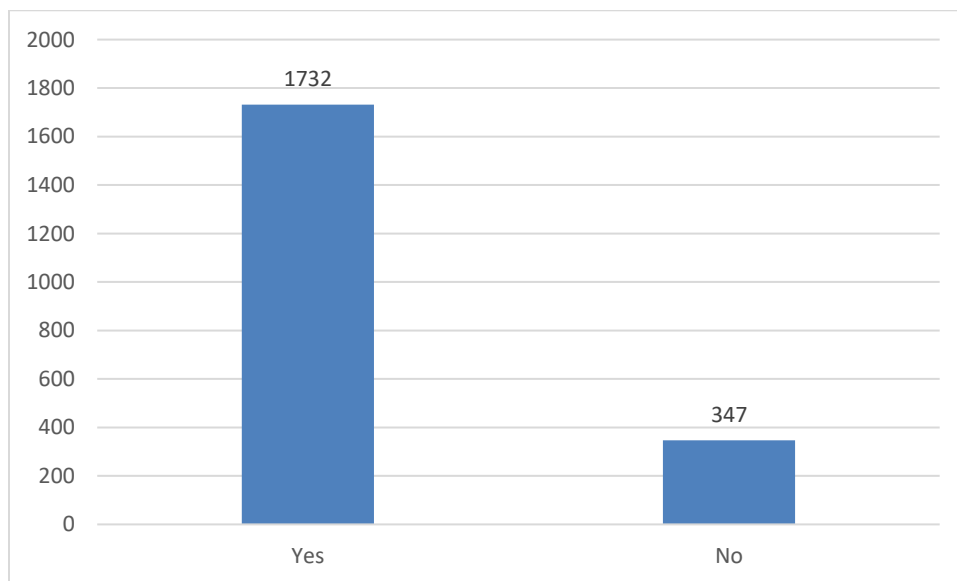
Figure 4.37: Performance Trend in Students' WASSCE Results Before and After the Introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track

Figure 4.37 represents the responses of the students on whether they have identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track. One thousand, seven-hundred and thirty-two (1,732) said "Yes" to this question while 347 said "No" to this question. Responses given by the students clearly indicated that there are some identifiable performance trends in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track.

The last section (Section E) sought the views of the students on the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education in SHSs. The first question in this section found out from the students whether they think there are any best practices associated with the Double Track. Responses to this question are seen in Figure 4.38.
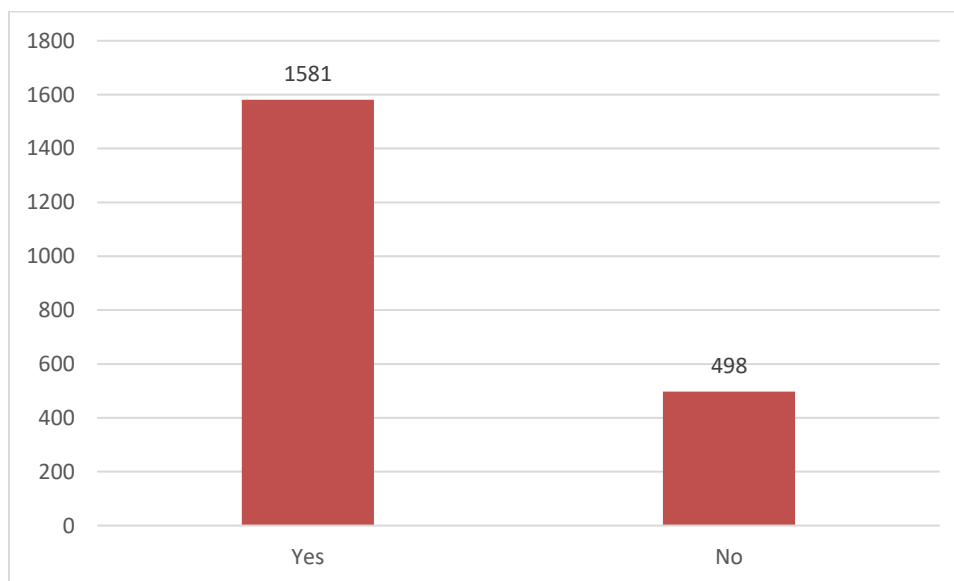
Figure 4.38: Best Practices Associated with the Double Track

Figure 4.38 represents the responses of the students on whether they think there are any best practices associated with the Double Track. One thousand, five-hundred and eighty-one

(1,581) answered in the affirmative while 498 gave a negative response. Their responses are indications that there are some best practices associated with the Double Track.

The next question in this section found out the students' views on whether the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana. Responses to this question are captured in Figure 4.39.
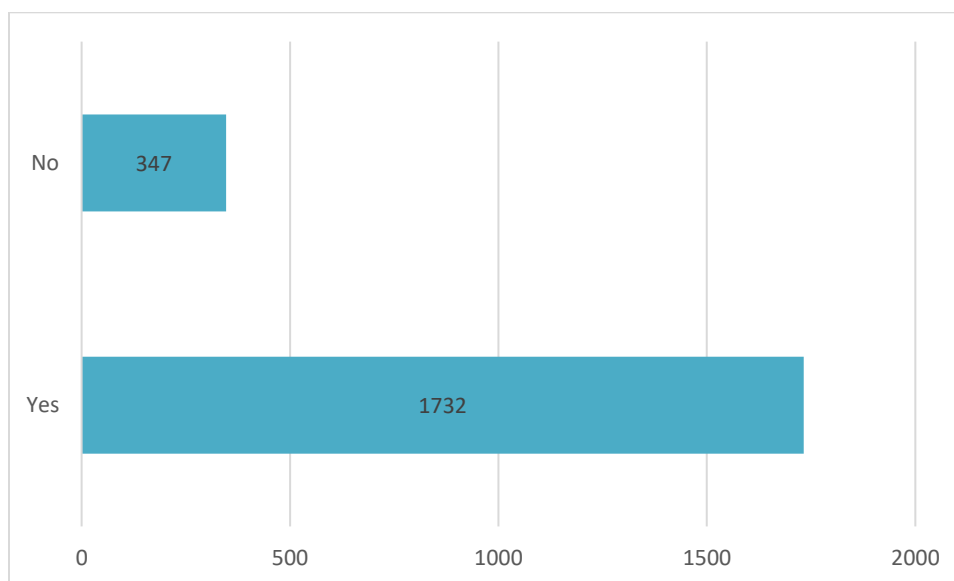
Figure 4.39: Influence of Best Practices of Double Track on Quality Education

Figure 4.39 represents the responses of the students on whether they think that the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana. One thousand, seven-hundred and thirty-two (1,732) answered in the affirmative while 347 gave a negative response. These responses largely indicated that the best practices associated with the Double Track has influenced quality education in Ghana.

The last question in this section found out the students' suggestions on best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana. Responses to this question are seen in Figure 4.40.
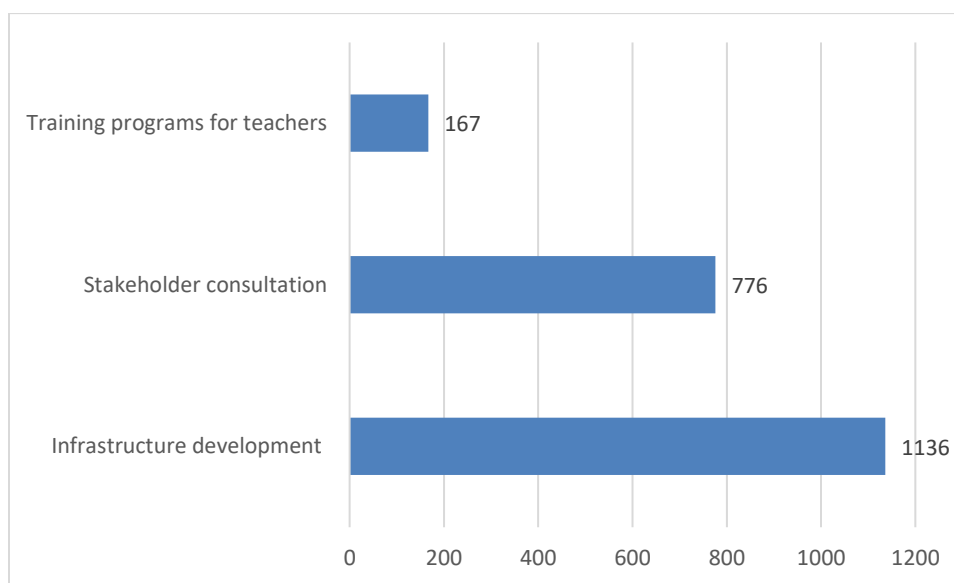
Figure 4.40: Students' Suggestions on Best Practices that can be Inculcated in the Double Track to Improve the Quality of SHS Education in Ghana

Figure 4.40 represents the responses of the students' suggestions on other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana. One thousand, one-hundred and thirty-six (1136) suggested the need for more infrastructure development. Seven-hundred and seventy-six (776) teachers suggested the need for stakeholder consultation while 176 suggested the need for training programmes and workshops for teachers.

4.4 RESPONSES FROM THE HEADMASTERS/MISTRESSES AND ASSISTANT HEADSMASTERS/MISTRESSES (INTERVIEW BASED)

There is one (1) headmaster/mistress and three (3) assistants in each of the selected SHSs. That is, the main headmaster or headmistress with three assistants. Hence, all the headmasters/mistresses (main and assistants) were interviewed. The interviews represented the qualitative data. In relation to the biographic data of the headmasters/mistresses, 18 headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses, representing 75.0% of the

sampled population, were male and six (6) headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses representing 25.0% of the population were female. On their age bracket of the participants, 14 headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses, representing 58.3% of the sampled population, fell between the age bracket of 41-50 years while ten headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses, representing 41.7% of the population, were above 50 years.

On the highest educational qualification of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses sampled for the study, ten headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses representing 83.3% of the sampled population held a Master's degree or Master of Philosophy (M Phil) as their highest educational qualification while two headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses, representing 16.7% of the sampled population, held a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) as their highest educational qualification.

In relation to the number of years they have been working in the educational sector, six of the headmasters/mistresses, representing 25.0% of the population, indicated that they have been working in the educational sector for about ten years. Ten (10) of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses, representing 41.7% of the population, indicated that they have been working in the educational sector for about 15 years while eight of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses, representing 33.3% of the population, indicated that they have been working in the educational sector for over 20 years.

Further questions outlined in the interview guides were based on the objectives of the study. Hence, the interview sessions were done in a manner that sought to capture the views of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses on issues relating specifically to the objectives of this study. The first objective of the study was to assess the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters'/mistresses' views on the quality of

teaching and learning in the SHSs. Reponses given by the participants, were captured under this broad themes as follows:

- **Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHSs**

In line with the first objective of the study, the researcher sought the views of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses on issues regarding the quality of teaching and learning in SHSs. The researcher first sought to find out whether the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses had any concerns regarding teaching and learning at the SHS level. In response, all the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses had some concerns regarding teaching and learning at the SHS level.

For instance, one head said:

"Well. yes, I do have some concerns regarding the semester duration of the double track, is not permitting effective teaching and learning because students do not spend much time before semester ends and sometimes, there are intermittent breaks during the academic year."

Another Head also said:

"I would say that because teachers are not allowed to use corporal punishment such as caning in high schools, the incidence of indiscipline on the part of some students has increased. For instance, lateness to class by some students, absenteeism and these are some of the things that tend to affect teaching and learning in the Senior High Schools."

The researcher then sought the views of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses on their general assessment of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools. In relation to this,

One head said:

"*I can assess that the teaching and learning in Senior High Schools is not encouraging these days. Though the teachers are doing their maximum best, but the system and measures put in place will not auger well for effective teaching and learning.*"

One head added:

"Well… if the researcher should ask me my personal assessment … I would say it is not encouraging. There is more that needs to be done with regards to teaching and learning on both the side of students and teachers."

The researcher further sought the views of the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses on whether they would say there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs. In response to this question, all the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters'/mistresses' answers revealed that teaching and learning in Senior High Schools is not as effective as it ought to.

For instance, one head said:

"*Yes, there is effective teaching and learning in Senior High Schools. Teachers are doing their best but as I mentioned earlier, the Double Track is not allowing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. For instance, the long breaks."*

One assistant head added:

"The Double Track does not allow teachers to fully complete the syllabus which largely affects the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools."

The researcher then asked the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses whether they have identified any shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning. In response to this question, all the headmasters/mistresses and their assistants revealed that they have identified some shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning.

For instance, one assistant head said:

"*Yes, there are shortfalls. Due to the free Senior High School and its double track policy, there is, for instance, high enrolment. The students' ratio is more than that of the teachers' ratio and that will not permit effective teaching and learning."*

Another assistant headmaster added:

"Well, I would say that students do not spend much time in a particular semester because the next track would be coming in, therefore, they have to vacate early and make way for them. Also, the facilities and logistics in the schools may not permit this huge number of student population in the school for effective teaching and learning."

- **Double Track and Quality of Education at the SHS Level**

In line with the second objective of the study, the researcher sought the views of the headmasters/mistresses and their assistants on issues regarding the comprehensive review of the Double Track in Ghana; challenges, prospects and perceived successes on quality education at the SHS level. The researcher first sought to find out whether the respondents think the double track policy is a good policy. In response, all the respondents revealed that they did not think the double track policy is a good policy.

For instance, one headmistress said:

"I think the double track policy is not a good policy at all. Due to the fact that teachers are over-burdened. Even though teachers are asked to teach on one particular track, some teachers teach more than one track."

Another headmaster added:

"Well, the student population puts pressure on the teachers and the facilities that they will be using for teaching and learning. Therefore, the double track policy is not a good policy at all."

The researcher then sought to find out views of the headmasters/mistresses and their assistants on the influence of the double track policy on enrolment, class size, contact hours, school facilities, and teachers. Responses given by the respondents are captured under the following sub-themes:

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- **Enrolment:**

On the influence of the double track policy on the enrolment, one headmaster said:

"For enrolment, the policy has made the students' ratio more than that of the teachers' ratio and this does not permit effective teaching and learning."

An assistant headmistress also said:

"The policy has led to an increase in enrolment, thereby, increasing the student population; thus, putting pressure on teachers and existing facilities."

- **Class Size:**

On the influence of the double track policy on class size, one headmistress said:

"The Free Senior High School and Double Track policy has brought about a very large class size. Some classes have as many as 70 students and this does not create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning."

Another headmaster added:

"This policy has led to unusual increase in class sizes and this is having a toll on teachers, and even the students as well."

- **Contact Hours:**

On the influence of the double track policy on contact hours, one headmistress said:

"For contact hours, I think it's okay, because sometimes, we have double periods, sometimes, one period and a period, is made up of an hour which is enough for teaching and learning at the Senior High School Level".

One assistant headmaster added:

"I think one of the few positive aspects of the Double Track policy is the contact hours. The duration attached to contact hours for lessons is good."

- **School Facilities:**

On the influence of the double track policy on school facilities, one headmaster said:

"*The available school facilities or current school facilities and the Double Track cannot match. The enrolment far outweighs the school facilities thereby, putting pressure on the facilities.*"

Another headmistress added:

"*The Free Senior High School and Double Track policy has brought much pressure on the school facilities due to the numbers.*"

- **Teachers:**

On the influence of the double track policy on teachers, one headmaster said:

"*Teachers are currently overwhelmed because of the high enrolment and student population.*"

Another headmistress added:

"*Current teacher to student ratio is not encouraging. Teachers now have to deal with twice or thrice the number of students they would have handled prior to this policy.*"

The researcher further sought the views of the headmasters/mistresses and their assistants on their overall assessment of government's performance with the Double Track policy implementation. In responding to this question, one headmaster said:

"*I would say that the government's performance with regards to the Double Track policy implementation is not encouraging. The government has to do more or better.*"

One assistant headmaster said:

"*Well… I think the government has done its best so far but there is still room for improvement.*"

The views of the headmaster were then sought on their assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment. In responding to this question, one headmaster said:

"I would say that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment has gone down."

One assistant headmaster said:

"Well… I think quality of education in Ghana at the moment is not the best."

The views of the respondents were further sought on whether the Double Track policy has had any influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. In response to this question,

One headmaster said:

"Yes, the Double Track policy has had some influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana because of high enrolment and inadequate number of teachers to match the burden."

One assistant headmistress said:

"Yes, the Double Track policy has had some influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana because of high numbers and insufficient logistics and facilities."

The researcher then sought the opinion of the respondents on Double Track policy in terms of its continuation or cancellation. In response to this question,

One headmaster said:

"I would say that the Double Track policy is not a good policy and it must be cancelled or phased out with immediate effect."

One assistant headmaster said:

"I think the Double Track policy has to be gradually phased out, out of the system because it looks like it is not helping."

The researcher asked the respondents to enumerate challenges they have identified with the implementation of the Double Track policy. In response, one headmistress said:

"I would say that the Double Track policy has brought hardships to students and teachers in terms of stress."

One assistant headmaster said:

"There are not adequate teaching and learning materials as well as facilities to efficiently run the double track."

The respondents were then asked to suggest ways by which challenges associated with the Double Track policy could be addressed. In response, one headmistress said:

"There is the need for more teachers to be posted to the various schools."

One assistant headmaster said:

"More facilities must be provided. Also, government has to ensure that there is adequate teaching and learning materials in all schools."

- **Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After Double Track:**

The researcher now sought the views of the respondents on the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the Double Track in SHSs. The first question posed to the respondents required their views on students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years. In responding to this,

One headmaster said:

"Well… I would say that students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years is very encouraging."

An assistant headmistress also stated:

" I would say that, in spite of all the challenges being faced currently in the SHSs, the students are doing comparatively better in the WASSCE in recent years."

The researcher then found out the views of the respondents on whether the Double Track has influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway and if yes, why so. In responding to this, the respondents shared varied opinions. For instance, one headmaster said:

" Well…. I think that the Double Track policy in a way, has influenced performance in the WASSCE. This is because in view of the long breaks in between the tracks, majority of the parents have found some alternatives of filling the gaps while the students are on break. For instance, most of these parents have hired the services of teachers to teach their wards privately at home during the break periods. And this has caused some significant improvement in the academic performance of these students and also reflecting in their WASSCE outcomes."

Another headmaster also said:

"On the influence of the Double Track on performance of students in the WASSCE, well…. personally, I should say that the results appear seemingly good because of examination malpractices and leakages. If you ask me, I would say, I do not trust the credibility of the results."

The researcher further found out the views of the respondents on whether they have identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track and what they think has contributed to this performance trend. In responding to this, the respondents revealed the following;

The respondents unanimously indicated that there have been some identifiable performance trends in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track. They indicated that the students who sat for the WASSCEs during the implementation of the Free SHS policy and the Double Track policy did comparatively better well as compared to students that wrote the WASSCE before especially in the core subjects. Moreover, the headmasters/mistresses and the assistant headmasters/mistresses of the selected schools revealed that from available data at the West African Examination Council (WAEC) from 2016 to 2022 showed a significant increase in rates of pass mark in the WASSCE since the inception of the Free SHS policy.

There was a significant increase in passing rates between the three years of results for Free SHS graduates in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and the previous two years' WAEC examination results, which were 2015 and 2016. Just 25.29% of applicants who took the May/June WASSCE in 2015 received an A1–C6 in mathematics, compared to 29.75% who received a D7–E8, and 37.17% who received an F9. 23.63% of students in Integrated Science received A1–C6, 39.19% received D7–E8, and 37.17% received F9. In the English language, 30.68% of applicants received D7–E8, 19.02% had F9, and 50.29% of candidates received A1–C6. In Social Studies, 51.84% received A1–C6, 25.20% received D7–E8, and 22.94% received F9. In 2016, in mathematics, 89,477 (38.10%) had F9, 65,007 (27.68%) had D7-E8, and 77,108 (32.83%) had A1-C6. In Integrated Science, approximately 113,933 students (48.48%) received an A1–C6, 75,938 (32.32%) received a D7–E8, and 42,519 (18.09%) received an F9. A total of 125,065 pupils (53.19%) received grades in English language from A1 to C6, 59,725 (25.40%) received D7–E8, and 46,595 (19.82%) received F9.

Results from the first batch of the Free SHS policy in 2020 revealed that 57.34% candidates got A1-C6 in English Language. For Mathematics, 65.71% had A1-C6 in 2020. In Integrated Science 52.53% candidates had A1-C6, while in Social Studies 64.31% candidates had A1-C6. Subsequently, results from the first batch of the Double Track policy in 2021 revealed that 54.08% candidates got A1-C6 in English Language. For Mathematics, 54.11% candidates had A1-C6 in 2021. In Integrated Science 65.70% candidates had A1-C6 in 2021 while 66.03% candidates had A1-C6 in 2021.

In 2022, 60.39% of the candidates had A1-C6 in English Language. In Mathematics, 61.39% candidates had A1-C6. In Integrated Science, 62.45% of the candidates scored A1-C6 while 71.51% had A1-C6 in Social Studies. In comparison to 2021, the students performed better in English Language, Mathematics, and Social Studies, with the exception of Integrated Science, where there was a decline in performance. Students who scored A1–C6 in mathematics also improved from 54.11 % in 2021 to 61.39% in 2022, while those who scored A1–C6 in English language increased from 54.08 % to 60.39% in 2022. The percentage of Social Studies students with an A1–C6 increased from 66.03% in 2021 to 71.51% in 2022. On the other hand, the performance for Integrated Science decreased from 65.70% in 2021 to 62.45% in 2022.

- **Best Practices of the Double-Track**

The researcher now sought the views of the respondents on best practices associated with the Double Track and how it has influenced the quality of education. In line with this, the views of the respondents were first sought on whether they have identified any best practices associated with the Double Track.

In responding to this, the views of the respondents varied. While some admitted to some best practices associated with the Double Track, other respondents did not see any best practices associated with the Double Track.

For instance, one headmaster said:

"Well… If you should ask me, I would say I haven't identified any best practices associated with the Double Track."

An assistant head also stated:

"With best practices, I would say that there are quite a number of freebies such as the supply of free text books to students, the supply of free uniform to the students, the payment of water and light bills for students, feeding the borders free with three hot meals daily and the day students with one (1) free hot meal daily, building of additional classrooms and the non-payment of school fees. Though I must admit, not all schools and students are currently benefiting from it, and well… I dare say that it is also not on the regular as promised."

The researcher now sought the views of the respondents on whether best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana and how. In responding to this, one headmaster said:

"Well… To a very large extent, I think when well implemented, it will positively impact the quality of education because these are basic requirements that students need to be in the right frame of mind to study and come out with their best. Best practices also in terms of infrastructure and resource provision to teachers will further enhance teaching and learning and quality education at large."

Another headmaster gave contrary view and said:

"Well…. Since I do not see any best practices associated with the Double Track, I cannot comment on these 'supposed' best practices have influenced the quality of education."

The respondents were finally asked to suggest other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana. In responding to this, one headmistress said:

"For me, I think the best practices would be to totally phase out the Double Track and the Free SHS policy all together. I do not think things gotten free or on a silver platter can be of any good quality… well… that's my opinion though."

Another headmistress said:

"Well…I think freebies like free uniforms and free feeding should be abolished and these monies rather channelled into more infrastructure building, resources for teaching and learning such as text books and also increment in the salaries of teachers."

4.5 INTERPRETATION

The discussion of the results from the study is based on the responses given by the respondents to questions asked by the researcher in line with the objectives of the study. The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which comprehensive review of Ghana's Double Track Policy, challenges, prospects and perceived successes in secondary schools can enhance the quality of education at the SHS level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta. Specifically, six public SHSs (Labone SHS, La Presbyterian SHS, Ghana Armed Forces Senior High Technical School, Accra Girls SHS, West Africa SHS, and Presbyterian Boys SHS) were investigated. The objectives were to assess the views of teachers, head masters/mistresses assistant headmasters/mistresses and students on the quality of teaching and learning in the SHSs, examine the effect of the Double Track on the quality of education at the SHS level, analyse the academic outcomes of students

before and after the introduction of the Double Track in SHSs and explore the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education. These objectives are further discussed below:

Objective 1: To Assess Views of Teachers, Headteachers and Students on the Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHSs.

The first objective of the study was to assess the views of teachers, headmasters/mistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses and students on the quality of teaching and learning in the SHSs. To achieve this objective, the researcher first found out from the respondents whether they have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level. The respondents (teachers, headmasters/mistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses and students) suggested some of their concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level. Some of the concerns suggested related to cases of classroom indiscipline on the part of some students, lateness to class by some students, absenteeism, and instances of some teachers missing their lesson periods which tend to affect teaching and learning in the SHSs. In giving their personal assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs, the respondents indicated that to a very large extent, the state of teaching and learning currently in SHSs is satisfactory and that there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs. The respondents, however, indicated that they have identified some shortfalls with regards to teaching and learning in the SHSs. The respondents suggested instances of inadequate teaching and learning materials, library facilities needed to accommodate the current number of students in SHSs, inadequate housing facilities, especially in the boarding schools to accommodate all the students on campus to ensure that students are always in school on time, also indiscipline acts among SHS students was suggested as a practice that interfered with effective teaching and learning in the SHSs.

Objective 2: To Examine the Effect of the Double Track on the Quality of Education at the SHS Level

The second objective of the study was to examine the effect of the Double Track on the quality of education at the SHS level. To achieve this objective, the researcher first found from the respondents whether the Double Track policy is a good policy. In response to this, majority

of the teachers and students indicated that the Double Track policy is a good policy. The researcher then sought the views of the teachers, headmasters/mistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses on the influence of the Double Track policy on enrolment, class size, contact hours, school facilities and teachers. On enrolment, both the teachers and headmasters/mistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses and students unanimously indicated that the Double Track policy has drastically increased student enrolment as compared to enrolment before the Free SHS policy. They indicated that the introduction of the Double Track policy is an effort by government to absorb the excess number of students in the SHSs and has divided the students' population into two; the green track and gold track to handle the situation with increased enrolment. These responses from the respondents corroborated Shields and Oberg's (2010) assertion that a multi-track school system results in an increase in school enrolment. On the influence of the Double Track policy on class size, all the teachers and headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses indicated that the Double Track policy has reduced the class size of students.

The teachers and heads indicated introduction of the Free SHS policy in the initial stages led to some exponential increase in the enrolment figures and, therefore, increasing the number of students in class. This situation caused congestions in the classrooms as most students could not even have desks to sit on with teachers also struggling to have the space required to teach the students. However, the introduction of the Double Track policy has led to a reduction in the class sizes since students are now rationed and do not all have to be in school at the same time. Hence, the respondents indicated that there has been a comparative reduction in class sizes. The teachers indicated that they now have less than 50 students in a class compared to about 70 to 90 in the previous years. Most of the classrooms have seen reduction in the number of students per class. The finding supports that of Inger (2014) who opines that compared to a year-round education, a multi-track school system is a strategy for overcrowded schools in decreasing class sizes.

Further, on the influence of the Double Track policy on contact hours, both the teachers and the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses unanimously indicated that the Double Track policy has increased contact hours. Since the Double Track only permits one group of students to be in school at a particular time, there is quite a limited time for teachers to cover the entire syllabus to make way for the other group. In view of this, lesson periods have been extended from 14gmt to 16gmt for teachers. This facilitates more communication between educators and learners. A teacher with two periods, for example, will have to teach for two hours straight, according to the respondents. While having enough instructional time is a desirable thing, poorly managed time might hinder effective teaching and learning. In addition, instructional time has been extended from six to eight hours per day with the implementation of the Double Track. This data corroborates Gorsuch's (2017) theory that longer instructional times are the outcome of a multitrack educational system.

On the influence of the Double Track policy on school facilities, the teachers, headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses revealed that the Double Track policy has resulted in some inadequacies in school facilities since the same infrastructure is serving a dual purpose by accommodating both tracks. Also, the respondents revealed that the Double Track has put pressure on the existing school facilities since the policy ensures maximum usage of all facilities on school campuses because at any point in time, one track is in school. Even though from economics point of view, it would be optimally utilised, this puts pressures on such facilities. For instance, there is always pressure on school facilities like desks, boarding facilities among others.

Consequently, on the influence of the Double Track policy on teachers, the respondents revealed that the Double Track policy has led to the recruitment of new teachers. Since it would be difficult for a single teacher to teach both tracks, more teachers were needed and the government has done that by recruiting more teachers so that teachers would not be deprived of their holidays. The teachers also revealed that the Double Track policy has resulted in the teachers having some flexibility since they are only in school based on the track to which they

have been assigned. In view of this, when a particular track's teacher has been assigned to is on vacation, the teacher has enough time to rest, rejuvenate, do more research and adequately prepare for his/her time to teach on the assigned track. The respondents further indicated that to a very large extent, government's performance with the Double Track policy implementation has been commendable.

On the views of the respondents' assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment, the respondents in their responses revealed largely that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is satisfactory. On the influence of the Double Track policy on the quality of SHS education in Ghana, the respondents revealed that the Double Track policy has had some influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana. In further expatiation of the influence of the Double Track policy on the quality of SHS education in Ghana, the respondents revealed that the Double Track has led to some inadequacies in teaching and learning materials needed to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Also, as a result of the Free SHS policy, some less endowed students with poor grades are getting admission under the policy. The teachers indicated that students who should have repeated the Basic Education Certificate Examination because they had poor grades ranging from 40 to 52 have all been offered admission and as the saying goes "garbage in garbage out" and as expected, such students are not likely to excel. The respondents, however, indicated that they are in favour of the continuous implementation of the Double Track policy. Hence the need for steps to be taken by the relevant stakeholders to ensure that the challenges associated with the policy are mitigated for its smooth running.

In citing the challenges associated with the Double Track policy, the respondents suggested the lack of adequate stakeholder consultation as a challenge because they indicated that they were not briefed adequately about the Double Track policy in the SHS. They also suggested inadequate provision of logistics and funds by the Government as a challenge. These included the needed amount of teaching and learning materials; they suggested the compromise on quality education as a challenge.

The respondents indicated that even though the Free SHS Policy is good, it is affecting the quality of education as a result of less endowed students with poor grades getting admission under the policy. The respondents suggested the challenge of most teachers is, possibly not completing the syllabus owing to the increased number of holidays as a result of the policy as well as issues regarding school facilities as a challenge of the Double Track policy since there is pressure on school facilities as a result of one track being in school at any point in time. These findings are in consonance with Ballinger (2015) who advocates for the need for educational change to be made collaboratively.

In suggesting the ways by which challenges associated with the Double Track policy could be addressed, the respondents suggested the need for increased stakeholder consultation, the need for provision of adequate funds and logistics by the government to address challenges associated with the Double Track policy implementation.

Objective 3: To Analyse the Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in SHSs.

The third objective of the study was to analyse the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the Double Track in SHSs. To achieve this objective, the views of the respondents (teachers and heads) sought on the performance in the WASSCE in recent years. Responses clearly indicated that students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years has generally been very encouraging in the SHSs. The respondents further indicated that the Double Track has had some form of influence on students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years. They indicated that the best WASSCE results in most subjects, especially the core subjects have been recorded across SHSs with the student batches of the Free SHS and subsequently Double Track policy.

The respondents unanimously indicated that there have been some identifiable performance trends in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the Free SHS and Double Track. They indicated that the students who sat for the WASSCE during the implementation of the Free SHS policy and the Double Track policy did very well as compared to students that wrote the WASSCE especially in the core subjects. In support of the responses from the headmasters/mistresses and assistant headmasters/mistresses of the selected schools, available data from the WAEC from 2016 to 2022 showed significant increase in rates of pass mark in the WASSCE since the inception of the Free SHS policy.

Comparisons between the subject-to-subject analyses of the two previous WAEC test years, 2015 and 2016, and the 2020, 2021, and 2022 outcomes of Free SHS graduates revealed a significant increase in passing rates. In 2015, only 25.29 percent of applicants who took the May/June WASSCE in mathematics received an A1–C6, while 29.75% received a D7–E8, and 37.17% received an F9. In Integrated Science, 23.63% received A1–C6, 39.19% received D7–E8, and 37.17% received F9. 50.29% of the candidates scored A1–C6 in English language, compared to 30.68% who scored D7–E8 and 19.02% who scored F9. 51.84% of students in social studies received A1–C6, 25.20% received D7–E8, and 22.94% received F9. A1–C6 was gained by 77,108 (32.83%) in mathematics in 2016, D7–E8 by 65,007 (27.68%), and F9 by 89,477 (38.10%). About 48.48% of students in Integrated Science, or 113,933 students, received an A1–C6, 32.32% received a D7–E8, and 18.09% received an F9. F9 was earned by 46,595 (19.82%), 59,725 (25.40%), and 125,065 pupils, or 53.19%, of the total, in the English language category.

Results from the first batch of the Free SHS policy in 2020 revealed that 57.34% candidates got A1-C6 in English Language. For Mathematics, 65.71% had A1-C6 in 2020. In Integrated Science 52.53% candidates had A1-C6 while in Social Studies 64.31% candidates had A1-C6. Subsequently, results from the first batch of the Double Track policy in 2021 revealed that 54.08% candidates got A1-C6 in English Language. For Mathematics, 54.11% candidates had A1-C6 in 2021. In Integrated Science, 65.70% candidates had A1-C6 in 2021 while 66.03% candidates had A1-C6 in 2021.

In 2022, 60.39% of the candidates had A1-C6 in English Language. In Mathematics, 61.39% candidates had A1-C6. In Integrated Science, 62.45% of the candidates scored A1-C6 while 71.51% had A1-C6 in Social Studies.

The pupils did better in English Language, Mathematics, and Social Studies in 2022 compared to 2021, with the exception of Integrated Science, where there was a decline in performance. Students with A1–C6 in English Language increased from 54.08 % in 2021 to 60.39% in 2022; similarly, students with A1–C6 in Mathematics saw a rise from 54.11 % in 2021 to 61.39% in 2022. In social studies, the percentage of students with A1–C6 increased from 66.03% in 2021 to 71.51% in 2022. For Integrated Science, on the other hand, performance decreased from 65.70% in 2021 to 62.45% in 2022.

Objective 4: Explore the Best Practices of the Double-Track on the Quality of Education.

The last objective in this study explored the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education in SHSs. The first question in this section found out from the respondents whether they have identified any best practices associated with the Double Track. Even though some respondents denied identifying any best practices associated with the Double Track. Some of the respondents went ahead to elaborate on some best practices associated with the Double Track. According to the respondents, the best practices of the Double Track include the supply of free text books to students, supply of free uniform to the students, the payment of water and light bills for students, feeding the borders free with three (3) hot meals daily and the day students with one (1) free hot meal daily, building of additional classrooms and the non-payment of school fees. On the question of whether the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana. The respondents revealed the best practices associated with the Double Track has somehow influenced quality of education in Ghana. For instance, the provision of free text books, helps the students with their studies and also gives them the opportunity to read ahead of lessons and do better in terms of their academics. In suggesting other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana; some respondents suggested the need for more stakeholder consultation, the need for government to ensure that all schools in Ghana

benefit from the free text books, uniforms, meals, the need for more infrastructure development, career development training programmes and workshops for teachers while others suggested the need for government to totally phase out the Double Track, Free SHS and its associated freebies in its totality.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter of the study analysed data collected from the field. The chapter discussed the results in line with the objectives of the study. Tables and figures were used to display data gathered from the students, teachers and headmasters/mistresses of the six (6) public SHSs located in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarises the key findings of the study based on the results from data gathered. The chapter also presents conclusions of the study based on findings, recommendations to the Ministry of Education and GES, as well as suggestions for further studies on the comprehensive review of the Double Track Policy in Ghana, challenges, prospects and perceived successes of SHS education in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta in the Greater Accra Region.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to comprehensively review the double-track policy in Ghana; taking into cognisance the challenges, prospects and success of the policy at the Senior High School level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta. To achieve this, some specific objectives were set. The first objective of the study was to assess the views of teachers, headmasters/mistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses and students on the quality of teaching and learning in the SHSs. The second objective was to examine the effect of the Double Track on the quality of education at the SHS level. The third objective was to analyse the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the double-track in SHSs. The last objective was to explore the best practices of the Double Track on the quality of education.

Key findings from the study based on the set objectives revealed that the state of teaching and learning currently in SHSs is satisfactory and that there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs in spite of some cases of indiscipline, absenteeism, lateness, inadequate study materials among others. Generally, teachers in the SHSs agreed that the Double Track policy is a good policy. However, the Double Track policy has had some positive and negative influences on

various aspects of the SHS education which include enrolment, class size, contact hours, school facilities, and teachers. Findings revealed that the Double Track policy has drastically increased student enrolment, reduced the class sizes, increased contact hours, put some pressure on the existing school facilities and has led to the recruitment of new teachers. Findings revealed that to a very large extent, government's performance with the Double Track policy implementation so far has been commendable.

Findings also revealed that the quality of education in Ghana at the moment is satisfactory and that the Double Track policy has had some influence on quality of SHS education in the La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta municipalities. More importantly, findings revealed that the Double Track has led to some inadequacies in teaching and learning materials needed to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Shields and Oberg's (2010) have indicated in their study that a multi-track school system results in an increase in school enrolment thereby resulting in some inadequacies in teaching and learning materials needed to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Also, as a result of the Free SHS Policy, some less endowed students with poor grades are getting admission under the policy which in the long run will affect the quality of students' outcomes. Challenges, however, associated with the Double Track policy includes the lack of adequate stakeholder consultation and inadequate provision of logistics and funds by the government.

Findings on the academic outcomes of students before and after the introduction of the Double Track in SHSs revealed that the best WASSCE results in most subjects especially the core subjects have been recorded across SHSs with the student batches of the Free SHS and subsequently Double Track policy. Available data from the WAEC from 2016 to 2022 showed significant increase in rates of pass mark in the WASSCE since the inception of the Free SHS policy. A comparative subject-to-subject analysis of the last three years WAEC's examination before Free SHS, that is 2015 and 2016, and the three years of results of Free SHS graduates in 2020, 2021 and 2022 showed a big leap in passing rates.

Findings on best practices associated with the Double Track revealed the supply of free text books to students, the supply of free uniforms to the students, payment of water and light bills for students, feeding the borders free with three hot meals daily and the day students with one (1) free hot meal daily, building of additional classrooms and the non-payment of school fees. Findings also revealed that the best practices associated with the Double Track have had some influence on quality education in Ghana. For instance, the provision of free text books helps the students with their studies and also gives them the opportunity to read ahead of lessons and do better in terms of their academics. According to Shields and Oberg (2010), educators bear the responsibility of fostering collaboration among all stakeholders within their communities, with the aim of promoting the well-being of students and society at large. According to Gold (2012), the implementation of a multi-track schooling system has the potential to enhance teaching and learning through the provision of smaller class sizes and increased teacher-to-student ratios. To further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana, findings revealed the following suggestions; the need for government to ensure that all schools in Ghana benefit from the free text books, uniforms and meals. The need for more infrastructure development, career development training programmes and workshops for teachers and the need for government to totally phase out the Double Track, Free SHS and its associated freebies in its totality.

5.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is plausible to state that the implementation of the Double Track policy has assisted more students to enrol into SHS, hitherto they would have been in the house. However, the policy has been confronted with major challenges as revealed in the study, which is having some influences on the quality of SHS education in the country at the moment. Basically, the development of any educational policy 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 government of Ghana, under the leadership of the NPP, rolled out the Free SHS Policy, as a social intervention initiative with

the overarching aim of improving equity and accessibility to educational services and in the long run enhancing the socio-economic status of the people, and enhancing national development.

The implementation of the policy has been rapid owing to the campaign promises made by the NPP during the 2012 elections. To ensure the policy's success, however, the current political leadership and policymakers need to pay attention to the many different voices in and outside their parties, especially key stakeholders like the teachers in these SHSs. The policy arena and decision-making processes have become complex, in which players who are not necessarily from an elected regime or members of a ruling party, are present and partake in policy dialogue. The poor consultation in the policy's formulation and implementation level coupled with the weak administrative structures and infrastructural inadequacies at the various implementing institutions are among many factors which are also responsible for the gaps. Therefore, it can be concluded from the study that the process of the Free SHS Policy adoption and implementation took place at the top or at the bureaucratic level and thereafter, policies are cascaded to the bottom for implementation.

The adoption and implementation of the policy have been a political tool to assure electorate of the capability of the ruling NPP to fulfil its campaign promises. The challenges so far are very fundamental and critical to determining the quality of the education in Ghana. Hence, there is a need for concerted efforts, through broader consultation, forging partnerships among state, school functionaries, voluntary agencies, parents and other stakeholders to bring about the desired results as far as Free SHS and by extension the Double Track is concerned.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to the leadership of Ghana's educational sector (Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service).

1.   It is recommended that headmasters/mistresses, assistant headmasters/mistresses and teachers are involved in the development of educational policies since they are the ones at the grassroots to ensure the successful implementation of the policy, hence, the need for more stakeholder consultations on the Double Track policy going forward. Educational policies should not be pushed down to teachers from the top to implement but rather they need to be involved in decisions that are derived from those policies. If teachers are adequately involved, they will be motivated to ensure its successful implementation in their various schools.

2.   There is the need for the Ministry of Education and the GES to ensure that government has adequate provision of resources and logistics for successful implementation of its policies like the Double Track. Hence government should rethink its measures to ensure equitable distribution of students across the institutions. Furthermore, government should also take measures to improve on the infrastructure of the schools to aid effective teaching and learning. Resources such as adequate and qualified number of staff, adequate financial support, equipment and infrastructure must be provided for better policy implementation.

3.   The study also recommends that guidelines on the policy should be developed and communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Social policy implementation brings about change; hence the need for effective communication. Poor communication of the policy directives and procedures affects the "support from the stakeholders, leads to less ownership of the policy by the stakeholders, lack of commitment on the part of the implementers, no collaboration and cooperation, less accurate and consistent approach towards the completion of the policy goals."

4.   Also, there should be provision for adequate monitoring of the implementation process. There should be direct monitoring in the form of inspection controls. Quality Assurance Unit should be well equipped in every regional office of the GES to ensure that processes are in line with the policy directives. Although head teachers of schools are at the implementing level, their influence of how to make the policy more effective is still relevant.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In light of the results and findings of the study, it is recommended that further studies are conducted on the comprehensive review of the Double Track of SHS education regarding challenges, prospects and perceived successes across the country particularly in deprived areas to generalise the findings on the comprehensive review of the Double Track regarding challenges, prospects and perceived successes of SHS education in Ghana. It is further suggested that studies are carried out to ascertain the comprehensive review of the Free SHS policy concerning challenges, prospects and perceived successes on private SHSs as well.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

It is undeniable that every study inevitably possesses inherent limitations. Nevertheless, scholars persistently strive to surmount these limitations to derive the most rational inferences feasible. The study's potential audience, setting and theoretical framework are subject to certain limitations. The researcher desired to broaden the scope of the study to enhance its reliability. However, the researcher encountered limitations that hindered their ability to do so. Furthermore, the investigation was subject to limitations imposed by institutional and geographical factors. This study employed a limited range of methodologies. The researcher exclusively focused on subjects that are directly pertinent to public policy within the realm of education, in a theoretical context. To gather data pertaining to the subject matter, the researcher employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, including the utilisation of questionnaires and conducting in-depth interviews with pre-established inquiries. Also, the study is currently limited by statistical techniques that are not robust enough to detect the pre-and-post double-track achievement differences. Other variables that could affect the responses of both students and teachers were not acknowledged.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This research was presented in five chapters. Chapter one of the study which is the introductory phase of the study chapter offered a background understanding of comprehensive

review of Ghana's double track, challenges, prospects and perceived successes on the quality of education at the SHS level. The problem was stated in this chapter, with research objectives and questions highlighted. The chapter also presented the significance of the study, the delimitations, definition of key terms as well as a summary of how the subsequent chapters were organised.

The second chapter dealt with the review of related literature to the work. The review of the related literature was to provide the needed insight as well as theoretical background knowledge related to the research topic. This chapter discussed theories relating to educational policies and quality education. The chapter also reviewed the key concepts of the study. Furthermore, the chapter reviewed works done by other researchers on various educational policy interventions, the Free SHS Policy, the Double Track and how these education policies and interventions were made in relation to a comprehensive review of the Double Track Policy's challenges, prospects and perceived successes of education at the SHS level.

Chapter three looked at the research methodology that was used in this study. The chapter presented detailed information relating to the research approach, research paradigm, population, sampling, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of instruments and ethical considerations.

The fourth chapter of the study analysed data collected from the field. The chapter discussed the results in line with the objectives of the study. Tables and figures were used to display data gathered from the students, teachers and headmasters of the six (6) public SHSs located in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

Chapter five summarised the key findings of the study and presented conclusions of the study based on findings. Recommendations were then made to the Ministry of Education and GES, on how the Double Track can be improved to enhance the quality of SHS education in Ghana. Suggestions were also made on further studies that can be conducted on the comprehensive review of the Double Track Policy, challenges, prospects and perceived successes of SHS education in Ghana. Limitations encountered in the course of undertaking this research were also highlighted.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2023/09/06

Dear Mr D Kwadamah

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2023/09/06 to 2028/09/06

Ref: **2023/09/06/61934704/45/AM**
Name: Mr D Kwadamah
Student No.:61934704

Researcher(s): Name: Mr D Kwadamah
E-mail address: 61934704@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +233202969676

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof. V.J. Pitsoe
E-mail address: pitsovj@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0124294436

Name: Dr. D. K. Vulley
E-mail address: divine.vulley@bog.gov.gh
Telephone: +233 244967729

Title of research:

The Double Track System's Effects On Senior High School Education In Selected Schools In Greater Accra, Ghana

Qualification: PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2023/09/06 to 2028/09/06.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2023/09/06 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:
1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevantguidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2028/09/06**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2023/09/06/61934704/45/AM** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof Mpine Makoe
EXECUTIVE DEAN
qakisme@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

ANEXURE B: INFORMED PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

UNISA | college of education

Dear Sir/madam,

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

My research topic is: **Comprehensive Review of the Double-Track Policy in Ghana; Challenges, Prospects and Perceived Success**

Date: 22nd August, 2023

 The Headmistress
Labone SHS

Dear Madam,

I am Divine Kwadamah doing a research under the supervision of Prof. V.J Pistoe, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at the University of South Africa. As a researcher, I invite you to participate in a study entitled "**Comprehensive Review of the Double-Track Policy in Ghana; Challenges, Prospects and Perceived Success**"

This study aims to explore "to what extent can Ghana's double track in secondary schools enhance the quality of education at the senior high school level in the municipalities of La Dade- Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta?"

Your school has been selected because you have expressed willingness to participate in the study.

The study will involve collection of biodata information about you, your teachers and students. There will be telephone, personal individual semi-structured interviews with your staff and this is to help the researcher to gain insight into your views about the double track effects on Senior High School education.

The interview will last for about 30 to 60 minutes and it will be tape recorded. The information obtained will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research purposes only

The benefits of this study are that the research findings will contribute to the existing body of literature on public policy implementation in Ghana, as well as exploring sustainable approaches to improving the efficacy of the policies. The study will also serve as a valuable reference material for academicians and researchers. The study findings will serve to identify additional areas of research that can stimulate the generation of knowledge by other scholars.

Finally, it will offer valuable feedback and insight to educators, senior high administrators, and educational stakeholders in Ghana regarding sustainable strategies for enhancing teaching and learning within the context of the double track policy.

There will be no incentives for participation in the research. There may be follow-up interviews if the need be. Feedback procedure will entail researcher checking the transcript and report of the interview and whereby they will be given back to the Headmasters/Mistresses, Deputy Headmasters/Mistresses and teachers of the senior high schools.

Yours sincerely,

Divine Kwadamah

PhD Candidate

ANNEXURE C: PERMISSION LETTER TO COLLECT DATA

<div align="right">
P.O Box MD 897
Madina – Accra
11th September, 2023
</div>

The Headmaster
Presbyterian Senior High School
P.O. Box LG 98
Legon – Accra

Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA IN YOUR INSTITUTION

I am a PhD Candidate pursing a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management Studies at the University of South Africa. In partial fulfilment of my thesis, I am currently undertaking a research on the topic "**Comprehensive Review of the Double-Track Policy in Ghana; Challenges, Prospects and Perceived Success.**"

I would be grateful if I could be permitted to conduct an interview to some selected members of your staff and administer questionnaires to some of your students.

The study would require the authorised staff and students to answer a few questions on the above-mentioned topic through interview and administration of questionnaires.

The data collected would be strictly used for academic purposes only and the respondents are assured of anonymity and confidentiality.

I would be grateful and appreciate it so much if my letter would be accorded the needed attention and consideration it deserves.

Counting on your usual co-operation.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
-Signed-
Divine Kwadamah (PhD Candidate)
0244-431320
0202-969676

ANNEXURE D: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear Respondent, I would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes of your time to answer the following questions. The study seeks *to Comprehensively review the double-track policy in Ghana; taking into cognisance the challenges, prospects and success of the policy at the Senior High School level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta.* I would like to assure you that information collected would be used strictly for academic purpose only and any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please tick or provide your answer where applicable.

SECTION A: Biodata of Respondents

1.   Gender

a.   Male   [ ]   b. Female   [ ]

2.   Age

a.   18-30 years   [ ]   b. 31-40 years   [ ]

c. 41-50 years   [ ]   d. Above 50 years   [ ]

3.   Highest Educational Qualification

a.   Diploma/HND   [ ]   b. Bachelor's Degree   [ ]

b.   Master's Degree   [ ]   d. Other (please

specify)…………………

4.   How many years have you been working in the education sector?

a.   Less than a year   [ ]   b. 1-5years   [ ]

c.   6-10 years   [ ]   d. Over 10 years   [ ]

SECTION B: <u>General Questions on the Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHS</u>

5.   Do you have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, what are your concerns?..

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6.   What is your general assessment of teaching and learning in SHSs?

a.   Excellent [ ]b. Very good [ ] c. Good [ ] d. Average [ ] e. Bad [ ] f. Very bad [ ]

7.   As a teacher would you say there is effective teaching and learning in SHSs?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

8.   Have you identified any shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, enumerate further………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION C: <u>Questions on the Effect of the Double Track on the Quality of Education</u>
<u>at the Senior High School Level.</u>

9.   Do you think the Double Track policy is a good policy?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

 What are your views on the influence of the Double Track policy on the following:

i.   Enrolment:………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………

ii.   Class size:…………………………………………………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………….

iii.   Contact Hours:………………………………………………………………

....

....

iv.   School facilities:…………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………

v.   Teachers:……………………………………………………………………

……...

....

10.   What would be your overall assessment of government's performance with the Double Track policy implementation?

a.   Very good [ ]   b. Good [ ]   c. Average [ ]   d. Bad [ ] e. Very bad [ ]

11.   What is your assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment?

a.   Very good [ ]   b. Good [ ]   c. Average [ ]   d. Bad [ ] e. Very bad [ ]

12.   Would you say the Double Track policy has had any influence on the quality of Senior High School education in Ghana?

a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, please elaborate further……………………………………………………………

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13.   What is your opinion on the Double Track policy?

a.   Should be cancelled [ ]   b. Should be maintained   [ ]

c. Other (please specify…………………………………………………………..

14.   Please enumerate challenges you have identified with the implementation of the Double Track policy.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

………

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15.   Please, suggest ways by which challenges associated with the Double Track policy could be addressed.

………

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………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION D: <u>Questions on Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in Senior High Schools.</u>

16.   What are you views of students performance in the WASSCE in recent years ?

a.   Very encouraging [ ]   b. Quite encouraging   [ ]   c. Not encouraging [ ]

17.   Do you think that the Double Track has influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, why so?..

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

18.   Have you identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the free SHS and Double Track?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

SECTION E: <u>Questions on Best Practices of the Double-Track on the Quality of Education.</u>

19.   Have you identified any best practices associated with the Double Track?

a.   Yes [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, please cite these best practices………………………………………………………….

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

20.   Would you say that the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, how?..

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

21.   Please suggest any other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of Senior High School education in Ghana.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………………
.

Thanks for your cooperation……

ANNEXURE E: STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES

Dear Respondent, I would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes of your time to answer the following questions. The study seeks *to Comprehensively review the double-track policy in Ghana; taking into cognisance the challenges, prospects and success of the policy at the Senior High School level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta*. I would like to assure you that information collected would be used strictly for academic purpose only and any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please tick or provide your answer where applicable.

SECTION A: Biodata of Respondents

1.   Gender

b.   Male   [ ]   b. Female   [ ]

2.   Age

a. 15-17 years   [ ]   b. 18-20 years   [ ]

c. 20-22 years   [ ]   d. Above 22 years   [ ]

3.   Which level are you in?

a. Form 1   [ ]   b. Form 2   [ ]   c. Form 3   [ ]

SECTION B: <u>General Questions on the Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHS</u>

4.   Do you have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

5.   What is your general assessment of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?

a.   Excellent [ ]b. Very good [ ] c. Good [ ] d. Average [ ] e. Bad [ ] f. Very bad [ ]

6.   As a student would you say there is effective teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

7.   Have you identified any shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, enumerate further………...

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION C: <u>Questions on the Effect of the Double Track on the Quality of Education at the Senior High School Level.</u>

8.   Do you think the Double Track policy is a good policy?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

 Do you think the Double Track policy has affected the following?

Enrolment   a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

Class Size   a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

Contact hours   a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

School facilities   a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

9.   What would be your overall assessment of government's performance with the Double Track policy implementation?

a.   Very good [ ]   b. Good   [ ]   c. Average   [ ]   d. Bad [ ]   e. Very bad   [ ]

10.   What is your assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment?

a.   Very good [ ]   b. Good   [ ]   c. Average   [ ]   d. Bad [ ]   e. Very bad   [ ]

11.   Would you say the Double Track policy has had any influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana?

a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

12.   What is your opinion on the Double Track policy?

a.   Should be cancelled [ ]   b. Should be maintained   [ ]

c. Other (please specify……………………………………………………………..

SECTION D: <u>**Questions on Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in Senior High Schools.**</u>

13.   What are you views of students performance in the WASSCE in recent years ?

a.   Very encouraging [ ]   b. Quite encouraging   [ ]   c. Not encouraging   [ ]

14.   Do you think that the Double Track has influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

15.   Have you identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the free SHS and Double Track?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

SECTION E: <u>**Questions on Best Practices of the Double-Track on the Quality of Education.**</u>

16.   Do you think there are any best practices associated with the Double Track?

a.   Yes [ ]   b. No   [ ]

17.   Would you say that the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana?

a.   Yes   [ ]   b. No   [ ]

18.   Please suggest any other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thanks for your cooperation…

ANNEXURE F: INTERVIEW GUIDE

This interview guide seeks to *Comprehensively review the double-track policy in Ghana; taking into cognisance the challenges, prospects and success of the policy at the Senior High School level in the municipalities of La Dade-Kotopon, Ayawaso North, Madina and Adenta.*. I would like to assure you that information collected would be used strictly for academic purpose only and any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: Biodata of Respondents

1. Gender

2.   Age

3.   Highest Educational Qualification

4.   How many years have you been working in the education sector?

SECTION B: <u>General Questions on the Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHS</u>

2.   Do you have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level?

If yes, what are your concerns?

3.   What is your general assessment of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?

4.   Would you say there is effective teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?

5.   Have you identified any shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning?

6.   If yes, enumerate further

SECTION C: <u>Questions on the effect of the Double Track on the Quality of Education at the Senior High School Level.</u>

7.   Do you think the Double Track policy is a good policy?

8.   What are your views on the influence of the Double Track policy on the following:

- Enrolment

- Class size

- Contact Hours

- School facilities

- Teachers

9.   What would be your overall assessment of government's performance with the Double Track policy implementation?

10.   What is your assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment?

11.   Would you say the Double Track policy has had any influence on the quality of SHS education in Ghana? If yes, please elaborate further.

12.   What is your opinion on the Double Track policy?

13.   Please enumerate challenges you have identified with the implementation of the Double Track policy.

14.   Please, suggest ways by which challenges associated with the Double Track policy could be addressed.

SECTION D: Questions on Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in Senior High Schools.

15.   What are you views of students' performance in the WASSCE in recent years?

16.   Do you think that the Double Track has influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway? If yes, why so?

17.   Have you identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the free SHS and Double Track?

SECTION E: Questions on Best Practices of the Double-Track on the Quality of Education.

18.   Have you identified any best practices associated with the Double Track?
If yes, please cite these best practices.

19.   Would you say that the best practices associated with the Double Track has any influence on quality education in Ghana? If yes, how?

20.   Please suggest any other best practices that can be inculcated in the Double Track to further improve the quality of SHS education in Ghana.

ANNEXURE G: AN EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED TO THE TEACHERS AND THEIR RESPONSES

Appendix B:

Questionnaire (Teachers)

Dear Respondent, I would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes of your time to answer the following questions. The study seeks *to ascertain the effect of the double track system on the quality of Senior High School education*. I would like to assure you that information collected would be used strictly for academic purpose only and any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please tick or provide your answer where applicable.

SECTION A: Biodata of Respondents

1. Gender
   a. Male [✓]   b. Female [ ]

2. Age
   a. 18-30 years [ ]   b. 31-40 years [✓]
   c. 41-50 years [ ]   d. Above 50 years [ ]

3. Highest Educational Qualification
   a. Diploma/HND [ ]   b. Bachelor's Degree [ ]
   b. Master's Degree [✓]   d. Other (please specify)....................

4. How many years have you been working in the education sector?
   a. Less than a year [ ]   b. 1-5years [ ]
   c. 6-10 years [ ]   d. Over 10 years [✓]

SECTION B: General Questions on the Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHS

5. Do you have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level?
   a. Yes [✓]   b. No [ ]
   If yes, what are your concerns?... *Ineffective teaching and* .... *...learning in the Senior High Schools.* ...

6. What is your general assessment of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?
   a. Excellent [ ] b. Very good [ ] c. Good [ ] d. Average [ ] e. Bad [ ] f. Very bad [ ]

7. As a teacher would you say there is effective teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?
   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [✓]

8. Have you identified any shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning?
   a. Yes [ ]   b. No [ ]
   If yes, enumerate further... *inadequate school* .... *facilities and insufficient teaching and learning materials.* ....

....
...

SECTION C: Questions on the Impact of the Double Track System on the Quality of Education at the Senior High School Level.

9. Do you think the double track policy is a good policy?
   a. Yes [✔]   b. No   [ ]

10. What are your views on the influence of the double track policy on the following:
    i.   Enrollment: *There has been an increase in enrollment*
         ....
         ......
    ii. Class size: *Classes are very large unlike previously*
         ....
    iii. Contact Hours: *There have less contact hours*
         ....
         ...
    iv. School facilities: *Insufficiency of classrooms libraries dormitories, teaching and learning materials, inadequate tutors*
         ....
    v.   Teachers: *Not enough*
         ....
         ....

11. What would be your overall assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation?
    a. Very good [ ]   b. Good [✔]   c. Average [ ]   d. Bad [ ] e. Very bad [ ]

12. What is your assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment?
    a. Very good [ ]   b. Good [✔]   c. Average [ ]   d. Bad [ ] e. Very bad [ ]

13. Would you say the double track policy has had any influence on the quality of Senior High School education in Ghana?
    a. Yes   [✔]   b. No   [ ]
    If   yes,   please   elaborate
    further...
    There has an increase in enrollment, Students who previously could not go to senior high schools have now been enrolled.

14. What is your opinion on the double track policy?
    a. Should be cancelled [ ]   b. Should be maintained [✔]
    c. Other (please specify...

15. Please enumerate challenges you have identified with the implementation of the double track policy. *Lack of funding to provide the schools with furniture not enough class-rooms inadequate text books, lack of stakeholder consultation.*

government's inability to release subventions pressure on sources of water on campuses, some teachers teach on both tracks which puts pressure on the teachers.

16. Please, suggest ways by which challenges associated with the double track policy could be addressed.

Government must build more classrooms to accommodate the numbers, government must employ more teachers, government must teachers & Parents who are stakeholders in the policy planning & implementation.

SECTION D: Questions on Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in Senior High Schools.

17. What are you views of students performance in the WASSCE in recent years ?
    a. Very encouraging [ ]   b. Quite encouraging [✓]   c. Not encouraging [ ]

18. Do you think that the double track system has influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway?
    a. Yes   [✓]   b. No   [ ]

If yes, why so? There was an improvement in the academic performance of the first & second batches of the free SHS.

19. Have you identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the free SHS and double track system?
    a. Yes   [✓]   b. No   [ ]

ANNEXURE H: AN EXAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRES ADMINISTERED TO THE STUDENTS AND THEIR RESPONSES

Questionnaire (Students)

Dear Respondent, I would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes of your time to answer the following questions. The study seeks *to ascertain the effect of the double track system on the quality of Senior High School education.* I would like to assure you that information collected would be used strictly for academic purpose only and any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please tick or provide your answer where applicable.

SECTION A: Biodata of Respondents
1. Gender
   a. Male   [✓]   b. Female   [ ]

2. Age
   a. 15-17 years   [✓]   b. 18-20 years   [ ]
   c. 20-22 years   [ ]   d. Above 22 years   [ ]

3. Which level are you in?
   a. Form 1   [ ]   b. Form 2   [✓]   c. Form 3   [ ]

SECTION B: General Questions on the Quality of Teaching and Learning in SHS
4. Do you have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level?
   a. Yes   [✓]   b. No   [ ]

5. What is your general assessment of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?
   a. Excellent [ ] b. Very good [ ] c. Good [✓] d. Average [ ] e. Bad [ ] f. Very bad [ ]
6. As a student would you say there is effective teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?
   a. Yes   [ ]   b. No   [✓]
7. Have you identified any shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning?
   a. Yes   [✓]   b. No   [ ]
   If yes, enumerate further.. .... inadequate text books large class size, inadequate teachers for some subjects, inadequate classrooms, inadequate dormitories and library facilities as well as dinning halls.

SECTION C: Questions on the Impact of the Double Track System on the Quality of Education at the Senior High School Level.
8. Do you think the double track policy is a good policy?
   a. Yes   [✓]   b. No   [ ]
9. Do you think the double track policy has affected the following?

   Enrollment   a. Yes [✓]   b. No   [ ]

   Class Size   a. Yes   [✓]   b. No   [ ]

   Contact hours   a. Yes [✓]   b. No   [ ]

School facilities   a. Yes   ☑   b. No   [ ]

10. What would be your overall assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation?
      a. Very good [ ]   b. Good ☑   c. Average [ ]   d. Bad [ ]   e. Very bad [ ]
11. What is your assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment?
      a. Very good [ ]   b. Good ☑   c. Average [ ]   d. Bad [ ]   e. Very bad [ ]
12. Would you say the double track policy has had any influence on the quality of Senior High School education in Ghana?
      a. Yes   [☑   b. No   [ ]
13. What is your opinion on the double track policy?
      a. Should be cancelled [ ]   b. Should be maintained [ ]
      c. Other (please specify..It. should..be...reviewed..and... maintained.

SECTION D: Questions on Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in Senior High Schools.
14. What are your views of students performance in the WASSCE in recent years ?
      a. Very encouraging [ ]   b. Quite encouraging ☑   c. Not encouraging   [ ]
15. Do you think that the double track system has influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway?
      a. Yes   ☑   **b.** No   [ ]
16. Have you identified any performance trend in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the free SHS and double track system?
      a. Yes   ☑   **b.** No   [ ]

Thanks for your cooperation……

ANNEXURE I: AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE HEADMISTRESSES IN ONE OF THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Transcription code:

Facilitator-F

Participants-P

SECTION B: <u>GENERAL QUESTIONS ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SHS</u>

F: Do you have any concerns regarding teaching and learning in the Senior High Level?
Yes

F: If yes, what are your concerns?
P: Class size too large, lack of furniture piece, inadequate teaching and learning materials.

F: What is your general assessment of teaching and learning in Senior High Schools?
P: Not effective, always because of inadequate teaching and learning materials.

F: Would you say there is effective teaching and learning in Senior High schools? Why so?
P: No, lack of teaching and learning materials and students spend lesser periods in schools

F: Have you identified any shortfalls in the SHS with regards to teaching and learning?
If yes, elaborate further.
P: No.

SECTION C: <u>Questions on the Impact of the Double Track on the Quality of Education at the Senior High School Level.</u>

F: Do you think the double track policy is a good policy?
P: Yes, because not everyone can afford to pay the school fees.

F: What are your views on the influence of the double track policy on the following?
P:

- **Enrolment:** High Enrolment.

- **Class size:** Too large and should be reduced.

- **Contact Hours:** Should be reduced for teachers because of workload on the teachers.

- **School facilities:** Not Sufficient.

- **Teachers:** Should be recruited to support the free SHS implementation.

F: What would be your overall assessment of government's performance with the double track policy implementation?

    P: It is good, but needs to be reviewed.

F: W**hat is your assessment of the quality of education in Ghana at the moment?**

     P: Education is yet to be fully achieved.

F: Would you say the double track policy has had any influence on the quality of Senior High School education in Ghana? If yes elaborate further

    P: Yes, because under –performing and academically weak students have all been admitted otherwise, they would have been home.

F: What is your opinion on the double track policy in terms of its continuation or cancellation?

    P: Review of the policy will help.

F: Please enumerate challenges you have identified with the implementation of the double track policy.

    P: Inadequate facilities, inadequate text books, inadequate teachers makes it difficult to run the policy.

F: Please, suggest ways by which challenges associated with the double track policy could be addressed.

    P: Government should build more classrooms, recruit more teachers, provide the schools with the core text books needed for the policy, government should build more libraries and dormitories and involve stakeholders in policy planning.

SECTION D: Questions on Academic Outcomes of Students Before and After the Introduction of the Double Track in Senior High Schools.

F: What are your views of students, performance in the WASSCE in recent years?
    P: Performance is good

F: Do you think that the double track shas influenced performance in the WASSCE in anyway? If yes why so?

    P: Yes, because students who were weak academically have now been admitted.

F: Have you identified any performance trends in the students' WASSCE results before and after the introduction of the free SHS and double track?

    P: Yes, because comparing 2020 and 2021 WASSCE results against the previous years, the was an improvement in all the core subjects.

Section E: Question on best practice of the Double-Track on the quality of Education

F: Have you identified any best practices associated with the Double-Track? If yes please cite these best practices.

    P: Yes, boarding students are being fed three times a day, government pays their water and light bills, government provides the students with free uniforms and day students also eat lunch once a day.

F: Would you say that the best practices associated with the double track have influences on the quality of education in Ghana? If yes, how?

    P: Yes, it encourages students from less endowed homes to come to school, it also makes the students eat balanced meals at school and it helps students to concentrate in class.

F; Please, suggest further any best practice that can be included in the Double-Track to further improve the quality of senior High Education in Ghana.

    P: Government should provide sufficient funds to ensure the continuity of the policy.

ANNEXURE J: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

22 Osche Street

The Reeds

Centurion

0157

30 December 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate serves to confirm that I have edited Divine Kwadamah's thesis entitled, **THE DOUBLE TRACK SYSTEM'S EFFECTS ON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN GREATER ACCRA, GHANA.**

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:

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