

**SIMON DIEDONG DOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND  
INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF GHANA'S FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
POLICY: PERSPECTIVES FROM SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS  
IN WA MUNICIPALITY, GHANA**

**ERNEST MALIR LAGNANG**

**2023**

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**BY**

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**THIS THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT SOCIOLOGY AND  
SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND ARTS, SIMON  
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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF PHILOSOPHY  
DEGREE IN SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

**OCTOBER, 2023**

## **DECLARATION**

### **Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research submitted for the award of Mphil. Social Administration Degree. This work has not been presented by anyone for academic award in this or any other university. All reference in this research has been duly acknowledge.

Candidate's Signature.....

Date.....

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### **Supervisor's Declaration**

I do hereby certify that the writing of this research was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on the supervision of thesis laid down by Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies.

Supervisor's Signature.....

Date.....

DR. FRANCIS N. SANYARE

## LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

<b><u>Acronym</u></b>	<b><u>Meaning</u></b>
BECE	Basic Education Certificate
CHASS	Conference of Head of Assisted Secondary Schools
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSSPS	Computerize School Selection and Placement System
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
FSHS	Free Senior High School
GETFUND	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GNECC	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
GOG	Government of Ghana
JSS	Junior High School
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAGRAT	National Association of Graduate Teachers
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPP	New Patriotic Party
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PFSHSE	Progressively Free Senior High School Education
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHPSS	Conference of Heads of Private Secondary School
SHS	Senior High School

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this piece of work to Almighty God, who is the source of my knowledge and strength. I also dedicate this work to my wonderful brothers for their support all throughout this work.

## ABSTRACT

Ghana's successive administrations have made education a priority since gaining independence from British colonial authority, which has led to ongoing adjustments in an effort to give the nation a model that is more suitable and meets citizens expectations. This study: i) explore the experiences of stakeholders about the implementation of the Free Senior High School policy: ii) identifies the achievements and challenges of the implementation Free Senior High School policy: and iii) to assess the options to improve upon the implementation of the Free Senior High School policy. In addressing these objectives, the study adopts a mixed method research approach. Semi-structured interview guide and questionnaire were used to interview key stakeholders in the implementation of the Free SHS education policy in Ghana who were purposively selected from a cross section of management of second cycle institutions, and public sector organizations in Wa municipal, Ghana. Using a systematic content analysis for analyzing the interview data gathered. The finds that stakeholder's engagement was poor and the that there was emphasis on the outcomes over the processes (such as extensive consultation). In terms of achievements the free SHS education policy accomplished only a partial of it set objectives such as increased enrollment and removal of financial barriers to secondary education. Notwithstanding the policies relevance for bridging the inequality gap and promoting national development, various challenges categorized into: i) institutional and ii) infrastructural challenges hamper its implementation success. Thus, the Free SHS education policy currently suffers from politicization and over-centralized administration which has led to the delay in achieving desired outcomes. Other infrastructural challenges also include the supply of logistics and financial constraints as a result of delayed payment of school grants to both suppliers and heads of schools. Regarding to full attention been fixed on access and apparently limited consideration all other aspects (eg knowledge and skills acquisition relevant to personal and national development) the recommends an equitable focus on all of these factors, with a much greater capacity of graduating students who will be prepared to pursue postsecondary education or enter the workforce.

**Keywords:** Educational Policy, Free Senior High School, Social Policy, achievements, Ghana.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRDUCTION**

This chapter introduces the main study. The chapter starts with an overview of the background of the study, and an analysis of the research problem. It also covers the objectives of the study, the research questions, and significance of the study. Further it includes the scope, organizations and limitations of the study.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Traditionally, the level of social service provision, industrialization, employment opportunities, social security, social or economic inequality, the availability of financial services for economic operations, the presence of health facilities, and the rate of educational progress are all determined by how effectively public policies are implemented (Ikechukwu & Chukwuemeka, 2011). As a result, the particular economic and political growth of an area or nation as a whole must be taken into consideration while developing public or social policies. The public sector plays a major role in government's involvement in development (Abah, 2010). This position entails successfully implementing government programs aimed at reaching development objectives. Governments create and put into effect social safety net measures as a means of controlling the rise in citizen discontent (Huber & Stephens 2012). The distribution of recommendations and actions for the modification, preservation, or making of living situations that are beneficial to the wellbeing of humans is a significant contribution of public policy to the pattern of development.

The general consensus is that, education is essential for developing human capital, reducing poverty, fostering social mobility, determining political participation, and serving as a fundamental foundation for democratic and institutional excellence

(Shuaibu & Oladayo, 2016). Developing nations have been creating educational strategies to enhance their educational systems because they are aware of the direct and indirect benefits of education (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). Some have stated that the East Asian Tigers' prosperous economic histories in the 1970s and 1980s can be partially attributable to the enormous investments made in secondary education (Bruno, 2014). Offering affordable and high-quality education remains a defining characteristic of many industrialized countries worldwide. As a result, enormous quantities of money are annually invested in education in the aforementioned nations. There are certain nations where the federal government is required to provide high-quality education. In some jurisdictions, it is up to the individual states to decide how to educate their citizens. All children in Finland receive high-quality instruction from preschool through age 16, during which time they follow a uniform curriculum (Sahlberg, 2015). After the age of 16, the government continues to subsidize education so that no one is denied a quality education due to financial constraints. In 2010, Japan, a country in Asia, became the first to offer senior high school education without a tuition fee. According to Hori and Shimizutani (2018), the program implementation increased senior high school enrolment. A small number of African nations have also made secondary education free in their own nations. Seychelles, Mauritius, Uganda, Kenya, and most recently Ghana are a few of them. In 2007, the government of Uganda made senior secondary education free. In Sub-Saharan Africa, this was a first of its sort (Essuman, 2018).

Considering the overall picture, Ghana's successive administrations have made education a priority since gaining independence from British colonial authority, which has led to ongoing adjustments in an effort to give the nation a model that is more suitable and meets citizens expectations (Adu-gyamfi et al., 2017). Ghana has

implemented a number of educational policies and initiatives over the past ten years to increase participation and access to education. These initiatives include the Capitation Grant, the School Feeding Program, government support on a partial financing (the progressive free senior high education policy, adopted in 2015), and the most recent free education policy (full funding, effective in 2017). The government's efforts to reduce poverty in Ghana have resulted in different results in urban and rural populations as well as the northern and southern regions of the country, which has hampered efforts to create access and equitable opportunity between wealthy and poor households, as well as between Ghana's northern and southern regions, where inequality in access to education, as seen by the decades-long growth of the school enrollment gaps between these groups (Hague & Cooke, 2016).

The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program was put into place by the government in 1996 in an effort to close the achievement gap between the wealthy and the poor (Essuman, 2018). According to the Constitution and the FCUBE proposal, only elementary and junior high school levels were eligible for free education (Nsia, 2018). Due to this, enrollment rates at primary (95%) and junior high (85%) school levels were high, but at senior high school (SHS) level they were low (45%). (Ministry of Education, 2017). According to these numbers, five out of every ten primary school-age youngsters would probably not be able to attend a SHS (Business and Financial Times BFT, 2019). In fact, rather than a lack of desire, the low enrollment at the SHS level is brought on by the inability of poor parents to afford the cost of an education (Kuyini, 2013& World Bank 2010).

In 2008, Ghana's President, Nana Akufo-Addo, agreed with that viewpoint. More recently, he argued that, public senior high schools could not accept 100,000 graduates of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) over the past four

years because of poverty, then roughly, both young men and women reaching about one million might have their education level ended at Junior High School over the course of the following ten years (Ministry of Education, 2017). He thought that was inappropriate, the president Akufo-Addo established the Free Senior School program or policy after winning the 2016 elections (Mohammed, 2020). This took the place of his predecessor's Progressively Free Senior High School Education (PFSHSE) Policy. The PFSHSE Policy freed parents from paying some educational expenses, including exam, sports, and library fees, as well as entertainment expenses. The Free SHS Policy, in contrast, offers a totally free education. Ghana appears to have benefited from earlier governments' efforts to widen access to and participation in secondary education. The free secondary education policy for children of Northern extraction, the Coco Board Scholarships and Bursaries, the Hardship Scholarship, the senior high school subsidy, and many others can all be linked to this. This emphasizes the idea that free senior high school existed in varied shades and forms for specific segments of the population (Bonsu, 2019).

However, it is essential that the targets be monitored and analyzed through a collaborative approach in order to fully realize the objectives of these policy interventions within the educational sector. The claim is that because stakeholders' experiences are so important to establishing accountability in education, they should not be overemphasized (Mandina & Chiheve, 2013). For instance, stakeholders play crucial roles in guaranteeing high-quality instruction by advancing the effectiveness and efficiency of procedures for eminence development (Brussels, 2011). Improving the decision-making process (Mualuko et al., 2009). And upgrading the educational system (Kamba, 2010). Among other things. And, most importantly, having an impact on the design and implementation of government education policies (Chinelo &

Odufowokan 2011). According to Mensah and Badu-Shavar (2016), participation from relevant stakeholders throughout the policy implementation process is necessary for public policy to live up to expectations.

Once more, political discussions have focused on problems arising from a lack of institutional capacity to infrastructure deficiencies and also touching on the policy financial viability. However, while many believe that the program will have positive economic and social effects, especially for females, others have unfavorable impressions about the flaws that have been identified in the educational institutions (Brudvold-Newman, 2017). Therefore, against this backdrop, this study aims to investigate how Ghana's FSHS policy is being implemented in senior high schools in the Wa municipality.

## **1.2 Problem Analysis and Statement**

It is generally known in the literature that educated persons play an important role in economic growth as they are more likely to participate in national development with higher-quality participation (Rehkopf et al., 2017). This was acknowledged within the larger context of the financial barriers to education that certain children must overcome, and the Free Senior High School policy was developed and put into practice. Even in environments where considerable efforts are developed to eliminate operational and material impediments, especially fees among other related school expenditures, universal enrollment and completion remain elusive despite widespread agreement that education provides a pathway to growth (Williams et al., 2015). In an effort to address the issue, Ghana's successive governments have developed a variety of policies that are aimed at removing potential obstacles to high-quality instruction by enhancing the sector's infrastructure, logistics, and human resource base (Darko-Ampem, 2002).

The requirement for coordinated action by multiple stakeholders in managing public sector initiatives has also recently gained attention in both study and practice. In light of this, successful partnership amongst entire stakeholders often results in efficient, responsible, and sustainable management (Reed et al, 2010). A very good collaborative governance intervention has been adopted by numerous industries as a result of the definite and possible benefits of stakeholder participation in development (Oketch & Rolleston, 2007; Wexler, 2017).

The New Patriotic Party (NPP) has recently championed a push for free senior high secondary education. Emerging worries regarding the political, social, and financial viability of the policy have been brought up by a number of stakeholders since it was implemented in 2017 such as the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS), and opposing political parties. One of the issues they brought up was the policy hurried rollout without wider stakeholder engagement. According to Nyadroh (2017), this has brought forth a number of significant issues for the policy. Some of the problems include the overcrowding that results from inadequate facilities for accommodating students, which hinders efficient teaching and learning. The idea of Free SHS and the way it was implemented have both provoked intense debates. While some argue that it is ludicrous and inconceivable, others favor fee-free secondary education as a means of eliminating poverty and as a way to providing Ghana with the skilled workforce it needs for socioeconomic development (Essuman, 2018; Oduro, 2019).

More importantly, the implementation fallouts in challenges and worries regarding cost, sustainability, human resource development, and politics boost the discussion. The policy, according to others, was hurried for political motives and without fully taking into account the cost ramifications (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020). They believe

that Free SHS is unreliable in the long run since it is too expensive, dependent on oil revenue, and supported by foreign donors. (Cudjoe, 2018 & Oduro, 2019). Others contend that the policy hasty implementation suggests that Free SHS is unlikely to fulfill the advised standards of policymaking, which could result in failure (McConnell, 2010b). It is crucial to establish that several exclusive studies have examined certain aspects of the free SHS policy and its implementation in Ghana, before problematizing this research. For instance, Kyeremanteng (2016) studied stakeholder involvement in FSHS policy formation and implementation while Bonsu (2019) explored the politics of Free SHS as a social policy and its implementation. Despite the foregoing, it appears that there is little academic study that attempts to contextually examine implementation of Free Senior High School policy in Wa municipal, Ghana. To close that gap, this study examined how the Free SHS policy is being implemented and how its objectives are being met in public second-cycle institutions in the Wa municipality.

### **1.3 Research questions**

Base on the objective set above, the study to sought answer the following research questions

1. What are the experiences of stakeholders about implementation of the Free Senior High School policy in the context of Wa Municipality?
2. Are there achievements and challenges to the implementation of Free Senior High School policy?
3. What are the implementing options to improve upon the Free Senior High School policy?

## **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of this study is to examine the implementation Ghana's free senior high school policy in the context of Wa municipality, Ghana.

### ***1.4.1 Sub objectives***

1. To explore the experiences of stakeholders on the implementation of Free Senior High School policy in context
2. To identify the achievements and challenges, if any, of the implementation of Free Senior High School policy.
3. To assess the options to improve upon the implementation of the Fee Senior High School policy.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

The government of Ghana championed the principle of access, equity, and equality senior high education with the goal of relieving financial stress on the majority of parents so that every eligible Ghanaian kid from junior high level might have access to public (state-owned) SHSs. The government claim that the strategy has increased enrolment in the public sector by 33.2% in the 2018 budget, however, has bolstered the postulation (Partey, 2017). Despite how important this issue is for national development, there is not enough evidence to support it in the literature currently available regarding information accessible as to the policy ability to achieve its goals as set by the policy maker as well as the difficulties associated with its implementation in Wa

Most crucially, Ghana second cycle institutions have undergone numerous educational changes to raise the bar of education for the nation social and economic advancement. Nevertheless, despite their best efforts, successive governments continue to face unrelenting criticism from a wide range of stakeholders regarding the

poor quality of education provided at the Senior High School (SHS) level, which serves as a transitional stage between the primary and advanced learning stages. The findings, implications for policy, and suggestions that would come from this study would pique enthusiasm for additional research in various areas of education in Ghana.

Once more, the investigations seek to advance both the body of knowledge and the body of writing on high-quality education.

Additionally, the findings from this would be used as a reference by students, academics, and other key stakeholders in the fields of development, public policy, and educational research, among others.

### **1.6 Scope of the study**

This research in particular does not claim to be exhausted. It would be restricted to investigate the Free SHS policy implementation, Stakeholders' experiences about the implementation of the policy, the achievement and challenges of Ghana's free senior high school policy in the Wa municipality, as well as implementations options to improve upon the policy within the Wa municipality. The units of analysis would be restricted to respondents of the management of public second cycle institutions, Ghana education service, relevant stakeholders of the policy and ministry of education in the Wa Municipal. The policy would be assessed within the context of the public second cycle institutions in the Wa Municipal, Upper West Region of Ghana from the period its implementation, September 2017. The study choice wa municipality is grounded on the facts that there are enough public second cycle schools to represent the information needed as well as all the implementing institution other organization were adequately saturated in the municipality. Also, this study is new in the

municipality and worth to research. The study would enthuse by Winter integrated model of implementation and McConnell Theory policy success/failure.

### **1.7 Organization of the study.**

The study is organized into Five main chapters. Chapter One, provides a general introduction to the study touching the background, problem analysis and statement, study objectives, and questions, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study.

Chapter Two deals with the review of relevant literature: this include both empirical and theoretical for a purpose of guaranteeing familiarity with the concepts been conversed, the prevailing form of knowledge to place the research base on its influence to the present information.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology which comprises techniques, and the procedures used for collecting both primary and secondary data to accomplish the set objectives. The population, data collection tools, and technique, as well as the analysis of data based on which conclusions are drawn for this study.

Chapter Four would present the main findings from the analysis in regards to the research questions of the study. Finally, Chapter Five covers the summary of the study informs conclusions and recommendations.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

A major limitation of this study is difficulty in accessing target respondents, due to the nature of the work of the respondents, it was very difficult to get them to respond meaningfully to the questions of the study. However, the researcher built good rapport through persistence with the respondents to gain their attention for the successful execution of the study.

The study participants, especially the heads of schools, staff of administration and department were unwilling to disclose information on the policy status as a sensitive and confidential issue. The researcher overcame this through close engagement with key management authorities to explain how the findings of the study with such details would enhance the implementation of the policy and the ethical plan to safeguard the given information. There was also difficulty getting enrolment data from some schools. Time restraint was another impediment to the researcher, since the respondents was unwilling to devote considerable time in answering the questionnaires.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter addresses a review of relevant literature in regard on the topic, implementation of Free Senior High School policy. The chapter discusses the theoretical framework that explains the relationship between the concepts in the study, it also reviews empirical studies that provide more meaning to the concept of implementation of the Free SHS policy particularly the achievement and challenges, stakeholders experiences about policy as well as the policy options to improve implementation.

#### **2.2 Conceptual Review**

##### ***2.2.1 The concept of policy implementation***

In an effort to explain what occur between the stated objectives and their realization a number of researches has subsequently been conducted in which scholars conceptualized policy implementation from different perspectives. According to Bryson (2018), the concept of implementation refers to the actions taken by government and the state institutions directed towards the achievement of prior policy objective. The definition propose that implementation is a process that requires a series of projects and programs that are combine to ensure the realization of a policy intended objectives.

Brynard (2005) further defined the idea as the capacity to create causal connections that lead to the desired outcome. This concept is quite similar to one given by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), who characterized implementation as involving a process of interaction between the establishment of goals and activities aimed toward

achieving them. Hill and Hupe (2014) make the case that implementation is the link between the articulation of governmental intention and actual consequences. According to each of the aforementioned definitions, implementation means having the ability to enact policies as intended, which necessitates meeting certain requirements. In that regard, Imperial (2005) defines policy implementation as comprising the processes, assets, and connections between policies and programs. To put it another way, the process of carrying out programs in order to achieve certain policy objectives falls under the umbrella of policy implementation (Hill & Hupe, 2014). Administrative agencies are primarily responsible for this process, which is under the direction of the chief executive or the legislature. Milakovich and Gordon (2007) in light of these considerations, make the case for a number of methodologies, such as the Program Evaluation & Review Technique (PERT), which employs the Critical Path Method (CPM), and Management by Objectives (MBO), both of which claim that the origins of implementation studies come from the explicit use of the word “implementation.”

### **2.3 Policy Cycle Framework**

Public policy, in its broadest sense, highlights the government attempts to strategically fulfill the needs, demands, and desires of the public by creating and institutionalizing political processes that use mechanisms to attain social goals, (Hanekom, 1987). According to John (2013), it is a process wherein decision-makers who are involved in or close to the operation of the government and other political institutions produce public activities that are meant to have an effect outside the political system. The public policy cycle is the result of a complicated political process involving a wide range of actors, including politicians, professionals, civil servants, pressure groups employed by the government, and occasionally even among

people who believe they are inert beneficiaries of the program or policy (Hill, 2013). Nagel (2001: 71) argues that the policy cycle explains how the policy-making process evolves and is a multidisciplinary problem-solving investigative process that analyzes the kind, origins, and ramifications of public policies, were autonomous process. Additionally, it draws attention to the importance of the policy domain or subsystem as the primary level of study. Public policy is developed through five stages, as stated by Dunn (1995: 16): (i) Setting the agenda, which occurs when authorities bring issues to the public attention. (ii) Policy adoption is when a policy is adopted with consensus. (iii) Policy formation is the process by which officials develop policies to address problems. (iv) Implementation of policies (where the approved program or policy is passed through administrative units that coordinate the use of financial and human resources to carry out the policy, and (v) Policy evaluation (where government auditing and accounting units assess whether the administration is in compliance with the program legal requisites and its goal accomplishment).

### ***2.3.1 Agenda setting***

This stage of the policy cycle includes problem identification and issue selection. The definition of a social problem and the need for government intervention are prerequisites for problem recognition. The second stage would have to actually put the identified problem on the agenda for thoughtful discussion of a public response (agenda-setting) (Baumgartner et al., 2004). The agenda is nothing more than a list of topics or issues that are now receiving considerable consideration from government officials and those closely connected to those officials on the outside. The ways in which a public or social concern is identified and seen on the public/media agenda are closely related to the ways in which problem recognition and issue selection methods and procedures are used. The choice of institutional forums where issues are

discussed, the participation of specific players (such as specialists), the planned employ of the media networks all been noted as tactical strategies to define issues (Baumgartner et al., 2004). Setting an agenda leads to the selection of various challenges and problems. It is a method of organizing the policy issue in light of probable tactics and tools that will influence how a policy is developed in later phases of a policy cycle. The movement of an issue from its acknowledgement (often articulated by interested organizations or affected players) up to the formal political agenda is a vital step in this process of agenda-setting. This process consists of a number of smaller stages where concerns are chosen for further consideration when problem-recognition and problem-solving skills are limited. Regarding actor composition and the role of the public, the actual agenda-setting is defined by distinct patterns, despite the fact that problem recognition and problem definition are said to be largely conducted in public, in the media, or at least among domain-specific professional (public) communities (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003).

Governments are frequently obliged to make decisions (Lodge & Hood, 2002). Where they could not easily cannot disregard public feeling in absent of running the danger of losing rightfulness or credibility, they must give the topic some prominence on the agenda. A policy issue becomes a big item on the policy agenda when a number of interacting elements and variables come together. These elements encompass both the tangible aspects of the policy environment (such as the degree of economic development) and the circulation and iteration of ideas and ideologies, which are crucial for assessing issues and establishing links between them and potential remedies (policy proposals) (Pressman & Wildvsky, 1973). The alignment of interests between the relevant parties in that setting, the ability of the institutions in charge to act effectively, and the cycle of public opinion the way an issue is perceived as well

as the remedies related to the various difficulties are crucial (Baumgartner et al., 2004).

### ***2.3.2 Formulation and adoption***

In this phase of the policy cycle, problems, proposals, and requests are turned into government initiatives. The process of creating and adopting a policy involves defining its goals (what it hopes to accomplish) and taking into account potential backup plans (Dye, 2002). Authors have drawn a distinction between formulation (of potential courses of action) and ultimate approval (official conclusion in accepting the program) (Stone, 2002). Leading civil employees and the ministerial bureaucracy are important players in the creation of policies. Negotiated policy formulation with ministerial departments (and the ministries' internal units) in a more or less informal setting, occurs prior to the ultimate decision on a given policy being made by the accountable institutions (primarily the cabinet, ministers, and Parliament). Depending on the political system, organized interest groups, elected members of parliament, and their cronies were considered key participants. The formal institutions of the governmental system take center stage when it comes to the final adoption of a particular policy option. In western democracies, policy formation and adoption take place as a complicated social process, in which state actors play a significant but not necessarily deciding role (Stone, 2002).

### ***2.3.3 Implementation***

The adoption of a program and the choice of a particular course of action do not ensure in all circumstances that policy makers will strictly follow the objectives and the goals in terms practice. The phase of policy implementation entails enforcing a policy by the accountable institutions and organizations, which are frequently but not always a part of the public sector (Hill & Hupe, 2002). There are three main

theoretical viewpoints that guide how policies are implemented: (i) the top-down model (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973); (ii) the bottom-up model (Sabatier & Weible, 2014; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). (iii) the combination of the two model (Winter, 1990).

Top-down model advocates, claim that this implementation strategy places the greatest focus on decision makers' capacity to generate results (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Policy goals that are clear on managing the execution phase. But a different tack is implied on the bottom-up approach. The advocates of bottom-up approach see local bureaucrats as the primary actors in the delivery of policies and see the execution of policies as a process of negotiation among systems of executors (Williams & Onibon, 2009; Lipsky, 1980). Top-down, bottom-up, and other theoretical model components are all included in hybrid theories, the determination to close the gap involving the other two approaches (Winter, 1990). Hill & Hupe (2002) do provide three essential components that a framework for implementing policy should have, though. They recommended first, that, the best approach of execution of policy should add policy or program description details. However how should the program be carried out, and by which agencies or organizations? Which interpretation should be used for the policy or law.? Again, the perfect process of program execution should factor in the outline for apportioning capitals or resources. This involved the how the personnel will implement the policy or program and also how the budgets are distributed. The organizational units in charge of execution are also bothered by it. To conclude on this, the optimal process of program or policy execution should visibly show by what method verdicts of a particular issues will be passed out.

### ***2.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation***

Evaluation happens frequently and is included into political discourse. The distinction amid managerial appraisals carried out or launched by the public administration and political evaluations carried out by a variety of players involving partisan sphere, and also, the general public including the media has been made as a result (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003). Government reports, public discourse, opposition party operations, and scientific investigations all include important evaluative components. Although evaluation studies aimed to make evaluation a crucial component of sane, evidence-based policymaking, the distinctive judgement and inducements of partisan procedures are particularly sensitive to evaluation activities beyond two key conducts, two of them are connected to fault games (Hood, 2002). The evaluation of program or policy outcomes and results is first and foremost skewed by the position, substantial interest, and values of a particular actor. Politics frequently involves assigning blame, in particular, for subpar performance. A significant barrier to evaluations is the second: a mis definition of the goals and objectives of policy. Governments are urged not to define goals precisely because doing so would expose them to political danger of accepting responsibility for blatant failure, which has a powerful disincentive.

### **2.4 Challenges of Policy Implementation**

Implementing social policies has proven to be a significant challenge for the majority of nations worldwide, particularly emerging nations. These challenges represent implementation inadequacies that have an impact on the policy intended result. In many case issues of implementation show up when projected benefits of the program or policy not attained by the beneficiaries. Numerous factors, including the policy itself, the person who formulated the policy, or the setting in which the policy was

made, could contribute to an implementation gap. Here are a few of the challenges discussed.

#### ***2.4.1 Lack of clear definition policy goals***

Most governments in developing nations have a clear propensity to pursue a number of objectives that frequently are not clear or consistent with the desires of the populace (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). The operational stage of the implementing agencies is influenced by precision of policy goals and their ranking in the policy statutes. Further, various actors may interpret policy aims differently, whether this is required or not. According to (Makinde, 2005) it is possible that actors will interpret and implement a policy differently because they do not comprehend or adhere to its spirit.

#### ***2.4.2 Overambitious policy goals***

The politicization of social policy in Africa has resulted in the creation of too ambitious policies by political parties to garner political capital along with extensive bureaucratic procedures (Sabatier & Weible, 2014). It seems to imply that policies or programs that do not include the targeted beneficiaries in their development and implementation will find it difficult to be sustained. This is because the target groups are mostly spectators rather than participants in the design or execution of policies. According to Egomnwan (2009), the desire to prove the political regime's legitimacy by offering concrete evidence of bettering conditions leads to a situation where political leaders are more likely to adopt policies that improved living conditions but may not be feasible due to their overly ambitious nature. As a result, there were significant implementation difficulties due to the scope, comprehensiveness, and operational capability of the policies that were developed.

#### ***2.4.3 Limited resources for implementation***

Effective policy implementation requires a lot of humans, financial, and physical (infrastructure) resources. Implementing agencies frequently lack the current technology, management talent, and administrative capacity necessary for efficient policy implementation., the methods used to implement policies are opposite to their objectives (Ankomah et al.,2005).

#### ***2.4.4 Lack of continuity and commitment for policy***

Programs or policies formulated based on political pledges and interests of party are frequently not maintained as a result of a change of administration, Priorities frequently change when governments change. Due to the necessity of switching to wholly new priorities and objectives, which call for new organizations, individuals, resources, and technology that aren't always simple to give, the circumstance tends to make implementation more challenging. As a result, numerous policies were dropped. Politicians inversely create policies by determination to rapidly appease public desires, but these solutions are only temporary and fail to address the root of the issue over time. Election victory is viewed as more significant than policy sustainability and achieving their fundamental objectives (Makinde, 2005).

#### ***2.4.5 Lack of coordination***

Many public policies demand for the participation of numerous agencies at various levels of government. Implementation failure can result from a lack of distinct explanation of duty and coordination involving the various agencies participation (Bouckaert et al. 2016; Christensen & Laegreid, 2007). The execution of policies cuts across many institutions functional and sectoral divisions, which adds to the difficulty of placing policies within institutions. Where institutional placement of policies is the case, ministries and departments share and compete for responsibility and authority on

the implementation, leading to duplication of effort, intra-bureaucratic conflict, and a lack of practical proficiency in of one agency. The current agencies and their political backers want to shield their territory, jobs, and constituency where there is duplication of effort and bureaucratic infighting (Weaver, 2010). He points out that this can occasionally result in the assignment of program implementation duties that more closely reflect the realities of the distribution of political power than what is necessary for efficient and effective administration. Weaver also points out that program structures that call for multiple approvals from organizations with very different goals may result in impasses and inaction, while inadequate coordination between numerous implementing organizations may cause program delivery breakdowns or delays, bureaucratic red tape that results in subpar services, and cost overruns.

#### ***2.4.6 Public sector corruption***

Politicians and public officials' corrupt tendencies undoubtedly have a significant impact on how well public policies are carried out. Every area of our society has been affected by corruption (Mkandawire, 2004). It can be observed in the open theft of funds intended for one program from another, in addition to the inflating of contract figures and percentage negotiations (Bolaji, 2014). The implementation and sustainability of policies are seriously threatened by corruption. The implementation process is contaminated by corruption, which has changed public policy and rendered the desired objectives impossible to achieved.

#### **2.5 Determinants of successful policy implementation**

Effective implementation enables the desired program performance and impact (Ripley & Franklin, 1986). Ayee (2000 ) content that, if the following influences are taken into account, social or public programs and policy implementation attained success, in Ghana and other African nations, the correct mixture of devoted politicians

and bureaucrats, (saints); adequate policy analysts with easily available and reliable information (wizards); management of antagonistic and apathetic factions (demons); and insulation of the policy environment from whims of imp as a necessary condition for the achievement of public policies and initiatives, he finally proposed a good governance strategy. Grindle and Thomas (1981), assert that, as to whether new policy or reform can succeed or failed depends on how the public responds to it. They predicated their case on the notion that an established set of policies is surrounded by an equilibrium state. The equilibrium is the consequence of those who are positively or badly impacted by the current institutional or policy arrangements accepting them. Changes to the existing policy will disturb this equilibrium and cause some sort of response or reaction from individuals who will be impacted by them. The type, extent, including position of such responses will control whether or not the modification is put into effect and maintained. The argument implies that individuals who will be adversely impacted by the new policy will rebel against its effective execution. On the other side, those who gain from the new policy will seek to keep it in place. However, the efforts of the two opposing groups will determine whether the policy is adopted and maintained. If a reform proposal is to be successful, its backers will need to overcome opposition, either passively by outlasting it or actively by devising a plan to control it. According to Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2015), a number of elements, including, human capacity, finance, organizational structures, equipment and materials, as well as novelty and know-how, contribute to the effective implementation of public policy. Hunter & Marks (2002), agree that, successful implementation necessitates a degree of openness regarding the model being implemented in addition to a shared outline and extended cooperative obligation athwart several agencies.

The intended beneficiaries of public policies ought to take part in the formulation phase by effecting their voice in what impacts their lives and to ensure successful implementation of those policies. They will have a sense of commitment and belonging as a result of this. The FSHS policy urges the use of a multi-stakeholder approach in this area to guarantee that all key actors provide their input by partaking in policy implementation. Franklin & Ripley (1981) suggested three strategies for effective policy implementation. They argued that the level of conformity displayed by bureaucracies as a whole should be used to gauge performance. The second strategy contends that routines that run without a hitch and the absence of a problem are signs of successful implementation.

Finally, they reasoned that a program under analysis should behave as expected and have the desired effect if its implementation is successful. Ripley and Franklin also stated that due to a policy's complexity, there is no one definitive standard definition or method for its successful execution.

### ***2.5.1 The role of politics***

The decision to promulgate and implementation of FSHS policy is political decisions, thus the Central government's actors and agencies must have the necessary political will and dedication to make sure they are successful. And due to complicated setting, they work in as well as the various goals of efficiency, effectiveness, and political expediency they aim to balance, politicians do, in most situations, have overlapping goals, ends, and means which they endeavor to stabilize. Politics is the limited use of social power, the ultimate focus of which is the nation, the fundamental elements of politics are the restrictions that political actors must work within and the strategic maneuvering that results from and takes place inside those constraints (Goodwin & Klingemann 2010). A sophisticated game of strategic calculations,

politics is, politicians frequently experience the so-called “politician’s dilemma” when choosing between a range of policy preferences as Geddes (1994) notes. She continues by saying all political officials, especially heads of state, share three basic objectives: that is remain in office, rule successfully, and forge a devoted partisan party. They must maintain what Weber (1978) referred to as the methods of administration and coercion (MAC) in order to accomplish the aforementioned. According to Weaver (Weaver 2000), MAC refers to macro-institutional, organizational ensembles that connect the rulers and the ruled on the level of the entire polity, such as different kinds of state administrations or military apparatuses, techniques of taxation, of national accounting, of popular mobilization, and other kinds of political inclusion.

Political masters could trigger implementation problems which comes from partisan officials and lawmakers of the implementing agencies as well as from inside or among them. For electoral purposes, politicians could feel intense temptation to interfere with agency decision-making. If an agency makes a judgment that is unpopular, an election is imminent, and incumbent politicians are likely to shoulder the public responsibility for the agency decision, the temptation to do so is likely to be extremely strong. To avoid political involvement which could be seen as enticement to future political officials (including themselves), politicians will occasionally purposefully establish a “arms-length” relationship with an implementing agency. For instance, they might assign independent boards to implementing agencies or contract out program operations. There are, however, few insulating arrangements put in place by politicians that cannot later be changed or reversed by politicians if they so choose. Analysis of Implementation can pinpoint Programmatic structures that raise specific

concerns about political involvement and offer suggestions for safeguards against it where necessary (Weaver).

### ***2.5.2 The role of resources***

Resources, financial, human, and material are essential to maintaining the process of implementing any policy, especially if it calls for the development and execution of public policy. A challenge for decision- and policy-makers is how to mobilize these. New structures and the acquisition of new staff require a variety of resources, including technical, financial, and high-caliber human capacity (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1983). Politicians, typically concentrate on the goals they hope to accomplish while disregarding implementation as their difficulty (Weaver 2000). Moreover, they want to achieve their objectives, they may consider executive statements that more resources are needed as an attempt by budget-maximizing bureaucrats to expand their dominion. To accomplish program objectives, policy executors' frequently lack the time as well as the human, organizational, technological, or financial resources required. Weaver (2000), further posit that, this problem has two components: administrative capability, which entails creating and maintaining a crucial stock of difficult-to-get and replaceable resources like expert knowledge, a resource flow comprising finance and other program inputs that are employed in the short term, together with capital equipment, reputation, and other factors. Execution process should have a sufficient and qualified human capacity on hand to carry out a program or policy guideline in order for it to be successful. The implementation agency needs to be well-prepared to deliver in this regard a successful outcome.

### ***2.5.3 Stakeholders attitude and reactions***

People oppose change for a variety of reasons, including status concerns, lack of information, and fear of the unknown, the absence of rewards, failure-related anxiety, poor trust in the organization, rigid peer group norms, and adherence to tradition (Plant, 1995). To fulfill their expectations, the implementation process must be managed. It is necessary to manage the ongoing, non-linear process of policy implementation (Grindle & Thomas 1991). It necessitates the formation of consensus, the involvement of important parties, the resolution of disputes through compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilization, and adaptability. ‘New policies often reconfigure roles, structures, and incentives, Consequently, the range of costs and advantages for implementers, immediate recipients, and other stakeholders has changed. Policy implementation is hence frequently exceedingly challenging. The business-as-usual approach, which is inwardly focused, has proven ineffective in obtaining desired goals (1996, Brinkerhoff). An important topic in management literature, the management of change also comes up in political discipline (Grindle & Thomas 1990; Crosby 1996). Many reform initiatives require new forms of collaboration amongst already-existing organizations. Sometimes, more than is necessary for efficient and effective administration, the division of labor for program execution reflects the realities of the distribution of political power since existing agencies and their political backers seek to safeguard their “turf,” jobs, and constituency. Additionally, program designs that demand multiple approvals from organizations with very dissimilar goals may result in impasse and inaction. Due to inefficient coordination procedures, several implementing agencies may have program delivery breakdowns and delays, bureaucratic “runarounds” and other forms of poor service, as well as cost overruns.

Implementation analysis can help to pinpoint the “supply chain” of program decisions that must be taken in order to start a new program, modify an existing one, and guarantee that services are delivered normally after those alterations have been made. Potential trouble spots where collaboration of numerous organizations will be required and where achieving that cooperation may be difficult might be identified by using previous understanding of evaluated or related policies. On grounds of this research, scrutiny of execution also can recommend strategies to streamline policy administration in order to reduce or better manage interagency coordination challenges, while still taking organizational specialty into consideration (Weaver, 2000).

## **2.6 Stakeholders’ role in policy implementation**

Participation of stakeholders in developing and implementing educational policies in any nation, human resource development is still largely determined by education. Globally, both developed and developing nations continue to struggle with the importance of stakeholders' involvement in optimizing the fundamental principles of educational programs. This is based on the claim that education occurs across a wide range of settings, including families, communities, the global community, state organizations, parasternal institutions, traditional authority systems, and other stakeholder groups (Ayee, 2008). No one group can claim exclusive ownership of the education of children around the world, notwithstanding the varying levels of responsibility assumed by each partner. It is quite illuminating to note that, long as kids learn and interact from the outside world, parents and families cannot be the only people responsible for their education. Crawford (2009) asserted that, among other groups, communities, society, parastatal institutions, government agencies, traditional councils, and religious organizations must assist the families and parents in the

socialization, education, and parenting of their children. The necessary policy environment must exist in order for children to be adequately prepared to contribute to the improvement of the society in which they live in order to receive the levels of education required in every nation. Berner (2001), argue that since each group contributes to education in a unique way, efforts must be made to build bridges involving all to exploit cooperations toward development through the creating and application effective educational programs for a sustainable educational system (Ayee, 2008). When these various groups of individuals work together to create and implement an educational policy that can provide a successful educational environment for all residents, education occurs most efficiently and effectively.

Accordingly, it's crucial to form and keep working to develop relationships between institutions that make policy, parasternal groups, school administrators, communities, as well as parents, are some examples. Crawford (2009) asserts that a large body of research has revealed several strategies for stakeholder participation in education, presenting real-world ways for various stakeholders to take part in the developing and execution of educational policies. Colletta and Perkins (1995) provide examples of numerous stakeholder participation processes, including curriculum design, data gathering, policymaker consultation, school administration, the creation improvements to school facilities and the development of instructional materials.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Heneveld and Craig (1996) highlighted stakeholder engagement as one of the key factors in determining how well education services are provided by parents, school administrators, government agencies, and the entire community. They lay out five requirements that, if met, would ensure that stakeholders' support for educational policy would effectively offer high-quality, easily accessible education to all citizens. These include, among many others,

enhancing (ensuring) regular communication between educators, parents, and the community; setting up a successful system of school governance for all parties; and making sure that all youngsters who are school-age have proper preparation for greater access to education.

## **2.7 Imperatives for stakeholder participation in education in Ghana**

Any initiative whose goal is to increase the participation of state institutions, organized educational organizations, the community, families/parents, and other stakeholder groups in education must also aim to improve the way that initiative is carried out. In order to improve the educational system in Ghana and make it more accessible, as is the case in the majority of modern, developed nations, there is a need for a larger stakeholder participation. The idea of stakeholder involvement in the educational environment is supported for a number of reasons, Berner (2001).

### ***2.7.1 Maximizing limited resources***

Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith, (2003) indicated that, majority of governments in the world were dedicated to providing education for kids who had reached the age of formal education. However, because of lack of resources and capabilities, governments have discovered that they lack the ability to do so. Most of the time, TLM (Teaching, Learning Materials) and human resources are scarce everywhere, especially in developing nations like Ghana. Finding efficient and effective ways to use the scarce resources already available has become the main objective. Despite the fact that some stakeholders have historically been involved in the formulation and implementation of educational policies, the fact that stakeholders themselves have resources to contribute to education and can be resources by providing local knowledge for those processes is still not fully appreciated. For instance, involving NGO, CSO, school administrators, parents, families, and communities in research,

data collection, policy formulation, and implementation processes can reveal some significant factors that contribute to lower enrollment and attendance, as well as poor academic performance in various schools.

In addition, most stakeholders are frequently worried about education quality and frequently ready to offer help that can, among other things, improve the quality of educational delivery. In some cases, teacher absenteeism and poor performance are serious problems, so involving stakeholders in the policy-making and implementation process is an important component as system for monitoring and supervising teachers. This helps to ensure that teachers show up on time and perform well in the classroom. Ahwoi, (2010) asserts that stakeholders are effective resources that should be used to develop and implement educational policies, as well as to contribute to the enhancement of educational delivery.

### ***2.7.2 Identifying and addressing sensitive Problems***

Every process for implementing a policy will inevitably run into obstacles. Engaging stakeholders helps to quickly identify these constraints so that solutions can be targeted at reducing them. Therefore, stakeholders can help in recognizing and dealing with factors that lead to educational challenges, like low school attendance and poor academic performance. In Gambia this effectively demonstrated. where Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies were used to schooling. Understanding the reasons for low attendance girlchild education, mobilizing communities about such issues, and assisting them in putting together their own solutions were the goals of the effort (World Bank 1995). It is revealed by the study major barriers to girls' education, (a) a lack of middle schools; (b) high tuition fees; (c) a higher risk of becoming pregnant before age 15; (d) a loss of respect for traditional values, particularly submission to and humility toward husbands; and (e)

perceptions, particularly among men, that girls will generally have less success in life. Clearly, a larger stakeholder network system could have handled all of these teething problems.

### ***2.7.3 Developing and maintaining partnerships between School stakeholders***

There are several approaches to bring stakeholders closer to the schools they support, including policymakers, administrators, conventional authorities, parents, and community members. According to Berner (2001), one strategy that might be used is eliminating gaps between policymakers, educators, and administrators of educational institutions. Crawford (2009) asserted that effective stakeholder engagement can help to minimize disputes between policymakers, school administrators, schools and communities, teachers and parents. The reduction of culture shock that could occur anytime educational systems change presents an additional chance for stakeholder participation in policy creation and implementation (Cario & Valismo, 1994). Stakeholders in the communities where schools are located can help the schools by inviting respected community members, such as religious leaders or tribal chiefs, to speak in the classrooms about the community's history, traditions, customs, and culture, which has long been celebrated there. Ahwoi (2010) asserts that schools can contribute to the creation and implementation of policies by identifying local problems and developing long-term remedies.

### ***2.7.4 Increasing Accountability***

Stakeholder involvement in educational policies, especially in school governance, is seen as a way to improve schools' accountability to the community they serve. This is experience in some places, like England and Wales, Canada, and the United States (Boon et al., 2012). A more market-oriented concept that views school-family partnerships more like business partnerships in which the two parties receive

reciprocal and complementary benefits that help them function more effectively, is where the idea of parental involvement for accountability originates. Cleuren (2008) emphasized that it is also quite obvious that stakeholder involvement enhances openness and accountability in financial reporting and commitments within the Ghanaian educational sector. The claim is that regular parent meetings and reporting procedures on student success foster accountability. Crawford (2009) asserted that parents are more likely to participate in school-related pursuits, such as participating in meetings with instructors and keeping tabs on their performance, when they donate their time, work, supplies, land, and money. Teachers and school employees feel increased pressure to provide kids with better education in order to meet the needs of parents and communities (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith 2003). Berner (2001), posits that, involvement can significantly aid in the development of accountability, which helps to enhance the quality of education provided.

#### ***2.7.5 Ensuring Sustainability***

Ahwoi, (2010) argued that having access to funding, whether from donors, commercial institutions, or government agencies, is one of the key components in ensuring the sustainability of initiatives. In this aspect, stakeholder involvement in education cannot by itself assure the continual of schools because communities frequently need outside money to maintain the program. Community involvement is a means to guarantee the advantages of a development program can be sustained once the external interventions are ceased (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2003). Sustainability depends on the level of independence attained by target communities, social and political commitment to the development of programs that support community sustainability as well as the social and political commitment of the greater society (Lovell, 1992). According to Boon et al. (2012), stakeholders are expected to actively

participate in the process of creating, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating projects and policies. Additionally, they are expected to gain knowledge and abilities that would eventually allow them to take over the project or program.

## **2.8 Empirical Review**

### ***2.8.1 Free Senior High School policy implementation***

It has been confirmed by numerous earlier research that one of the main issues facing emerging countries has been the implementation of educational policies. The main factors that have affected the process have been revealed to be lack of continuity in successive government policies, corruption, insufficient financial resources, lack of a visionary leader, lack of “political will” on the part of successive administrations, bad follow-ups, a weak monitoring system, poor policy assessments, a centralized approach in execution, a lack of political stability, and worsening institutional disciplines are some of the problems (Ahmad et al 2012). Based on this critical examination, their study draws the following conclusion, despite the fact that Pakistani education policy goals are frequently stated to be sublime and ideal, they nonetheless encounter poor institutional frameworks and frequent political interference because of the aforementioned causes. As a result of this, the objectives of the policies are not met, and the intended outcomes are not obtained. Ahmad et al. (2012) offers some recommendations, prior to, though, and following the processes of policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, policymakers and policy implementers must be taken into account. The implementation of the policies will be fueled by dedication, strong will, motivation, and strong institutional support if educational programs are implemented with dedication, expertise, and professional zeal while exhibiting zero tolerance for corruption in any form, the budgetary allocation for them should be enhanced.

According to Bregman and Stallmeister (2002), Africa's fragile economies pose a hurdle to increasing access to secondary education because they have raised the average cost of schooling on the continent significantly. Increased funding for secondary education is required, together with making internal efficiency improvements to achieve cost-effectiveness can help make secondary education in Africa accessible, universal, inexpensive, and fair (Lewin & Calloids, 2001). The high cost of boarding secondary schools in African countries is a legacy of colonialism. Such a legacy is not fit for the type of mass education used today when contrasted to the cost of building and sustaining schools (World Bank, 2005). Akyeampong (2005) and Bennell et al. (2005) provided a similar scenario in Ghana and Zambia, where boarding school costs are much higher than day school costs.

Other studies, like Makinde (2005), also look into the issues with execution of policy in developing countries the experiences of Nigeria. The study uncovered that, certain implementation issues are brought about by government policy inconsistencies, exploitation, and a lack of necessary people and material resources. In light of this, the study came to the obvious conclusion that policies are implemented frequently in developing countries, but frequently without producing the anticipated outcomes. Despite these difficulties, numerous African nations, such as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, have recently introduced a type of free secondary education (FSE) with various results. In sub-Saharan Africa, the first country to offer secondary education to all students without charging tuition was Uganda in 2007 (Essuman, 2018). The 136% rise in enrolment and completion of fee-free primary education, the 80% transition rate shortfall, and the commitment to enacting the fee-free secondary education pledge made by President Yoweri Museveni in 2006 during his campaign for reelection all contributed to the introduction of FSE (Werner, 2011). The Ugandan

FSE Policy objectives were to improve quality of education, expand access to secondary education, and maintain the benefits of primary education for all. (Essuman, 2018). Prior to its full-scale introduction in 2007, the program was piloted for a year. More low-income rural homes throughout the nation were the focus of the pilot program (Werner, 2011). The Ministry of Education and Sports of Uganda implemented initiatives to reduce the per-student price of secondary school, boost efficiency, and provide more room for students in anticipation of impending implementation bottlenecks. These tactics included, among others, a rise in teacher-to-student ratios, a decrease in class sizes, and a rationalization of teachers' workloads (Jacob & Lehner, 2011).

In an earlier investigation by Asankha and Takashi (2007) discovered that the policy had a significant effect on secondary school enrollment, particularly for girls from low-income families. For example, according to Jacob and Lehner (2011), enrollment climbed by 1,194,000 in 2010 compared to 412,367 in 2007. The free secondary education initiative was implemented in Kenya in 2008, partially fulfilling the government's election-year political commitment. The case of Uganda the FSE Policy sought to boost secondary education accessibility for all children, with a focus on those from low-income homes, and to improve the standard of that level of education. Kenya's FSE Policy was only partially implemented, as in Uganda, the government generously funded secondary school capitation subsidies and tuition prices at public day schools. Parents and guardians did, however, pay for the cost of boarding as well as other costs, such as books and stationery. Rather than completely eliminating fees, the implementation of FSE in Kenya cut them significantly. According to Radoli (2011), the FSE Policy increased the pace at which children moved from primary to secondary education. Brudevold-Newman (2017) stated that, the policy boosted

educational attainment by around 0.8 years. Large class sizes, an increase in untrained teachers as a result of rising student enrollment and a shortage of qualified teachers, and an expanding government deficit were all unintended effects of the introduction of the FSE (Otieno & Colclough, 2009).

In a similar vein, the government of Tanzania 2014 saw the introduction of an FSE Policy as part of a combined free and mandatory basic and lower secondary education program for all people (Ministry of Education & Vocational Training, 2014, p. 3). In 2016 it got rid of all fees and other financial requirements for lower secondary education to make it easier for people to get access (Godda, 2011). The following increase in enrollment raised a number of implementation challenges, such as stress on school principals' workloads and a lack of funding to allow schools to satisfy the logistical and academic needs of schools and students. The FSE policies in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania are comparable to that of Ghana, they all aim to improve educational quality and expand secondary education access, especially for children from low-income families. The plans also fulfilled the promises made by governments of the various nations during election campaigns. In Ghana, there was a pressing need for a free senior high school policy since there were several obstacles to providing secondary education (Bonsu, 2019). In research on the politics of implementing social policy: a case study of Ghana's free SHS program shows how financial limitations and infrastructural problems thwart efforts to execute the program. The implementation of Ghana's free SHS program has been significantly hampered by insufficient infrastructure and logistics (delays in the distribution of school subsidies to both vendors and head teachers).

Also, Harriet (2016) assessing stakeholder participation in policy formulation and implementation the study emphasized an important role in implementation of the Free

Education policy the Stakeholders can identify pertinent needs and provide potential strategies for effective policy design and implementation in addressing urgent challenges especially when there is effective stakeholder involvement. The need to increase shared motivation for the successful implementation of the FSHS policy is a crucial role performed through stakeholder involvement. A variety of stakeholders are driven to actively participate in the development and execution of a policy for a variety of reasons. Helping to eliminate these expensive items will encourage parents to support the policy's adoption. Stakeholder involvement helps important people and organizations come to consensus on a standard course of action in crucial policy issues. The importance of economic barriers, the physical growth improvement of school facilities, raising the standard of secondary education, fostering equity, and acquiring crucial job-readiness skills reasons are brought to the forefront through effective stakeholder engagement in educational policy concerns.

### ***2.8.2 Ghana's education policies implementation: issues and development***

Ghana since independence, has undertaken numerous reforms in education aimed at creating a better system or structure that will fulfill the needs of the nation's development. Different political systems, as well as external goals and resource availability concerns, have had a significant effect in the direction of education programs. Populist governments, democratic and military, have actively promoted education reform in order to create opportunities for the rural poor, enhance quality, preserved and raise the standards. The Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) of Nkrumah, for instance, was much more extreme and advocated both supply- and demand-led techniques. A considerable number of new teachers were hired, trained, and placed in schools, and there were no fees for basic education. Gradually introducing a redesigned educational framework was the idea.

After gaining full independence in 1957 and the passage of the Education Act in 1961, middle school tuition costs were likewise eliminated. In order to increase student demand for education in the Northern and Brong-Ahafo regions, scholarships were instituted for primary, secondary, and higher education. Akyeampong et al. (2007), posits that, the policy focusses up to this point, had been on expanding access through enrollment. After 1966, policy for elementary education and for education in general centered on standards and the caliber of instruction that kids received after they were enrolled. This included a concentration on post-primary grade curriculum content that was applicable to the working world, suggestion following two years of middle school, kids be picked for the academic secondary stream. Before graduating from high school, those who were not chosen would do prevocational education for an additional two years. By 1972, the focus had returned to access rather than standards and quality as a result of this policy's widespread perception elitist and indulgent toward the requirements of the middle classes. By this point, many children from lower-income families had access to elementary education, and their current objectives included gaining greater access to secondary education, particularly the academic rather than the vocational stream (Akyeampong, et al., 2007). A basic education stage comprising elementary and the first three years of secondary school (junior secondary) was encouraged as part of the New Structure and Content of Education (NSCE), which was implemented in 1974. Akyeampong (2009) reports that the NSCE also suggested curriculum revisions to make primary and junior secondary education more hands-on and skill-focused.

The NSCE suggestions, which focused on increasing enrollment changes in basic education as well as to the content and applicability of the curriculum, served as the basis for the reforms that were implemented in 1987 and 1996. Scholarship programs

were tested in an effort to promote girls' desire for study. Housing, rewards for teaching, and training programs were used as incentives for teachers in addition to pay. When the first junior secondary school cohorts' performance fell short of expectations in the middle of the 1990s, the issue of standards came back into the spotlight. The constitutional amendment in 1996 helped the FCUBE program. The government was mandated by Article 38 (2) of the Constitution of 1992 to create a strategy for the implementation of free, mandatory, and universal basic education within the next ten years. These give the country's basic education system legal weight (Akyeampong, 2009). The financial backing from the global donor community and the political will that had triggered the reforms in 1987 were still present. Through a comprehensive upgrading program, instructors at this time around, the reforms were more prepared for (Kosack, 2009). Large-scale distance education programs for teachers faced significant technical hurdles, and the supply of both trained and untrained teachers found it difficult to keep up with increases in student enrollment (Akyeampong, 2009). Numerous educational improvements have been brought about by fiercely fought elections during the fourth republic. NPP government after elected into office in 2000, a process to examine the current system of education was started. This was based on the need to determine what specific actions needed to be taken to get Ghana's educational system on track to produce the kind of educational output necessary for personal growth and increased economic productivity in a setting of global competition, as well as to fulfill a pledge on the election platform (GoG, 2003). Since 1951, party manifestos have frequently included current developmental challenges that are likely to gain electoral benefit and so allow for the adoption of policies consistent with party ideologies. For instance, the 1951 CPP manifesto included pledges for free basic education, industry, and jobs for

everybody. As a political actor, CPP carefully prepared these promises to help it win the election and get the power to rule. Similarly, NPP 2000 Chapter three platform exhaustively described how the party would fundamentally alter Ghana's educational system if voted to office (NPP platform, 2000). The party was persuaded that forming a commission to assess the entire educational system was essential in order to make it more responsive to contemporary challenges following the election victory and taking office in 2001. Jophus Annuah-Mensah served as the committee's chairman when it was founded in 2002. Secondary, technical, and vocational education philosophy, as well as professional development, and funding education are just a few of the topics covered in a comprehensive evaluation of the entire educational system (GOG, 2003). The reviews report was examined by the parliament, together with the two political parties (NPP and NDC) strongly disagreed during the ratification process.

Eventually, the 2008 Education Act (Act 778) was passed as a result of the legislative process. The polarization that characterized the 2007 educational reform can be viewed in the context of political impact on policy when the recommendation to lengthen SHS from three to four years was agreed by parliament, which paved the road for implementation. The New Patriotic Party (NPP), in 2001, Mr. John Agyekum Kuffour changed the senior secondary education program from a three-year to a four-year program. The National Democratic Congress (NDC), which took office in 2008, decided to modify the decision back to three years. In the months leading up to the legislative elections in December 2008, both the center-right NPP and the center-left NDC made promises about improving access and quality at every level. The NPP placed a greater emphasis on quality and standards than the NDC, which instead prioritized expanding the senior secondary stage from four years to three while also advocating for the expansion of early childhood education, teacher preparation

programs, and technical institutions. elementary school for six years, junior secondary school for three years, senior secondary school for three years, and four years in a university program make up the current system of education, which begins at the age of six (Djangmah, 2009). Overpoliticization is to blame for the structure of Ghana's educational system being inconsistent. Following their election to office, political parties work to implement any reforms they think necessary, particularly with regard to their mission to provide Ghanaians with high-quality education (Adu-gyamfi et al., 2016).

### ***2.8.3 Legal Foundation and History of Ghana's Free Senior High School Policy***

This research discovered that over the years, the various public policies in Ghana have been influenced by the philosophies of the various political administrations. specifically, various political party systems implement laws in accordance with their ideologies. Ghana 1992 Constitution, however, lays out the fundamental tenet of all governments. Political leaders in Ghana are required by the country's supreme law to implement specific programs and policies aimed at enhancing the welfare of all residents. Numerous provisions in the 1992 Constitution are intended at defending and advancing fundamental freedoms and rights during the course of development. Several Constitutional articles emphasize the inclusion and equality of citizens in a variety of areas of life, including health, education, and socioeconomic standing (see GOG, 1992). At a gathering, His Excellency Nana Akuffo Addo, the President of Ghana, reiterated this in relation to education. Article 25(1) of Ghana's 1992 Constitution states that all citizens have "the right to equal educational chances and facilities" with regard to educational policies. This clause addresses formal and non-formal education at the basic, secondary, and tertiary levels. These constitutional provisions have been instrumental in spurring a number of development initiatives

targeted at lowering vulnerability and enhancing Ghana's educational system (Bonsu, 2019).

#### ***2.8.4 Progressive/Targeted Free SHS Program***

The NDC government made a pledge to Ghanaians towards increasing the funding for public secondary schools before winning the 2012 elections. This had the progressive and specific goal of lowering the financial loads on parents and infrastructure. Consequently, a number of infrastructure initiatives were started. They stated the construction of 200 new senior secondary schools, paying particular attention to areas or towns without such facilities (NDC, 2012). As a result, the NDC administration, which was in power at that time, concentrated on developing the infrastructure required to raise educational standards and facilitate FSHS policy implementation in accordance with a progressive guideline. After consulting with stakeholders, "Mahama government began a gradual starter of Free SHS education in 2014. This particular Free SHS program was intended to begin mainly with day students. Former President John Mahama stated in his State of the Nation Address in 2014 that a guideline would be submitted to Cabinet for the program's endorsement and following execution (Bonsu, 2019).

A state consent of providing free senior high education to every eligible student followed infrastructure improvements and the initial enrollment of day students. The government provided money for the first term of the 2015–16 academic year for 320,488-day students in public senior high schools as part of the declaration of 2016 budget, which marked the beginning towards the transition to progressively free SHS education (Ghanaweb, 2017). Exams, entertainment, sports, SRC, library culture, scientific development, math and science tests, ICT, and curriculum fees were all covered by the progressive Free SHS education (Bonsu, 2019).

### ***2.8.5 Universal Free SHS Program***

The political party NPP claimed that, the guidelines put forth by the NDC government prior to the 2016 elections was rather slow and unable to achieve the goal of providing Free SHS education to every citizen in Ghana enrolled in public SHS. As a result of keeping its pledges, the NDC received harsh criticism. The media and civil society groups praised their current successes and criticized it for being inaccessible and difficult to use (GNECC, 2016). Because of the populace's general discontent and the NPP's aggressive election campaign, the NPP won the elections, and in September 2017 the Free SHS policy was introduced.

Ghana government, Nana Akufo-Addo made a commitment to implementing Free universal secondary education for every citizen in Ghana by the introduction of Free SHS policy is in accordance with the country constitution.” According to the 1992 constitution of Ghana, Article 25(1)b declares Senior High education by all in all forms, addition to the technical and the vocational schools, generally shall be accessible and available to all by all suitable demand, particularly through the gradual initiation of the Free SHS education. The commitment of Free SHS includes free boarding, food, textbooks, libraries, science centers, computers, exams, and utilities.” In contrast to the NDC government’s progressive and targeted strategy, the 2016 NPP manifesto placed a strong emphasis on the need for a universal rollout of the Free SHS policy. Despite being the legitimate right by the constitution and also in accordance with the development plan of the nation, the Free Senior High school education in particular as public or social policy by espousal and implementation stood as a political ploy to win elections.

### ***2.8.6 Perspective of Ghana's Free Senior High School policy***

Secondary education still faces inherent and obvious barriers in most rising nations like Ghana (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). Numerous efforts are still being scaled up by different governments to overcome these obstacles. In the list of constitutional provisions in Ghana's Constitution, Article 25(1b) states that "Secondary education in its various forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education." His Excellency John Dramani Mahamah, the former president of Ghana, and the NDC government created a program with the aim of establishing a roadmap for the gradual implementation of free secondary education in Ghana as required by the 1992 Constitution. to carry out this constitutional responsibility. Clear commitments were made on the implementation of the Universal Secondary School by making secondary school free for every Ghanaian child in the 2008, 2012, and 2016 campaign manifestos by His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo and the NPP government. This was to be accomplished through free tuition, free admission, free textbooks, free science centers, free computers, free utilities, and free libraries, among other things (Adu-Ababio & Osei, 2018). The goal was to relieve stress on parents and provide a solid foundation of human resources for young people in Ghana. The claim is that both of Ghana's major political parties agreed, in terms of political commitment, that all qualified Ghanaians must have access to free secondary education. Additionally, Free Senior High School implementation was in line with the SDGs. According to Adu-Ababio and Osei (2018), Goal 4 specifically states that by 2030, children must have successfully completed both primary and secondary education, which must be free, equitable, and of a high standard.

The implementation of this policy intervention seems to be a foundation for earlier initiatives and interventions performed by prior administrations. The claim made here is that Ghana appears to have benefited from earlier governments' efforts to widen access to and participation in secondary education. The Free Secondary Education Policy for children of Northern extraction, the Coco Board Scholarships and Bursaries, the Hardship Scholarship, the Senior High School Subsidy, and many others can all be linked to this. This emphasizes the idea that Free Senior High School existed in varied shades and forms for specific segments of the population. As stated, the Free Senior High School Policy is explicitly referenced as a comprehensive plan for offering free secondary education to all citizens in both the 1992 Constitution and the SDGs.

However, it has been discovered the Free SHS policy in Ghana existed earlier. From the facts assembled, many Ghanaians did not have access to formal schooling while the country was under colonial rule. Consequently, from the political period of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his Convention Peoples Party, Ghana achieved freedom from their colonial masters (British) in 1957 March. Ultimately, the CPP proclaimed a one-party state and adopted socialist policies on the far left. Based on the socialist philosophy of the CPP government, Nkrumah sought to abolish school fees in 1961 in order to encourage enrollment in formal education at all levels basic, secondary, and tertiary. The Northern Region of Ghana, in particular, continues to profit from these policies. Subsequent governments also introduced programs and policies to further these earlier attempts to improve equitable access to education. The primary issue for succeeding governments has been funding these policies with tax revenue. This research agrees with Asare-Bediako (2014) that the primary source of funding for these programs was the imposition of taxes. Consequently, citizens' opposition and

that of other opposition political groups (Pierson, 2001). The Free SHS education policy was reimagined by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) as their main political initiative in 2017.

### ***2.8.7 Progressive/Targeted verses a Universal Free SHS Program***

The political agendas and beliefs of the various political parties' efforts to quicken development have led to a politization of the Free SHS. The political climate has allegedly turn into partisans determined interest instead of deliberate policy approaches, based on a number of arguments. Because of this, Abdulai & Hickey (2016) believe that social spending by the government has not always helped the poor. As a result, many citizens now depend on client politics to obtained common social services and amenities, which over time slows down development and worsens Ghana's inequality problem (Oduro, 2014; Abdulai & Hickey, 2015). For example, in 2012, the topic of FSHS overshadowed political discourse and election campaigns. The two largest political parties in Ghana stated their plans to make secondary education free in their party manifestos.

The choice of social or public policy problems and issues relies less on societal needs than it does on how well they align with political elites' electoral agendas. Therefore, changes factors such as social, political, and economic has an ideal impact on the content of a strategy or program. Consequently, the degree to which some by their relevant interest is endangered as result of the policy are required to oppose it, hitherto, those who are in position to benefit from it, are required to advocate for such a policy (Bell & Stevenson 2015). As a result, a number of political groups gave the FSHS policy top priority because the citizens were passionate for it. Their methods of execution, however, were different. The NDC, CPP, along with other smaller parties,

advocated for a progressive and targeted level of the Free SHS, in contrast to the NPP government's belief that it could be enacted in a universal manner.

#### ***2.8.8 The imperatives for Free Senior High School policy in Ghana***

Ghana's Free Senior High School Policy benefits practically all of its citizens, which serves the purpose for its implementation. The disparity issue that continues to plague secondary school access in Ghana may be resolved through the Free Senior High School Policy (MOE, 2017). The Free Senior High School policy eliminates financial barriers that parents and children in Ghana of school-age suffer from in order to alleviate the inequality restriction and offer equal chances for all pupils. To accomplish this, all fees approved by the Ghana Education Service (GES) Council are absorbed by the Free Senior High School policy. More crucially, the policy allows for the absorption of all recurring costs, such as feeding expenses that cover three meals for border kids and one hot meal for all other students who attend school all day, including many other things.

Another important justification for the implementation of the Free Senior High School policy is that it permits students who would have otherwise stopped their education at the Junior High School (JHS) level to complete secondary education under Ghana's Free Senior High School policy, acquiring practical and employable skills (World Bank, 2017). The argument made here is that the Free Senior High School policy gives Ghana's human resource base the required information, which up until now would not have had access to employable skills and appropriate secondary education. As a result, the Free Senior High School policy will contribute to the development of human capital by requiring secondary education as a prerequisite for admission to universities in Ghana. The contention made here is that human resources seem to be the most important resources in every nation and need all governments attention. By

ensuring system improvement, performance accountability, and leadership throughout the entire school administration process, the FSHS program or policy facilitates changes that would raise the quality of secondary education. (Adu Ababio & Osei, 2018). This is accomplished, among other things, by improving infrastructure and providing instructional materials on time. Among many other things, improving human capital development is crucial for the Free Senior High School policy execution in order to make Ghanaian students more competitive on the international stage.

## **2.9 Theoretical Review**

### ***2.9.1 Relevant Theory to Free SHS Policy***

### ***2.9.2 McConnell's Theory of policy success/failure***

Two key theoretical principles for developing public policy serve as the foundation for this study. The assessment of the Free SHS policy formulation and implementation process is guided by McConnell's (2010) theory and the Winter's Integrative Model of implementation (2003).

The two reconcilable dimensions for evaluating policy success serve as a framework for analyzing how successful the policy has been in terms of the program and process (McConnell, 2010b). This study contributes to and advances knowledge in the area of policy making by using this theory to investigate the Free SHS Policy. Traditionally, policy success or failure has been seen through a prism of whether or not the programmatic goals of a policy are accomplished. It is erroneous or inaccurate to judge a policy success or failure solely based on its programmatic objectives. This is because McConnell (2010b) contends that in addition to program failure, other aspects of policy success or failure exist and must be addressed if failures are to be

avoided. Process failure is the second common sources of policy failure mentioned by McConnell (2010a). This means that policies can fail both substantively and technically (objectively or as perceived to be failing to deliver expected material outcomes), as it is typically the case with program failures, as well as conceptually, meaning it is simply being unable to move from an idea to reality through the successful completion of a policy process (Bovens, Hart, & Peters, 2001; Brandstrom & Kuipers, 2003). According to Fischer (2003), a policy is deemed effective inasmuch as its supporters were able to accomplish the objectives, they set for it. However, only those individuals who hold the initial objective in high regard are likely to consider its accomplishment in this manner. Given the word success is positive connotations, therefore, a program or policy is deemed successful if it accomplishes the objectives that its factions set forth for it, receives no meaningful criticism, and/or has widespread support (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020). This approach has the benefit of acknowledging that the government can and occasionally does succeed in achieving its objectives in each of its three areas of policy. For instance, a government may be successful in putting together an agreement to pass important legislation or decisions. It can implement a program using tools for policy that results in the desired outputs and outcomes. The government might also be successful in creating a policy that improves election prospects. But in this situation, a policy is frequently deemed successful if it makes it through a challenging, veto-point-filled, and multi-actor approval process to creation and implementation, regardless of its ability to “deliver the goods” in terms of its substantive program effectiveness or efficiency (Lindblom, 1959). Howlett (2009) arranged these procedural errors according to the stages of the policy-making process during which they take place. These circumstances include those during the agenda-setting stage

when overreaching governments take on too many initiatives at once and those during the formulation stage when they try to address “wicked” or “un-addressable” problems where neither the cause of a problem nor the solution to it are well known enough to generate workable policy alternatives (Churchman, 1967).

Another scenario is when a policy is being adopted, where institutional settings made for sequential procedures may stymie it (Jones, 1994) or where governments engage in log-rolling and other types of bargaining that compromise the integrity of policy ideas (Anderson & Heywood, 2009). The other stages are at the implementation stage, where governments implement too many policies beyond an organization’s ability to produce results (Meier & Bohte, 2003). Or too many policies are evaluated incorrectly and don't use the results to inform future policy changes (May, 1992). Commonly, both in Ghana as elsewhere, only the program dimension is evaluated (see, for example, (Ayee, 2000; Mohammed, 2014). However, this method of measuring the success of policies only captures a portion of the truth. We will still have to deal with the issue of how objective an assessment is when trying to tell the complete story or evaluate policy performance (Marsh & McConnell, 2010). The final option or phase in a cycle of policy support is post-implementation review, which offers the chance to evaluate the degree to which, as of a predetermined date, policy objectives have been met. The field of policy review and assessment has a well-established body of literature (OECD 2013, Cairney 2016). It will search for answers to important issues like, “Were the policy expectations met.? Have any lessons been learned for programs in the future? The responses to these inquiries can support judgments regarding whether or not to renew, expand, or discontinue an activity in a rational, evidence-based setting. A general paradigm that is adaptable is one that McConnell (2015) developed in his examination of the many levels of policy failure. The first of these

applies the most to the function of implementation assistance. The degree to which such an intervention has assisted in securing policy legitimacy, developed stakeholder support, displayed clarity of purpose, demonstrated a comprehension of complexity, sustained political support, and contributed to the wider attainment of policy objectives may be among the criteria for assessing the contribution of a policy support program.

## **2.10 The Integrative Model of implementation.**

### ***2.10.1 Winter's integrated model of implementation***

In an effort to merge the top-down and bottom-up perspectives on policy implementation, Winter (2003) developed the “Integrated Implementation Model,” which consists of four (4) significant groupings of socio-political elements that affect implementation outcomes. According to him, research on the application of policies process should be carried out “in terms of both output and outcome/impact” (Winter 1990: 27). Winter's strategy is more of a “framework of analysis” than it is a causal model that identifies important groups of variables and devices that have an impact on the outputs and results of implementation. The model presupposes a connection between policy output or performance (by implementers) and outcome or impact (experienced by recipients of the policy). As a result, from the standpoint of synthesis, Winter contrasts the results of the implementation of policies or programs with their objectives that have been publicly announced (top-down) and also takes into account the various interests of implementation actors (bottom-up) that have an impact on the outcomes of policies. In his analysis, he separates the factors into four categories: (I) the nature of the policy formulation process prior to the law (decision) to be implemented; (II) organizational and interorganizational implementation behavior; (III) street-level bureaucratic behavior; and (IV) response by target groups and other

changes in society and socioeconomic context/conditions (Winter 1990:20-1, cited in Ryan 1996; Winter 2003). He identifies four steps in the policy formation process in relation to the first factor, which considers how policy formulation and design may affect the consequences of implementation. Conflicts, the selection of policy tools (including resource distribution), attempts to solve problems, and the focus on the policy development process are among them. Conflicts during the policy-formulation stage, according to Winter, might affect the results of implementation since they frequently result in the creation of confusing goals. Implementation is unlikely to be successful if a real attempt is not made to solve a problem, and the more conflict, the more probable that implementation would be unsuccessful (winter 1990, cited in Ryan 1996: 738).

The second set of factors focuses on how the implementation procedure affects the outcomes of implementation. The implementation process, according to Winter, necessitates organizational and interorganizational behavior that represents various levels of coordination and collaboration. These factors concentrate on how businesses and other organizations interact in response to policy instructions. Consistency, compatibility, and cooperation among institutional interests, as well as between policy objectives and organization interests, are often appealing in this regard. Organizational authority, institutional ties, and resource dependence among implementing organizations are all factors that Winter emphasizes as being crucial to execution (Peter & Pierre 2003).

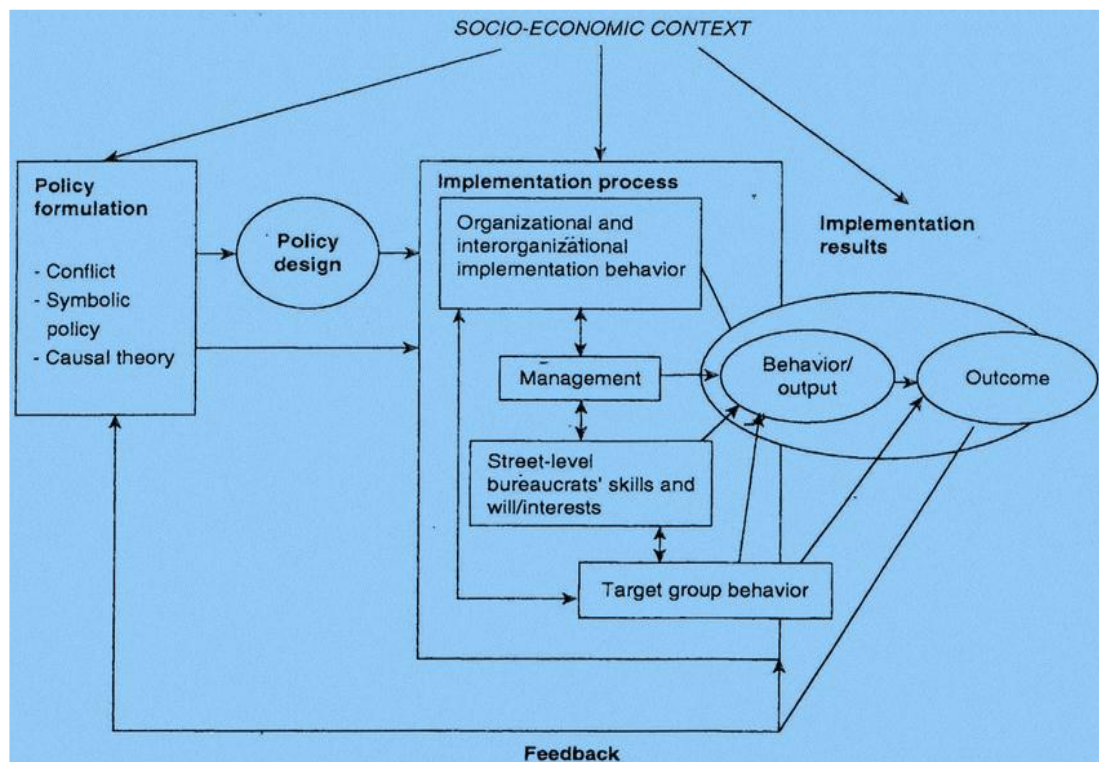
The third variable/group in Winter's model gives street-level officials (actors) a framework for inclusion in the implementation process (Lipsky 1980). Instead of focusing on the organization or institution as a whole, this variable highlights the impact of specific organizational player on the implementation process. According to

Winter, “Street-level bureaucrats have the power to systematically skew how programs are carried out” (Winter, 2003 p. 212). Winter also emphasizes the significance of the link between organizational culture and the conduct of bureaucrats at the ground level. He points out that altering organizational culture is necessary in order to successfully execute new changes by changing how street-level bureaucrats behave (Ibid). He highlights the importance that those who benefit from public policies have in his fourth variable by pointing out that programs and policies should consider the characteristics of target groups since they have the power to accept or reject policies. Winter argues that in order to improve policy implementation, target groups with various socioeconomic and/or educational backgrounds require various implementation tactics. These target groups, which can include people of a nation, recipients of benefits, or businesses, have a significant impact on the policy’s outcomes as well as street-level officials’ performance in co-producing public service, including both positive and negative actions. They contend that beneficiaries have the power to encourage policy implementers, such as lower-level bureaucrats, to succeed in accomplishing policy aims and objectives or to fail in doing so. It is probably that a program would be achieved where target groups tend to support it, and it may not be implemented successfully where they do not.

Winter (2003) focuses on the overall socio-economic environment or context in which a policy is executed in his final cluster. According to him, determining the sociocultural or environmental variables that influence the outcome and output of policy is a crucial requirement for efficacy (Van Meter & Van Horn 1975). How far do elements of social and economic influence the execution of any policy or program, that is the key question. When “implementing policies, different types of situations or contexts should be taken into account.” (Berman 1980: 206) Local social and

economic circumstances would have an impact on the implementation process if policies were implemented at the local level. This is in line with Sabatier & Mazmanian's (1980) classification of these socio-economic factors as “non-statutory” implementation-affecting factors. Therefore, these academics focus on changes in socioeconomic circumstances that can have an impact on a program as well as changes brought on by political or societal factors that may help or impede the implementation of policy. These criteria are significant when examining how the Free SHS is being implemented in Ghana because they highlight the intricacies and changes that the policy may experience as a result of the diverse socioeconomic conditions found throughout the country.

**Winter’s Integrated Model of Implementation**



**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**

## **2.11 Conceptual Framework**

**Integrated Model of implementation. source: Adopted Winter (2003).**

### ***2.11.1 Explanations of variable from the conceptual framework figure above***

As seen in the above figure, Winter's four sets of variables on the implementation of policies are valuable because they account for the impact that one set of variables has on other variables. Winter stated that "the four sets of variables are interconnected, and the process for formulating policy has an impact on how the other factors develop." The decisions made by street-level' bureaucrats are influenced and predisposed by organizational and inter-organizational behavior. These connections exist between target groups and "street-level" bureaucrats as well (Ryan 1996; Winter, 1990). Figure 2.0 depicts the drafting or design stage of a policy to the consequences of its execution (policy performance and outcome), with arrows pointing in both forward and backward directions. This mixed model combines top-down and bottom-up viewpoints. Due to its emphasis on performance and results in relation to established policy goals Winter's model is essential for implementation of research in contrast to normal top-down research, the model does not restrict policy implementation to simply achievements when examining whether a given policy or program is effective or congruent with declared aims and objectives. Winter's paradigm rather expands the purview of policy analysis to take into account how the target is affected by the policy. Beyond that, the model adequately considers the creation of policies and their subsequent application in the process of policy -making. Even more crucially, the model emphasizes how important it is for local implementers and other contextual factors to play a part in how policy objectives are met. Like Lipsky (1980), Winter acknowledges that local actors can have a considerable impact on policies as they are being implemented and that implementation studies must

therefore pay attention to their activities and procedures. The framework focuses on how policies are created and designed, as well as how they are implemented and, if they are implemented properly, comprehended, would considerably affect how the policy is ultimately established by stressing the activity relevance at the policy design phase.

The emphasis is placed on the implementation process and its overall product when applying Winter's variables to the implementation of the of free senior high school program. Additionally, it directs the study attention to independent variables including resource accessibility, the adequacy of the organizational framework for implementation as well as the level of dedication, cooperation, and coordination within such organizations.

## **2.12 Summary of Literature Review and Gaps Identified**

The chapter has analyzed the idea of implementing the Free SHS policy within the context of Ghana based on the discussion that has taken place so far. In the chapter, detailed of how the free SHS policy was conceptualized and why it was instituted. The study's methodology was supported by an appropriate literature evaluation that took into account the topic's contributions as well as any gaps that were found. The conceptual features of critical terms and an analysis of empirical findings are covered in this chapter to support the dependability of the conclusions drawn from the analysis and discussion of the study's data.

The concept review includes the idea of policy implementation and its life cycle, stakeholder roles, attitudes toward policy implementation, and approaches to policy implementation. Other important areas include factors that influence successful policy implementation, Ghana's free senior high school policy, Ghana's free senior high

school policy from a global perspective, and trends and issues in Ghana's educational policy, and among others. It is clear from the literature analysis that educational policies, like the free SHS policy, frequently involve significant state programs that are utilized to advance government toward the socio-economic development of a country. Both industrialized and developing nations have it that such programs, however, are carefully planned and implemented in affluent nations like Canada, Finland, and the USA. Partisan politics, along with a number of other legal and institutional issues, present in emerging and African countries, making it difficult to implement effective educational policies and programs.

Gaps are noted, and assessment of the literature by other authors reveals that, the cycle that a policy should follow was not adhered to by the Free SHS initiative. It was hurriedly rushed into effect in an effort to gain the public trust. The consultation process is poorly represented and frequently subject to political influence (Bonsu, 2019; Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020). The study reveals that efforts to implement Ghana's Free SHS program have been thwarted by financial limitations and infrastructure problems. The implementation of Ghana's free SHS program has been significantly hampered by insufficient infrastructure and logistics (delays in the distribution of school subsidies to both vendors and head teachers) (Bonsu, 2019). Despite the fact that there have been many studies on the subject of policy implementation, the study shows that little emphasis has been placed on how public policy achievements in the area of education being developed and implemented are influenced by their effective execution. It is widely accepted across the literature that government-provided basic, secondary, and university education increases enrollment and expands access to those who may otherwise be excluded. Therefore, this gap needs scholarly consideration. Again, the analysis above shows that the majority of

educational social programs, regardless of the level of national revenue, frequently skip the typical public policy formulation process in the beginning. Why do the majority of educational social policies eschew the conventional procedure for creating public policy? The literature on educational policy also calls for understanding on this issue. In addition, the literature analysis mentioned above shows that few stakeholders are genuinely involved in the execution of policy.

Last but not the least, the literature evaluations above demonstrate the discrepancy between Free SHS policy theory and practice. Why are theory and practice so different? Few research (Abdulai et al.,2019; Seplyeda & Nyst, 2012; Tessitore 2011) in the aforementioned evaluation, an attempt was made to address this, but not in relation to educational policies. in the face of the various research gaps highlighted. This study focuses on the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy, stakeholder's experiences of the policy, achievement and challenges of the implementation the policy and option to improve upon the policy.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology used to gather and analyze data for this research. Specifically, this chapter outlines the Profile of study area, philosophy that underpins the study method, research approach and design, population and sample size as well as the sampling technique or instruments used. It also includes the various data sources and data gathering instruments used. The data collection process, data analysis procedures, reliability and validity and the ethical considerations are further discussed here.

#### **3.2 Profile of Study Area**

##### ***3.2.1 Administrative setup***

In accordance with Legislative Instrument (LI) 1800, the Wa Municipal Assembly was established in 2004 from the formerly existing Wa Districts, continuing the decentralization strategy that was first implemented in 1988. The Assembly performs deliberative, legislative, and executive duties in the districts in accordance with Section 10 of the Local Government Act of 1993 (Act 462). The Assembly is responsible for the overall development of the municipality under this Act. The General Assembly, its Secretariat, Departments of Assembly, 5 Zonal, 1 Urban Council, and 73 Unit Committees make up the municipal Assembly. 43 people make up the General Assembly, of which 2/3 are elected and 1/3 are nominated by the government after agreement with the local traditional authority.

### ***3.2.2 Location and Size***

The Upper West Region of Ghana is made up of eleven administrative divisions (district assemblies). The municipality's administrative borders are shared by the Wa East District Assembly to the east and south, the Wa West District Assembly to the west and south, and the Nadowli District Assembly to the north. The municipality capital is Wa, which also serves as the regional headquarters of the Upper West Region. It is located between latitudes 1°40'N and 2°45'N and longitudes 9°32' to 10°20'W. It is 6.4% of the region land mass and has a land mass area of about 234.74 km<sup>2</sup>.

### ***3.2.3 Population Structure***

Wa Municipality has a total population of 200,672 as of the population and housing census of 2021. Of this number, the town alone has a population of 143,358. (GSS,2020). The Municipality growth rate ranges from 2.9% for rural areas to 5% for metropolitan areas. Its population was estimated to be 98,675 in the year 2000, with 61,826 males and 65,458 females, respectively. The current population of the Municipality is 200,672 (GSS, 2021), with men making up approximately 98,493 of that population and women making up approximately 102,179. (GSS, 2021)

### ***3.2.4 Vegetation and Climate***

The Guinea Savannah environment is where Wa Municipality is located. The vegetation is mostly grass with a few scattered drought-resistant trees like dawadawa, neem, baobab, and shea trees. The many plants and trees in the areas surrounding Wa educational institutions offer shade for rest and study. The Municipality climate is comparable to that of the three Northern regions. In the Municipality, there are primarily two seasons: the dry and the wet. The dry season is marked by hazy and cold harmattan and lasts from mid-November until the end of March, when the hot

weather condition starts. The wet season begins in April and lasts until approximately October.

### ***3.2.5 Strategic Sectors of the Local Economy***

About 70% of the Municipality's people work in agriculture. Agriculture is the primary source of income, followed by commerce (which accounts for 9% of all income), and industry (which makes up around 3% of all income). Communication, energy, tourism, and transportation are other crucial economic sectors.

### ***3.2.6 Trade/Commerce***

In terms of employment, trade and commerce are second only to agriculture in Wa Municipality. The primary operations include, among others, transportation, retail, finance, and public service. The Wa Municipality is the current commercial/service hub for the region, having infrastructure for frequent trading and offices.

### ***3.2.7 Industry***

Small-scale industries that make up the Municipality include agro-processing, wood, metal, glass, textile, leather and hide, clay/sand/stone, art, and craft. About 15% of the people in the municipality work in the manufacturing sector, where they process metal, wood, leather, etc. In the Municipality, lone entrepreneurs are responsible for the majority of businesses. This limits their ability and aptitude to acquire the funds required for their growth and progress. To make sure that the industry sector plays its share in generating income and jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) and cooperative clustering and networking have to be encouraged.

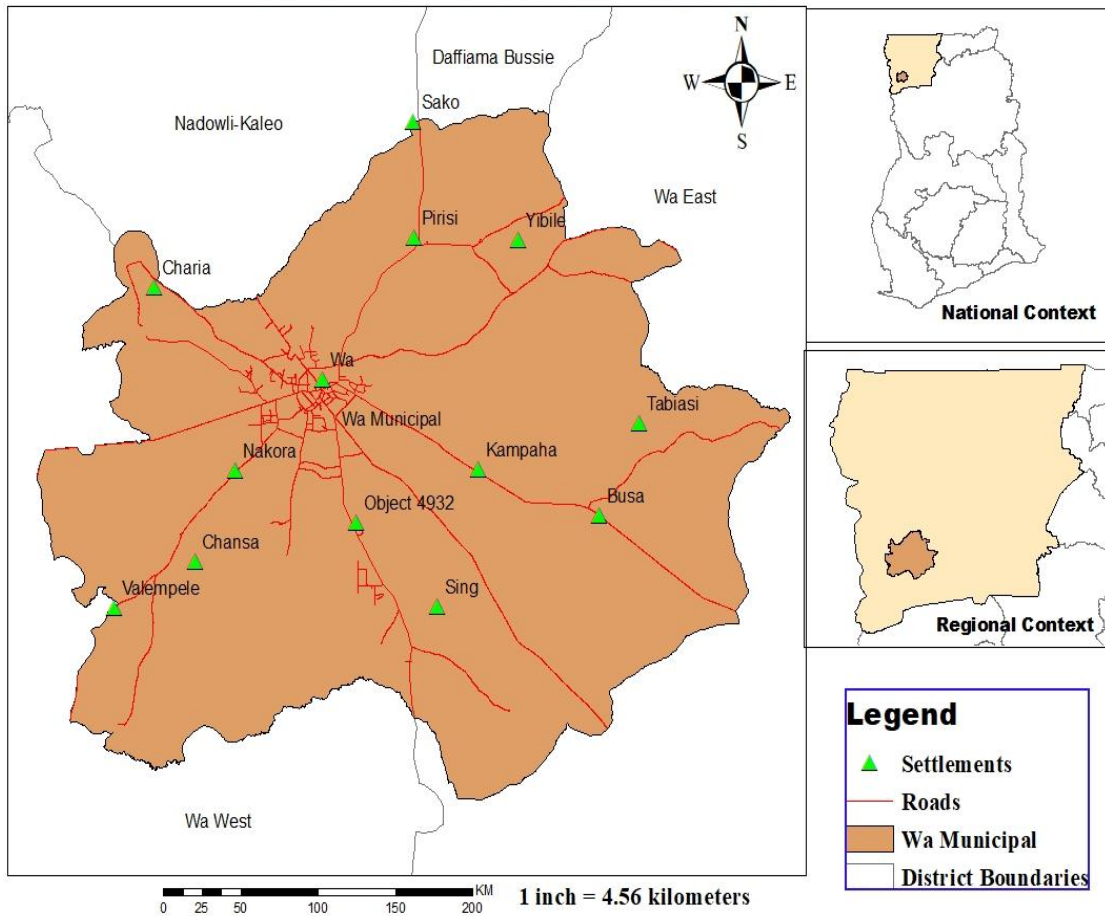
### ***3.2.8 Services***

Wa Municipality is home to over 15 banks and non-banking financial organizations. However, it is challenging for firms to obtain loans from the banks due to sloppy financial record maintenance and insufficient collateral. Personal savings, family and friends, and money lenders are the main sources of venture and working capital. The development of companies and other industries is significantly jeopardized by this. As a result of their low incomes, residents of the Municipality cannot obtain loans from financial institutions to expand their enterprises because they do not have appropriate collateral.

### ***3.2.9 Education***

The town of Wa is host to a few renowned educational institutions, from the basic level to the highest educational level. There are well-organized campuses within the municipality, such as Simon Diedong Dombo University Business and Integrated Development Studies and Dr. Hilla Liman Technical University. Colleges of education and health are also located in the municipality, along with six public senior high schools, two technical institutes, a school for the blind, and a school for the deaf. Others include private senior high schools like Tupaso SHS and St. Francis Xavier Junior Seminary, which are both considered among the best secondary schools in the area. The municipality educational institutions, both public and private, have been made models, which has increased the capacity of its infrastructure and made it an attractive place for both students and teachers.

## MAP OF WA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY



**Figure: 3.1** Represents the Map of Wa Municipal  
**Source:** Ghana statistical services, (2021)

### 3.3 Philosophical Underpinnings

This study adopts the pragmatic paradigms or philosophy. Paradigms are a set of ideas and behaviors that control how research are conducted within a discipline by supplying the framework for conducting inquiries (Weaver & Olson, 2006). It shapes the theoretical ideologies and beliefs that influence how researchers interpret and conduct their study within the world and how they view it (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The study is built on pragmatic paradigm, which sits in the middle of the philosophical spectrum and emphasizes what is most practical rather than taking a stand for either subjective or objective reality (Alise & Teddlie, 2010; Wahyuni,

2012). According to the pragmatist paradigm, the best course of action in a particular circumstance constitutes truth (Creswell, 2013 in Akudugu, 2019), placing more emphasis on the outcome of an unresolved issue than on the approach taken (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The Pragmatist philosophy served as the foundation for this study simply because of its pertinence to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the application of Ghana's free education policy (Doyle et al., 2009). The pragmatist philosophy was more applicable for the conduct of this research because the study questions, question (2) and (3) require both qualitative and quantitative data, so neither the positivist philosophy (which holds that reality can be measured objectively) nor the constructivist philosophy (which views truth as a social construction) would be able to adequately investigate the questions. Both of these ideologies rely on quantitative experiments to infer meanings from phenomena (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The constructivism and positivism tenets can be combined because of the pragmatism philosophy (Morgan, 2007). For example, the researcher can qualitatively examine participants' lived experiences to determine the meaning they attribute to the phenomena and then quantitatively assess the meaning that is objectively associated with the phenomena. Since its ontological foundation is on what works best at answering the study questions, this helps to close the gap between qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This shifts attention from the study process and methodology to its findings (Doyle et al., 2009; Maarouf, 2019). According to Morgan (2007), it is "intersubjective," or both objective and subjective, and it acknowledges the presence of a single reality that different people interpret in different ways. The results of the research and the

phenomenon significance are both important to pragmatic thinking (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It highlights how to use both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and analyze data in order to develop solutions that are practical to the issues that require the study (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Shannon-Baker, 2016). (Morgan, 2014). Through analysis, the pragmatic researcher can maintain some balance between their subjective reflection of the research and the objectivity of the facts acquired (Shannon-Baker, 2016). In the context of this thesis (an investigation into the implementation of Ghana's free education policy), the objective is to examine the literature through a contextual investigation (Creswell, 2009) that would produce findings from actual lived experiences (Akudugu, 2019) of the successes and challenges of the policy in the Wa municipal over a 5-year period, the study did that by asking the study participants questions about their experiences. study subjects, utilizing both information from interviews and information from existing documents to comprehend the subjects, view the synergy on option needed to improve the policy.

The pragmatist approach was, on the other hand, gave the researcher access to participants minds and their meaning associations, how they contextualize their relationship to the FSHS policy implementation as positive or negative, and how they interpret the subjective significance of their practice experience (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Akudugu, 2019). Comparatively, quantifiable data was analyzed to provide further light on the opinions expressed by the study participants based on their actual experiences with the policy execution. The pragmatic approach to learning about a phenomenon offered the chance and platform required to capture the subjective aspect of the participants lived experiences as well as the facts that support and reflect their perceptions (Maarouf, 2019). By using this method of investigation, the study was

able to compile extensive knowledge and quantitative data about the issue that directly address the study objectives.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

This study is drawn from a mixed-method research approach in addressing and arriving at a conclusion. The mixed-method approach integrates the two data sets while combining qualitative and quantitative data collecting, analysis, and interpretation techniques (Creswell, 2009; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). It is a particular method of conducting research that adheres to the pragmatic philosophy and is predicated on the idea that combining qualitative and quantitative methods would result in a more thorough grasp of a problem than using either of the two research spectrum extremes separately (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). The strategy is appropriate for tackling research goals that call for both in-depth knowledge of individuals' firsthand accounts of the phenomena and numerical or statistical analysis for a thorough comprehension (Azorn & Cameron, 2010).

Using this strategy, permit the researchers to create their studies to gather data on participants' opinions and the links between measurable factors (Williams, 2007). By doing so, it adhered to the pragmatist principle of what best addresses the research topic, allowing for effective exploration and explanation of the issue at hand (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This abductive technique enables researchers to alternate between the induction and deduction processes in order to piece together the qualitative and quantitative sides' divergent strengths for an effective answer to the research questions (Morgan, 2007).

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data was used to understand the study setting, which provides a complex situation. The viewpoint of study subjects on

decisions regarding their experiences reflecting from the implementation of the policy is necessary to understand how the free education policy is being implemented. These decisions rest on the ideas provided by study subjects in their natural setting rather than creating variables of the social life as in the quantitative approach (Neuman, 2012). Literature review indicates that most studies that implored one side of these methods (qualitative or quantitative) are usually unable to properly show these perspectives in their empirical studies which attempt to evaluate social or public policy implementation in their own research context. Therefore, to address this practice in Ghana the use of mixed-method approach inevitable.

### **3.5 Study Design**

The design used for this research is concurrent mixed method study design. Concurrent mixed-method design refers to a mixed-method study design where the mixing of the qualitative and quantitative elements a) cuts across the set objectives of the study, the nature of data gathering and analysis, as well as the conclusions made on findings; b) are executed simultaneously without one depending on the other (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). Before integration is achieved at the point of interpretation, the data from both strands can be acquired simultaneously or separately, and the analysis can be performed independently (Castro et al., 2010; Creswell, 2014). With this strategy, the research topic was fully addressed by comparing the results of one method with those of the other and validating the results (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

The concurrent mixed-method design is suitable for this study because the investigation's aims require both quantitative and qualitative data (objective one alone is only qualitative and objectives two and three all are both qualitative and quantitative) (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In other words, the successes and

difficulties in each of the two objectives (2-3) The participants' perspectives on their real-world experiences with the decisions made in these areas and the significance they ascribe to the phenomenon are required when considering possibilities to enhance the policy (Akudugu, 2019; Yin, 2014). The data collection occurred at the same time that interview guides were used to ask participants about their experiences with the policy in context with regard to the implementation, success, and obstacles as well as potential improvements to the municipality's policy (Creswell, 2009; 2014). Secondary sourced documents were then compiled information from the earlier documents. To fully comprehend how the FSHS policy was implemented, these data sets were individually examined and then combined at the point of interpretation (Creswell, 2014; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

### **3.6 Study Population and Sampling**

This section of the thesis deals with the study subjects and how they were chosen and contacted in order to get the data required to answer the study objectives. Study population refers to all objects or items of interest in a study (Adeniyi et al., 2011; Awwoke, 2006). It is known as the people, things with all characteristics that the researcher intends to understand. It was necessary to select a subset of the designated population to assist the research, a process known as sampling, due to a number of considerations including the necessity for rapid data collecting, cost-effectiveness, and the development of precise results (Rahi, 2017). It is also the totality of cases that meet a given set of criteria (Polit & Hungler, 1999). It includes every topic or object that satisfies the study questions requirements.

### 3.6.1 Target population

The target population is the population with which the researcher hopes to generalize findings from. For the purpose of this study, the target population involved all public second cycle schools in the Wa Municipality and all organizations and institutions involved or play a role in carrying out Ghana's free SHS policy implementation, they include representatives from the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Education, second cycle school heads, the National Association of Teachers (GNAT), and the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT). This target population was deemed to be able provide the accurate and comprehensive information needed to understand how the free SHS policy is implemented in the municipality.

**Table: 3.2** A Summary of Respondents Interviewed

Name of institution	Number of respondents	Description quotes
Ministry of Education	1	Officer (O)
Ghana Education Service	1	
Free SHS Secretariat	1	
Association of Teachers	2	
Wa SHS	1	Senior high schools (SHS)
Wa SHS/Technical	1	
Jamiat girls	1	
Northern Star SHS	1	
Wa Islamic SHS	1	
Wa Technical Inst.	1	
T I Amass	1	
	Total respondent=12	

### 3.6.2 Sampling methods/techniques

The study relied on purposive sample this is because its potential respondents were already discovered and the choice of then been selected is based on the fact that the group has relevant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the research (Morra & Rist,2009). However, in mixed-method research, with regard to this study, the main

goal is to produce samples that will adequately meet the research objectives (Tashakorri & Teddlie, 2009). Tashakkori & Teddlie (2009) point out that purposive sampling can occasionally produce both qualitative and quantitative data. In the context of this study, both quantitative and qualitative data is necessary to evaluate the trend or level of achievements and challenges as well as options to improve the policy regarding the execution of the FSHS policy in the municipality, especially for recent years, and to enhance a thorough understanding of the study objectives.

All research participants, including the documents reviewed, were included using a non-probability purposive sampling method (Flick, 1998, in Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009). As emphasized in the literature, purposive sampling aids in focusing precisely on respondents whose knowledge and lived experience we aim to learn regarding (in the case of this study) the implementation of free SHS policy. It is a type of sampling technique that relies on the researcher's assessment of the individuals who have the required information for the achievement of the study's objectives (Rahi, 2017; Kumar, 2011). The Free SHS is recognized as being sufficient in terms of secondary source papers to offer details on the implementation of the program and its applications (Telli et al., 2021). In qualitative research, the sample size is relatively small for the reason of this study, is make an in-depth analysis of the subject and not to investigate a representative sample of the population.

A total of twelve (12) interviews was conducted including various key informants from various institutions. The institutions were sample based on how directly involved they were in the execution of the free SHS policy. in all 12 interviews were conducted by the researcher in the seven senior high schools in Wa Municipality. The schools being sampled have the following characteristics. There is only 1 girls' school, and 6 mixed schools, for a total of Seven (7) institutions. The importance of

the schools to the study can be attributed to the fact that they are the target of the policy and are responsible for its day-to-day execution. The Ghana Education Service (Upper West regional Office, two interviews), the Association of Heads of Public Schools, and the Free SHS office at the Ministry of Education were among the implementing organizations or institutions sampled (two interviews), Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) one interviews, National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT), one interviews. These institutions and agencies serve as a representative sample because of their direct involvement in the policy. The GES is the primary agency charged with carrying out the policy, while the ministry of education serves as its chief overseer. At different stages of the policy, other institutions serve complementary functions.

Accordingly, quantitative sample size was obtained from the sample frame of 171 core subject teachers in the seven public Senior High Schools in the municipality, 119 participants were chosen to engage in the study. The sample size was generated as follows: 23 teachers from Wa Senior High School, 25 from Wa Senior High/Technical, 13 from Wa Islamic Girls, 16 from Wa Islamic Senior High School, 21 from Wa Technical Institute, 12 from T I Amass, and 9 from Northern Star Senior High School made up the sample pool of teachers. The sample size was calculated mathematically in the manner shown below.

There are 171 core subject instructors in total throughout all seven public senior high schools.

The formula for calculating the sample size is based on Yamane's (1967) approach for mathematically predicting the sample size. within the Wa municipal. Therefore, the

study uses Yamane's model of sample size estimation to estimate sample size based on these data.

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

Where  $N$  is the total population size,  $e$  is the precision level and  $n$  is the sample size to be calculated.  $N$  is the total population of core subject teachers in the seven public Senior High Schools in Wa municipal which is 171. Using a confidence level of 95% by substitution into model

$$n = \frac{171}{1 + 171(0.5)^2} = 119$$

Where  $N = 171$  teacher's  $e =$  significant level of 5%

This implies that the study will target at least 119 core subject teachers.

To determine the sample size from various schools' proportionate distribution was employed where  $n =$  total number of core teachers in specific schools,  $N =$  total number of core teachers in the seven schools,  $S =$  sample size, and  $s =$  sample to be calculated.

<b>Proportionate distribution</b>	$\frac{n}{N} \times S = s$
WA SHS	$\frac{34}{171} \times 119 = 23$
WA SHS/T	$\frac{37}{171} \times 119 = 25$
NORTHERN STAR SHS	$\frac{14}{171} \times 119 = 9$
WA ISLAMIC SHS	$\frac{23}{171} \times 119 = 16$
ISLAMIC GIRLS SHS	$\frac{20}{171} \times 119 = 13$
T I AMASS	$\frac{18}{171} \times 119 = 12$
WA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE	$\frac{31}{171} \times 119 = 21$

**Source: author's construct, field survey (2022)**

### **3.7 Data Types and Sources**

The study depends on both primary and secondary sources of data to achieved the study objectives. The primary data for this research were attained through administering semi-structured questionnaires sample respondents and in-depth interviews collected from individuals and officials been part of policy making implementation process of FSHS policy in Ghana. On the other hand, secondary data

was derived from written documents covering policy, per-reviews journals, articles, assessment reports of Free SHS policy, reports by ministers, published interviews, political party manifestos, cabinet papers and committee statements

### **3.8 Data Collection Methods, Instruments, and Techniques**

The research employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies during its data collection. Neuman (2006) posits that, using triangulation method in social research denote the combination of qualitative and the quantitative mode of study and data and thus they complement each other. The key data collection tool used were interview guide and semi-structured questionnaires. Open and close ended question were set into the questionnaires and administered respondents who were core subject teachers from all the seven public Senior High Schools in Wa municipality. Also interview guide was used to interview the purposively chosen individuals, heads of public SHS and officials been part of policy making implementation process of FSHS policy in Wa municipal.

#### ***3.8.1 Interview***

An interview is a way of gathering data that involves an interpersonal meeting between two people the interviewer and the interviewee typically face-to-face but also over the phone (Kumar, 2011; Kothari, 2004). Structured interactions in interviews are those that have a predetermined list of questions, semi-structured interactions have both closed-ended and open-ended questions, and unstructured interactions have a list of open-ended questions and broad topics as memory triggers (Yin, 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Individual in-depth interviews were one of the strategies the study used to gather data. This gave the interviewer and one interviewee the opportunity to

have a dialogue and elicit detailed information about the implementation of free education.

The tool for this strategy is an interview checklist or guide that included a list of open-ended inquiries and broad subject areas as memory cues for more in-depth inquiries that showed problems with the subject (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This procedure was carried out using an interviewer-administered technique, in which the researcher met in person with the respondents and prodded and queried them on the topic using the structure of the guide/checklist. With the intention of transcription and merging both records for analysis, the interview was also recorded on audiotape (with the permission/consent of respondents) and handwritten notes. The tool assisted the interviewer in asking extra questions to better understand the interviewees' responses (Yin, 2016). Data from each participant was gathered using the interview approach.

### ***3.8.2 Document Review***

Document review is a type of data collection technique used to compile data from secondary sources (Kothari, 2004). It is the process of going over or extracting information from already published sources, which may be hard copies, soft copies, or electronic copies (ministry of education and other relevance sources).

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Literature has recognized the importance of data, sources, and types in the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is necessary to link the data to the purpose for which they were sought after being able to recognize the necessary data set and how to collect it from its proper locations (the objectives of the study). The purpose of data

analysis, according to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), is to provide answers to the researcher's questions in order to further the study's goals. They went on to say that data analysis included interpreting study participants comments in light of the researcher's own observations and readings. This procedure started with putting the data acquired (editing, coding, and categorizing the data) into a form suitable for analysis (creating patterns and links among data set) to support findings based on reflections with the study's objectives (Kothari, 2004).

### ***3.9.1 Qualitative data analysis***

The qualitative component was purely manual. Although computer software can be used to analyze qualitative data since it makes the process easier (Creswell & Poth, 2018), Patton (2015 in Creswell & Poth, 2018) contends that the researcher's mind is where the true analytical work in a qualitative study takes place. For the qualitative data (participants' opinions on decisions made regarding the implementation of Ghana's free education policy), content and topic analysis was used. To detect trends and patterns in the words used, their frequency, relationships, and communication structures and discourses, content analysis is characterized as “a systematic coding and categorizing approach used for studying enormous volumes of textual material subtly” (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 3).

The aim of content analysis is to distil the vast amounts of information gathered from respondents into clear, understandable meanings. As a result, the raw data was translated into the voices or words of the participants, grasping the true meaning of their opinions while remaining true to the respondents' main points of view. Condensing and iterative coding take place simultaneously during the analytical procedure (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). A comprehension of the data is needed to

recognize patterns in the transcribed data, classify them into themes and sub-themes as they develop, and then infer meanings from the themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke proposed a six-step process for using thematic analysis, even though it is acknowledged in the literature that there is no set method for qualitative data analysis: you start by becoming familiar with the data, then use codes to identify pertinent data segments that may be responding to the study's objectives, establish and review themes from the coding, develop an in-depth analysis of the themes, and piece together the themes (Neuendorf, 2019; Braun, et al., 2015).

After all the components have been turned into textual data, the information gathered during interviews was synchronized in both handwritten notes and tape recordings. The transcribed data was coded by categorizing and giving systematic labels to data sets (Tracy, 2013), then a theme was formed (along with detailed analysis of each established patterned relationship).

### ***3.9.2 Quantitative data analysis***

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. It is a method that involves developing tables, graphs, and summarizing statistics from raw data (Samuels, 2019). This method helps to summarize the quantifiable information into forms that could easily be interpreted and understood (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009). It uses tables and graphs to establish patterns and relationships for effective communication of results (ibid). The analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS), and the Excel computer software in the organization and creation of the tables among others. Descriptive statistics was employed to organize the secondary data (Jansen & Warren, 2020).

### ***3.9.3 Mixing and interpretation***

When employing the completely mixed concurrent dominant status design, the outcomes of the qualitative and quantitative data strands are then combined at the interpretation stage (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Creswell, 2013; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018). The data was subsequently used to produce a tale that portrayed the fabricated reality of the study subjects' experiences with the implementation of the free SHS policy by weaving together the responses' perspectives as a result of the interviews (Neuendorf, 2019). This was supported by the quantitative data results at some points, where the trends and performance that emerge from the analysis was compared with that which is expressed by the respondents, to give a clear picture and complete understanding of the implementation of Ghana's free senior high school policy: as a reflection of the study's objectives upon which conclusions were drawn.

### ***3.9.4 Data presentation***

The organization of the data under analysis for interpretation and conclusions is referred to as the presentation of data (Ocenar, 2014). Tables, text are all examples of data presentation formats. The data for this thesis spans all three formats of presentation: the qualitative data are written up in paragraphs with direct quotes from the respondents that are then organized into themes and topics. Tables that summarize statistics of the experiences from policy successes in the municipality was used to present the quantitative facts (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018).

### **3.10 Reliability and Validity**

Any research project's credibility and acceptability depend on how genuinely and consistently ethically sound the findings are produced (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Reliability, in its original sense, refers to the degree to which study findings may be

reproduced in various contexts. However, establishing reliability in qualitative research is about ensuring that the conclusions and inferences drawn from the study are consistent with the views of the study subjects as expressed in the data that was provided to the researcher (Maxwell, 2013), where the emphasis is not on discovering an objective truth (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Accordingly, consistency between findings and data is what is meant by reliability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). And there are several approaches to improve this consistency (Silverman, 2013). In order to achieve dependability in research activity, it is necessary to build tools and plan mediums for data collecting that are resilient, as well as to eliminate mistakes related to measurement sources such as biases of data collectors (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In order to accomplish this goal, the researcher make sure that all data collection tools accurately reflected the study's goals before the thesis supervisors assess them. By restricting the primary data gathering tasks (administration of the tools) to the researcher alone, the study also attempts to eliminate errors in data collection biases. The researcher was the only one that manage the transcription of the tape recordings from all sources and the coding procedure. Additionally, the researcher makes sure that during the data collection procedure, rapport was consistently built with each participant. According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), practice and training can result in a human instrument that is effective for gathering qualitative data. To eliminate any flaws that can restrict the thoroughness and responsiveness of the instruments and their administration, pre-testing of all the instruments mentioned for this study was done prior to the primary data collection.

According to Creswell & Poth (2018), validity is an evaluation of how true the research findings are according to the researcher's description, taking into account the participants' and the audience's viewpoints. Various authors have proposed various strategies for achieving validity in research (Lichtman, 2014; Patton, 2015; Tracy, 2013). Each of the three strands of Creswell & Poth's (2018) nine validation strategies was represented by one of the three literature outlines of strategies used in this study: the researcher's lens of multiple data sources, the participant's lens of member checking, and the reader's lens of a richly detailed story.

The two sources of information interviews and document reviews provided the information that help determine the actual nature of the problem. Additionally, some of the study volunteers received the study's preliminary data so they could assess the veracity or legitimacy of the recorded responses (Glesne, 2016). This assisted the participants in recognizing how accurately the analysis captured their actual experience and in filling in any gaps or misinterpretations (Hays & Singh, 2012). (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The third alternative is to make sure that the tale that is pieced together from the study data on each designated theme is sufficiently detailed, including enough and connected information that successfully addresses the study's objectives (Stake, 2010).

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

To prove ethical accountability, this research was conducted within the norms of ethical study in both the literature and the empirical research. Social research has always involved people (both the inquirer and the enquired), thus it is crucial for the researcher to properly and convincingly arrange for the participants because the involvement of the participants is linked to data collection and analysis (Okoro,

2020). Planning for ethical considerations in research entails anticipating threats to the safety and integrity of the inquired, including emergent issues (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These threats are then addressed through the establishment of measures that will enable the research process to overcome those obstacles. According to these writers, the three guiding principles of respect for the study participants, taking into account their welfare, and treating everyone fairly throughout the process are the focus of the ethical research lens. By upholding the greatest ethical standards throughout the research, these guiding concepts was accomplished. Through an introductory letter, permission was requested from the all the institutions or organization and all other groups in the study region to be included in the interview. Only those who willingly agreed to participate in the study were interviewed, and the researcher always get their permission before starting any interview. Each participant received adequate notice to prepare for the interview, and their privacy was never violated while they were being conducted. Additionally, the study participants were made aware of their unrestricted, unpenalized ability to leave the study or interview at any moment. The researcher makes sure that no harm (emotional) is done to any participant in the course of participation in the research and did not also directly or indirectly deceive the participants in any way to keep them in the process. The information that was taken from study participants was treated with the utmost confidentiality and not passed on to a third party but used for only academic purposes (Tracy, 2013).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter in particular presents results analysis and discussion from the data obtained from the field. The results which emerged from qualitative and quantitative of field data in addition to secondary data collected from pertinent documents are also discussed. The chapter covers and presents results on free senior school policy implementation, stakeholders experiences about the policy in context as well as achievements and challenges and the option to improve upon the performance of the policy in the Wa Municipal, Ghana.

#### 4.2 Stakeholder's experiences of the Free Senior High School policy

##### *4.2.1 The role of stakeholders in the implementation of FSHS Policy in Ghana*

Ghana's Free Senior High School policy was implemented following a clear political commitment made during the 2016 electioneering campaign promise. The Free Senior High School policy aimed to improve senior high school education quality and equity, remove financial barriers, expand infrastructure, and offer the essential assistance for senior secondary technical vocational education training (TVET). Engagement of stakeholders is still crucial in attempts to realize these primary aims of the program. Essentially, the delivery of education is still the shared obligation reinforced by the involvement of pertinent stakeholders.

*“The provision of education is shared responsibility. so, it is impossible to ignore the important role of stakeholders and their involvement in the field”*  
*(Interview, NAGRAT Officer, 2022)*

The stakeholders influence of involvement in the formulation and execution of education policies makes it necessary to encourage greater stakeholder involvement within the education sector. Engagement of key stakeholders makes it possible to deliver high-quality, comprehensive education beyond resorting to public outrage. Practical participation of stakeholders likewise affects how Ghana's educational concerns are managed and funded. Accordingly, the importance of stakeholder engagement in management dynamics cannot be overstated. Various parties who helped with the development of the FSHS policy and strategic papers should involve in managing the program.

#### ***4.2.2 Stakeholder Engagement and Shared Motivation for Free SHS Policies***

Another important task performed by stakeholders' involvement was to enhance common motivation towards efficient free SHS policy implementation. A number of stakeholders are driven to actively participate in the creation and execution of a policy for a variety of reasons, depending on their particular demands. Thus, the one-time charge items that were typically applied to first year of secondary education caused the majority of parents the most worry with regard to the accomplishment of the FSHS policy core objectives. Support for the policy implementation from parents was largely driven by the involvement of stakeholders, who helped to reduce the cost of these things. The study findings indicate that significant cost items have been eliminated as a result of support from many stakeholders during the development and implementation of policy. The involvement of parents, various teacher unions, Ministry of Education, through Free SHS secretariat, GES council, Ghana education service, among other significant stakeholders helped to provide the necessary impetus through elimination of cost items like health examination fees, admission fees, and another levy.

*“The participation of stakeholders is critical simply because it brings about the needed zeal and motivation which in views help in eliminating charges and cost for certain items such as school uniform, school clothes, Physical education kits, house dress, and supplemental core readers among others which generally been bill for the first year of senior high education period”*  
*(Interview, GES Officer1, 2022)*

Effective stakeholder engagement, improves planned organization through the implementation of policy processes and again inspires the entire stakeholders in make significant contributions to the accomplishment of the policy goals. The point in the direction of increased stakeholder involvement facilitating efficient policy implementation process entirely. These results seem to support Freeman’s (1984) claims that stakeholder involvement in the creation and implementation

of policy is essential and highly indispensable. Policies like the FSHS are examples of social interventions that provide state goods to every citizen in an equitable and just means. A nation-citizens, states and groups are remarkably interested in matters pertaining to the field of education and notably, national programs impacting the provision of quality education entirely. In essence, this justifies the need for an effective stakeholder framework throughout the entire policy-making process.

#### ***4.2.3 Stakeholder engagement and critical factors for consideration in FSHS policy***

Stakeholder involvement helps important people and organizations come to consensus on a standard course of action in crucial policy issues. The importance of cost barriers, the physical expansion of school infrastructure, the enhancement of equity, the quality of secondary education, and the acquisition of necessary skills for employment are brought to the forefront by effective stakeholder engagement in

educational policy issues. Infrastructure remained a key factor for development and application of the FSHS policy in Ghana, leading to further decisions like the semester structure and the first-year senior high student double-track schedule. There are several important factors to take into account when creating wise policy strategies for ensuring the seamless execution of educational policies like the FSHS policy. The survey shows that the infrastructural deficit and the difficulties associated with the rise in enrollment in light of the implementation of the FSHS policy were prominent among the crucial concerns declared by practically all heads of public senior high schools.

*“Stakeholders’ requirements for infrastructure were revealed only after effective stakeholders’ engagement. The options for closing the gap were suggested through varied engagement with the relevant stakeholders.” (Interview, Asst SHS3, 2022).*

The FSHS policy's formulation and implementation is possible by effective stakeholder interaction, which also allowed for the limited creditworthiness of GETFund receivables, the change to semester systems, and a system of double-track for students of the first calendar year. These essential elements were recommended because of time restrictions and the availability of resources while the 2018 applicants were submitting their applications.

*“The intense level of stakeholder involvement made it possible to work together as a team on various projects, including the creation, the implementation of the double-track school system and the formulation and application of the FSHS policy.” (Interview, NAGRAT Officer, 2022)*

Stakeholder collaboration that is effective entirely through the policy-making process enables the achievement of educational outcomes, for example the creation of an equitable and high-quality educational system that includes all beneficiaries. Bawole (2013)

#### **4.3 Responsiveness of the Free Senior High School policy**

The responsiveness of a policy is measured by how well the policy meet the demands, interests, or values of specific groups (Dunn, 2012). The results of the interviews indicate that the Free SHS Policy is ineffective because the kids who would most benefit from a senior high school education that is free of fees are not the ones who actually receive it. Between urban and rural locations, there are differences in the infrastructure and amenities of schools as well as the availability of instructors and support staff.

*“Several other elements contribute to the policy’s irresponsiveness. Majority of students from low-income households accept offers to study outside of their home districts but decline them. They turn down the offers owing to the challenge of distance, a lack of sleeping space options, or a lack of courses that are tailored to their desired professional choices.” (Interview, Asst head SHS2, 2022)*

The policy does not, in this way, address the needs of the underprivileged. Speaking in a different venue, the education minister countered that in 2016, prior to the implementation of the Free SHS Policy, 111,336 JHS students who were placed in SHSs did not enroll because of a lack of funding. However, he said that after the Free SHS was implemented, this number was drastically reduced to 62,453. His assessment was that the Free SHS Policy is appropriate (Prempeh, 2018).

#### **4.4 Appropriateness of the free senior high school policy**

A program's objectives and the tenability of the underlying assumptions are said to be appropriate when they are valuable or worthwhile (Dunn, 2012). The Free SHS Policy objectives are to make senior high school education available to everyone, to develop human capital, to help young people grow up to be responsible adults, and to adapt education to Ghana's developmental requirements. These goals are necessary since a large population of uninformed youth costs money to children, their parents, and society as a whole. An illiterate and only moderately productive labor, lower adult salaries, bad health, and a complacent and ignorant populace are the results of a large number of uneducated persons (Satz, 2003). Therefore, it is a wise strategy to implement an initiative to enroll all eligible children in SHS education.

*“The fact is that without dependable financial sources, the policy’s viability will be in jeopardy. The policy existing reliance on oil income funding is unsustainable in the event that the oil runs out. Alternative financial options, which are exceedingly scarce, must be looked for the strategy to continue.”*  
(Interview, GES Officer1, 2022).

*“Money or finances is a threat to the policy sustainability, why because the possibility that there won’t be enough money in the future to support the policy is worrisome because every cedi spent on it means that cedi is not available for another policy or program. This is due to the fact that sunk costs would have made up the majority of the money previously incurred on the policy in the past.”* (Interview, Asst head SHS6, 2022)

#### **4.5 Achievements or effectiveness of the free SHS policy.**

Policy achievement or effectiveness can be seen as the capacity to which that policy or program succeeds in accomplishing its objectives. The Free SHS Policy's goals include removing financial barriers to education, enabling universal access to secondary education, enhancing infrastructural quality and equity, and providing the necessary/essential skills for socioeconomic growth (Essuman, 2018).

*“The policy has really impacted a lot by removing the cost which was a hindrance to many parents. I can categorically say that enrollment has increased as matter of fact we don't use to have this numbers of admissions but our numbers this day has increase because of the implantation of the policy. This increment in enrolment we are experiencing is because every cost has been absorbed by the government, therefore to talk about the achievement, parents are free from the burden of cost of education, this has created universal access to education.” (Interview, Asst head SHS7, 2022)*

*“The policy has been helpful in terms access to education, as of now, if not for the policy many children who are brighter will have end their education at junior high level due to financial issues but now, they have access to education which they are proud of, and is an achievement. So, after completion they can at least do something with knowledge they have acquired.” (Interview, Asst Adm SHS4, 2022).*

**Table 4.1 Progressive Measurement of the Enrollment of Senior High Schools in The Wa Municipal**

SCHOOL	YEAR OF ENROLLMENT				
	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020	2021
<b>WA SHS</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>942</b>
<b>WA SHS/TEC</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>418</b>
<b>WA ISLAMIC SHS</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>461</b>
<b>NORTHER STAR SHS</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>ISLAMIC GIRLS SHS</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>276</b>
<b>T.I AMASS SHS</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>281</b>
<b>WA TEC. INSTITUTE</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>960</b>
<b>Total enrollment per year</b>	<b>2078</b>	<b>2732</b>	<b>2782</b>	<b>2936</b>	<b>3532</b>

Source: field data survey (2022)

From table above displays information about Senior High School enrollment in Wa municipality from the period of implementation to 2021 year (2017–2021). The data was measure progressively to uncover the increased in the enrollment of students in the various schools equate to yearly enrollment increase within the municipality. The data is to justified the responses of respondents that the policy has increase

enrollment. However, the margin of increment is due to the Free SSHS policy, the respondents further stated that “if not for policy we don’t admit this numbers we are recording every year, thus, the infrastructure are not adequate enough for us to enroll such numbers but for the policy’s sake, we are giving a quota to enroll whether the facilities are adequate enough or not the order remains. But we do request for the number we can admit but they system would place students’ number more then we requested.” The table above results of student admissions affirm the increased in the enrollment in various school’s base on total yearly admission numbers in the Wa Municipality.

#### SPSS Results

**Table 4 2: Objective Achievement of free SHS policy**

Statement	Percentage (N=119)					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
In your opinion, will you say the policy has influenced student enrollments as compared to the initial state of education?	<b>59.7</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>
To what extent are you satisfied with the policy, regarding improvement in quality and equity	<b>0</b>	<b>30.3</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>45.4</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>100</b>
In your opinion, will you say that the policy has impacted by removing cost barriers to access to education?	<b>62.2</b>	<b>37.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 1, 59.7% of the respondents strongly agreed with the opinion that the free SHS policy influenced student enrolments compared with the previous state of education. 40.3% also responded to the agree option; that shows that 100% of the study respondents share the view that the policy has influenced student enrolments, since no single respondent chose to be neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. With respect to the improvement in quality and equity, 0% strongly agreed, 30.3% agreed, 21% neither agree nor disagree, 45.4% disagreed and 3.4% strongly disagreed. This shows that close to half of the study respondents are not satisfied with the free SHS policy's impact on education quality and equity. Regarding the third objective of the free SHS policy, all participants (62.2% strongly agree and 37.8 agree) think that the policy has resulted in leveraging cost to education access.

#### **4.6 Challenges of implementing Ghana's Free SHS policy**

The implementation of Ghana's Free SHS policy was found to be plagued by a number of challenges. Among the many issues, the important ones that demand the focus of the government and officials are described below. The major inputs required for policy implementation include the actors' access to politics, financing, technology, and knowledge; a clear policy and strategy guide; a supportive environment for stakeholder involvement; and their ability to employ these inputs.

##### ***4.6.1 Political influences***

The politicization of Free SHS policy implementation is a serious obstacle or threat to the policy. Hence, the study reveals that, the Free SHS policy was implemented with political motivation and as a strategy for the present NPP government to gain power. As a result, the components and established procedures for implementing public and social policy have been ignored. The present administration not giving much consideration to wider or broader engagement and preceding assessment of the

program, even though policy execution spans through the well-organized and subdivision of numerous organizations, which further complicates institutional placement of policy. Where institutional placement of policies is the case, ministries and departments share and compete for responsibilities and authority on the implementation, leading to duplication of effort, internal bureaucratic conflict, and a lack of technical expertise in any one agency.

*“In fact, what i know is that every policy before it been implemented it follow through all the procedures it goes through the policy cycle which is an idealize process. But in the case of the Free SHS program the situation is different, the policy did not follow the ideal cycle of policy implementation. In an effort to win the public’s trust, it was hastily pushed into implementation. The public consultation is poorly represented and frequently subject to political influence.” (Interview, Asst head SHS5, 2022).*

The free SHS policy will only be successfully implemented if the decision-makers provide clear instructions and the senior management team (political leadership) actively engaged stakeholders during policy preparation (see also Kielstra, 2010). Issues with a program exclusion might not policy implementation may not only come up from or between the bodies of implementers but also from the “political masters” precisely those agencies that is, legislators and political executives who for political reasons might interfere with agency in terms of making decision either before the agency makes the judgement or repudiate verdicts of these agency. When political intervention affects policy and program implementation, content and execution face challenges (Weaver, 2010). Some respondents had serious reservations when comparing the free SHS proposal to the free basic education policy.

*“.... Every nation foundation is its educational system, and human-centered progress is crucial. If you want to begin any development that will have a significant influence, you should always prioritize the welfare of the general public. Therefore, the SHS is the ideal next level as the basic level is already free. Another possibility is that it's a political strategy to target young people who will turn 18 before the next election because they support the group that gave them the opportunity to receive free education.” (Interview, SHS3R, 2022)*

The government's contempt for fundamental societal requirements, such as its refusal to address the problems facing Ghana's basic education system or its pursuit of the free SHS program, is another indication that populist policies are needed in order to gain political advantage. Despite the fact that, most of the citizens in Ghana see the FSHS policy attractive therefore a method in reduce their economic problem, they contend that, before solving SHS level, much consideration can also direct toward the elementary level where many obstacles remain to make it truly free. Indeed, a quick glance through the basic level which is ostensibly free, reveals significant difficulties at that level due to a lack of various forms of support. There may still be elementary classrooms held outside under trees and several more without desks or textbooks, among other things. The idea is that the basic school instead need assistance in order to generate kids that the free SHS could accept based on merit and the need to rectify disparities. However, politicians have used the free SHS as a rallying point due to political expediency. According to a number of commentators, Ghana's basic education challenges including the state-own and private indicate the need for attention.

#### **4.6.2 Sustainable Funding and Infrastructural Challenges**

The research exposed that, efforts to implement Ghana's Free SHS policy have been thwarted by financial limitations and infrastructure problems. A significant obstacle in Ghana's FSHS policy execution has been bedeviled by adequate infrastructure including logistics (late in payment of grants to schools, school heads and suppliers). The majority of participants agreed that it was essential to provide schools with the necessary amenities, including classroom buildings, dormitories, furniture, computers, and other accessories, as well as transportation, to make the process of putting policies into practice easier.

*“Considering the fact that, Free Senior High School policy, is a policy that covers all, including school uniforms, clothes, free books, free books, among others, the state provide these things but not in adequate enough, the situation make school operation difficult in terms finance. Because the schools are not allowed to sell anything to the students. We can't sell anything and what we received from government is not adequate. Hmm it is not easy for heads of schools these days especially SHS.” (Interview, Asst head SHS3, 2022)*

*“As you look around you can tell by yourself, we lack adequate infrastructure. Let me state the fact, the most urgent is infrastructure challenges, right now to get classroom space and boarding facilities for a significant number of students is a problem. The class room and the boarding facilities we have cannot sustained the number of students we are admitting every year. So is big challenge to us.” (Interview, Asst Adm SHS4, 2022).*

The amount, caliber, and distribution of these resources allocated to implementation have a significant impact on whether and how a policy is implemented (Wurzburg, 2010; OECD, 2010). The resources needed to implement the Free SHS policy

primarily include infrastructure, funding, and technology access and the capacity to operate it. Persistent problem is not about whether the resources for the program is enough or available for use but as to whether these resources would be used for its intended purposes (OECD, 2015).

The success of the Free SHS program is under jeopardy, and the quality of instruction, student learning, and teacher productivity have all been impacted. On the other hand, enhancing infrastructure services promotes economic growth and welfare. Additional resource constraints material and human ones, like, sufficient quantity of employees well resourceful to handle the implementation, adequate in addition pertinent data about the process of implementation also the power to guarantee that the policy is implemented in accordance with their intended purposes. The Free SHS policy also needs facilities like land, tools, buildings, and finances among others to be implemented successfully. Without adequate funding, laws cannot be upheld, services cannot be rendered, and practical rules cannot be created. The Free SHS policy was implemented in 2017, which led to a 33.2% rise in enrollment (Ministry of Finance, 2018).

*“The infrastructure issues have led to students traveling long distances as day students because the boarding facilities are not adequate enough, overcrowding of boarding facilities can lead to health issues, as a result of overcrowding students are not being adequately supervised both in the classrooms and dormitory therefore, they engage in social vices, etc.” (Interview, Adm TEC, 2022).*

When there is an ideal number of students per teacher in a classroom, the eminence of instruction is substantially higher and student achievement improves. This is because

classes with fewer students per teacher have higher-quality contact and, consequently, higher levels of achievement. Ankomah et al. (2005),

#### ***4.6.3 Limited stakeholder participation.***

The degree of stakeholder participation in policy-making course was another question which respondents were asked to answer. Some respondents claimed that the stakeholders were consulted before the workshop and that they were given the opportunity to participate in seminars. While others were unsure of the involvement of stakeholders in the creation of the policy, others responded that they were not at all involved. Adoption and execution of policy are related institutionally. The way that policies are implemented and the connections between the main players and participating structures are determined by the institutional framework. In order to entrench a social role, belief norm, belief, norm, specific value, pattern of conduct in an organization, social structure, or society at large, the Free SHS policy must be institutionalized. It entails the establishment or structuring of governmental institutions or specific bodies in charge of directing or carrying out policies.

*“Every policy goes through specific stages, as we all know. Formulation is the first thing, then second sensitization, implementation is third, Implementation, third... Four, evaluation is required. But this is only a paper thing. The objectives may be present, as well as the action plan. But as for a sensitization workshop and everything that comes after, no, nothing like that. (Interview, NAGRAT Officer, 2022).*

Various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies' functional and sectoral divisions are crossed during the implementation of policies, which might further complicate institutional placement of policies if handled improperly. Where institutional

placement of policies is the case, ministries and departments share and compete for responsibilities and authority on the implementation, leading to duplication of effort, internal bureaucratic strife, a lack of practical proficiency on any agency, and clients' challenges and efforts make to access services. Insightful session is essential for Free SHS policy achievement and sustainability despite the fact that working with multiple agencies at once may waste resources, impede change, cause confusion, cause policies to conflict, and ultimately outcome in significant roles being disregarded (Workman et al., 2010). The coordination required to smoothly execute of multifaceted program such as FSHS which call for more engagement of stakeholders, may be hampered if there is organizational fragmentation.

*“The consultation process was frequently politicized and poorly represented. My statement of the fact that communication and coordination across the panel remained or slightly below 35%, which shows that much more work has to be done.” (Interview, Asst head SHS2, 2022).*

*“We only have a say in this policy at our local level here so just imagine a policy you want to achieve result but refuses to listen and take the views of stakeholders, the engagement was not properly done before the implementation of the policy. I can confidently say that this policy should have been a good policy every Ghanaian will enjoy from, but the policy as it is now, is frustrating with a lot of challenges there and there. Yes, the policy is politicized because if you want to point out what is not right about the policy you become a victim or a sabotage so we are careful to say anything about the policy.” (Interview, Asst head SHS3, 2022).*

Implementing policies faces a significant obstacle when people are not involved in their formulation. According to Roseveare (2008), developing sound policies is only the first step toward successful policy implementation. In order to achieve successful implementation, policymakers must cultivate sincere agreement among all interested parties, ensuring that everyone is working toward the same goal rather than taking divergent paths. All interested parties must be involved for this to succeed. All parties must be persuaded that their efforts will be more successful because bringing about change and pursuing a goal in unity can lead to some upheaval.

#### ***4.6.4 Lack of Knowledge and Clear Policy Guide for Free SHS Challenges***

Program or policy execution occasionally occurs as a result of an inability to examine the results and analyze the strengths and shortcomings of various systems. Such aptitude identifies which programs can produce outcomes. Again, it considers institutional structures and arrangements, system internal coherence, and whether policies are congruent with the nation's aims and priorities while ensuring that no policies are pulling in opposite directions or contradicting one another (Roseveare, 2008). It is discovered, no distinct policy structure directing program execution process, which is peculiar to that of FSHS education policy.

*“Since the implementation of the policy till date, there is no clear policy document /plans currently accessible to the public, predominantly, faculty of education and relevant stakeholders, so what do you expect from the policy, they think the heads are against the policy which is false statement but they know things were not properly done and considered before the implementation of the policy.” (Interview, Asst Head SHS5, 2022).*

The Free SHS policy, according to respondents with high levels of allegiance to the current NPP government, has a clear purpose that is outlined in the action plan, but other respondents disagree, citing the “side to side” aspect of the process of execution. Consequently, lack of a program guide prompted concerns about the strategy’s viability. The operational stage in the implementing agencies is influenced by the precision of the policy goals and their ranking in the policy statutes. Further, various actors may understand policy aims differently, whether this is desired or not. If policy procedures and guidelines are not present, it is possible that players will interpret and implement a policy differently. Program or policy credentials typically, are created by bureaucrats with little to no participation from the implementer and other stakeholders who will be affected, either negatively or positively, by the policy. Sometimes, stakeholders are requested for feedback on draft regulations or policy documents before policy instruments are finalized. It becomes challenging for the stakeholders as a result for them to adopt both the program and also the execution process (Spratt, 2009). For social policy to be implemented successfully, communication is a crucial component. The parties tasked with putting a policy into effect might not necessarily understand its language (Hill, 2006). Comprehensively, the processes by which agents learn and process information is essential to managing knowledge for successful implementation (Fuster & Köster, 2016). A handful of systems are put together to promote vertical communication between administrative layers and to encourage bottom-up feedback. Similar to this, there is little mobilization of viewpoints around specific concerns with a view to influence change due to the absence of tools to allow communication within layers. The execution and sustainability of policies are significantly influenced by both vertical and horizontal communication mechanisms. Williams and Onibon (2009) acknowledged that government bureaucracy has a role in

policy execution. The efficacy of government agencies charged with implementing policies is primarily determined by their effectiveness and competency.

#### ***4.6.5 The 'Top-Down' Implementation Approach***

The centralized administration system of Free SHS program or policy causes numerous interruptions and substantial managerial costs in reaching intended outputs and results, represents additional institutional obstacle of FSHS policy implementation. Key employees from the Ministry of Education have a significant impact on setting significances and influencing the course and rate of transformation in a centralized (top-down) policy environment. The debate over the execution of public policies revolves around “Top-Down” versus “Bottom-Up” approaches. Policies that are imposed from the top without considering how they might be accepted locally might lead to implementation gaps. A significant downstream effect of this gap between policy statements and policy implementation is the potential for demotivation and disengagement. This divergence happened with the Free SHS for a number of reasons. As an illustration, government statements about priority goals were more closely related to partisan concerns and planned aligning in relation to gaining access to oil and foreign cash than to a firm resolution to assist the execution of the FSHS program. Hence, the bureaucrats including actors at bottom rung's structure hierarchy came under pressure to obediently implement the program with their meager infrastructure and resources. However, it is not a case of bottom-up vs top-down approaches to policy and action being favored, but that a balance between the two is important. Furthermore, if there be any change happens as a top-down process or as a bottom-up one which starts in the schools would substantially influence how implementation plays out. Alternative centers and decentralizing structures, being established by corporate management, policy network and social

partnerships are emerging even inside traditional centralized institutions. There is also a greater comprehension of the idea that some policies are best enforced top-down as others might possibly stick if they are nurtured inside the context of the school. A stronger understanding of the idea that school-based innovation is likely to be more successful when integrated into and aligned with a state agenda is also present.

*“Because the policy is centralized, this has made it exceedingly challenging to complete tasks quickly. Since everything is included in the free SHS policy, including clothing, school uniforms, books etc., but these are not sufficient in request, therefore, this is making it significantly difficulty for us as heads because we are not permitted to bill the students with anything extra. implementation of the program or policy turn so difficult due to the centralized form distributions.” (Interview, Asst head SHS7, 2022).*

This shows that Ghana’s Free SHS program is a clear example of a top-down approach to policymaking. The dominant view is that decision-making and initiative-taking fall under the purview of the central state apparatus. The approach followed is de-concentration rather than decentralization, as a result of which authority remain dominant at the center while decision aspects are spread in transitional layers at the regional and local stages. In other words, government subdivisions discover themselves with more duties (that is enforcing laws), but not in any case affecting authority (in making rules). The impression is that the state (or its intermediary level legislatures) should handle all problems, including small ones, as a result of schools not being considered as places for policy formation but rather as implementers of policy.

**Table 4.3: Challenges facing the free SHS Policy**

Statement	Percentage (N=119)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
In your opinion, will you say politics is a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	<b>31.1</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>
In your opinion, will you say feeding is a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	<b>26.1</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>
In your opinion, will you say logistics are a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	<b>25.2</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>0.8</b>
In your opinion, will you say infrastructure is a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	<b>27.7</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>0</b>

The results of table 2 presents the views of respondents of the identified challenges. On the issue of politics, it shows that 31.1% strongly agree, 42.9% agree, 24.4% are neither agree nor disagree and 0.8% indicated agree and strongly disagree. Thus, over 70% of the respondents share the view that politics is a challenge impeding the full realization of the free SHS policy. On feeding, 26.1% strongly agree, 68.1% agree, 2.5% indicated neutral and disagree, then 0.8% strongly disagree. Also, it is clear that over 90% of the respondents hold the view that feeding is a serious challenge battling the free SHS policy, even though some 3.3 disagree. The results also show that about 85% of the respondents (25.2 strongly agree; 60.5 agree) sees logistics as a challenge to the smooth operation of the free SHS policy; while some 11.7% disagree. Over 75% of the respondents indicated that infrastructure is a challenge hindering smooth operation of the free SHS policy and some 17.6% of the participant population disagreed. Thus, the disagreement to the infrastructure challenge serves as the highest among the responses to the identified challenges; indicating that there are some schools where respondents are satisfied with their available infrastructure.

**Table 4.4: Cross Tabulation of Challenges according to Schools**

		Name of School							Total
		ISLAMIC GIRLS SHS	NORTHERN STAR SHS	T I AMAS S	WA ISLAMIC SHS	WA SH S	WA SHS/ T	WATE C	
In your opinion, will you say logistics are a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	Strongly Agree	3	5	5	1	8	4	4	30
	Agree	15	6	5	8	14	14	10	72
	Neutral	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Disagree	0	1	3	0	1	7	1	13
<b>Total</b>		18	12	13	11	23	27	15	119
in your opinion, will you say infrastructure is a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	Strongly Agree	3	10	1	0	3	10	6	33
	Agree	15	2	9	10	6	12	9	63
	Neutral	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
	Disagree	0	0	3	1	13	4	0	21
<b>Total</b>		18	12	13	11	23	27	15	119
in your opinion, will you say	Strongly Agree	6	2	6	5	5	9	4	37
	Agree	9	4	4	4	12	9	9	51

politics is a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	Neutral	3	5	3	2	6	8	2	29
	Strongly Disagree	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>		18	12	13	11	23	27	15	119
in your opinion, will you say feeding is a challenge hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?	Strongly Agree	2	3	4	3	6	5	8	31
	Agree	16	8	9	7	17	18	6	81
	Neutral	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	3
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Disagree	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>		18	12	13	11	23	27	15	119

The results of the cross tabulation give a picture of the identified challenges facing the free SHS policy in the various schools within the Wa Municipality. Even though the responses from the participants generally shows that all schools battle with the same challenges, the magnitudes as indicated by the participants differ from challenge to challenge. With regards to the challenge of logistics, WA SHS/T has the highest number of respondents that disagree with it as a challenge, followed by T I AMASS. On the infrastructure challenges, the WA SHS is a variant as majority of their respondents (13 out of 23) disagree with infrastructure as a challenge facing the

success of the free SHS policy: that is to say, the respondents are satisfied with their current infrastructure.

It is also worth noticing that almost all schools do not disagree to the politics challenge; meaning that politics is one challenge that has a close to uniform effect on all the schools of the Municipality as far as the free SHS policy is concerned. The results of the cross tabulation thus show that the weight of the challenges is different from school to school

**Table 4.5: Current State of free SHS policy**

Statement	Percentage (N=119)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do you think these challenges can in anyway affect the quality of education in the country?	14.3	67.2	8.4	10.1	0
Do you think the current government response is sufficient to address the issue of free SHS policy?	2.5	23.5	21.0	49.6	3.4
In your opinion, do you think the free SHS policy should be reviewed to improve policy performance?	32.8	58.0	5.0	4.2	0

The results in table 4 sought the opinions of respondents on the state of the free SHS policy with regards to the identified challenges. It shows that 14.3% strongly agree that the identified challenges affect the quality of education in the country; 67.2% also

agree. However, 8.4% neither agree or disagree, then 10.1% disagree. It means that over 80% of the respondents share the view that the identified challenges facing the policy would have a negative impact on the quality of educational system in the country. Responding to the sufficiency of current government responses to the challenges of the policy, about 26% (2.5 strongly agree; 23.5 agree) thinks the government is sufficient, while 53% (49.6% disagree; 3.4% strongly disagree) holds the view that current government response to the challenges is insufficient. On whether or not the policy needs review, 32.8% strongly agree, 58% agree, then 5% neither agree nor disagree and 4.2% disagree. Thus, over 90% of the respondents believes the policy needs review.

#### **4.7 The option to improve upon the Free SHS policy**

##### ***4.7.1 post-policy implementation review***

Post-implementation review is the last step in a policy support cycle, providing the opportunity to assess the extent to which by some agreed point policy objectives have been met. The literature on policy review and evaluation is long established (OECD 2013& Cairney 2016). Where done well it will seek answers to several key questions: Was the problem correctly identified? Were any important aspects overlooked? Were any important data left out of the analysis? Were policy expectations fulfilled? Have lessons been learned for future programs? In a rational evidence- based context, the answers to these questions can help to modify implementation trajectories and support decisions on whether or not to renew, expand or terminate an initiative.

*“Reviewing the policy is the better option forward, this will bring on broader engagement of all relevant stakeholder. More deliberation on matters about the policy will help identified. Issues like what is working and work is not working will be reveal for critical attention. There are more challenges*

*because the policy was in rush for implementation, and to improve upon the policy, we need to re-engaged the policy for broader consultation. (Interview, Asst head SHS7, 2022)*

*“The policy needs a broader stakeholder’s engagement this will help to identify the gap of the policy. for instance, i think that, to improve on the performance of the policy there should be a cutoff point, most of the students here cannot even read but they are here so the cutoff point will not allow the bad one’s access to SHS this will make the policy effective since only the serious ones that would have the opportunity to enroll into secondary school. I also think some components should be given to parents to pay especially the uniforms and text books (Interview, Asst Adm, SHS4,2022)*

**Table 4.6: Suggestions for Improvement**

Statement	Percentage (N=119)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Stakeholder re-engagement is critical to improving the free SHS policy	21.0	72.3	5.0	1.7	0
Cut-off point for SHS entry is critical to improving the free SHS policy	1.7	23.5	7.6	43.7	23.5
Cost sharing is critical to improving the free SHS policy	21	48.7	4.2	24.4	1.7

Table 4 shows the views of respondents concerning suggestions for improvement in the free SHS policy. Summing the views up, 21% strongly agree to stakeholder re-engagement, 72.3% agree, 5% indicated neutral and only 1.7% disagree. This means that 93.3% of the respondents think stakeholder re-engagement is necessary for the improvement of the policy. Regarding the introduction of cut-off point for SHS entry, only 1.7% strongly agree, 23.5% agree and 7.6% neutral. However, 43.7% disagree and 23.5% strongly disagree: this shows that majority of the respondents (67.2%) does not believe that introducing cut-off points will improve the free SHS policy. On cost sharing, 21% strongly agree, 48.7% agree and 4.2% indicated neutral. About 24.4% disagree and some 1.7% also strongly disagree. Thus, 69.7% of the population that participated in the study share the view that cost sharing is critical to improving free SHS policy. The argument here is that, the well capable should be allowed to pay to help subsidize the cost of the program other also contested that, the policy will not be free anymore in as much as some will be allowed to pay while other benefits freely.

#### **4.8 Discussion of results**

The study results reveal certain gaps with regards to the position of public/ social policy implementation. The Free SHS policy adoption and execution took place at the top level and then, discharged the policy to the bottom for implementation. Also, the consultation of policy formulation and implementation was poor and merged with weak administrative structure. However, for effective policy implementation and to experience policy success McConnell theory (McConnel, 2010) agree that, a policy is often judged a success if it successfully goes through a complex, veto-point-filled and multi-actor approval process to formulation and implementation, regardless of its actual ability to deliver the objectives in terms of its substantive program effectiveness or efficiency. In the case of free senior high policy, the implementation

situation was different, as revealed in the study results the policy was implemented without it passing through the policy cycle framework, hence the process its implementation does not affirm to what literature agreed as the best procedure. Again, given the word success is positive connotations, therefore, a program or policy is deemed successful if it accomplishes the objectives that its factions set forth for it, receives no meaningful criticism, and/or has widespread support (Fischer 2003; Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020).

Again, regarding to Winter's integrated model of implementation, in the conceptual framework, stakeholder's role in the model is recognized as decisive, contextual condition and local implementers playing a part in influencing the way goals of the program or policy are realized (Winter 2003). But in the case of Free SHS policy much attention was not given to stakeholder's involvement which led to the policy the struggle of the policy as seen in the literature and been affirmed by results. Winter clears the doubts that, a vital amount of impact can be exercise by local actors on a program or policy during implementation process (Winter, 2003). Thus, in terms of FSHS program, much attention was not pay to the stakeholders, the consultation and involvement of stakeholders was limited in this case (Bonsu 2019). For instance, importance verdict legislation can be approved through government efforts. Government also succeeds in producing a policy which boosts electoral fortunes of results. Therefore, the reviewed literature and the study results shows FSHS program execution do not reflects core ideas of McConnell theory of policy success and winter's integrated model of policy formulation and implementation (McConnell, 2010 & Winter2003). To give connotation to the study objective (achievements of the policy) to understand whether Free SHS policy has been effective by achieving its set objectives. However, in terms achievement the study results reveal also that, Free

SHS policy can boast of only handful of its set objectives and goals such as cost removal, increase in enrollment (universal access to education) been achieved while others like infrastructure development, equity, quality education, equipping students with the necessary skill development after completion need a critical attention. (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020). Therefore, to talk about effectiveness the study contest that the policy has not been effective and has since not yet produce the desirable outcome. The factor led to enrollment rise is as a result of the removal financing cost which served as barrier and making difficult for most parents to enroll their wards to second cycle institutions (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020).

Accordingly, the results also show that the challenges bedeviling the policy in the municipality deserves an urgent response from the government to solve the situation at hand. As these challenges were mention by the respondents, majority of the respondents believe government effort in solving the problem is not encouraging. These challenges include logistics and feeding constrain, financial and infrastructure deficit, limited of relevant stakeholder involvement or consultation which consequently has great implication on the policy operation. political influence, absence of precise program or policy planned and espousal of over centralization of the policy implementation process (Bonsu 2019). The above mention challenges have a dare implication on the policy performance if urgent attention is ignored. All these developing challenges facing the policy can be attributed to lapse or inconsistence in the formulation and implementation process due to lack of broader engagements of the policy. However, on the objective of how to improve upon the quality and sustainability of the Free SHS policy implementation, literature reveal that a policy succeeds if the right process of policy implementation is adhered to, the study results also uncovered that broader engagement of the policy is a key to its sustainability

which agreed with McConnell's Theory of policy success (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2020). Post-policy review policy support cycle that provides the opportunity and options to assess the extent to which by some agreed point to policy objectives have been achieved, certify consistency and also the important information of the program is communicated appropriately to actors, sustained consent surrounding the objectives tools including others means to achieve the policy goal (McConnell, 2010).

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of key findings, the study sought to examine the implementation of the Ghana's free Senior High School policy in Wa municipality, and to specifically examine the experiences of stakeholders about the policy in context and also, to identify the achievements and challenges of the policy as well as the options to improve upon program or policy. The important findings of the study in relation to the main objectives of the study are summarized, with conclusions and implications established, provided here, after data from a cross section of appropriate officials participated in the "Free Senior High School policy" was reviewed and discussed through interviews. In the chapter's conclusion, proposals are made for further research on the application of public or social research, among academia, practitioners in the educational field, and policymakers.

#### **5.2 Summary of key findings.**

This section presents summary of key aspects of the study. The section is therefore organized under the specific objectives for which the study was conducted and key findings.

##### ***5.2.1 Stakeholder's experiences about the Free SHS policy in contexts***

The results show that stakeholder's engagement is poor as enunciated by respondents and the that there was emphasis on the outcomes over the processes (such as extensive consultation).

The findings from the study reveals as uttered by respondents that emphasis was centered on the program dimension and the focus is laid on removing the cost barrier in order to boost access to secondary education, while little consideration is place on the program elements such as other cost variable, space and infrastructure development, quality education and knowledge and acquisition of skills applicable to personal and development of the nation.

The study results show that in terms of policy dimension, the program met the relevance standard because of its aims of making Senior High education universally accessible, nurturing the youth into responsible adults and developing human capital are desirable ones in achievement.

### ***5.2.2 Achievements and challenges of the implementation of Free SHS policy in Wa municipality, Ghana.***

The study findings show, Wa municipality secondary school enrolment numbers have increased as a result of the free SHS policy.

The evidence for satisfying the efficiency component is more complicated because some objectives like universal access to education, removal of cost barrier, enrolment increase have been met while others still required improvement on the political and pragmatic levels.

Additionally, the findings from the study suggested that everything related to secondary education financial burdens including tuition, admission, textbooks, libraries, science centers, computers, exams, utilities, boarding, and meals had been absorbed by the government through the free SHS program. However, the true implication of the free SHS policy is that it has lessened or eliminated the financial burdens of parents and guardians of SHS students, which has hampered more access and equality.

The results of the research uncovered that, the implementation of FSHS program or policy is faced with many challenges. These challenges are into two categories, institutional and infrastructure. The first is institutional challenges comprises the politicization and overly centralized system of administration of the program, consequently, caused a delay in achieving the desired outputs and outcomes.

The second is infrastructure challenges is directed to the logistics supply, feeding, including financial curtailments resulting to the late imbursement of grants to suppliers and heads of schools of schools. Policymakers, political leaders, among other stakeholders should pay attention to the infrastructure and institutional problems if they want to keep the Free SHS policy in place.

### ***5.2.3 The options to improving upon the implementation of Free SHS policy***

The results of the study divulge the need for introduction of senior high school entering grade cut-off point, this would ensure efficient management of the resources and also to improve performance and quality, due to the cost challenges the policy should be targeted rather than universal approach free SHS education.

For effective implementation and improving upon the policy, the study reveals the need for more emphasis on re-engagement of the policy with all relevant stakeholders to review the policy, by doing so, the gaps in the policy will be identified and address to ensure sustainability of the FSHS program.

The research discloses also that, cost- sharing is critical for improvement of the policy, for instance those who can pay and are capable should be allow pay to help ease government the expenditures on the policy.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The quality and progress of Ghana's educational system would be a deception if workable measures and procedures are not implemented to guarantee ongoing developments and the continuity of the achievements earned in terms of its quality. Under the New Patriotic Party direction, the Ghana government implemented the social intervention project such as FSHS program with the principal goal of enhancing the educational services by equity and accessibility equity for a sustainable period, improving socioeconomic standard of the populace and thereby promoting national development. The present political establishment and decision-makers "will have to pay attention to the many varied voices within and outside of their parties, as well as to local and global emotions" in order to assure the policy success. The policy arena and decision-making procedures have developed into a complex environment where participants participate in policy discourse who certainly not from an elected government or governing party supporters. The strength of the ruling party's government and the degree of its support from major interest groups and the general public determine how well it can implement particular ideologies-based policies. In other words, developing educational policy required consideration of ideological, political, partisan, and value components. A number of other reasons, including inadequate administrative structures and insufficient infrastructure at the various implementing organizations, defective engagement during formulation and execution of policy or program, which result in gaps. Accordingly, results from the study shows the FSHS program or policy acceptance and implementation processes started at the central or top bureaucratic level and then cascaded down to the bottom for execution. The challenges or difficulties encountered thus far are also vital and crucial in deciding the standard of Ghana's educational system. In order to achieve the desired outcomes for free SHS, concerted efforts must be made through wider consultation

and the creation of “partnerships among state schools, parents, schools functionaries, voluntary agencies and other stakeholders. In terms of appropriateness criterion, the FSHS program is noteworthy with regards to program implementation in relation to policy dimensions because its objectives of ensuring that all students have access to SHS education, building human capital, and guiding young people toward becoming responsible adults are those that should be pursued.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Taking into consideration the results and analysis presented by this research. notable suggestions, policy recommendations are offered to decision-makers in heads and management of secondary schools, agencies of government and departments, political leadership including the academia for additional studies.

- The research first and foremost recommends an equitable focus on all of these factors, with a much greater promise of graduating students who will be prepared to pursue postsecondary education or enter the workforce, in light of the overemphasis on access and apparent lack of attention on other aspects (such as teacher training and outcomes).
- Secondly, the infrastructure and academic capability of the current Senior High Schools have to be evaluated and expanded urgently.
- Undoubtedly, the free SHS has led to an increase in enrolment, however, not all of the schools in the Municipality can accommodate the rising numbers therefore to guarantee an impartial distribution of students among institutions, government should reconsider its current policies by taking steps to upgrade school facilities in order to support efficient teaching and learning.
- Again, the study also recommends that policy guidelines be created and distributed to all pertinent parties, implementing educational policy this would

necessitate effective communication. Because the study results reveal that, most school heads are not entirely or informed of the policy approach regarding admissions and day-to-day school operations.

- The research recommends excellent communication between the policy or program implementers and the intended beneficiaries, this is critical and would grantee the school heads confident that their opinion is taking in consideration.
- The study recommends also broader engagement of the policy to ensure the sustainability of the policy, this is possible by reviewing the policy, determine its strengths and weaknesses and, where appropriate, giving critical attention.
- Over-centralization of the policy has been a significant issue, delaying crucial technical and administrative tasks. To facilitate quick and efficient transactions, the research advises some duties including funds should be transferred to Ghana Education Service regional offices in the future. Decentralization should be made more effective.
- To improve upon the policy performance, the study suggests the introduction of cut-off point grades to entering SHS instead of the universal method of Free SHS, which might be more suitable given the costs associated with its implementation.
- Last but not least, the study suggests working in partnership with the private sector in the provision of education in developing and implementing the Free SHS policy. This would reduce the load on the government, particularly in terms of infrastructure issues. Alternative public-private partnerships (PPPs) that Ghana can realistically imitate are demonstrated by Mauritius and Uganda.

#### ***5.4.1 Recommendations for further research***

To further analyze different aspects of this study, additional theoretical and empirical research is encouraged:

First, to evaluate the effect of the sample size and demography on the success of the free SHS policy; choosing individual school cases and implementing agencies from all parts of the nation to investigate the status of the Free SHS Policy implementation.

Additional research can be conducted, to determine the effect of the free SHS policy on private secondary schools as well.

Again, research may also be undertake using more thorough statistical methodology be utilized to assess the effects of important aspects of the implementation of the free SHS policy using different case studies.

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**APPENDIX**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**SD DOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND INTEGRATED**

**DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK**

**Appendix A: In-depth interview guide for Heads of Schools /GES/ MoE**

Dear Respondents,

I am Ernest M. Lagnang, a master’s student of University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. Faculty of Social Science and Art. Department of Sociology and Social Work, pursuing a post-graduate degree in Social Administration. As part of the requirement for the fulfillment of the degree we are to conduct a research work. Your school has been selected randomly to take part in this study which seeks to identify *achievements and challenges associated with the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy also to explore the experiences of stakeholder of about the policy and finally examine the option available to improve on the implementation of the policy.* This forms part of the study topic “EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GHANA’S FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION POLICY.” The information you provide regarding this study should be from your perspective and not from other people. Such information will include your background, general school management and your experiences regarding the Free SHS policy.

**Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be certain that this is purely for academic purposes the interview will be done with your privacy and confidentiality ensured, therefore your responses and information provided during this interview which are not public information will be kept secure.

**Declaration by participant**

I agree to take part in a research study entitled examining the implementation Ghana’s Free Senior High School Policy” I declare that I understand all that has been explained to me about the study- objectives and procedures and I agree to participate in this study.

Name.....

Name of institution .....

Position in the organization .....

## **BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON THE FSHS POLICY IN GHANA**

1. At what time was the idea of free SHS policy conceived?
2. Do you think the policy is well institutionalized in terms of the policy having?
  - i. Clear objective and action plan (probe for sensitization workshop on the sector policies within and across departments and agencies)
  - ii. Adequate infrastructures and resources (probe for types of infrastructures needed and availability).
  - iii. • Roles and responsibility of key actors (probe for capacity and competence of human resource).

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**Appendix B: In-depth interview guide for Heads /Asst. Heads of  
Schools/GES/Stakeholders**

Dear Respondents,

I am Ernest M. Lagnang, a master’s student of University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. Faculty of Social Science and Art. Department of Sociology and Social Work, pursuing a post-graduate degree in Social Administration. As part of the requirement for the fulfillment of the degree we are to conduct a research work. Your school has been selected randomly to take part in this study which seeks to identify *achievements and challenges associated with the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy also to explore the experiences of stakeholder of about the policy and finally examine the option available to improve on the implementation of the policy.* This forms part of the study topic “EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GHANA’S FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION POLICY.” The information you provide regarding this study should be from your perspective and not from other people. Such information will include your background, general school management and your experiences regarding the Free SHS policy.

**Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be certain that this is purely for academic purposes the interview will be done with your privacy and confidentiality ensured, therefore your responses and information provided during this interview which are not public information will be kept secure.

**Declaration by participant**

I agree to take part in a research study entitled examining the implementation Ghana’s Free Senior High School Policy” I declare that I understand all that has been explained to me about the study- objectives and procedures and I agree to participate in this study.

Name.....

Name of Institution .....

Position in the organization .....

**What are the experiences of stakeholders on implementation policy in context?**

3. What do you perceive are the main roles of the stakeholders (identify a few and probe for specifics) in the implementation of the FSHS policy?
4. Kindly describe your experiences of free SHS policy base on?

- i. Responsiveness
- ii. Appropriateness

**The achievements and challenges of the implementation free SHS policy in Ghana.**

5. What, in your view, are some of the major achievements of the policy since its implementation?

Probe for the achievements

6. What are the challenges in regard to the implementation of the policy? (Probe all possible aspects that may be challenging (e.g., institutional, and infrastructural challenges etc.)

7. Your overall assessment of the policy?

- i. clarity
- ii. Consistency
- iii. Relevance and public response

8. kindly tell me about the effects, in your view of challenges on the quality of education in the country?

9. How do you assess stakeholders (e.g., government and its agents)'s response is it sufficient to address the challenges of free SHS education? (Probe for options to stakeholder responses)

**What are the implementing options to improve upon the policy?**

10. What do you consider as critical success factors in improving the implementation of the free SHS policy? Probe for all possible answers?

11. How do you think the government can best sustain the Free SHS program for the long term?

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**Appendix C: Data Collection Instrument for Teachers**

Dear Respondents,

I am Ernest M. Lagnang, a master’s student of University of Business and Integrated Development Studies. Faculty of Social Science and Art. Department of Sociology and Social Work, pursuing a post-graduate degree in Social Administration. As part of the requirement for the fulfillment of the degree we are to conduct a research work. Your school has been selected randomly to take part in this study which seeks to identify *achievements and challenges associated with the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy also to explore the experiences of stakeholder of about the policy and finally examine the option available to improve on the implementation of the policy.* This forms part of the study topic “EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GHANA’S FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION POLICY.” The information you provide regarding this study should be from your perspective and not from other people. Such information will include your background, general school management and your experiences regarding the Free SHS policy.

**Anonymity and confidentiality:** Please be certain that this is purely for academic purposes the interview will be done with your privacy and confidentiality ensured, therefore your responses and information provided during this interview which are not public information will be kept secure.

**Declaration by participant**

I agree to take part in a research study entitled examining the implementation Ghana’s Free Senior High School Policy” I declare that I understand all that has been explained to me about the study- objectives and procedures and I agree to participate in this study.

Name.....

Name of school.....

Position in the organization .....

**12.** in your opinion, would you say that the policy has impacted by removing the cost barrier to access to education?

- a) Strongly Agree { } b) Agree { } c) Neutral/ Not at all { } d) Strongly Disagree { } e) Disagree { }

**13.** To what extent are you satisfied with the policy with regards to improvement in quality and equity?

- a) Very satisfied { } b) Satisfied { } c) Neutral { } d) Neutral { } e) Not satisfied { }  
} Not very satisfied { }

**14.** In your opinion, would say the policy has influence student's enrolments as compare to the initial state of education?

- a) Strongly Agree { } b) Agree { } c) Neutral/ Not at all { } d) Strongly Disagree { }  
} e) Disagree { }

**15.** In your opinion, would you say that, there are challenges hindering the smooth operation of the free SHS policy?

- Yes { } b) No { }

If yes to question 22

**16.** could you please state some of the challenges facing the operation of the free SHS policy?

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**17.** Do you think these challenges can in any way affects the quality of education in the country?

- a) Strongly Agree { } b) Agree { } c) Neutral/ Not at all { } d) Strongly Disagree { }  
} e) Disagree { }

**18.** Do you think the current Government's response is sufficient to address the issue of free SHS education?

- a) Strongly Agree { } b) Agree { } c) Neutral/ Not at all { } d) Strongly Disagree { }  
} e) Disagree { }

**19.** in your opinion, do you think the free SHS policy should be review in order to improve on the policy performance?

a) Strongly Agree { } b) Agree { } c) Neutral/ Not at all { } d) Strongly Disagree { } e) Disagree { }

20. What do you consider as critical success factors in improving the implementation of the free SHS policy?

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THANK YOU