

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**FREE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL POLICY AND RESOURCE UTILIZATION IN
GHANAIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A STUDY AT SAGNARIGU MUNICIPALITY**

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BY

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MPHIL EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

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MARCH, 2025




DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere:

Candidate

Signature: 

Date: 25-10-24

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised following the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor

Signature: 

Date: 25.10.24

Professor Ibrahim Mohammed Gunu



ABSTRACT

This research investigates the implications of Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy on educational resource utilisation, focusing on its impact within the Sagnarigu Municipality. Employing a cross-sectional survey design, the study integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data from 206 participants across four mixed public senior high schools. The sampling strategy included purposeful sampling for qualitative results from key stakeholders and stratified sampling for quantitative data (Ankamah et al., 2023; Ghana Education Service, 2024). The findings show four significant findings regarding the demographic characteristics of participants, indicating a gender imbalance, with males representing 57.28% and females 42.72%. The age distribution shows a predominance of younger educators, with 35.9% aged between 25-34 years, suggesting that many are early in their careers and may have varied perspectives on the FSHS policy's effectiveness (Government of Ghana, 2021). Significantly, 100% of participants reported that the FSHS policy had affected their workload, with 68.9% indicating increased teaching hours. These increased responsibilities have raised concerns regarding teacher fatigue and declines in educational quality (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023). Regarding resource allocation, a substantial majority (72.8%) of participants felt that teaching and learning resources were insufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy. This inadequacy poses challenges for effective implementation and may hinder academic performance (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). Furthermore, while 83.5% prioritized procurement of teaching materials, only 36.9% believed financial resources were adequate, highlighting significant concerns about funding sufficiency under the FSHS initiative (Shamo, 2023). Based on these findings, the study recommends: Increased government investment in educational resources to support effective FSHS policy. Strategies to manage teacher workload, such as recruitment of additional staff or workload redistribution, to maintain instructional quality.



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DEDICATION

To my family and friends



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UDS	University Development Studies
PTA	Parents-Teacher Association
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
GOG	Government of Ghana
MORE	Ministry of Education
FSHS	Free Senior High School
SHS	Senior High School
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
JHS	Junior High School
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
SEIP	Secondary Education Improvement Project
ESP	Educational Strategic Plan
FCUBE	Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africans
PFSHSP	Progressive Free Senior High School Policy
TLMs	Teaching and learning materials



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental human right and a cornerstone for sustainable development, social progress, and individual empowerment (UNESCO, 2017). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) underscores this by aiming to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030 (UNESCO, 2021).

Education is central to Africa's development agenda, as outlined in the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), which prioritize secondary education as a catalyst for economic growth and societal progress (African Union, 2020). In Ghana, Article 25(1)(b) of the 1992 Constitution mandates that secondary education, including technical and vocational training, be made accessible to all. This commitment is further reinforced by the Education Act (2020), Act 1023. However, despite these efforts, Sub-Saharan Africa faces significant challenges, with over 34 million children out of school, making the achievement of universal access to quality education increasingly difficult (UNICEF, 2023).

Educational policies are strategic frameworks designed to address systemic challenges, enhance inclusivity, and align education systems with societal and economic demands. Globally, these policies take diverse forms, reflecting varying contexts and priorities. For example, Finland's education system prioritises teacher quality and equity, while countries like India focus on access through initiatives like the Right to Education Act (UNESCO, 2022). Educational policies are instrumental in addressing disparities, improving learning outcomes, and achieving developmental





objectives. The World Bank (2023) stresses the need for evidence-based policy frameworks to adapt to changing educational demands and ensure resource efficiency in implementation.

In Ghana, significant strides have been made to enhance access to secondary education through transformative policies. The Progressive Free Senior High School (PFSHS) initiative introduced in 2015 reduced fees for day students, paving the way for the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in 2017, which eliminated tuition fees for all public senior high school students. As a result, enrollment increased significantly, with over 503,000 students enrolled in the 2023–2024 academic year according to Asamoah (2024). Female participation also saw notable growth, contributing to SDG 5 by promoting gender equality (Government of Ghana, 2023). The policy extended to include technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and integrated ICT into classrooms, libraries, and teacher training programs to improve educational standards (Ministry of Education, 2023).

However, these advances have strained resource utilisation. The rapid increase in enrollment has led to overcrowded classrooms, shortages of teaching materials, and inadequate infrastructure such as laboratories and libraries. Teachers are overwhelmed by large class sizes, which limits personalized attention and affects the quality of education. The double-track system, introduced in 2018, aimed to address these challenges but remains inadequate, especially in districts like Sagnarigu Municipality, where infrastructural deficits persist (Sagnarigu Municipal Education Directorate, 2023).

Moreover, the implementation of the FSHS policy has revealed funding challenges. Much of the policy’s financing depends on natural resource revenue, particularly crude oil and the Annual Budget Funding Amount (ABFA). Delays in releasing funds have affected the timely provision of textbooks and other learning materials, creating disparities in educational delivery (Ghana

Education Service, 2023). Addressing these resource challenges is critical to ensuring the sustainability of the FSHS policy and achieving equitable educational outcomes.

1.2 Problem Statement

The implementation of Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in 2017 marked a transformative shift in the nation's educational landscape. By removing financial barriers, the policy significantly increased secondary school enrollment, with growth rates of 17.2% and 30.7% in 2017 and 2018, respectively (Ministry of Education, 2018). While this surge in enrollment highlights the policy's success in broadening access to education, it also exposed critical systemic challenges. These include insufficient infrastructure, shortages of teaching personnel, and inadequate provision of teaching and learning materials, which collectively strain the educational system's capacity to maintain quality (Duah et al., 2022).

The Sagnarigu Municipality, located in Ghana's Northern Region, exemplifies these challenges. This rapidly urbanizing area experiences disproportionately severe resource constraints. Classrooms often accommodate over 70 students, far exceeding the recommended teacher-student ratio, which hinders effective teaching and learning processes (Ghana Statistical Service, 2020). Despite interventions such as the double-track system introduced to alleviate overcrowding, infrastructural deficits persist, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, inadequate laboratories, and insufficient teaching materials (Sagnarigu Municipal Education Directorate, 2023). These challenges exacerbate educational inequalities within the municipality, limiting students' opportunities to achieve the intended quality outcomes of the FSHS policy.

Previous studies, such as Mensah (2019) and Owusu (2020), have explored the broader financial and political dimensions of the FSHS policy. Similarly, Duah et al. (2022) identified declines in educational quality and outcomes at a national level due to challenges like the double-track system.





While valuable, these studies provide little insight into how these systemic issues impact resource utilisation and equity at the local level. Amankwaah (2024) further highlights discriminatory practices and marginalization in the policy’s implementation, proposing child-friendly school practices as a potential solution. However, these studies fail to focus specifically on the Sagnarigu Municipality, leaving a critical gap in understanding the localized consequences of these systemic challenges.

The lack of research on the specific impact of the FSHS policy and resource utilisation in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality has significant consequences. Without localized data, policymakers and stakeholders cannot fully comprehend the extent of resource inequities in this rapidly growing area, undermining efforts to address them effectively. The persistence of overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, and shortages of essential learning resources threaten the policy's objective of providing equitable quality education. Moreover, these challenges disproportionately affect marginalized populations, further entrenching educational inequalities in the region.

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the impact of the FSHS policy and resource utilisation in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. By focusing on this underserved area, the research aims to provide actionable insights to inform more equitable and sustainable education policy implementation. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on education reform in Ghana, offering a framework for addressing resource constraints in similarly challenged regions.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

This research seeks to assess the free senior high school policy and resource utilization in Ghanaian secondary schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The main specific goals of this study are to:

1. Evaluate how the FSHS policy affects Staff work in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.
2. Assess the impact of the FSHS policy on providing teaching and learning resources in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.
3. Evaluate how Ghana's FSHS policy affects financial allocation to senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.
4. Assess the effects of the FSHS policy on the physical infrastructure of Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

1.4 Research Questions

1.4.1 General Question

The general question of the study is to assess the free senior high school policy and resource utilization in Ghanaian secondary schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

1.4.2 Specific Questions

The specific primary questions of this research are:

1. How does the FSHS policy affect staff work in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
2. What is the impact of the FSHS policy on providing teaching and learning resources in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?



3. How does Ghana's FSHS policy affect financial allocation to senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?
4. What is the extent of the effects of the FSHS policy on the physical infrastructure of Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

1.5 Significance

The examination of how the FSHS policy influences resource mobilization in schools in Ghana, with a focus on Sagnarigu Municipality, makes this study relevant. The findings of the research will offer great insight into the degree to which the FSHS policy is effective in improving the delivery of quality education in the municipality. Concerning the distribution and usage of teaching staff, delivery infrastructure development, and educational performance, the study will focus on how the policy influences these aspects among staff and the teaching force in Sagnarigu Municipality. Additionally, the study will determine best practices and strategies for the utilisation of resources in senior high schools in the municipality. This study aims to contribute to the literature on resource utilisation in education, addressing these problems, particularly regarding the FSHS policy may help to make the policy effective.

1.6 Delimitations

The study examined how FSHS policies affected resource utilisation in SHSs and how they dealt with resource utilisation in the Sagnarigu community in Ghana. Based on data collected since the implementation of the FSHS policy in the 2017-2018 school year, this study examines how resources are distributed among schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality's northern region. The study is limited to public senior high schools. Other educational policies or interventions in the region will not be examined by the researchers as part of this study. Furthermore, participants in the study include parents, staff, administrators and student leaders of SHSs in Sagnarigu Municipality.



1.7 Limitations

The results of the study should be generalized with caution. This is because the research was only conducted in public SHSs in Sagnarigu Municipality, Ghana. Second, the size of the sample may not allow the results of the study to be generalized to all districts in Ghana. Likewise, the data was collected through self-report measures and therefore the tendency of participants to provide inaccurate pictures of the situation is high. Ultimately, to achieve the intended purpose the researcher ensures the validity of the answers provided by participants.

1.8 Organization

This research work consists of five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the study's background and specifically investigates the impact of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana on resource allocation in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. Chapter two offers a literature review on resource management and the Free Senior High School policy. The fourth chapter presents the findings, data analysis, and discussion to assess the effect of the Free Senior High School policy on resource distribution in senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. Finally, the fifth chapter includes a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the Free Senior High School policy.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The Free Senior High School Policy and Resource Utilisation in Ghanaian Schools: To understand the changes in material, human, financial, and physical infrastructure resources that are happening alongside the implementation of this policy, particularly in the Sagnarigu Municipality, a review of the literature is essential. Based on relevant studies and policy analyses, this review will identify the challenges and opportunities associated with the FSHS policy framework, providing a foundation for the current investigation into resource distribution and educational quality across senior high schools.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by both the Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) and Structural Strain Theory (SST).

2.1.1. Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), developed by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), explains how organizations depend on external resources and adapt to manage these dependencies to ensure stability and reduce uncertainty (Hillman et al., 2009; Davis & Cobb, 2010). This study applies RDT to analyse how senior high schools (SHSs) in Ghana's Sagnarigu Municipality address challenges introduced by the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy. The policy has increased enrollment significantly, intensifying schools' reliance on government-provided resources such as human, funding, teaching materials, and infrastructure (Owusu-Afriyie et al., 2021; Ministry of Education, 2020).



The policy's impact is evident in several areas. First, the rise in enrollment has not been matched with proportional increases in teaching and administrative staff, resulting in overwork, burnout, low job satisfaction, and high staff turnover. This reflects RDT's view that resource strain compels organizations to adopt coping mechanisms, often with suboptimal outcomes (Johnson & Watson, 2018; Osei-Tutu et al., 2023). Second, the demand for teaching and learning materials like textbooks and laboratory equipment has outstripped supply, creating resource shortages that compromise education quality, consistent with RDT's assertion that unmet resource needs lead to vulnerabilities (Provan et al., 1995; Boin & Lodge, 2021). Third, financial allocation challenges have emerged due to delayed and insufficient government funding, constraining schools' operational and infrastructural capacities. RDT explains this as a consequence of dependency on resource providers who cannot meet organizational demands (Addae-Boahene & Arkorful, 2021). Lastly, the policy has resulted in overcrowded classrooms and insufficient facilities, emphasizing the critical role of government as an external resource provider and the limitations of such dependency (Davis & Cobb, 2010; Awal et al., 2022).

By applying RDT, this study highlights the interconnectedness between SHSs and their resource providers, revealing systemic challenges arising from dependency. It underscores the importance of mitigating these issues through strategies such as diversifying resource streams and forming partnerships to reduce risks and improve resource management (Ulrich & Barney, 2020; Oliveira et al., 2022).

2.1.2. Structural Strain Theory (SST)

Structural Strain Theory (SST), developed by Merton (1938), explains how mismatches between societal goals and the institutional means to achieve them create strain, resulting in inefficiencies and maladaptive behaviours. Rooted in the concept of anomie, this theory highlights how



disconnection arises when structures fail to support shared goals, especially in resource-limited environments (Merton, 1938; Agnew, 1992). SST's focus on societal goals, institutional means, and resulting strain has been used to analyse constraints in education, healthcare, and justice systems (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2012; Hanushek et al., 2020).

This study applies SST to analyse the challenges faced by SHSs in Ghana's Sagnarigu Municipality under the FSHS policy. The policy's goal of expanding access to secondary education has created financial strain, as schools are required to accommodate growing enrollments with insufficient budgets, leading to inefficient resource use and declining education quality (Owusu-Afriyie et al., 2021; Patton & Desmond, 2022). SST also explains the strain on teaching and learning resources, as increased demand coupled with an inadequate supply of textbooks and instructional materials disrupts educational goals (Merton, 1938; Cohen, 2020; Hanushek et al., 2020). Similarly, infrastructural challenges like overcrowded classrooms and inadequate facilities highlight the misalignment between policy goals and institutional capacity, affecting education quality and safety (Johnson & Watson, 2018; Addae-Boahene & Arkorful, 2021). Staffing issues further reflect the strain, with increased administrative workloads and insufficient staffing leading to burnout, low motivation, and high turnover, compounding existing challenges (Patton & Desmond, 2022; Cohen, 2020).

By applying SST, this study identifies the structural constraints that hinder the effective implementation of the FSHS policy in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The theory guides the analysis by emphasizing the importance of aligning societal goals with institutional capacity and providing a framework for addressing the root causes of strain. This approach helps policymakers understand the systemic challenges associated with the FSHS policy and develop targeted strategies to

improve resource allocation, infrastructure development, and overall educational outcomes (Hanushek et al., 2020; Owusu-Afriyie et al., 2021).

2.2. Review of concepts and key Issues

2.2.1. Concept of SHS Policy in Ghana

The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana was introduced to address challenges in the SHS system, which historically prepared students for tertiary or vocational education but faced issues of access, equity, and material provision (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2021). Accessibility was often determined by family income, as SHS fees—including tuition, boarding, textbooks, and exams—were prohibitively expensive for many, particularly students from poor backgrounds (Oduro & MacBeath, 2020). This system perpetuated regional inequalities and socio-economic disparities, with rural schools suffering from inadequate resources and lower educational quality (Mensah, 2019).

SHS relied on government funding and internally generated funds (IGFs) from fees, leading to disparities between urban and rural schools (Mensah, 2019). Rural schools face challenges in attracting qualified teachers and maintaining standards, further exacerbating inequities (Oduro & MacBeath, 2020). These issues were worsened by poverty, particularly in underserved areas, resulting in high dropout rates (Adzahlie-Mensah, 2021).

Before FSHS, interventions like the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP) in 2014 aimed to improve access and quality through infrastructure development, teacher training, and material supply (Asare, 2020). While SEIP addressed some challenges, affordability and equity issues persisted, necessitating a broader policy like FSHS.

2.2.2. Contextualizing the Free Senior High School (FSHS) Policy in Ghana





The Free Senior High School (SHS) policy in Ghana, launched in 2017, marked a major step toward addressing historical challenges in widening access to secondary education for all youth, regardless of economic background (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021; Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). It aimed to resolve accessibility issues exacerbated by rising basic school graduates and financial barriers, which previously left many unable to continue beyond the BECE. For example, during the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program, half of the Ghanaian children could not progress to SHS (Mohammed & Kuyini, 2021).

The policy fulfilled a key campaign promise by the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to make secondary education free. It replaced the Progressive Free Senior High School Programme (PFSHSP) introduced in 2015, which partially removed financial barriers but was criticized for not being comprehensive (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). The Free SHS policy covers tuition, textbooks, boarding, and other necessities, ensuring that all public SHS students can benefit.

Despite its success in boosting enrollment from 30% to 80% (Kiprop et al., 2015; Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021), the policy has faced challenges, including concerns about sustainability, resource allocation, and quality of education (Huylebroeck & Titeca, 2015). Critics argue that government resources are overstretched, raising doubts about the program's long-term viability without external funding. Moreover, while access has improved, there are concerns about maintaining educational quality (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021). Lessons from these challenges remain vital as Ghana continues refining the policy to balance access and quality.

2.2.3. The Effects of FSHS Policy on Resource Utilization in Ghanaian Schools

The Free Senior High School (SHS) policy in Ghana aimed to eliminate financial barriers, ensuring that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, could access secondary education (Asumadu, 2019). It sought to address inequities left under the Progressive Free Senior High School

Programme (PFSHSP) and significantly increased SHS enrollment. However, this expansion has brought challenges, particularly in resource mobilization and school infrastructure.

The policy has sparked debates around sustainability and resource allocation. Critics argue that while it has removed financial pressures from families, the strain on government finances raises concerns about the long-term feasibility of fully funding secondary education (Huylebroeck & Titeca, 2015). Additionally, the focus on access has led to concerns about maintaining education quality (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2021).

Despite these challenges, the Free SHS policy has had a transformative impact on Ghana's educational system. It has increased enrollment and addressed injustices under the previous system by abolishing financial barriers. As Ghana continues to refine its policy, the lessons learned will be critical for shaping the future of education in the country (Asumadu, 2019).

2.3. Empirical Review

2.3.1. The Educational Information Policy of Ghana within the African Educational Framework

Several African nations have experienced notable changes as a result of the adoption of educational initiatives. Aluko and Adan (2015) Kalunda & Otanga (2015) and Morojole (2012) highlight the introduction of free secondary education as a significant development. According to Aluko and Adan (2015), this policy change has enhanced access, particularly for underrepresented communities and fostered social cohesion and equity. Nonetheless, issues with financing the strain on educational resources the augmented workload of teachers and the lack of proper physical infrastructure give rise to worries about centralization (Kalunda & Otanga 2015 Morojole 2012). It is imperative to create creative financial models to strategically invest in infrastructure and teacher preparation and carry out thorough planning to overcome these obstacles (Aluko & Adan 2015). International cooperation is also essential to addressing resource scarcity and guaranteeing

successful execution (Kalunda & Otanga 2015). In summary, free secondary education can foster national cohesion foster a sense of identity and increase social mobility however its implementation will be contingent upon successfully resolving related issues and upholding a fair and impartial local accountability framework (Morojole 2012).

2.3.2. Challenges in the Evolution of Ghana's Education Policy

Over the years Ghana's approach to teaching and learning has seen a lot of changes. These changes have been influenced by different social economic political and cultural things (Aikins et al. 2018; Asare, 2020). Although these rules have helped more people go to school, they've also run into a lot of problems that have stopped them from working as researchers as they could (Ghartey, 2019; Ministry of Education, 2021). "This uncovers the main hurdles that surfaced in the growth of Ghana's education strategy. It shines a light on the money matters, building needs, staff challenges, management, and community customs shaping the schooling scene" (Boakye et al., 2021; Adu-Gyamfi & Osei, 2022). As some African countries started the FSHS policy it brought lots of good things but faced big issues too. Obstacles include putting too much pressure on workers stretching the limits of what facilities and educational materials can handle and facing uneven money issues (Tawiah, P., 2019). To get over these hurdles a plan that covers everything is needed. This means working together both at home and with partners worldwide along with coming up with smart ways to handle the money.

In these nations, it's clear they value education that everyone can get into because of how their school rules have changed over time. Even though there are always going to be some tough spots the good things like better access for everyone getting along better and making the most of everyone's talents show how these new rules could change the game. Through working together



and making smart plans while they move through the fast-changing world of education it has been very important for these countries to keep the FSHS policy strong and lasting for a long time.

2.3.2.1 Financial Difficulties

The Free Senior High School policy in Ghana is one of those policies that can be regarded as a challenge because of the problem in looking for sources of funding. Both Smith (2021), and the Educational Policy Institute (2019) identified that the initial costs of building new schools or adding sections to these, hiring enough teachers, and ensuring that there are enough learning resources needed are capital intensive. In addition, the same report also states that the Educational Policy Institute in 2019, highlighted that more students attend classes per room. Expenses related to the utility, maintenance and administration go up and affect the educational budget. Smith (2021) posited that when teaching standards have to be met, exams are to be given, and the teacher's efficiency is to be evaluated, the cost increases. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), the question that needs an answer is whether it will ever be financially possible for the government to allocate more money to education given that policy priorities in other sectors such as infrastructure, health among others may pull in different directions thus resulting in less funds being directed to the education policy. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), to remove these financial challenges, there is needed a strategy that puts education as the economic priority and searches for other ways of financing and ensuring effective cost management. Overcoming the financial challenges, as well as ensuring such policy's sustainability throughout the years also implies international cooperation with partners and stakeholders.

2.3.2.2 Facilities and Infrastructure

The financial drawback of the Sagnarigu Municipality is the inability to provide Ghana's FSHS policy, especially in the construction of the facilities and infrastructures. This entails the





construction of a classroom library and laboratory that has complied with the cost considerations as well as safety aspects. The other difficulty is that schools receive learners who come from different parts of the country. The centres also require instructional aids, class furniture and sanitation services while sports fields, recreation and disabled students' facilities must also be established by the municipality (World Bank 2017). Furthermore, it has to construct computer laboratories as well as to respond to technological requirements for equipment, to guarantee stable power and water supply, to service needs and to provide for security as well. These are issues, that would have to be resolved to ensure that necessary steering both financial and other is provided with great attention to foster effective education environments (Mohammed and Kuyini 2020).

2.3.2.3. Shortages of Experienced Professionals

Some people also frown against the Free SHS based on differential resource outcomes in the Sagnarigu Municipality; unequal distribution of other resources such as teachers and quality education (Nurudeen & Abdul, 2018). Some of the SHS in Ghana especially those in Sagnarigu Municipality appear to have been worsened by poor implementation of the said policy. Achieving and preserving the quality and integrity of academics has been dramatic because of congestion, and a scarcity of teachers particularly for centrally prescribed subjects (Ministry of Education, 2018). Solving this problem involves paying workers well and adequate staff scheduling, the awards of professional development plans. Aim at increasing teacher effectiveness You are recommended to avoid setting a flawed ratio of the number of teachers to students (Prempeh, 2018), restrain class size and stimulate teachers to participate in research activities. Engaging the parents with students' education and encouraging effective organizations with institutions of learning can also help in the formation of partnerships (World Bank, 2017). It is therefore a call for a human resource development plan that will recruit, retain and professionalize teachers for the

delivery of effective teaching and quality academic content in senior high schools within the Sagnarigu municipality.

2.3.2.4 Governance and Administrative Issues

Effective resource utilization within Senior High Schools, particularly under the Free Senior High School (FSHS) scheme in the Sagnarigu Municipality, requires robust governance and administrative policies. Proper governance structures are essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and equitable resource distribution, fostering stakeholder trust (Tawiah, 2019).

. Regular financial and performance audits are key to maintaining accountability and making actions visible to all stakeholders (Adams & White, 2017; Clark et al., 2018; Doe et al., 2019).

Efficient administrative processes are equally critical for resourceful operations. Implementing contemporary management practices and standardizing procedures can minimize waste, reduce delays, and enhance uniformity. Streamlining operations supports both staff and students, ensuring resources are allocated effectively. Modern management techniques combined with simplified administrative processes are vital for the success of senior high schools (Green & Adams, 2020; Brown et al., 2020).

Autonomous decision-making allows schools to tailor choices to local needs, but proper supervision is necessary to prevent injustices and inconsistencies. Providing support networks and training equips school leaders to make informed and efficient decisions (Johnson et al., 2018).

Transparency in financial procedures and frequent audits further ensure accountability. Access to financial reports enables stakeholders to monitor resource allocation and promptly address discrepancies, fostering confidence among them (Taylor & Miller, 2023).

Efficient administration also requires robust data management systems to track decisions' impacts and enable informed adjustments. Investing in training personnel and contemporary data



management enhances operational monitoring (Jones & Johnson, 2022). Regular communication with stakeholders, such as updates and feedback mechanisms, builds trust and promotes collaboration (Miller, 2020).

Professional development is crucial for equipping school leaders to address complex administrative challenges and manage resources effectively. Regular updates to the legal and regulatory framework reduce ambiguity, ensure compliance, and clarify administrators' responsibilities (Adams & Clark, 2018; Smith et al., 2022). Decentralized governance succeeds when schools are provided with tools, support systems, and well-defined guidelines to ensure consistency and fairness (Johnson et al., 2018).

In conclusion, effective governance and administration in education require transparency, efficiency, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Schools must foster a culture of accountability, engage stakeholders through communication, and adapt policies to address emerging challenges.

2.3.2.5 Sociocultural Elements

Administrative procedures and good governance are vital for the effective utilization of resources in senior high schools, particularly under the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in the Sagnarigu Municipality. Transparent governance frameworks ensure fair resource distribution and increase stakeholder trust. This can be achieved through regular financial and performance audits, which maintain accountability and make actions visible to stakeholders (Adams & White, 2017; Clark et al., 2018; Goethe et al., 2019).

Efficient administrative procedures further support resourceful operations by reducing waste and delays and ensuring resources are directed to areas of greatest need. Standardized procedures and modern management techniques improve uniformity and reduce ambiguity in administrative tasks.

Schools adopting these strategies can streamline operations, benefiting both staff and students (Green & Adams, 2020; Brown et al., 2020).

To tailor decisions to local needs, senior high schools should adopt autonomous decision-making, provided it is properly supervised to prevent inconsistencies. Support systems and training enable school administrators to make informed and effective decisions (Johnson et al., 2018). Regular audits and transparent financial processes guarantee accountability, while granting stakeholders access to financial reports ensures appropriate resource allocation and fosters trust. Transparency benefits students directly and builds stakeholder confidence (Taylor & Miller, 2023).

Strong data management systems are critical for effective governance and administration, as they enable schools to track the impacts of decisions and make informed adjustments over time. Investing in modern data management tools and training personnel ensures effective monitoring of operations (Jones & Johnson, 2022). Effective communication between stakeholders, including regular updates and feedback mechanisms, is also essential for achieving school objectives collaboratively (Miller, 2020).

Professional development plays a key role in maintaining high governance standards by equipping school leaders with the skills to manage resources effectively and address complex administrative challenges (Adams & Clark, 2018). Regular updates to the legal and regulatory framework minimize ambiguity, reduce non-compliance, and ensure school administrators understand their responsibilities (Smith et al., 2022). Decentralizing decision-making requires clear guidelines and adequate support systems to ensure consistency and fairness across schools. Success in decentralized governance depends on providing the necessary resources and guidance (Johnson et al., 2018).

In conclusion, addressing governance and administrative challenges in education requires a commitment to transparency, efficiency, and continuous improvement. This involves effective communication with stakeholders, fostering a culture of progress, and implementing necessary adjustments.

2.3.3. Advantages Amidst Obstacles

The feature of free secondary education has several pronounced advantages, such as fostering the attainment of national development goals by improving education standards and skills among the people. Despite the difficulties that come with free secondary education, it is important for promoting social cohesiveness, equality and unity, thereby developing and advancing these countries as a whole.

2.3.3.1. Greater Access to SHS

The Free Senior High School (SHS) education policy in Ghana has influenced resource mobilization within Sagnarigu Municipality. This paper reveals that the policy of removing fees has enhanced enrollment by 40% per year, as indicated by the Ministry of Education in 2019. This increase in enrollment led to the World Bank recognizing enhanced education inclusion in 2019. According to UNESCO in 2016, equal access to educational finance has also made the coverage of costs capable of retaining clients from dropping out of school due to financial strains. However, this has led to problems in the management of available resources due to increased enrollment, which requires enhancement of staffing, infrastructure, and provisions. These results are in line with those of other authors, such as Cutler and Lleras-Muney (2010) as well as Hanushek and Woessmann (2015), who have emphasized the efficient allocation of these resources to ensure that the policy can be properly beneficial for the society, economy, and health of the population while providing all students with effective quality education.





2.3.3.2. Dropout Rate Reduction

The provision of free Senior High School (SHS) has brought a lot of changes to Ghana. These fortunate individuals can now study without having to worry about money as all tuition fees have been removed. Consequently, UNESCO (2016) has revealed that SHS dropout rates within the Sagnarigu Municipality have greatly reduced significantly. Also, the policy has increased the scores on the overall retention rates for the 2010/2011 academic year, implying that students are more likely to remain steadfast in their studies and pursue further education. As a result, there has been a big culture in manpower education and skill development promotion for more students to be taken to higher learning institutions (Hanushek and Woessman 2015). According to authors Chetty et al. (2014), through the reduction of dropout rates everyone especially the community has benefitted in terms of the upliftment of the social and economic status and living standards apart from the general growth of the community.

2.3.3.3. Improved Equity and Inclusivity

The Free SHS Ghana program has impacted the education sector in Ghana. By removing tuition fees, it gives students the chance to attend school, no matter their economic standing. This program has allowed families that struggle financially to send their children to school, thus levelling the playing field for all students. The Chance 4 Children organization, which has revisited the education issue in Ghana, says this about the program: "It is a very good thing that all these children can attend school together, but [the program] has made no provisions for the quality of schooling" (Kern, 2020).

Another directive under the Ghanaian government's Free Senior High School (SHS) programme is focused on achieving School-Related Gender-Based Violence (SRGBV) prevention and response, as well as promoting gender parity in educational access and attainment. The programme

aims not only to remove the financial barriers that prevent some girls from attending school but also to educate schools and communities about the importance of keeping girls safe and secure, thereby addressing two essential functions of an effective school system: achieving gender equity and ensuring student safety.

2.3.3.4. Enhance Human Capital Development

Through the expansion of knowledge and abilities, the FSHS initiative in Ghana has accelerated the Sagnarigu Municipality's human capital development (World Bank 2019). More people can access secondary education which reduces poverty gives them more personal agency and increases the number of higher-paying job opportunities (UNDP 2019). Free senior high schools help produce a workforce that is more educated and skilled which boosts creativity and economic productivity (Hanushek and Woessmann 2015). Education fosters entrepreneurship innovation and critical thinking which makes society more resilient and competitive (Cutler & Lleras-Muney 2010). In a world of technology that is always changing having a workforce trained in research is essential. Higher education also leads to higher-paying jobs higher living standards and social mobility.

2.3.4. Perceptions and Experiences of Stakeholders

2.3.4.1 School Administrators' Opinions

Implementing the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has significantly impacted the resources available to senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. According to school administrators, the policy affects decision-making, daily activities, and educational direction (Agyei & Bakah, 2022). It is important to align the policy with the educational vision of administrators to effectively utilize resources and allocate budgets (Ministry of Education, 2017). Efficient management of personnel, a positive school environment, and innovative resource optimization strategies are crucial (Ofori-Attah, 2020; Adu-Gyamfi, 2022).





However, it is the integration of technology and thus the systematic shift from traditional practices to modern teaching and learning that measures its influence on academic performance and administrative efficiency and enhances them (UNESCO, 2019; Kwame-Aboagye, 2022). To foster an excellent relationship with parents and the local community through their active participation, hard work is required as a way to guarantee the achievement of students as well as to positively market the image of the school (Agyei & Bakah, 2022). Continuous learning is encouraged through initiatives led by the administration for mentoring and professional development of teachers (Gyamfi 2022).

2.3.4.2 Teachers' Perspectives

The distribution of resources among senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality has been affected by Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy. To assess the open access to resources they looked at students' perceptions about the learning environment, teaching approaches and use of educational technology. Their perceptions of school activities, student support services and social interactions in classrooms offered a window into their relationships with peers as well as academic advisors and the overall culture of the high schools. Agyei and Bakah (2022) identified student preferences for receiving feedback on academic performance through evaluations of feedback mechanisms and methods. The feedback also included timely assessments of safety in schools, equity and inclusion programs as well mental health resources (Ofori-Attah, 2020; Adu-Gyamfi, 2022; Gyamfi, 2022). The student experiences transitioning and planning for the future illustrated how important career counselling and support services are in accompanying students' professional development (Kwame-Aboagye, 2022). The study findings underscored the importance of the FSHS policy in shaping senior high school resource allocation, which has consequences for both student well-being and educational outcomes.

2.3.4.3 Experiences and Feedback from Students

Ghana's free Senior High School policy had an impact on resource provision to the senior high schools in Sagnarigu Municipality. The academic resource and teaching aid preparedness of the participating students were assessed by examining their perceptions of the learning climate, pedagogical methods applied, as well as educational technology employed. Students' perceptions of extracurricular activities, support services, peer relations and social belongingness at the classroom level helped to inform our understanding of students' experiences regarding their school climate. Self-Constructed Feedback Mechanism: Students' Preferred Form of Academic Achievement-Based Self-Reflective Feedback (Agyei & Bakah, 2022). Secondly, contributions were made by Ofori-Attah (2020) on school safety; Adu-Gyamfi (2022) diversity and inclusion Gyamfi et al., 2009 as the first key pillar in schools. Finally, Kwame-Aboagye (2022) established the importance of career counselling and support services for students in the study of students' experiences of transitions and planning for their future training and work. The study findings stressed the importance of the FSHS policy for resource distribution that affects the senior high schools, positively influencing health as well as academic achievements.

2.3.4.4 Perspective of Parents and Guardians

It is, therefore, important that this study solicits from parents and guardians an understanding of how, at large, the FSHS program in Ghana has brought about changes in resource utilization to senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. This includes the learning experience in terms of what is learned or taught and implications for demonstrating achievement, reflection on learning with teachers and related support services, means of interaction like formal and informal meetings, print and electronic newsletters, and other web-based applications, Kwame-Aboagye 2022.

Further, in child safety, the interventions have to do with whether parents want their mental health and functioning as members of committees, volunteers, and participants in school events.

2.3.5. Ghana's Educational Reforms

2.3.5.1 Pre-Colonial Era

The British introduced formal education in Ghana in the mid-nineteenth century with the establishment of missionary schools, and Ghana was colonized in the same period (Amissah, 2015). The researchers stationed at these schools, as stated by Adjei (2016), had the main objective of imparting basic education, literacy, numeracy, Christian teachings, and vocational training to prepare people for jobs in colonial administration and missionary duties such as clerks, catechists, and desk assistants. Assignment (2017) points out that the eventual purpose of the colonial education system was to make Ghanaians behave like subordinates to the British by indoctrinating them with British culture and beliefs. Thus, colonization is the root cause of the present Ghana education system that supports imperialism and indoctrination (Government of Ghana, 2017).

2.3.5.2 Colonial Influence

Formal education was initiated in Ghana during colonization in synchronization with the introduction of British-run Christian missionary schools in the mid-19th century (Amissah, 2015). These educational institutions aimed to produce clerks, catechists, and assistants for colonial administration and missionary work, emphasizing basic literacy, numeracy, and Christian doctrines (Adjei, 2016). The intended function of this colonial education system was to promote, propagate, and disseminate British culture and belief systems to encourage Ghanaians to accept submissive positions in colonial society (Assimeng, 2017). This is why there is a direct relationship between the framework in operation during colonial rule and the modern educational system in Africa and Ghana, including curriculum structures and the language of instruction (Mazrui, 2003).



Education has been marginalized to some extent due to the narratives promoted by the colonial education system and the negative portrayals of African children it perpetuated (Dei, 2017). Black populations still feel the negative effects of the modernization of knowledge, language, and values of the West at the expense of Indigenous knowledge and ontology (Wa Thiongo, 1986). Many scholars have described the modern schooling system in Africa as a powerful tool for promoting racially discriminatory colonial policies of colour and classification (Mazrui, 2003). Hegemonic institutions and policies stemming from the colonial legacy are seen as perpetuating Western supremacy by shaping individual identity, eroding cultural identities, reinforcing patriarchal systems, and promoting aspirations for modern sector jobs and Western consumer goods (Dei, 2017).

2.3.5.3 Post-Independence Education Initiatives

After the Declaration of Independence in 1957, Ghana deliberately charted a development course that sought to achieve progressive change through the use of education for both social and national transformation (Addo, 2013). This paper will analyse the strategies of education advancement under the stipulation of Dr Nkrumah and his government through the following: The 1951 Accelerated Development Plan for Education and the 1961 Education Act. The policy initiatives were developed by researchers with the following aims: to enhance national unity, to provide education for all social classes regardless of their ability to pay for it, and to inspire Ghanaians to take leadership roles in the recently liberated nation (Agyeman-Duah, 2017). In 2017, the Ghanaian government persisted with the reforms of efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization and the expansion of education in senior high schools, including those in Sagnarigu Municipality, by implementing the Free Senior High School Policy.

2.3.5.4 Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)



In 1995, the FCUBE program was introduced by the Ministry of Education in Ghana, which was an effort to ensure that every child is and should have free school attendance up to junior high. For example, according to a study by Agyeman-Duah (2017), the program managed to increase raw enrollment in the various primary schools. This initiative also reduced the inequality in education due to different levels of economic status. Another successful initiative in delivering education is the Free SHS Policy. This novelty approach that characterizes current educational reforms pursues efficiency in education and distribution of opportunity in senior high schools, including Sagnarigu Municipality.

2.3.5.5 Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018-2030

Though ambitious, the Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030 represents Ghana's effort at consolidating the modernization of the education system. In this connection, ESP will improve all facets of teaching and learning across the education spectrum while preparing learners for the challenging twenty-first-century market. Most extraordinarily, the ESP has attained an extraordinary feat with highly improved literacy levels. The Ghana Education Service reported that literacy rates amongst students increased from 2% in 2016 to 38% in 2022, according to the International Institute for Educational Planning at UNESCO. It is obvious that ESP has brought several changes in the field of education and has influenced human lives. These include the introduction at junior high schools of a common core curriculum, common curriculum at elementary schools, and NAAC 2020. Additionally, the ESP has improved the coordination of different agencies and institutions by fostering partnerships that enhance all education initiatives of the Education Ministry.

2.3.5.6 Capitation Grant and Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP)



This paper examines the changes that have taken place in the framework of the educational system in Ghana. According to the Ministry of Education (2005), interventions like the Capitation Grant implemented in the mid-2000s were aimed at enhancing access by reducing the costs of school fees. Starting in 2014, The Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP) focuses on increasing the quality and relevance of secondary education through curriculum development and enhancement of facilities and structures (World Bank 2014). These efforts have resulted in a noticeable improvement in the level of educational opportunity. Additionally, the Free Senior High School policy, which was initiated in the 2017 academic year, was expected to complement the effort of increasing inclusive education and resource distribution in senior high schools, including those in the Sagnarigu Municipality.

2.3.5.7 Free Senior High School (SHS) Policy

This Free Senior High School Policy, initiated in 2017, aims to provide all students attending public senior high schools with free senior high school education. Textbooks, along with other core resources necessary for instruction and learning, are made available for this purpose. The program has ensured that the overall number of enrolled students is higher than that compared to the previous year, though the infrastructure and quality of education have specific long-term economic challenges that remain most distinctly in areas like the Sagnarigu Municipality 2020 Ministry of Education. In this respect, maintaining this type of thoroughgoing educational program means meeting and overcoming many challenges with sufficient financing.

2.3.5.8 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy

TVET has been adopted in Ghana and recognized as a valuable contribution of the policy to its economic development and preparation of an employable workforce. The government subsequently passed the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act



2020 (Act 1047) with the view to raising standards and making programs offered in TVET institutions more successful to employers and students' needs. The new law now provides a full reformist approach to a more modern system of managing and reorganizing TVET within the country. This CTVET Act 2020 is intended to harmonize and coordinate activities that relate to TVET through the establishment of the Commission for TVET as a centre that oversees, assures quality, and develops policies for all TVET institutions. These reforms from the Act include alignment of the curriculum to the current industry standards and the expectations of the labour market. The competency-based training approaches in the Act are crucial in ensuring that learners acquire appropriate and practical skills that enhance employability. The Act seeks the modernization of buildings and equipment in TVET institutions, with regulations on the usage of resources for infrastructure development. The CTVET Act, 2020 encourages the application of relevant modern teaching techniques and technologies to create a perfect learning environment benchmarked with international standards. Strategic partnerships should also be forged with players in the private sector through resource sharing in the policy, field training opportunities, and integration of employer feedback in the training program development and delivery. These reforms will be effectively realized through careful consideration of the resource allocations required in terms of material, human, and financial investments. This will be important to the senior high schools within Sagnarigu Municipality, in that with frequent supervision and adherence to what the Act requires, there is likely a significant recording of strides in academic achievement and future economic opportunities both for students and the community at large. Conclusion The TVET landscape in Ghana is undergoing a revolution; and among factors that have contributed to or could be said to have enhanced this revolution, is the CTVET Act 2020. This is achieved by

offering well-planned and strategic guidelines aimed at raising the standard of efficiency and accessibility of VET throughout the nation.

2.3.5.9 Inclusive Education Initiatives

Ghana has made notable progress in implementing inclusive education, affirming the right to equal education for all, including disadvantaged children with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2020). Various initiatives have been introduced, such as teacher training programs on special needs education, inclusive policy frameworks, and infrastructure improvements, which promote diversity and accommodate different learning needs (UNESCO, 2019). The evolution of Ghana's education system, shaped by colonial legacies, post-independence reforms, and modern policies, highlights a consistent commitment to widening access, improving quality, and ensuring inclusivity.

One significant step in achieving inclusivity was the introduction of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in 2017, ensuring no child is denied education due to financial constraints. According to the World Bank, this policy has led to significant increases in enrollment, especially among historically underrepresented groups. However, challenges persist. Akyeampong (2017) highlights that inadequate infrastructure and resources, particularly in rural schools, continue to impact education quality. Additionally, the OECD (2019) notes a shortage of teaching staff, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

To address these issues, the government has invested in teacher training to improve qualifications and skills, particularly for inclusive education (Ministry of Education, 2019). Infrastructure renovation has also been prioritized, with rural areas receiving new school buildings and upgrades to create better learning environments (UNICEF, 2020). For example, infrastructure improvements in the Sagnarigu Municipality have significantly enhanced educational facilities. Policies



promoting inclusive education in the municipality include the provision of assistive technologies for students with disabilities.

Despite these efforts, more remains to be done to achieve Ghana's vision of a well-educated, skilled, and employable population. Sustained investment in education is essential, especially in areas like teacher preparation and infrastructure development, to ensure continued progress toward inclusivity and quality education for all.

2.3.6. Previous Studies

The implementation and impact of Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy have been widely analysed in terms of access, quality, and resource utilization. Amankwaah (2024) highlights that while the policy improves access, discriminatory practices in implementation hinder quality education delivery. The study emphasizes adopting child-friendly school practices to reduce marginalization and optimize resources. Dwomoh et al. (2022) find that the double-track system leads to declines in education quality, particularly in core subjects, and identify challenges like financial constraints, infrastructure deficits, and inadequate teaching resources, necessitating a comprehensive policy review.

Mohammed and Kuyini (2021) identify inefficiencies and political hurdles affecting implementation through an analysis of 65 interviews and secondary sources. Although not region-specific, their findings stress the importance of localized interventions to address systemic challenges. Adu-Ababio and Osei (2018) use microsimulation modelling to show that the FSHS policy alleviates financial burdens on vulnerable households but highlight the need for infrastructure development to meet rising education demand.

Dwamena et al. (2023) uncover unintended consequences such as increased financial stress, lower academic performance, and teenage pregnancies. Through structured interviews and regression



analysis, they attribute these issues to overcrowded classrooms and inadequate resources but leave gaps in understanding long-term impacts. Ma et al. (2023) explore teacher professional development (PD) preferences, finding that longer training enhances feedback and alignment with teacher needs. However, they note the absence of subject-specific training and long-term PD effects on outcomes.

Addai-Mensah (2023) examines moral development under the FSHS policy, finding that overcrowded classrooms and indiscipline hinder moral education. The study suggests exploring teaching methods and curriculum impacts on moral behaviour. Overall, while the FSHS policy has increased access and reduced financial burdens, challenges like infrastructure deficits, resource constraints, and quality issues require targeted interventions and investments to ensure sustainable outcomes.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy, implemented in Ghana in 2017, marked a groundbreaking moment in the nation's educational history. By removing financial barriers, the policy sought to provide equitable access to secondary education for all eligible students. However, the ambitious initiative also introduced significant challenges, particularly in resource-constrained districts such as the Sagnarigu Municipality. To understand these complexities, a conceptual framework can provide valuable insights by examining the interplay between policy implementation, resource utilization, and educational outcomes.

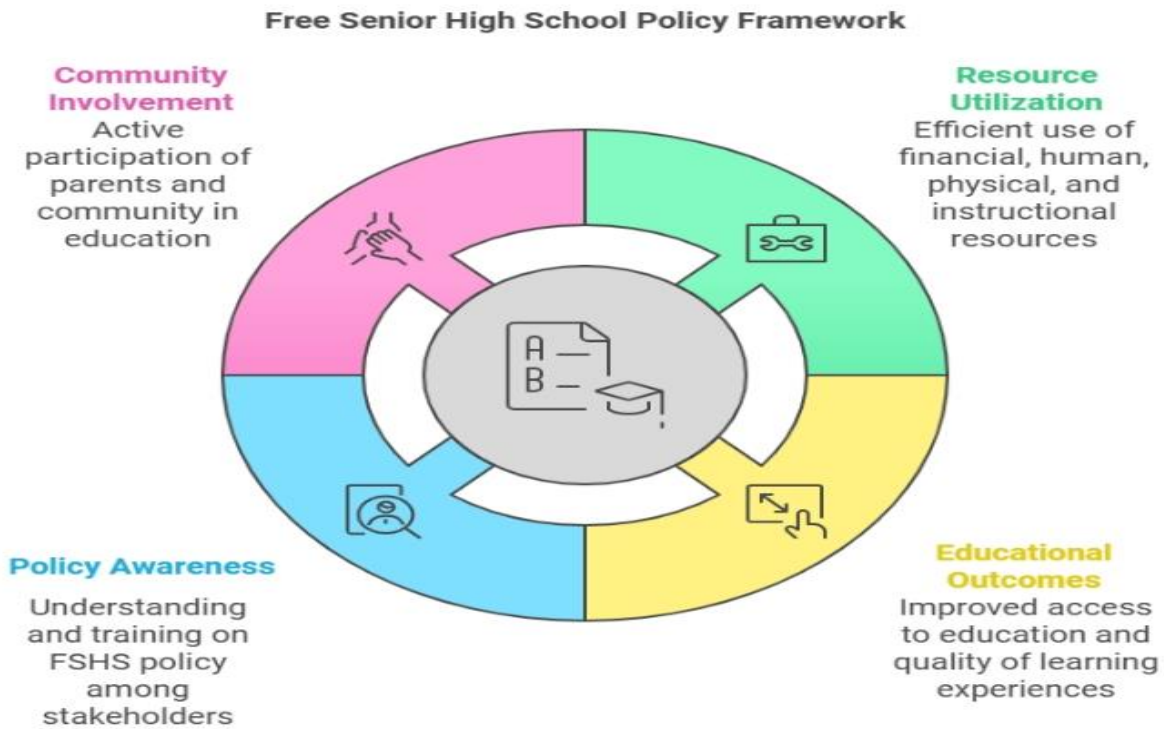


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author's construct, 2024.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between independent variables and dependable variables.

At its core, the FSHS policy aims to eliminate financial obstacles to education, thus promoting access and equity across Ghana. The policy operates on the principle that no child should be denied an education due to financial limitations. This bold objective necessitated a range of implementation strategies.

Firstly, the government prioritized funding by allocating substantial public resources to cover tuition, boarding, and other school-related costs. Additionally, infrastructural development became a cornerstone of the policy, with efforts focused on expanding existing schools and constructing new facilities to accommodate the anticipated surge in enrollment. Furthermore, teacher training

programs were introduced to ensure that educators could effectively manage larger and more diverse classrooms.

Despite these efforts, the policy's execution has revealed systemic gaps, especially in rapidly urbanizing areas like Sagnarigu. These shortcomings emphasize the need to examine resource utilization more closely to understand the policy's impact.

2.4.1. Educational Outcomes: Access and Quality

The primary aim of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy is to improve educational outcomes by increasing access and enhancing quality. While the policy has succeeded in significantly raising enrollment rates—national figures increased by 17.2% in 2017 and 30.7% in 2018 (Ministry of Education, 2018)—the quality of education remains a significant concern. Challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and insufficient teacher training compromise the learning experience, particularly in underserved areas like the Sagnarigu Municipality. As a result, the benefits of increased enrollment may be undermined by insufficient resource allocation.

The policy's effectiveness is shaped by the interconnected relationships between implementation, resource utilization, and educational outcomes. Effective implementation depends on factors like policy awareness, community participation, and strong school management practices. In the Sagnarigu Municipality, rapid population growth and socio-economic challenges intensify resource limitations, creating disparities in educational delivery. This highlights the need for systemic improvements to ensure equitable and sustainable educational outcomes.

In summary, the conceptual framework for evaluating the FSHS policy reveals a complex interplay between its components. While the policy has improved access to education, its uneven impact, particularly in resource-constrained areas like Sagnarigu, demands targeted solutions. A



comprehensive approach that prioritizes equitable resource distribution, strengthens school management, and encourages community engagement is necessary. Such measures will help ensure that the FSHS policy delivers on its promise of providing quality education for all Ghanaian children.

2.5. Summary of Chapter

The literature on Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy presents both opportunities and challenges. While the policy has expanded access to secondary education and reduced financial burdens for vulnerable households, it has also led to unintended issues such as financial strain on families, inadequate teaching resources, and gaps in teacher professional development. Studies emphasize the need for continuous monitoring to maximize benefits and minimize negative effects. Future research should focus on the long-term impact on household poverty, improving teacher training, integrating moral education, and optimizing resource allocation for better academic outcomes. Despite its successes, challenges such as infrastructure deficits, resource shortages, and discriminatory practices persist. Addressing these requires inclusive policies that ensure equitable, quality education, particularly in underserved areas like Sagnarigu.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Effective exploration of the methodological procedures and strategies of research requires a structure that links problems to findings, strengthening explanations. The setup of the research design is the first step researchers take before the exploration of participant selection, tactics of recruitment, and techniques of data collection. In this way, the researcher will be discussing techniques of data analysis and interpretation to let the study remain credible and compliant with ethical standards.

3.1. Philosophy

This research adopts the pragmatic paradigm, which provides a practical framework for inquiry and decision-making, particularly in mixed-methods studies (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). Pragmatism emphasizes actionable data, the connection between experience, knowing, and acting, and research as an experiential process. It prioritizes practical validity over theoretical validity, enabling continuous investigation and adjustment rather than seeking absolute truths. According to Kaushik and Walsh (2019), pragmatism engages marginalized communities, generates evidence for macro-level studies, and helps address complex issues. This approach facilitates meaningful, actionable findings, aiding researchers in making informed judgments and decisions.

3.2. Study Design

This research employed a cross-sectional survey design. This design was appropriate for this research as it enables the collection of data from a large population at a single point in time, which is important for assessing the current state of resource utilization in secondary schools under the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy. The utilization of a structured questionnaire by the





researcher helped gather quantitative data regarding various aspects of resource utilization, including human resources, teaching materials, and financial allocations.

The cross-sectional survey design facilitated the examination of relationships between variables without manipulating them, making it suitable for understanding how different factors interact within the context of the FSHS policy. For instance, it enabled the researcher to explore how resource availability correlates with educational outcomes among students in Sagnarigu Municipality. This design was advantageous as it provided a snapshot of the situation, enabling immediate findings into the effectiveness and challenges of the FSHS initiative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Moreover, this approach is cost-effective and time-efficient compared to longitudinal studies that require repeated observations over time. Given the pressing need to assess the impact of the FSHS policy amidst ongoing debates about its sustainability and effectiveness (Agbese, 2018; Asante et al., 2022), a cross-sectional survey can yield timely data that stakeholders can use to inform policy adjustments. The ability to reach a diverse sample of schools within Sagnarigu Municipality enhances the generalizability of findings across similar settings in Ghana.

Additionally, employing descriptive statistics enabled a clear presentation of data trends and patterns related to resource utilization. This quantitative analysis could be complemented by qualitative results from focus group discussions with educators and administrators, thereby enriching the overall understanding of how resources are utilized under the FSHS framework (Osei & Kyeremeh, 2021). The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data by this design addressed the research questions and also provided a comprehensive view of the educational setting influenced by the FSHS policy. In conclusion, a cross-sectional survey design was justified

as it effectively identified the current situation of resource utilization in Ghana's secondary schools under the FSHS policy.

3.3. Approach

This study applied the mixed method approach in its data collection. Halcomb and Hickman (2015) explained mixed methods study as a study that comprises using both quantitative and qualitative data in one specific investigation. It is used as an alternative approach in an instance where merging quantitative and qualitative methods yields more accurate and dependable information than using either quantitative only or qualitative study (Halcomb & Hickman, 2015). The qualitative study is defined by Aspers and Corte (2019) as a process in which the scientific community is improved by making new important distinctions resulting from closer study of the phenomenon studied.

Qualitative procedures are used to provide answers to questions related to experience, meaning, and perspective, mostly based on the participant's subjective opinion (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & De Lacey, 2016). The term 'quantitative study' is used to describe the process by which measurements are taken from study populations to produce numerical data (Rutberg & Boukhisidi, 2018). In addition, quantitative studies involve the use of standard questionnaires/experiments to collect numerical data (Jopling, 2019).

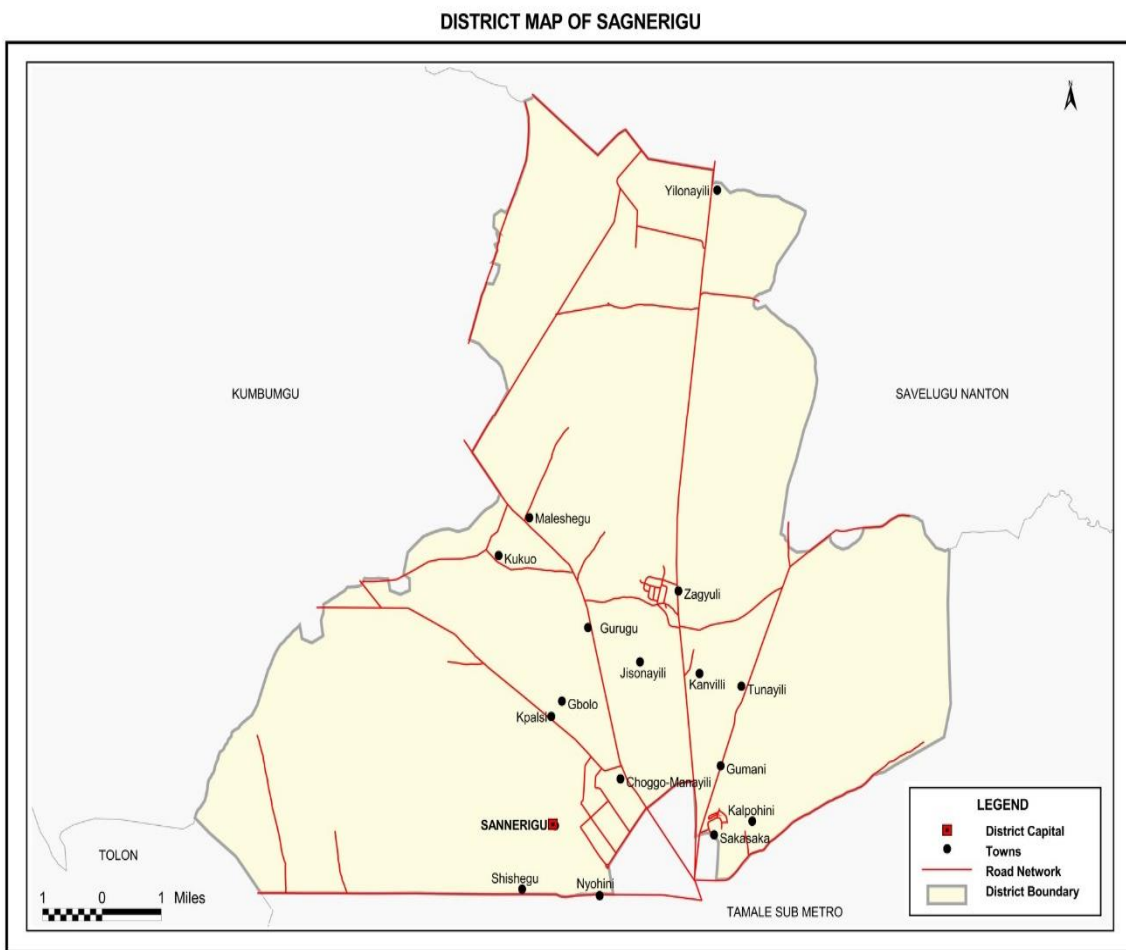
3.4. Study Area

Data collection was, therefore, easier because the region implemented the Free Senior High School policy, in addition to how close the researcher was to the area. Consequently, the study was conducted in the Sagnarigu Municipality of the Northern Region. The municipality covers an area of 200.4 square kilometres and is made up of 79 villages comprising 20 urban, 6 peri-urban, and 53 rural communities. It shares boundaries with Savelugu municipality and Nanton district in the north; Tamale Metropolis in the south and east; Tolon district in the west, and the Kumbungu



district in the north. The fact that the Sagnarigu Municipality encompasses various environments, ranging from urban to rural areas, presents a complete overview of the policy effects and more so repeats the suitability for studying the consequences of the Free Senior High School policy on resource allocation. Besides, attesting to its standing as a major education hub in the area are five government-aided senior high schools and an immense number of basic schools.

Figure 1 A map showing the study area.



Source: Ghana Statistical Service, GIS

3.5. Population





The population is constituted of Tamale Senior High School, Kalpohini Senior High School, Northern Business Senior High School, and Islamic Science Senior High School in the Sagnarigu Municipality of Ghana. This includes students, instructors, headmasters, department heads, support staff, librarians, laboratory technicians, and maintenance staff who are directly involved in resource utilization. The total population therefore constituted 400 participants. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan scale determination table, the sample size was 206.

3.6. Sample and Sampling Procedures

Sampling procedures are important in research as they determine the validity and reliability of the findings. In this study, a combination of stratified sampling and purposive sampling was employed to gather data from participants. This dual approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by ensuring that diverse perspectives were represented.

Stratified sampling was utilized to collect quantitative data, enabling the researcher to categorize participants into distinct sub-groups based on specific characteristics relevant to the study. The selection process involved four public senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality: Tamale Senior High School, Kalpohini Senior High School, Northern Business Senior High School, and Islamic Science Senior High School. Within these institutions, a total sample size of 206 participants was established, comprising various roles such as headteachers, subject teachers, students, and administrative staff. For instance, 4 headmasters and 12 assistant headmasters were selected due to their leadership roles, while 52 subject teachers were included for their direct involvement in educational delivery (Alvi, 2016; Open Journal of Educational Research, 2022). This method ensured that quantitative data could be analysed statistically to identify trends and patterns across different roles within the schools.



On the other hand, purposive sampling was employed to gather qualitative data from participants who possessed specific knowledge or experience pertinent to the research focus. This technique was effective in selecting individuals who could provide in-depth results on resource utilization and policy implementation. Participants included 25 department heads, 4 domestic bursars, 10 accountants, 35 housemasters and housemistresses, 40 year-three students, and 24 old students. With the focus on these key informants, the researcher could delve into varied discussions about the implications of the free senior high school policy on resource management (Zengulaaru & Nyamekye, 2022).

The combination of these sampling techniques facilitated a detailed data collection process that balanced quantitative breadth with qualitative depth. This methodological triangulation not only enhanced the reliability of the findings but also enabled a holistic understanding of how the free senior high school policy is perceived and implemented across different educational roles within Sagnarigu Municipality (Ghana User Satisfaction Survey, 2012). The careful selection criteria ensured that participants were well-informed and capable of providing relevant findings to the study's objectives.

In conclusion, the strategic application of stratified and purposive sampling techniques in this research highlights their importance in achieving a comprehensive understanding of complex educational policies and their practical implications within Ghanaian secondary schools.

3.7. Sample Size

In this study, a sample of 206 participants was meticulously selected from four mixed public senior high schools. This sample was chosen to provide a good representation of the diverse perspectives within the educational ecosystem of the Sagnarigu Municipality. Employing a convergent parallel mixed design, the study integrated both qualitative and quantitative methods, ensuring



comprehensive data collection that reflects the nature of educational resource utilization. Purposeful sampling was used to gather qualitative insights from key stakeholders, including 4 headmasters and 12 assistant headmasters were selected due to their leadership roles, while 52 subject teachers were included for their direct involvement in educational delivery (Alvi, 2016; Open Journal of Educational Research, 2022). These roles were specifically targeted due to their critical involvement in school management, finance, and student welfare, thereby enhancing the qualitative data with contextually relevant perspectives (Ankamah et al., 2023; Ghana Education Service, 2024).

In parallel, stratified sampling facilitated the collection of quantitative data across various sub-groups, including 25 department heads, 4 domestic bursars, 10 accountants, 35 housemasters and housemistresses, 40 year-three students, and 24 passed students. This approach ensured that the sample encompassed a wide array of viewpoints, thus enhancing statistical representativeness and minimizing biases associated with any singular group. The inclusion criteria mandated that participants be affiliated with public senior high schools benefiting from the Free Senior High School policy, specifically those who had been in their respective roles for over three years. This criterion was important in ensuring that participants possessed adequate experience and knowledge relevant to the study's focus (Ghana Ministry of Education, 2023). The combination of these sampling strategies by this research not only identified in-depth qualitative findings but also provided quantifiable data that shows trends within the educational landscape, thereby strengthening the validity and reliability of its findings.

3.8. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedure for this research involved a dual approach utilizing both questionnaires and secondary data. Questionnaires served as the primary tool for gathering first-



hand information from stakeholders, including teachers, students, and school administrators. The design of the questionnaire was meticulously crafted to ensure clarity and neutrality, thereby minimizing response bias. Questions were organized logically, covering various aspects of resource utilization and perceptions of the Free Senior High School policy. This structured format facilitated quantitative analysis while also allowing for qualitative insights through open-ended questions (SurveyCTO, 2024).

To enhance the reliability of the data collected, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted before the main data collection phase. This pilot test involved a small group of participants who provided feedback on question clarity and relevance, leading to necessary adjustments (ResearchGate, 2022). The final questionnaire was then distributed to a representative sample of participants within the Sagnarigu Municipality, ensuring that diverse perspectives were captured.

In addition to primary data collection via questionnaires, secondary data was important in contextualizing the findings. Secondary data sources included government reports, academic articles, and historical records related to educational policies in Ghana. This existing information provided a foundational backdrop against which primary data could be analysed, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how the Free Senior High School policy has been implemented and its impact on resource utilization (SurveyCTO, 2024). The integration of both primary and secondary data by this study aimed to triangulate findings and enhance the validity of the research conclusions. The combination of these methodologies not only enriched the dataset but also ensured that the research addressed its objectives effectively while adhering to ethical standards in data collection.

3.9. Sources of Data



This informs the study on the implications of the free senior high school policy in Ghanaian schools; a case study in the Sagnarigu Municipality combined the sources of primary and secondary data. This integrated approach to primary and secondary data sources has enabled the study to go into an in-depth analysis of the policy impact and give full insight into the implications of the policy for resource distribution in Ghanaian schools. This, in turn, led to an increase in the validity of findings to be cross-referenced and a more complex comprehension of the policy implications, (Creswell 2013; Rubin and Rubin, 20120).

3.9.1. Primary Data Collection

The primary data collection for the study used a questionnaire measuring the impact and experiences of how the FSHS policy affected resource distribution in schools within the Sagnarigu Municipality in Ghana. From the primary data, information about the contribution of the people who directly experienced policy implementation gave first-hand knowledge of it.

3.9.2. Secondary Data

The secondary data were obtained from several sources: literature on Ministry of Education publications and online research resource reports from educational directorates. Using such data to provide contextual background information, researchers have further improved our understanding of the subject at hand. This additional data, therefore, supports the main data through a case study in the Sagnarigu Municipal region, adding to the broader dimensions of data that enable us to analyse in greater detail how the FSHS policy functions concerning resource allocation in schools in Ghana.

3.10. Research Instruments

3.10.1 Questionnaire



This researcher has used a structured questionnaire which is made out of direct questions to obtain information from the participants. When one tries to obtain standardized statistical data from diverse subgroups of large sample sizes, it works extremely well. The researcher has framed the questionnaire based on the research conducted earlier. A questionnaire has various advantages in the fact that it can be easily issued to a large number of participants in minimal time, thus saving money and time, as well. The researcher constructed a questionnaire that integrated both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The nature of the closed-ended questions was meant to have pre-defined response options whereas open-ended questions allowed free and subjective responses from participants. The investigator divided the questionnaire into five parts, retaining Part I for demographic data and Parts II–V for the main research issues.

3.10.2 Interview

In elucidating information from participants, the researcher designed an interview guide. I used both a structured and flexible interview guide. The ability to pose close and open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews without being bound by any preordained order or sequence is relevant for research into complex questions of resource distribution within Ghana's free senior school policy. This approach allowed me to gather rich qualitative data and get a comprehensive understanding of the variables influencing the experiences and outcomes concerning this policy in Sagnarigu Municipality. I have used a template systematic collection of data from teachers that has helped me in achieving the fourth goal of the study. This targeted data analysis in detail has served to give me a better view of the problem.

3.11 Pre-Testing of Instrument

Extensive data analysis was conducted by the researcher to ascertain whether the policy of FSHS in Ghana has affected resource distribution at the senior high school level or not. It is a case



involving the Sagnarigu Municipality. Using quantitative statistics in combination with qualitative methods, the researcher could draw some important conclusions. The verification and rechecking of data against data by the researcher enhanced the validity of the findings to ensure that correct information was included. Accordingly, some interesting results were obtained by the researcher since the analysis of the data was made via Excel and SPSS. The findings were presented using some elementary-level statistics. Thematic analysis techniques for patterns and repeating themes within the spoken data that had been collected were carried out by the researcher.

3.12 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this research involved an in-depth approach that integrated both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative aspect utilized descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, especially through correlational analysis using SPSS to examine the relationships between various factors influencing resource utilization in the context of the Free Senior High School (SHS) policy. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize data related to the demographic information of participants and the data set. This included calculating measures of central tendency, such as means and medians, alongside measures of variability like standard deviations, which provided a clear picture of the distribution of resources and student outcomes across different schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality (Ankamah et al., 2023; WIDER, 2023).

To explore relationships among variables, inferential statistics were applied using SPSS through correlational analysis. This method enabled the researchers to assess how variables such as funding levels, teacher-student ratios, and resource availability correlated with student performance outcomes. For instance, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the strength and direction of these relationships, enabling findings into how effectively resources were being utilized under the Free SHS policy (Acheampong et al., 2023).

On the qualitative side, thematic analysis was conducted to gather deeper insights into stakeholders' perceptions regarding the Free SHS policy. This involved coding interview transcripts from educators, parents, and students to identify recurring themes related to challenges and successes experienced since the policy's implementation. The integration of qualitative data enriched the understanding of quantitative findings by providing context and illustrating how policy impacts varied across different demographic groups.

In conclusion, this mixed-methods approach facilitated a good analysis of the Free Senior High School policy's effectiveness in resource utilization within Ghanaian secondary schools. Combining statistical effectiveness with qualitative results the research provides a varied understanding of the educational context in Sagnarigu Municipality.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were very important to me. I sent an introduction letter to the GES office in Sagnarigu Municipality, which I received from the Head of Department (HOD) before beginning my data gathering. Adhering to the university's ethical guidelines, I took great care to protect the participants' identities. I asked potential volunteers to voluntarily enrol in the study. I didn't share the data with anyone else until my research was finished; I only used it for that purpose. After distributing the questionnaire to the participants, I provided an overview and discussed the study goals to avoid misinterpretation. I took my time going over the details of the questionnaire and the study purpose with each participant. As a measure to preserve participant privacy, I made sure participants remained anonymous and confidential throughout the data collection process by not identifying information collected personally.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Demographic Information of Participants

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
(N = 206)		
Gender		
Male	118	57.28
Female	88	42.72
Total	206	100
Age		
Under 25	28	13.6
25-34	74	35.9
35-44	52	25.2
45-54	30	14.6
55+	22	10.7
Total	206	100.0
School of Participants		
School A	46	22.3
School B	57	27.7
School C	54	26.2
School D	49	23.8
Total	206	100.0





Highest Educational Attainment of Participants		
SHS	38	18.4
Degree	100	48.5
Masters	65	31.6
PhD	3	1.5
Total	206	100.0

Participants' Role in School		
Teaching Staff	142	68.9
Non-Teaching Staff	40	19.4
Administrator	24	11.7
Total	206	100.0

Religious Background of Participants		
Islam	150	72.8
Christianity	48	23.3
Traditionalist	8	3.9
Total	206	100.0

Years of Experience in SHS		
Less than 1 year	36	17.5
1 - 5 years	64	31.1
6 - 10 years	36	17.5
Over 10 years	70	34.0
Total	206	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)



The demographic information of participants in this study provides important findings into the composition of the sample population. This analysis is important for understanding the context in which the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy operates and its implications for educational outcomes.

The sample consisted of 206 participants, with a significant gender imbalance. Males represented 57.28% (118 participants), while females accounted for 42.72% (88 participants). This disparity highlights a potential area for further investigation regarding gender equity in educational participation within the Sagnarigu Municipality, describing trends in Ghanaian education where male enrollment often surpasses female enrollment (Afrobarometer, 2024).

The age distribution of participants reveals a predominantly youthful demographic, with 35.9% (74 participants) aged between 25-34 years. The representation of younger individuals (under 25 years) was relatively low at 13.6% (28 participants), while those over 35 years comprised a significant portion: 25.2% (52 participants) aged 35-44 years, and 14.6% (30 participants) aged 45-54 years. This age profile suggests that many participants are likely to be relatively early in their careers, which may influence their perspectives on the FSHS policy's effectiveness and challenges (Government of Ghana, 2021).

Regarding educational qualifications, a majority of participants held degrees, comprising 48.5% (100 participants), while those with a Master's degree constituted 31.6% (65 participants). Only a small fraction had attained a PhD (1.5%, or 3 participants). This high level of educational attainment among participants may provide a knowledgeable perspective on the policy's implementation and its resource utilization, as they are likely to have substantial academic and professional experience in the educational sector.

Participants' roles varied significantly; teaching staff made up the largest group at 68.9% (142 participants), followed by non-teaching staff at 19.4% (40 participants) and administrators at 11.7% (24 participants). This distribution indicates that the majority of opinions collected stem from individuals directly involved in delivering education, which is very significant for assessing the policy's impact on teaching and learning environments.

The religious composition of the sample showed a predominance of Islamic participants at 72.8% (150 individuals), followed by Christians at 23.3% (48 individuals). The representation of traditionalists was minimal at 3.9% (8 individuals). This demographic factor may influence attitudes toward educational policies and resource allocation, showing cultural values and priorities within the community.

Experience levels among participants varied, with those having over ten years of experience constituting the largest group at 34.0% (70 participants). Conversely, those with less than one year of experience represented only 17.5% (36 participants). This breadth of experience is essential for providing nuanced opinions on the FSHS policy's effects on educational practices and resource management.

In conclusion, the demographic data explains key characteristics of the participant pool in this study on Ghana's FSHS policy, revealing significant findings regarding gender representation, age distribution, educational attainment, roles within schools, religious backgrounds, and professional experience.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

4.2. How does the FSHS Policy Affect Staff Work in Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Question 8	Question 9	Question 10
Valid	206	206	206
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	1.0000	1.4320	3.0194
Std. Error of Mean	.00000	.04880	.08839
Median	1.0000	1.0000	4.0000
Mode	1.00	1.00	4.00
Std. Deviation	.00000	.70034	1.26861
Variance	.000	.490	1.609
Std. Error of Skewness	.169	.169	.169
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.337	.337	.337
Range	.00	2.00	4.00
Sum	206.00	295.00	622.00
10	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
20	1.0000	1.0000	2.0000
25	1.0000	1.0000	2.0000
30	1.0000	1.0000	2.0000
40	1.0000	1.0000	3.0000
50	1.0000	1.0000	4.0000
60	1.0000	1.0000	4.0000
70	1.0000	2.0000	4.0000





75	1.0000	2.0000	4.0000
80	1.0000	2.0000	4.0000
90	1.0000	3.0000	4.0000
Skewness		1.320	-.529
Kurtosis		.299	-1.302

Table 3: Statistics

Variable	Frequency (N=206)	Percentage (%)
Yes	206	100
No	00	00
Total	206	100.00

If yes, how has your workload changed?

(Tick all that apply)

Increased teaching hours	142	68.9
Additional Administrative Tasks	39	18.9
Increased Student Supervision Responsibilities	25	12.1
Total	206	100.0

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance."

Strongly Agree	40	19.4
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Agree	37	18.0
Neutral	14	6.8
Disagree	109	52.9
Strongly Disagree	6	2.9
Total	206	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana, implemented in September 2017, has significantly influenced the educational setting, especially in the Sagnarigu Municipality. This policy was designed to eliminate financial challenges to secondary education by covering costs such as tuition, textbooks, and boarding fees. The objective of this discussion is to analyse how the FSHS policy has affected staff work in Senior High Schools (SHSs) within this municipality, using descriptive statistics to provide an in-depth understanding of its impact.

The descriptive statistics from the study reveal that all surveyed staff (100%) reported that the FSHS policy has affected their workload. The mean score for the perceived impact on workload was 1.0000, indicating a consensus among staff that their responsibilities have changed due to the policy. Significantly, 68.9% of participants indicated an increase in teaching hours, while 18.9% reported additional administrative tasks, and 12.1% noted increased student supervision responsibilities. This data illustrates a clear trend: the introduction of the FSHS policy has resulted in heightened demands on educators, especially in terms of teaching and administrative duties (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023).

The implications of these findings are significant. Increased teaching hours can lead to teacher fatigue and burnout, potentially affecting the quality of education delivered to students. Moreover, additional administrative tasks may detract from teachers' primary responsibilities—namely,





providing effective instruction and support to students. The burden of increased student supervision further complicates this scenario, as educators must balance their time between teaching and ensuring student safety and engagement (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

In terms of staff motivation and performance, responses to the statement "The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance" were varied. The mean score for this statement was 3.0194, suggesting a neutral stance overall; however, a closer examination reveals that only 19.4% of participants strongly agreed with the statement while 52.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This disparity indicates that while some educators perceive positive effects on motivation and performance due to improved access to resources for students, many others feel overwhelmed by their increased workloads (Ghana Education Service, 2024).

The skewness values also provide results in staff perceptions regarding motivation and performance. A skewness of -0.529 suggests a slight tendency towards negative perceptions among staff regarding the impact of the FSHS policy on their motivation and performance levels. This finding is corroborated by qualitative findings from interviews conducted with educators who expressed concerns about their ability to maintain high standards of teaching amidst rising demands (Diwa Institute, 2023).

Furthermore, the variance in responses reflects differing experiences among staff members based on their specific roles and responsibilities within the school system. For instance, teachers with heavier teaching loads may feel more negatively impacted compared to those in administrative positions who might benefit from additional resources provided by the policy (Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, 2023).

The answers from the interviews were about how the FSHS policy affected the amount of work that SHS employees do in the Sagnarigu Municipality. I asked participants, in their opinion, how the FSHS policy influenced their ability to perform their professional duties effectively?



TS1 of the participants remarked during an interview on 14/05/24 that *“There has been a significant change. With more students enrolled, teachers are faced with bigger class sizes and longer teaching days, which makes it challenging for them to give each student individualized attention. They are also having to deal with more administrative work, which takes away from the time they could be spending instructing and helping students.”* TS2, another individual, agreed on 14/05/24 that *“The curriculum has become more demanding. Instructors are under pressure to cover more ground in less time, which results in longer preparation and planning periods and less time for lesson planning. Staff members are also spending less time teaching and assisting students because administrative responsibilities have grown, and they are managing more paperwork.”* HM1, another person, expressed on 14/05/24 that *“The workload had doubled since the policy was implemented. To meet demand, employees are putting in more hours—including on holidays and with researchers—which is making them more burned out and demoralized.”* In response to a question about ways to lighten the workload, HM2 said on 14/05/24 that *“Staff members are dedicated to providing high-quality instruction despite the difficulties. To assist them in efficiently managing their workload, the government must offer more resources and assistance.”* TS3 (14/05/24) *“The increase in class sizes has made it difficult to monitor student progress effectively. It has become challenging to provide timely feedback on assignments, which affects students’ overall learning experience and performance.”* TS4 (14/05/24) *“Teachers are finding it hard to maintain a work-life balance due to the increased workload. The extended teaching hours, combined with administrative tasks, have left little time for professional development or self-care, resulting in fatigue and decreased productivity.”* HM3 (14/05/24) *“The lack of teaching aids and limited infrastructure to support the growing student population has added to the burden. Teachers*

often have to improvise with inadequate resources, which reduces the effectiveness of lessons and hinders student engagement."

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy aims to enhance educational access and equity in Ghanaian secondary schools, its implementation has led to significant changes in staff workload within SHSs in Sagnarigu Municipality. The descriptive statistics indicate that all educators have felt an increase in their responsibilities, primarily through extended teaching hours and additional administrative duties. Although some staff members recognize potential benefits regarding student outcomes and resource availability, many report feeling overwhelmed by these changes. As such, policymakers need to consider these findings when evaluating the efficacy of the FSHS policy and its implications for educational quality and staff well-being.

4.3. What is the Impact of the FSHS Policy on Providing Teaching and Learning Resources in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Question 12	Question 13	Question 14
Valid	206	206	206
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	1.7282	3.0922	3.4951
Std. Error of Mean	.03107	.05701	.08940
Median	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000
Mode	2.00	3.00	4.00
Std. Deviation	.44599	.81823	1.28309
Variance	.199	.670	1.646
Skewness	-1.033	-.712	-.710





Std. Error of			
Skewness	.169	.169	.169
Kurtosis	-.942	.106	-.728
Std. Error of			
Kurtosis	.337	.337	.337
Range	1.00	3.00	4.00
Sum	356.00	637.00	720.00
10	1.0000	2.0000	1.0000
20	1.0000	3.0000	2.0000
25	1.0000	3.0000	2.0000
30	2.0000	3.0000	3.0000
40	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000
50	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000
60	2.0000	3.0000	4.0000
70	2.0000	4.0000	4.0000
75	2.0000	4.0000	4.0000
80	2.0000	4.0000	5.0000
90	2.0000	4.0000	5.0000

Table 5: Statistics

Variable	Frequency (N=206)	Percentage (%)
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Are teaching and learning resources sufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy?		
Yes	56	27.2
No	150	72.8
Total	206	100.0

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials."		
Strongly Agree	22	10.7
Agree	35	17.0
Neutral	10	4.9
Disagree	97	47.1
Strongly Disagree	42	20.4
Total	206	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The research question guiding this analysis is: "What is the impact of the FSHS policy on providing teaching and learning resources in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?" To address this question, descriptive statistics derived from survey data are examined, focusing on the sufficiency of teaching and learning resources, the frequency of their supply, and perceptions regarding the policy's effectiveness in improving access to quality materials.



The first aspect to consider is whether teaching and learning resources are sufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy. The survey results indicate that a significant majority of participants (72.8%) believe that these resources are insufficient. Only 27.2% affirmed that the available resources meet the demands posed by the FSHS policy. This disparity suggests a significant gap in resource allocation and availability, which may undermine the policy's objectives of enhancing educational access and quality (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023).

The mean score for this question is 1.7282, with a standard deviation of 0.44599, indicating a clustering of responses towards the lower end of the scale, where lower values represent a lack of sufficiency. The median value of 2 further supports this finding, as it lies below the midpoint of the scale. The skewness statistic of -1.033 suggests a leftward skew in responses, reinforcing that many participants perceive a deficiency in resources (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

Another significant dimension is how frequently teaching and learning materials are supplied to schools. The mean score for this aspect is 3.0922, with a standard deviation of 0.81823, indicating moderate agreement among participants about the frequency of supply. The median score is 3, suggesting that while some schools receive resources regularly, others may experience irregularities in supply. The distribution appears more balanced compared to resource sufficiency; however, the variance (0.670) indicates significant differences in experiences across schools (Ghana Education Service, 2024).

The final area addressed in this analysis is participants' perceptions regarding whether the FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials. The mean score for this question stands at 3.4951, with a standard deviation of 1.28309, indicating a tendency towards agreement among participants that access has improved since the implementation of the policy. However, it is noteworthy that nearly half (47.1%) of participants disagreed with this statement,

while an additional 20.4% strongly disagreed (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023). This highlights a significant division in perceptions: while some believe that access has improved, a substantial proportion feels otherwise.

The cumulative percentages reveal that only 10.7% strongly agreed with the statement, suggesting that while there may be improvements perceived by some stakeholders, many remain sceptical about the overall effectiveness of the FSHS policy in enhancing access to quality educational materials.

Interview responses focused on what challenges have you encountered regarding the provision of teaching and learning resources under the FSHS policy? *“The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy has had a mixed impact on teaching and learning resources in my school,”* claims HM1 in an interview on 21/05/24. *“Although the increase in student enrollment has expanded the individual options of teacher job availability, it has put a strain on our resources so that we have suffered shortages in basic furniture, textbooks, and other necessities.”* HM1 further noted on 21/05/24: *“As I pointed out just now, there has been a shortage of textbooks, furniture, and other essential facilities,”* he said, pointing out the lack of teaching tools. *“Much worse is that the equipment in our laboratories is antiquated and barely adequate to conduct any meaningful research.”* TS1 also shared this concern on 21/05/24: *“Teachers are feeling the stress as well. Their big class sizes and heavy workload prevent them from providing each student with the individualized attention they require, which has a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and learning. It is also difficult for teachers to execute the curriculum effectively due to a lack of resources.”* *“Despite these challenges, teachers are innovating and adapting,”* according to TS2 on 21/05/24. *“Utilizing digital resources like tutorial videos and online textbooks, some educators are improving their classes. Certain individuals are sharing their expertise and assets with their peers.”* According to HM4 on 21/05/24, *“Some teachers have risen to the occasion by using innovative methods to engage students and make learning more accessible. To help teachers and give them the tools they need to provide high-quality instruction, more work must be done.”* TS3 attempted to express on 21/05/24: *“If I had to rate the impact of the FSHS policy on teaching and learning resources, I would say it's been both positive and negative. Although it made education more accessible, it also put pressure on available resources and the calibre of instruction.”* To



increase the effectiveness of the policy, HM3 recommended on 21/05/24 that *“The government increase its investment in teacher development and educational infrastructure. They recommended working with parents and other stakeholders to understand issues and develop workable solutions, as well as recruiting more teachers to reduce workloads and class sizes and provide incentives for educators to remain in the field.”*

In conclusion, descriptive statistics reveal significant results on the impact of the FSHS policy on teaching and learning resources within Senior High Schools in Sagnarigu Municipality. The overwhelming majority view teaching and learning resources as insufficient to meet educational demands, while perceptions regarding frequency and quality improvements show mixed results. These findings highlight significant challenges facing educational stakeholders in ensuring that the FSHS policy fulfils its promise of equitable access to quality education.

4.4. How does Ghana’s FSHS Policy Affect Financial Allocation to Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Question 16	Question 17	Question 18
Valid	206	206	206
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	1.6311	1.1650	3.7233
Std. Error of Mean	.03370	.02593	.08131
Median	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
Mode	2.00	1.00	4.00
Std. Deviation	.48369	.37213	1.16709
Variance	.234	.138	1.362
Skewness	-.547	1.818	-.839



Std. Error of			
Skewness	.169	.169	.169
Kurtosis	-1.717	1.317	-.321
Std. Error of			
Kurtosis	.337	.337	.337
Range	1.00	1.00	4.00
Sum	336.00	240.00	767.00
10	1.0000	1.0000	2.0000
20	1.0000	1.0000	2.0000
25	1.0000	1.0000	3.0000
30	1.0000	1.0000	4.0000
40	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
50	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
60	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
70	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
75	2.0000	1.0000	5.0000
80	2.0000	1.0000	5.0000
90	2.0000	2.0000	5.0000

Table 7: Statistics

Variable	Frequency (N=206)	Percentage (%)
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Do you think the financial resources allocated to your school under the FSHS policy are adequate?

Yes	76	36.9
No	130	63.1
Total	206	100.0

**How are financial allocations under the FSHS policy prioritized in your school?
(Tick all that apply)**

Procurement of Teaching Materials	172	83.5
Infrastructure Development	34	16.5
Total	206	100.0

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization."

Strongly Agree	10	4.9
Agree	35	17.0
Neutral	11	5.3
Disagree	96	46.6
Strongly Disagree	54	26.2
Total	206	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)



The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has significant implications for financial allocation to senior high schools, especially in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The present discussion utilizes descriptive statistics to analyse how the FSHS policy affects financial resource allocation within this region.

A survey conducted with 206 participants from various senior high schools in Sagnarigu revealed important findings regarding perceptions of financial adequacy under the FSHS policy. The mean score for the adequacy of financial resources allocated to schools was 1.63, indicating a general sentiment of inadequacy among participants, with a standard deviation of 0.48 suggesting variability in responses. Significantly, 63.1% of participants reported that the financial resources were inadequate, while only 36.9% felt they were sufficient. This disparity describes a significant concern regarding the sufficiency of funding provided by the government under the FSHS initiative (Shamo, 2023).

In terms of prioritization of financial allocations, the survey results indicated that procurement of teaching materials was deemed the most critical area, with 83.5% of participants selecting it as a priority. However, infrastructure development received significantly less attention, with only 16.5% identifying it as a priority area. This prioritization shows a focus on immediate educational needs over long-term infrastructural investments, which may hinder overall educational quality and sustainability (Ghana Education Service, 2022).

The perception of financial transparency resulting from the FSHS policy was also assessed. The mean score for agreement with the statement "The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization" was 3.72, suggesting a moderate level of agreement among participants. However, when examining the distribution of responses, it became evident that nearly 73% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating widespread scepticism about



financial transparency and accountability in resource allocation under the FSHS framework. This scepticism is further highlighted by a skewness value of -0.84 and a kurtosis value of -0.32, suggesting that while some participants felt positive about transparency, a significant majority did not share this view (UDS International Journal of Development Studies, 2023).

The implications of these findings are profound for policymakers and educational stakeholders in Ghana. The overwhelming perception that financial resources are inadequate suggests an urgent need for reassessment and potential restructuring of funding mechanisms associated with the FSHS policy. As noted by Shamo (2023), increasing school populations without corresponding increases in funding can lead to resource strain and diminish educational outcomes.

Moreover, prioritizing procurement over infrastructure development raises concerns about the long-term sustainability and quality of education provided within these institutions. While immediate teaching materials are important for daily operations, neglecting infrastructure can lead to deteriorating conditions that affect student learning experiences (Ghana Education Service, 2022).

In the interview on financial allocation to participants when asked, how has the financial allocation under the FSHS policy impacted the school's operations? ADM1 responded on 30/05/24 that *"The elimination of the primary source of revenue from student fees due to the FSHS policy has made it increasingly difficult for schools to generate funds through traditional means."* ADM3 stated on 30/05/24 that *"Since the policy implementation, there has been a significant reduction in school income, making it difficult to maintain facilities to support extracurricular activities and buy essential supplies."* ADM4 noted on 30/05/24 that *"The current income levels are inadequate to cover routine activities and operations, which is impacting the quality of education provided by the school."* ADM2 stated on 30/05/24 that *"Many schools are still finding it difficult to meet their*



needs despite the government's increased financial support, particularly in light of the spike in student enrollment.” AHM2 expressed concern on 30/05/24 that “As a result of the FSHS policy, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) have decreased their financial contributions, widened the financial gap, and made it more difficult for schools to make up the difference. With the FSHS policy in place, our school's PTA funding has significantly decreased, and the number of parents willing to financially support school-related activities has significantly decreased.” ADM5 (30/05/24) “The implementation of the FSHS policy has placed a heavy financial burden on schools. Delays in government disbursements have further compounded the challenge, as schools struggle to manage operational costs and ensure uninterrupted academic activities.” ADM6 (30/05/24) “While the FSHS policy has made education accessible to more students, the lack of adequate funding for infrastructure expansion has resulted in overcrowded classrooms, straining both resources and teaching capacity.” AHM3 (30/05/24) “Schools are now overly dependent on government funding, which is often insufficient or delayed. This dependency limits our ability to address unique school needs or invest in critical areas such as technology and library resources.” ADM7 (30/05/24) “The financial strain under the FSHS policy has forced schools to cut down on extracurricular activities and maintenance. This has not only impacted student morale but also the overall school environment.”

To address these challenges effectively, the Ghanaian government needs to consider strategies such as cost-sharing mechanisms with parents or seeking additional funding from international donors to bolster financial allocations for senior high schools (Ministry of Finance Ghana, 2023). Furthermore, enhancing transparency and accountability in financial management will be important in rebuilding trust among stakeholders regarding resource utilization.

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy represents a significant step towards increasing access to education in Ghana, its implementation has revealed significant challenges related to financial adequacy and transparency in resource allocation within senior high schools in Sagnarigu Municipality. Addressing these issues will require concerted efforts from government authorities and educational stakeholders to ensure that the intended benefits of the FSHS policy are realized effectively.

4.5. What is the Extent of the Effects of the FSHS Policy on the Physical Infrastructure of Senior High Schools (SHSS) In the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Question 20	Question 21	Question 22
Valid	206	206	206
Missing	0	0	0
Mean	1.6505	1.3301	3.7524
Std. Error of Mean	.03330	.04707	.08925
Median	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
Mode	2.00	1.00	4.00
Std. Deviation	.47798	.67554	1.28096
Variance	.228	.456	1.641
Skewness	-.636	1.789	-.947
Std. Error of Skewness	.169	.169	.169
Kurtosis	-1.611	1.600	-.126





Std. Error of			
Kurtosis	.337	.337	.337
Range	1.00	2.00	4.00
Sum	340.00	274.00	773.00
Percentiles			
10	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000
20	1.0000	1.0000	3.0000
25	1.0000	1.0000	3.0000
30	1.0000	1.0000	3.0000
40	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
50	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
60	2.0000	1.0000	4.0000
70	2.0000	1.0000	5.0000
75	2.0000	1.0000	5.0000
80	2.0000	2.0000	5.0000
90	2.0000	3.0000	5.0000

Table 9: Statistics

Variable	Frequency (N=206)	Percentage (%)
Has the FSHS policy led to improvements in physical infrastructure in your school?		
Yes	72	35.0
No	134	65.0



Total	206	100.0
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Which areas of infrastructure have seen the most improvement? (Tick all that apply)

Classrooms	162	78.6
Laboratories	20	9.7
Dormitories	24	11.7
Total	206	100.0

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has adequately addressed the school's infrastructure needs."

Strongly Agree	22	10.7
Agree	13	6.3
Neutral	29	14.1
Disagree	72	35.0
Strongly Disagree	70	34.0
Total	206	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2024)

The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has generated significant interest regarding its impact on the physical infrastructure of Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Sagnarigu Municipality. A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to assess the extent of these effects, focusing on various aspects of infrastructure improvement and stakeholder perceptions.



The findings reveal that a substantial majority of participants (65%) reported that the FSHS policy has not led to improvements in physical infrastructure within their schools. Only 35% acknowledged some level of enhancement, indicating dissatisfaction among stakeholders regarding infrastructural advancements post-policy implementation. This disparity highlights a significant area for further investigation, as infrastructure is important for facilitating effective teaching and learning environments (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021).

In examining specific areas of infrastructure that have seen improvements, classrooms emerged as the most significantly enhanced component, with 78.6% of participants indicating positive changes. This suggests that while the overall perception of infrastructural improvement is low, there has been a focused effort to upgrade classroom facilities. Conversely, laboratories and dormitories received far less attention, with only 9.7% and 11.7% of participants respectively noting improvements in these areas. The skewed distribution of improvements raises concerns about the adequacy of support for critical facilities necessary for comprehensive educational experiences (Owusu & Osei, 2020).

The extent to which participants agree that the FSHS policy has adequately addressed the infrastructure needs of their schools presents another layer of findings into stakeholder perceptions. A significant portion of participants expressed disagreement with this statement: 35% disagreed and 34% strongly disagreed. In contrast, only 10.7% strongly agreed that the policy met their infrastructure needs. The mean score for agreement was calculated at 3.75 on a scale where higher values indicate stronger agreement, reflecting a consensus that the policy has not sufficiently addressed infrastructural deficits (Ghana Education Service, 2022).

The statistical analysis also reveals significant variances in responses regarding perceptions of infrastructural improvements. The standard deviation for the question of whether the FSHS policy



has led to improvements in physical infrastructure was calculated at 0.48, indicating moderate variability in responses among participants. This variability highlights differing experiences and expectations among schools within the municipality (Asare & Koomson, 2023). Furthermore, the skewness value of -0.636 suggests a tendency towards negative perceptions regarding infrastructural improvements under the FSHS policy.

Interviews regarding what specific challenges related to physical infrastructure your school faces under the FSHS policy? One of the HM1s stated on 06/06/24 that *“The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy has raised enrollment and created serious infrastructure issues in schools by significantly affecting the physical infrastructure of Senior High Schools (SHS) in Sagnarigu Municipality. Staff rooms and libraries have been turned into classrooms to accommodate the students due to crowded classrooms and inadequate furniture.”* *“The quality of education has been impacted by inadequate infrastructure, particularly in science and computer labs, which makes practical learning challenging for students,”* according to an additional HM2 on 06/06/24. Furthermore, P1 said on 06/06/24 that *“More action is needed to address the infrastructure gap, but despite the challenges, they have collaborated with local organizations to renovate classrooms and provide extra furniture.”* An additional HM1 stated on 06/06/24 that *“The FSHS policy has strained resources, highlighting the need for government investment in infrastructure development even though it has increased access to education.”* In response to additional inquiries on 06/06/24, H3 explained that *“The challenges of overcrowded classrooms, worn-out furniture, and inadequately equipped science and computer labs are affecting both teachers' movement and students' focus.”* *“While highlighting the financial burden of hiring more teachers, ADM1 also mentioned the implementation of a shift system to lessen congestion,”* on 06/06/24. HM4 emphasized on 06/06/24 that *“Substantial investments in infrastructure such as new classrooms, labs, libraries, furniture, equipment, and technology are required.”* TS highlighted on 06/06/24 that *“The impact of student disengagement and decreased motivation, particularly in science and computer labs as a result of overcrowding and inadequate resources, is leading to a decline in students' performance.”*

The findings from this descriptive statistics analysis provide significant findings into the perceived effectiveness of the FSHS policy concerning physical infrastructure in SHSs within Sagnarigu

Municipality. While there are indications of some improvements—especially in classroom facilities—the overall sentiment remains one of dissatisfaction among stakeholders. The limited enhancements in laboratories and dormitories further exacerbate concerns about the adequacy of resources necessary for comprehensive educational delivery.

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy represents a significant step towards enhancing educational access in Ghana, its impact on physical infrastructure appears limited and uneven across different areas within Sagnarigu Municipality's SHSs. The data suggests that further efforts are needed to address existing infrastructural deficits comprehensively.

CORRELATIONAL ANALYSIS

4.2. How does the FSHS Policy Affect Staff Work in Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 10: Pearson Correlation

	Has the FSHS policy affected your workload?	If yes, how has your workload changed? (Tick all that apply)	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation"





				and performance. "
Has the FSHS policy affected your workload?	Pearson Correlation	. ^a	. ^a	. ^a
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.
	N	206	206	206
If yes, how has your workload changed? (Tick all that apply)	Pearson Correlation	. ^a	1	.545
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.000
	N	206	206	206
To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance."	Pearson Correlation	. ^a	.545	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.
	N	206	206	206
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				
a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.				

Table 11: Spearman Correlation



			Has the FSHS policy affected your workload?	If yes, how has your workload changed? (Tick all that apply)	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance." "
Spearman's rho	Has the FSHS policy affected your workload?	Correlation	.	.	.
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.
		N	206	206	206
	If yes, how has your workload changed?	Correlation	.	1.000	.593**
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.	.000
		N	206	206	206



	(Tick all that apply)				
To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance." "	Correlation Coefficient	.		.593	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.		.000	.
	N	206		206	206
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

The implementation of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has sparked significant discourse regarding its impact on educational access, staff workload, and overall school performance, especially in the Sagnarigu Municipality. This research aims to explore how the FSHS policy affects staff work in Senior High Schools (SHSs) within this region, using descriptive statistics to provide a comprehensive analysis.



In the Sagnarigu Municipality, this surge in enrollment has inevitably affected the staff workload. According to the data collected from 206 participants, when asked whether the FSHS policy has affected their workload, the mean response was 1.0000 with a standard deviation of 0.00000. This indicates a unanimous agreement among participants that the policy has indeed impacted their workload.

Further examination reveals that when participants were questioned about how their workload had changed due to the FSHS policy, a mean score of 1.4320 with a standard deviation of 0.70034 was recorded. This suggests that while there is an acknowledgment of increased workload, the extent of this change varies among staff members. The implications of these findings are significant; they suggest that while the FSHS policy has facilitated greater access to education, it has also placed additional responsibilities on educators who must accommodate a larger student body.

Moreover, the correlation analysis conducted reveals significant findings on the relationship between workload changes and staff motivation. A Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.545 ($p < 0.01$) indicates a moderate positive correlation between how staff perceive changes in their workload and their agreement with the statement that "the FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance." This finding is important as it highlights that an increase in workload does not necessarily correlate with decreased motivation; rather, many educators perceive the policy as beneficial for enhancing their performance and job satisfaction.

In terms of motivation and performance, participants rated their agreement with the statement regarding the positive impact of the FSHS policy on staff motivation at a mean of 3.0194 with a standard deviation of 1.26861. This score shows a generally favourable view among educators regarding the motivational benefits derived from the FSHS initiative. Such perspectives conform with existing literature suggesting that policies aimed at increasing educational access can enhance



a more motivated workforce (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023). However, it is important to note that while many educators feel positive about their roles under this policy, there remains a concern about sustaining quality amidst rising enrollment figures.

The increase in student numbers due to the FSHS policy has raised questions about resource allocation and teaching quality in SHSs. Critics argue that while access to education has improved significantly—evidenced by increased enrollment rates—there are challenges related to maintaining educational standards (Ghana Education Service, 2023). The double-track system introduced alongside the FSHS policy was intended to manage this influx by enabling schools to operate on two separate schedules; however, it has also led to logistical challenges for educators who must adapt to varying class sizes and schedules (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

Furthermore, qualitative feedback from educators indicates that while they appreciate the intent behind the FSHS policy, they also face challenges related to classroom management and resource limitations. The need for additional training and support for teachers is evident as they manage these changes (Dwomoh et al., 2023). The correlation between increased workload and perceived motivation suggests that while staff may feel empowered by their roles in facilitating education for more students, there is an underlying tension regarding their capacity to deliver quality education effectively.

In conclusion, the Free Senior High School policy has undeniably transformed the educational system within Ghana's Sagnarigu Municipality by increasing access to secondary education. However, this transformation comes with significant implications for staff workloads and educational quality. The descriptive statistics reveal a complex relationship between increased responsibilities and heightened motivation among educators. As Ghana continues to refine its

educational policies, it will be important to address these challenges through adequate support systems for teachers and ongoing evaluations of educational outcomes.

4.3. What is the Impact of the FSHS Policy on Providing Teaching and Learning Resources in Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 12: Pearson Correlation

		Are teaching and learning resources sufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy?	How frequently are teaching and learning materials supplied?	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials."
Are teaching and learning resources sufficient to meet the	Pearson Correlation	1	.737	.901
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000





demands of the FSHS policy?	N	206	206	206
How frequently are teaching and learning materials supplied?	Pearson Correlation	.737	1	.853
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	206	206	206
To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials."	Pearson Correlation	.901	.853	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	206	206	206
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 13: Spearman Correlation



			Are teaching and learning resources sufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy?	How frequently are teaching and learning materials supplied?	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials."
Spearman's rho	Are teaching and learning resources sufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy?	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.705	.818
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000



		N	206	206	206
How frequently are teaching and learning materials supplied?	Correlation Coefficient		.705	1.000	.844
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.	.000
	N		206	206	206
To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The	Correlation Coefficient		.818	.844	1.000

FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials."	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	206	206	206
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

This essay discusses the impact of the FSHS policy on providing teaching and learning resources in the Sagnarigu Municipality, utilizing descriptive statistics derived from a study conducted with 206 participants.

The first aspect to consider is the sufficiency of teaching and learning resources to meet the demands of the FSHS policy. The mean score for participants indicating whether these resources were sufficient was 1.7282, with a standard deviation of 0.44599. This suggests that participants generally felt that resources were insufficient. The low mean score indicates a significant concern regarding the adequacy of teaching materials provided under the FSHS policy. Such inadequacies can hinder the effective implementation of educational programs and affect students' academic performance (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023).

Moreover, the frequency with which teaching and learning materials are supplied received a mean score of 3.0922, with a standard deviation of 0.81823. This score shows a moderate level of satisfaction among participants regarding the regularity of resource supply. While this indicates



some degree of responsiveness in resource distribution, it also highlights inconsistencies that could disrupt the learning process. A consistent supply of educational materials is important for maintaining an effective learning environment, as emphasized by Levinson et al. (2018), who argue that access to learning materials is fundamental for achieving educational equity.

Participants were also asked to evaluate the extent to which they agree with the statement: "The FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials." The mean score for this statement was 3.4951, with a standard deviation of 1.28309, indicating a consensus that the policy has positively impacted access to quality resources. However, despite this positive perception, the variation indicated by the standard deviation suggests differing opinions among participants about the actual improvements experienced in resource quality (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

The correlations between these variables further illustrate their interrelatedness. A strong positive correlation was found between the sufficiency of teaching resources and how frequently materials are supplied (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.737), as well as between resource sufficiency and perceived improvements in access to quality materials (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.901).

These correlations suggest that as the frequency of supply increases, so does the perception of sufficiency and quality among participants (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023). This finding highlights the importance of not only providing resources but also ensuring their timely availability to enhance educational outcomes.

In addition to Pearson correlations, Spearman's rho also indicated significant relationships among variables, reinforcing those perceptions regarding resource sufficiency are closely tied to both supply frequency and perceived improvements due to the FSHS policy. The Spearman correlation coefficients were similarly significant: 0.705 between resource sufficiency and supply frequency,



and 0.818 between resource sufficiency and perceived improvements in access (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). These findings highlight that stakeholders' perceptions are significant indicators of policy effectiveness.

The implications of these findings are profound for educational planning and policy implementation in Ghana's Sagnarigu Municipality. The perceived insufficiency of teaching and learning resources suggests an urgent need for government intervention to ensure that schools are adequately equipped to meet educational demands. As noted by Akyeampong (2009), addressing these gaps is important for achieving broader educational goals such as increased enrollment rates and improved academic performance.

Furthermore, while participants acknowledged improvements in access due to the FSHS policy, it is clear that there remains a disconnect between policy intentions and on-the-ground realities regarding resource provision. This gap points to a need for ongoing evaluation and adjustment of policies to ensure they effectively meet the needs of students and educators alike (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023).

In conclusion, while Ghana's FSHS policy has made strides toward enhancing access to secondary education through improved availability of teaching and learning resources, significant challenges remain regarding their sufficiency and consistent supply. The descriptive statistics from this study reveal significant findings into stakeholder perceptions that can inform future educational policies aimed at enhancing an equitable learning environment in senior high schools across Ghana.

4.4. How does Ghana's FSHS Policy Affect Financial Allocation to Senior High Schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 14: Pearson Correlation



		Do you think the financial resources allocated to your school under the FSHS policy are adequate?	How are financial allocations under the FSHS policy prioritized in your school? (Tick all that apply)	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization."
Do you think the financial resources allocated to your school under the FSHS policy are adequate?	Pearson Correlation	1	.340	.777
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	206	206	206
How are financial allocations under the FSHS policy prioritized in your school? (Tick all that apply)	Pearson Correlation	.340	1	.488
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	206	206	206

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization."	Pearson Correlation	.777	.488	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	206	206	206
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 15: Spearman Correlations

	Do you think the financial resources allocated to your school under the FSHS policy are adequate?	How are financial allocations under the FSHS policy prioritized in your school? (Tick all that apply)	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization."
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Spearman's rho	Do you think the financial resources allocated to your school under the FSHS policy are adequate?	Correlation	1.000	.340	.756
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	206	206	206
	How are financial allocations under the FSHS policy prioritized in your school? (Tick all that apply)	Correlation	.340	1.000	.607
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	206	206	206
	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS	Correlation	.756	.607	1.000
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	206	206	206

	policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization."				
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

The implementation of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has been an important educational reform aimed at enhancing access to secondary education. The research question, "How Does Ghana's FSHS Policy Affect Financial Allocation to Senior High Schools in The Sagnarigu Municipality?" necessitates an examination of descriptive statistics that explain the financial implications of this policy within the context of Sagnarigu Municipality.

Descriptive statistics provide a foundational understanding of perceptions regarding the adequacy of financial resources allocated under the FSHS policy. The mean score for participants who believe that the financial resources allocated to their schools are adequate stands at 1.6311, with a standard deviation of 0.48369 based on a sample size of 206. This relatively low mean suggests a general dissatisfaction with the adequacy of funding, indicating that many stakeholders perceive the financial resources as insufficient for meeting educational needs (Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2023).

Furthermore, when examining how financial allocations under the FSHS policy are prioritized in schools, a mean score of 1.1650 with a standard deviation of 0.37213 was recorded. This statistic shows a tendency among participants to prioritize certain financial allocations over others, which



may imply strategic decision-making processes in resource utilization. The prioritization may be influenced by various factors, including immediate educational needs and long-term institutional goals (Ghana Education Service, 2023).

The perception of improved financial transparency as a result of the FSHS policy is another significant aspect analysed through descriptive statistics. Participants rated their agreement with the statement "The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization" with a mean score of 3.7233 and a standard deviation of 1.16709. This higher mean score indicates a more favourable view regarding transparency, suggesting that stakeholders recognize some improvements in how funds are managed and allocated within schools (African Education Watch, 2024).

The correlational analysis further explains the relationships between these variables. A significant Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.340 between perceptions of adequacy in financial resources and prioritization of allocations indicates a moderate positive relationship; as perceptions of resource adequacy increase, so does the prioritization of allocations (Ghana Statistical Service, 2024). Additionally, there is a strong correlation (0.777) between perceptions of financial resource adequacy and improved financial transparency, suggesting that those who view resources as adequate are also likely to perceive improvements in transparency.

The findings from this analysis highlight several implications for educational policy and resource allocation in Ghana's Sagnarigu Municipality. First, the perceived inadequacy of financial resources highlights a significant area for policymakers to address. With an increasing enrollment rate—evidenced by a notable rise from approximately 308,799 students in 2016 to over 1.2 million in 2023—there is an urgent need for adequate funding to support this growing student population (Ghana Education Service, 2023). The government must consider sustainable funding mechanisms



that can support not only current operational costs but also infrastructure development to accommodate increased enrollment.

Moreover, the prioritization of financial allocations suggests that schools are making strategic decisions based on available resources. However, this raises questions about equity and access; if certain areas are prioritized over others, disparities may emerge within the education system that could affect overall educational outcomes (Institute of Fiscal Studies, 2023). Therefore, policymakers need to ensure equitable distribution of resources across all schools within the municipality.

Lastly, while there is recognition of improved transparency in financial management under the FSHS policy, continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary to maintain this momentum. Transparency is important for enhancing trust among stakeholders and ensuring that funds are used effectively for educational purposes (African Education Watch, 2024). Implementing effective accountability mechanisms will enhance stakeholder confidence and promote better resource management practices.

In conclusion, the descriptive statistics reveal significant findings on how Ghana's FSHS policy affects financial allocation to senior high schools in Sagnarigu Municipality. While there are positive perceptions regarding transparency and prioritization strategies among stakeholders, significant concerns regarding resource adequacy persist.

4.5. What is the Extent of the Effects of the FSHS Policy on the Physical Infrastructure of Senior High Schools (SHSS) in the Sagnarigu Municipality?

Table 16: Pearson Correlation

	Has the FSHS policy led to	Which areas of	To what extent do you
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		improvements in physical infrastructure in your school?	infrastructure we have seen the most improvement? (Tick all that apply)	agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has adequately addressed the school's infrastructure needs."
Has the FSHS policy led to improvements in physical infrastructure in your school?	Pearson Correlation	1	.359	.822
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	206	206	206
Which areas of infrastructure have seen the most improvement? (Tick all that apply)	Pearson Correlation	.359	1	.478
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	206	206	206
To what extent do you agree with the	Pearson Correlation	.822	.478	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

following statement? "The FSHS policy has adequately addressed the school's infrastructure needs."	N	206	206	206
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Table 17: Spearman Correlation

	Has the FSHS policy led to improvements in physical infrastructure in your school?	Which areas of infrastructure have seen the most improvement? (Tick all that apply)	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has adequately addressed the school's infrastructure needs."
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Spearman's rho	Has the FSHS policy led to improvements in physical infrastructure in your school?	Correlation	1.000	.379	.818
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		N	206	206	206
	Which areas of infrastructure have seen the most improvement? (Tick all that apply)	Correlation	.379	1.000	.619
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		N	206	206	206
	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The FSHS policy has adequately addressed the school's	Correlation	.818	.619	1.000
		Coefficient			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		N	206	206	206



	infrastructure needs."				
. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

The research question guiding this discussion is: "What is the extent of the effects of the FSHS policy on the physical infrastructure of SHSs in the Sagnarigu Municipality?" To answer this, the researcher analysed descriptive statistics derived from survey data, focusing on correlations that indicate the relationship between the FSHS policy and improvements in school infrastructure.

Descriptive statistics provide a foundational understanding of how various factors interrelate within the context of the FSHS policy. In this study, 206 participants were surveyed about their perceptions of infrastructure improvements attributable to the FSHS policy. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between participants' acknowledgment of infrastructure improvements and their agreement that the FSHS policy has adequately addressed the infrastructure needs of their schools. Specifically, a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.822 ($p < 0.01$) indicates a strong relationship between these two variables. This suggests that as perceptions of infrastructure improvements increase, so too does agreement regarding the adequacy of the policy in meeting infrastructure needs.

Furthermore, participants identified specific areas where infrastructure improvements have been most significant. The correlation analysis indicates a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.359$, $p < 0.01$) between perceived improvements in physical infrastructure and specific areas that have seen enhancements. These finding highlights that while overall perceptions are favourable, certain aspects of infrastructure may be prioritized or more visibly improved than others.

The Spearman's rho correlation further supports these observations, with coefficients reflecting similar trends: a strong correlation ($r = 0.818$, $p < 0.01$) between general perceptions of



improvement and agreement with the adequacy statement, alongside a moderate correlation ($r = 0.379$, $p < 0.01$) between perceived improvements and specific areas highlighted by participants. These results indicate that stakeholders perceive tangible benefits from the FSHS policy concerning physical infrastructure, which conforms with educational goals outlined by Ghana's Ministry of Education.

The implications of these findings are significant for understanding how educational policies can influence physical resources in schools. The FSHS policy aims to increase student enrollment and enhance educational quality through improved facilities. According to research conducted by Duah Dwomoh et al. (2022), beneficiaries of the FSHS program do not incur costs associated with tuition or essential learning materials, which has led to an increase in student numbers and necessitated corresponding improvements in school infrastructure (Duah Dwomoh et al., 2022). This is consistent with global educational frameworks advocating for equitable access to quality education as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2021).

Despite these positive correlations, it is important to consider criticisms related to the implementation and sustainability of such policies. Critics argue that while enrollment rates have surged due to free education initiatives, there are concerns about deteriorating quality and inadequate infrastructure development to accommodate increased student populations (Agyeman & Adjei, 2021). The double-track system introduced alongside the FSHS policy aimed to address overcrowding but faced challenges regarding effective resource allocation and infrastructural readiness (Ghana Education Service, 2021). In conclusion, the descriptive statistics derived from this study provide compelling evidence that the FSHS policy has positively impacted physical infrastructure within SHSs in Sagnarigu Municipality. The strong correlations observed suggest that stakeholders perceive significant improvements linked to this policy initiative.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of the Study

This research investigates the implications of Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy on educational resource utilization. The study employs a cross-sectional survey design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather comprehensive data from 206 participants across four mixed public senior high schools in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The sampling strategy included purposeful sampling for qualitative insights from key stakeholders and stratified sampling for quantitative data, ensuring a representative sample that shows diverse perspectives within the educational ecosystem (Ankamah et al., 2023; Ghana Education Service, 2024).

The findings reveal significant results in the demographic composition of participants, which includes a gender imbalance where males constitute 57.28% and females 42.72%. The age distribution shows a predominance of younger educators, with 35.9% aged between 25-34 years. Significantly, the majority of participants hold degrees (48.5%) or master's degrees (31.6%), indicating a well-educated participant pool that can provide informed perspectives on the FSHS policy (Ghana Ministry of Education, 2023).

The study highlights that 100% of participants acknowledged that the FSHS policy has impacted their workload, with 68.9% reporting increased teaching hours and additional administrative tasks contributing to heightened responsibilities. Despite these increased demands, responses regarding staff motivation reveal a complex picture; while some educators perceive positive impacts on motivation due to improved access to resources, a significant portion (52.9%) disagreed with the statement that the policy has positively affected their performance (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023).





In terms of resource adequacy, a staggering 72.8% of participants reported insufficient teaching and learning resources to meet the demands of the FSHS policy. This inadequacy poses a significant challenge to effective educational delivery, as it undermines the policy's objective of enhancing educational access and quality (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). Furthermore, only 27.2% felt that available resources were sufficient, indicating a significant gap in resource allocation.

The impact of financial allocations under the FSHS policy also emerged as a significant concern. A majority (63.1%) reported that financial resources were inadequate for their schools' needs, with procurement of teaching materials prioritized over infrastructure development. This prioritization raises concerns about long-term sustainability and quality in education delivery (Shamo, 2023). Additionally, perceptions regarding financial transparency were largely negative; nearly 73% of participants expressed scepticism about transparency in resource utilization under the FSHS framework.

Finally, regarding physical infrastructure improvements, only 35% acknowledged enhancements due to the FSHS policy, with classrooms being the most improved area. However, substantial dissatisfaction remains regarding overall infrastructural adequacy (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021).

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy has significantly increased access to secondary education in Ghana's Sagnarigu Municipality, its implementation reveals substantial challenges related to workload management for staff, resource sufficiency, financial adequacy, and infrastructural improvements. These findings highlight the need for policymakers to reassess strategies for effective resource allocation and support systems to ensure that the intended benefits of the FSHS policy are realized.

5.2. Key Findings

The Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has been a transformative initiative aimed at enhancing access to secondary education. This study, conducted in the Sagnarigu Municipality,



reveals significant findings regarding the policy's impact on resource utilization in secondary schools. The demographic profile of the participants indicates a predominance of male educators (57.28%) and a significant representation of younger staff, with 35.9% aged between 25-34 years. This youthful demographic suggests a workforce that is likely to be adaptable yet possibly inexperienced in managing the complexities introduced by the FSHS policy (Afrobarometer, 2024).

A significant finding is that all surveyed staff (100%) reported an increase in workload due to the FSHS policy, with 68.9% indicating longer teaching hours. This increase in responsibilities has implications for teacher burnout and educational quality, as educators struggle to balance enhanced duties with effective teaching (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023). Furthermore, while some participants acknowledged improvements in access to teaching resources, a staggering 72.8% felt that these resources were insufficient to meet educational demands, highlighting a significant gap in the policy's implementation (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018).

The perceived inadequacy of resources is further highlighted by the low mean score of 1.7282 for resource sufficiency, indicating widespread concern among educators regarding the availability of essential materials (Ghana Education Service, 2022). This insufficiency is compounded by the mixed perceptions surrounding the frequency of resource supply and overall improvements in quality, with nearly half of the participants expressing scepticism about the FSHS policy's effectiveness in enhancing access to quality educational materials (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023).

Financial allocation under the FSHS policy also presents challenges. A significant majority (63.1%) of participants deemed financial resources inadequate, which raises concerns about sustainability and long-term impacts on educational quality (Shamo, 2023). The prioritization of

funding for teaching materials over infrastructure development indicates a short-sighted approach that may jeopardize the overall educational environment.

In terms of physical infrastructure, findings reveal that 65% of participants believe there have been no improvements since the implementation of the FSHS policy. Classrooms have seen some upgrades; however, significant areas such as laboratories and dormitories remain neglected (Owusu & Osei, 2020). This disparity highlights a need for comprehensive infrastructural support to ensure that schools can effectively accommodate increased student populations.

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy has significantly increased access to secondary education in Ghana, its implementation has revealed substantial challenges related to resource sufficiency, financial allocation, and infrastructure development.

5.3. Implications of the Findings

The implementation of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has generated significant discourse regarding its impact on educational access, staff workload, and overall school performance, especially in the Sagnarigu Municipality. The findings from the study reveal significant implications for resource utilization and educational quality.

The demographic data indicates a predominance of male participants (57.28%) and a significant representation of younger educators, with 35.9% aged between 25-34 years. This demographic profile suggests that many staff members are relatively early in their careers, potentially influencing their perspectives on the FSHS policy's effectiveness (Afro barometer, 2024). The high level of educational attainment among participants—48.5% holding degrees and 31.6% with master's degrees—implies that they possess substantial knowledge regarding the policy's implementation and its resource utilization (Government of Ghana, 2021).

The findings indicate that 100% of participants acknowledged increased workload due to the FSHS policy, with 68.9% reporting increased teaching hours. This heightened demand raises concerns



about teacher fatigue and burnout, which can adversely affect educational quality (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023). Furthermore, a significant portion of educators (52.9%) disagreed that the FSHS policy positively impacted their motivation and performance, highlighting a disconnect between policy intentions and actual outcomes (Ghana Education Service, 2024).

In terms of resource allocation, a staggering 72.8% of participants perceived teaching and learning resources as insufficient to meet educational demands under the FSHS policy. This inadequacy can undermine the policy's objectives of enhancing educational access and quality (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). Despite some improvements in access to resources, nearly half of the participants disagreed that the FSHS policy had improved access to quality teaching materials (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023).

Financial allocation also presents challenges; 63.1% of participants felt that financial resources were inadequate for their schools' needs. The prioritization of procurement over infrastructure development raises concerns about long-term sustainability and quality in education (Shamo, 2023). The perception of financial transparency was also low, with nearly 73% of participants expressing scepticism about resource allocation under the FSHS framework (UDS International Journal of Development Studies, 2023).

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy represents a significant step towards increasing access to secondary education in Ghana, its implementation has revealed considerable challenges related to staff workload, resource sufficiency, and financial allocation. These findings highlight the need for policymakers to reassess funding mechanisms and support systems to ensure that the intended benefits of the FSHS policy are realized effectively.

5.4. Recommendations

The implementation of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in Ghana has significantly transformed the educational landscape, especially within the Sagnarigu Municipality. However,



findings from recent studies indicate that while the policy has increased access to education, it has also introduced several challenges regarding resource utilization, staff workload, and infrastructure development. Therefore, specific recommendations are important for various stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of the FSHS policy.

1. Recommendations for the Ghanaian Government: The government of Ghana should prioritize increasing financial allocations to senior high schools. Currently, a substantial majority of educators perceive the financial resources as inadequate (Ghana Education Service, 2024). To address this, the Ministry of Finance should consider revising budgetary allocations to ensure that schools receive sufficient funding for teaching materials and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, establishing a transparent funding framework will enhance accountability and trust among stakeholders (Shamo, 2023).

2. Recommendations for Educational Administrators: School administrators must advocate for improved resource management and utilization. Given that 72.8% of participants reported insufficient teaching and learning resources (Tawiah & Addai-Mensah, 2023), administrators should develop strategic partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations to supplement educational resources. Furthermore, training programs focused on resource management can empower staff to better utilize available resources effectively.

3. Recommendations for Teacher Training Institutions: Institutions responsible for teacher training must integrate modules that prepare educators for the evolving demands of the FSHS policy. As increased workloads have been reported due to rising student numbers (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018), it is important to equip teachers with skills in classroom management and differentiated instruction. This training will help mitigate burnout and maintain educational quality despite increased responsibilities.

4. Recommendations for Community Engagement: Engaging parents and community members in supporting schools can enhance resource availability. The Ghana Education Service should implement community outreach programs that encourage local involvement in school activities and resource provision. This approach can enhance a sense of ownership among community members and stimulate additional support for schools.

5. Recommendations for Continuous Policy Evaluation: Finally, there is a need for ongoing evaluation of the FSHS policy's implementation. The Ministry of Education should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework that assesses not only enrollment rates but also educational outcomes and resource adequacy (Ghana Statistical Service, 2023). Regular feedback from educators and stakeholders can inform necessary adjustments to the policy, ensuring it meets its intended goals effectively.

In conclusion, while the FSHS policy has made commendable strides in increasing access to education in Ghana, specific recommendations addressing financial allocation, resource management, teacher training, community engagement, and continuous evaluation are important for enhancing its overall effectiveness.



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APPENDIX A

Letter of Introduction

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STUDIES

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P.O. Box TL1350
Tamale
Northern Region
Ghana, West Africa

Our Ref:
Your Ref:

DATE: 16th May, 2024

The Regional Director,
Ghana Education Service
Tamale

Dear Sir/Madam,

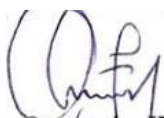
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter, Mr Yakubu Majeed, is a postgraduate student studying at the Department of Educational Management and Policy Studies at the University for Development Studies (UDS).

He requires some information from secondary school general workers, headteachers, teachers, students, and parents in the Sagnarigu Municipality to write his thesis titled "Free Senior High School (FSHS) Policy and Resource Utilization in Ghanaian Secondary Schools: A Study at Sagnarigu Municipality" as a requirement for his MPhil program.

Kindly give Mr. Yakubu Majeed the necessary assistance to enable him to gather the information he needs for the research. I would greatly appreciate it if you could provide the required assistance for his data collection in your outfit. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


Dr. Quansah, JYD

Head of Department



APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Questionnaire for Participants

Research Topic: Free Senior High School Policy and Resource Utilization in Ghanaian Secondary Schools: A Study at Sagnarigu Municipality

Section A: Informed Consent

Dear Participant,

I am researching the topic "Free Senior High School Policy and Resource Utilization in Ghanaian Secondary Schools: A Study at Sagnarigu Municipality" The study aims to assess the effects of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy on staff work, resource provision, financial allocation, and physical infrastructure in Senior High Schools within the Sagnarigu Municipality.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any point without penalty. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. The completion of this questionnaire means you consent to participate in this study.

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact me at 0246312896/0205158816.

Thank you for your time and important input.

Sincerely,

Yakubu Majeed

MPhil Educational Management and Planning

Section B: Background Information

1. Gender:

Male []

Female []

Other []

2. Age:

Under 25 []

25-34 []

35-44 []

45-54 []

55+ []





3. Schools of the Participants

- School A
- School B
- School C
- School D

4. Highest Educational Attainment of Participants

- Senior High School
- Degree
- Masters
- PhD

5. Role in School:

- Teaching Staff
- Non-Teaching Staff
- Administrator
- Other (please specify): _____

6. Religious Background of Participants

- Christian
- Islam
- Traditionalist

7. Years of Experience in SHS:

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- Over 10 years

Section C: Effects of FSHS Policy on Staff Work

8. Has the FSHS policy affected your workload?

- Yes

No

9. If yes, how has your workload changed? (Tick all that apply)

Increased teaching hours

Additional administrative tasks

Increased student supervision responsibilities

Other (please specify): _____

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

"The FSHS policy has positively impacted staff motivation and performance."

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

11. Open-Ended Question: In your opinion, how has the FSHS policy influenced your ability to perform your professional duties effectively?

.....
.....
.....

Section D: Impact on Teaching and Learning Resources

12. Are teaching and learning resources sufficient to meet the demands of the FSHS policy?

Yes

No

13. How frequently are teaching and learning materials supplied?

Monthly

Quarterly

Annually

Irregularly

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

"The FSHS policy has improved access to quality teaching and learning materials."

Strongly Agree

Agree



- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

15. Open-Ended Question: What challenges have you encountered regarding the provision of teaching and learning resources under the FSHS policy?

.....

.....

.....

Section E: Effects on Financial Allocation

16. Do you think the financial resources allocated to your school under the FSHS policy are adequate?

- Yes
- No

17. How are financial allocations under the FSHS policy prioritized in your school? (Tick all that apply)

- Procurement of teaching materials
- Infrastructure development
- Staff salaries

Other (please specify): _____

18. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?
"The FSHS policy has led to improved financial transparency in resource utilization."

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. Open-Ended Question: How has the financial allocation under the FSHS policy impacted the school's operations?

.....

.....



.....

Section F: Effects on Physical Infrastructure

20. Has the FSHS policy led to improvements in physical infrastructure in your school?

Yes []

No []

21. Which areas of infrastructure have seen the most improvement? (Tick all that apply)

Classrooms []

Laboratories []

Dormitories []

Other (please specify): _____

22. To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

"The FSHS policy has adequately addressed the school's infrastructure needs."

Strongly Agree []

Agree []

Neutral []

Disagree []

Strongly Disagree []

23. Open-Ended Question: What specific challenges related to physical infrastructure does your school face under the FSHS policy?

.....

.....

.....

Thank You for Completing This, Questionnaire!

