The Education Policy with the Most Impact on the Development of Primary Education and the Implications for Attaining Sustainable Development Goal 4

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Abstract

The study aimed at investigating the education policy with the most impact on primary education in Ghana and the implications for attaining Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4). The variables for the study were chosen from a population comprising of teaching staffs from the seven (7) primary Schools in Dansoman in the Greater Accra Region and other stakeholders of the education sector of Ghana. A sample size of 100 respondents were selected from stakeholder including Ghana Education Service (GES), Ministry of Education (MoE), West African Examination Council (WAEC), the seven primary schools and district offices of education as well as direct beneficiaries of education policies such as students and parents within the Greater Accra region. Questionnaires and structured interview guides were used to garner information from respondents.

The study found out that Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) is the most effective education policy in Ghana. However, in order for this policy to be effective towards provision of quality education (SDG4), there must be supplementary policies that ensures economic and financial empowerment of parents and households to provide materials, food, transportation and other basic education needs of students.

The study also recommends that staff motivation packages, training and development that seek to achieve universal basic education in a long run is not neglected.

Keywords: *Keywords: impact, policy, motivation, training, and development.*

Introduction

Common sense they say is common but common sense is not common to all. Even common sense if common at all is acquired. The process of acquiring knowledge that is believed to be common to all is through education. Not everyone may agree that education is the foundation of human knowledge but certainly, education shape the way we think, behave and relate to each other. Education is very necessary but education in itself does not constitute the flow of knowledge. In other words, education is like a noun that needs a verb to perform an action. However, education in itself is not a means to an end but a system that requires other factors to produce an end. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argues that in order for an education system to be effective and efficient, there must be a driving force that fuels the system. In other words, the impact of education system is measured by the efficacy of various educational policies that feeds into the system.

It is by no coincidence that the Millennium declaration at the world summit of the United Nations in 2000, captured the desire of the world to achieve universal Primary education by 2015. This has come to be known as the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). It has been 15 years and over, since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (specifically MDG2) was set to eradicate non-performance of the education sector especially in developing countries. It is already three years since Ghana transitioned onto the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the progress of Ghana on MDG2 has been mixed and not fully met. A series of gaps still exist in MDG2. This study therefore seek to investigate the education policy with the most impact on primary education in Ghana and to provide possible solution to the effective implementation of this policy.

Background of the study

Ghana attained independence from Britain 61 years ago. Just as any developed world began their journey of development on the background of education, Ghana believes in the development of its human resource through education. Immediately after independent, Ghana formulated the Education Act of 1961. This became the first legislative instrument given mandate to the Ministry of Education (MoE) to oversee all educational affairs of the country (Ghana Constitution and Legal Frame work, 2009). The Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) of 1951 under our colonial masters (Britain) led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first elected president of Ghana was coexisting together with the education Act of 1961. The ADP brought about infrastructural and expansionary development in the education sector. This lifted the phase of primary and secondary education in the country. During this period, until the mid-1970, Ghana became known as the beacon of quality and excellence education in African (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008). The years following the mid 1970's and the early 1980's witnessed many challenges in the educational sector. This led to the commissioning of several committees by several governments to inquire into the challenges in the education sector. Based on the advice and recommendation of these committees, Ghana has undertaken a number of educational reforms including school feeding programmes, increment in the number of years of senior high education from three to four years as well as the recent implementation of a complete free Senior High School (SHS) Policy (the budget statement, 2017). "One major requirement of the 2007 educational reform was the need for all students in primary school up to SHS level in Ghana to acquire basic ICT literacy skills (including Internet use) and apply these in other aspect of life" (CRDD, 2007a, 2007b, & 2007c).

Government in the quest to meet the educational needs of the country signed onto the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to attain among other developmental goals, universal primary education (MDG2) for all by 2015 (Ghana Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015).

It is most often argued that education is the key to success. However, the question on whether we have found this key still remains begging. According to world statistics on the progress of MDG2, primary education increased from 83% in 2000 to 90% in 2012. "Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) has made the greatest progress in primary school enrolment among all developing regions, its enrolment rate rising from 52 percent in 1990 to 78 percent in 2012, even with rapid growth of the population of school-going age" (Ghana Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015). Since signing onto the MDGs, Ghana has integrated into its policies including: Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA I), 2010-2013, and GSGDA II (2014-2017). These policies among other initiatives are meant to promote growth and development through education. National data report on Ghana's performance on MDG2 indicates that Ghana has largely achieved set targets on MDG2. "The proportion of young people who can read and write in English, which stood at 17 percent in 1991/92, improved to 56 percent in 1998/99 and reached 81 percent in 2012/13. According to Ghana Millennium Development Goals Report (2015) "The rate among young males increased from 18 percent in 1991/92 to 84 percent in 2012/13 while that of females accelerated from 16 percent to 77 percent over the same period". However, despite remarkable gains in enrolment and completion rates, quality of education remains a concern at all levels, particularly in public basic schools with regional disparities in the quantity and quality of educration outcomes, especially in the northern regions and rural areas of Ghana (Ghana Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015). The primary aim of this study is therefore to investigate the education policy with the most impact on primary education, whiles emphasizing on improvement in quantity and quality of educational outcomes in Ghana.

Problem statement and justification

One major setback in the development of primary education is that government is unable to identify the policy with the most impact to channel scarce resources for sustainable development. According to highlights of the 2016 national budget, 98.3% of total social sector budget was allocated to education and health. The budgetary allocation to education alone was 65%. Again, the highlights of the 2016 budget indicates that capitation grant was increased by 3% and 1714 out of 2578 schools under trees were replaced with decent structures. During the same period, 2016, government also rolled out the free progressive senior high school (SHS) policy. In 2017, government made SHS completely free starting

with the first-year students. This means that all primary students can enter straight into SHS upon excelling in their final exams. Among other reforms and polices undertaken by governments over the years include distribution of free school uniforms, capitation grants, school feeding programmers and many others. What next? What else has government not done to ensure educational policies benefits both the present and the future generations? In 2014, only 60% of students out of 461,013 who sat for the final exam attain the pass mark into SHS (Citifmonline, 2014). This is worrying! Parents are disturbed. Is it that government policies for education are not good enough? Could it be that the educational polices are not producing the desired outcomes? In other sense, is government not implementing the right policies relevant for the development of education in specific districts and regions? This and many other questions remain begging for answers. However, research shows that all these policies have positive impacts on primary education in Ghana. This study therefore seeks to identify the policy with the most impact on primary education in Ghana.

Research objectives

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the education policy with the most impact on the development of primary education in Ghana and its implications on SDG4. Specifically, the research aims to:
1. Analyze the benefits of educational policies on primary education in Ghana.
2. Examine the challenges of educational policies in the development and growth of primary education in Ghana.
3. To identify the best possible way to minimize the impact of educational barriers on the development of primary education in Ghana.

Research questions

The study will answer the following research questions:
1. What are the benefits of educational policies on primary education in Ghana?
2. What are the challenges of implementing educational policies on primary education in Ghana?
3. What is the best way to minimize the impact of educational barriers on the development of primary education in Ghana?

Literature review

Education

Education may be described as the oldest sector of any economy. Undoubtedly, education is inevitably the component of the economy that has lived with human existence. Many years ago, the first man to live on earth needed to communicate and to teach his ideas of survival to his predecessors. One way or the other, without school or classrooms, many have learnt the ways of life and the culture of other people. These are form of education that have been passed over space and time. According to (Stone, 1981:71) education systems portrays the nature of people, their culture, feelings, affections and way of life. This means that education has been with man and will always be with man. "Everything that which exist in time has cultural-historical aspects"-Stone (1981).

According to many researchers and scholars (Schultz 1963; stone, 1981; and Lipsky, 1980) education has no precise and concise definition. It is the commonest word known to many but difficult to define into its proper scale. However, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) defined education as "Education is the manifestation of the divine perfect, already existing in man". This means that education makes us perfect. Education build and bring out the invisible in us. Education polishes our talents and build them into finished products. Thomas Raymont-1906 argues that education has always been defined narrowly ignoring self-culture and the general influence education has on one's surroundings. According to (Blackedge & Hunt, 1985) schools are established to disseminate educational goods such as opportunities and skills to the individuals. Parson (1961) argues that schools are the agents of socialization in the communities. Education in itself is not a means to an end. Education is a process. It evolves over time and requires stratified learning and development at various stages. Education is also very involving and requires deep pocket spending and resources to sustain the sector. The main

spending stream of government to the education sector is through educational reforms and policies. According to the New American Foundation, the federal government of the USA allocated an estimated $154 billion to the education sector. "Peak spending in real terms was in 2010-11 at £93.4 billion (2013-2014 prices)-(Bolton, 2014)". An education review by (Thompson and Casely-Hayford, 2008) states that total resources invested in the education sector of Ghana in 2006 was $billion including government, donor and all other sources. Despite this expenditure, the country is yet to achieve 100% primary education.

Education policy

Policy is not a way of life but a way series of actions have been planned to be carried out. A policy can be a standard document regulating the relationship between two parties to a contract. A policy document therefore contains a series of actions to be followed for a successful implementation and execution of a task. In the literature, many scholars and academicians have defined education policy in different ways. Haddid (1995) defined policy as "explicit or implicit single decision, initiatives or retard actions or guide implementation of decisions". Policymaking is the first step in any planning process Hiddid (1995). Taylor et al (1997) define policy as an action plan explaining what actions government wants to take, why and with what effect. However, the worry for many policy makers and implementers is not the definition but the successful implementation of educational policies (Quah, 2015). Pressman and Wildavisky (1984) argued that policies that fails to achieve their intended purpose did not have a solid foundation. In other words, the successful implantation of policies largely depends on setting clearly defined goals that are well understood by the policy implementers. A John Nyoagbe research conducted for Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) to assess teacher's knowledge on reforms before implementation found that 333 teachers who took part in the study concluded, they were not adequately and properly informed prior to various reforms. Many teachers therefore suggested induction training and orientation on specific reforms and policies (Little, 2010). Psacharopoulos (1989) conducted a research on the efficiency of a series of educational policies on some East African countries. He discovered that there was a huge gap in the intended purpose of the policies vis-à-vis their achieved outcomes. He therefore came out with three main reasons for the deviations in policy implementation. These include: 1) intended policies were never implemented 2) projects that were implemented failed to meet the minimum criteria to have an impact 3) polices that were implemented did not meet their intended purpose.

Primary education in ghana

Ghana is a West African state bounded by three other countries. Just as all typical West African country were colonized and ruled by European traders who later became our oppressors, Ghana was one of those countries that began some part of its civilization with the arrival of the Portuguese in the late 15th century (Graham 1971). The people of Ghana had their own form of education which is today described as informal education. In the days before the arrival of the Europeans, learning and teaching, skill and the general transfer of knowledge was through storytelling, role-play, on the job training among others. The people of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) did not have schools where they gather to learn (Graham 1971). Everything was thought and knowledge transferred to the younger generation through apprenticeship and storytelling. The arrival of the first European in 1471 brought about a major transformation and cultural diversity. The early European in their quest to satisfy their trade desires and dominance on the African continent introduced formal education to the Gold Coast (Foster, 1963). The early education movement was white missionaries who established basic schools in the country. Famous among them were the Methodist, catholic and Anglican schools basic and secondary schools (Owu-Ewie, 2006, 76). A couple of these schools are still in existence today namely Wesely Girls School in the Central region, Achimota senior high school in the greater Accra region, which were established by the then governor of the Gold coast (Sir Alex Gorggisberg). The land scale of education began to experience massive change during post independent era from 1957 to date. The passing of the education Act of 1961 and various education policies and reforms since independent has shaped and transformed the educational system to what it is today (Owu-Ewie, 2006, 76).

Today, Ghana's primary education system is an interplay of public and private partnership. Partnership in the sense that both parties (government and private) contribute to the development of primary education in the country. Private primary schools in the country is estimated to be about 74.7% with only 25.3% public primary schools. Ghana currently operates a 6-3-3-4 system of education. This consist 6 years of primary education, 3 years of Junior High School (JHS), 3 years of Senior High School (SHS) and 4 years of university education (Ghana Issue Paper, 2006). Rustin (2015) indicates that currently, about 90% of Ghanaian children are now in school compared with 64% in Nigeria and 72% in Pakistan. Further reports show that "Ghana spends 8% of GDP on education, more than UN 6% benchmark and more than the UK's 6.5%" (Rustin, 2015).

Functions/Benefits of educational policies

Policies are formulated to perform specific functions or purpose. Although policies to some extent do not always achieve their intended purpose, they are nevertheless formulated in vague. Educational policies differ in size, scope, complexity, scale, decision criteria, and environment and in function (Haddid, 1995). Some educational policies perform multi-purpose function whiles some are intended to execute only one function. For the purpose of this study, the functions of education policy have been categorized into structural, economic, social, and cultural transformation.

Structural transformation

One of the main reasons why governments all over the world undertake education polices is to bring about structural change in the education system. Structural transformation could be in the form of change in programming, operation management, the education/school syllabus or even investment in physical structures such as school building, library etc. The fast growth of the Korean economy can be attributed to structural transformation in the Korean education system (Ferreira, Monge-Naranjo and Pereira, 2014). "South Korea, after the Korean War (1950-1953), instituted a plan of compulsory and free basic education, which led to a high enrollment rate already in 1960. In Ghana the first major structural transformation was experienced in the early 1950's and 1960's with the introduction of the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) of 1951 and the education Act of 1961. During this period, Ghana experienced tremendous increase in enrollment and the number of primary and secondary school that were established in the country (World Bank, 2004).

Economic and financial transformation

Education resides in an economy. Hence, one of the most important function of education policies is economic impact. Ghana is one of the fastest growing economies in the world with GDP average growth rate of 6.8% per annum from 2000 to 2017. This unprecedented growth is without doubt, the manifestation of an improving education system. The economic impact of education policies is evidence in a number of micro and macroeconomic development. The education system is a means to build the national capacity and skills of individuals. Education policies plays major role in providing resources and personnel (e.g. Trained teachers, administrators, experiences) etc.) that are tapped for the development of human capital relevant for economic growth. The education system plays a major role in "producing a professionally-educated class – the lawyers, businessmen and teachers etc." (Brennan, King and Lebeau, 2004). However, the experiences of today and the rising graduate unemployment rate shows that economic resources do not match the human capacity being produced by the education sector. In reference to Peace (2013) "Youth unemployment in sub-Sahara Africa is 22.8% with figures ranging from 2.2% in Madagascar to 42% in Tanzania". Meanwhile, graduate unemployment is about 50% in Africa (ACET, 2016).

Social and cultural transformation

Most social theorist (Karabel and Halsey, 1997; King, 1983) will agree that indeed education brings about socio-cultural transformation and development in the economy. Education policies are therefore used as instrument of change to transform the way of life of the people. In the words of (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984) policy instruments must be understood by the people going to implement the policy. Hence, if the policy is not explained to make the beneficiaries and the implementers understand how it

will preserve or bring about positive transformation in the socio-cultural practices of the people, the policy may be rejected. "Social transformation generally involves the introduction or extension of modernity, and particularly the idea that knowledge is rational and secular and can be tested and built upon" (Brennan, King and Lebeau, 2004). According to functionalist theory, education is the foundation and the focal constitute of all other aspects of the society.

Barriers to effective education policy implementation in Ghana

In the literature the most predominant and pressing challenge of implementing education policies in Africa is largely due to political interference (Scanlon and Moumouni 2012). For the sake of this study, the researcher considered political interference into details.

Political interference

Ghana in the wake of political freedom and a beacon of one of the most achieved democracies in the world is yet to balance the wheels when it comes to political influence and rule of law. Ghana experienced what can be described as the first political interference and instability in the country after the overthrow of the first republic in 1966. The military government (National Liberation Council-NLC) took over and introduced its own reforms including the two years middle school (Pedley and Taylor, 2009). During the period, National Liberation Council was blamed for alleged interference in the education sector leading to indiscipline and unemployment of graduates (Little, 2010). Since independent until date, there have been a number of political interference whenever there is change of government. In 2001, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) came into office after the then National Democratic Congress (NDC) was voted out of power after ruling the state for 19 years. The change of government brought about an extension of the Senior High School system from 3 years to 4 years. In 2008, NDC was voted back into power and new government reversed the 4 years education system back to the 3 years. Speaking to the issue of political interference and reforms, (Kosak 2009:496 cited in Little, 2010) alleged that no government will provide primary education unless it promotes government agenda to remain in power or context another election. Other challenges of implementing education policies include inadequate financial resources, gender equality, and child labour among others.

Millennium and sustainable development goals

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are part of the global goal targeting the well fair of individuals within member states of the United Nation (UN). The MDGs was launched in 2000 following a series of meetings held among member countries of the UN to reach a consensus on promoting good health, eradication hunger, promoting economic empowerment especially of women among others globally. The MDGs is composed of eight main specific goals. These include Goal 1-erasdicate extreme poverty and hunger, Goal 2: achieve universal primary education, Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women and five other goals (Ghana MDGs Report, 2015).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a twin goal of the millennium development goals. It is the continuation of MDGs. As the name connotes, SDGs are to build on MDGs whiles sustaining the achievements made on MDGs. The SDGs commenced in 2016 following the end of MDGs. Unlike the MDGs, SDGs is composed of 17 global goals to be attained by 2030. The goal two of MDGs is dedicated to achieving universal primary education has been fused in SDGs as part of SDG4, which is to ensure quality education is attained by 2030.

The impact of educational policies/reforms on MDGS and SDGs in Ghana

The MDGs have been implemented for the past 15 years in together with other national development plans (GPRS I, GPRS II and the GSGDA I). The implementation of SDGs is in the third year since inception in 2016. According to Ghana MDGs Report (2015) "At global level, progress on the MDGs has been mixed, with relatively weak performance in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Southern Asia, even though progress might have been made on individual targets in different countries". However, Ghana MDGs report 2015 has described the achievement of the various indicators on MDG2 as largely achieved by Ghana. As stated in the Ghana MDGs Report 2015, there are unachieved target in MDGs

that have been transitioned on the SDGs. Ghana has undergone a number of educational transformations since independent. Most of these changes in the education sector was as a result of change in government (Adu-Gyemfi and Adinkrah, 2016). Whiles Ghana prepares to overcome the challenges of attaining 100% primary universal education and ensuring quality education outcomes, this study evaluates the impacts of four main education polices and their contributions to the attainment of MDGs.

Free compulsory basic education

Enshrined in the global goals (Millennium Development Goals) is the Free Universal Primary Education (FUPE), which member countries are to attain within a maximum of 15 years (Ghana MDGs Report, 2015). Before the establishment of this goal, Ghana had in its national plans a Free Universal Basic Education (FUBE) that was established before independence in 1957. All put right, this first universal primary education was free but not compulsory and mostly free for deprived students in deprived communities (Akyeampong, 2009). The education Act of 1961 and the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 within which the FUBE was established was faced with a number of challenges, rendering FUBE ineffective. The Economic Recovery Reform (ERR) in 1983 and the transition of government from military to democratically elected leadership led to the formation of a new constitution in 1992. The new constitution reinforced and relaunched FCUBE in 1996 by the then ruling government (NDC) to ensure all barriers prohibiting participation and implementation were removed (Akyeampong, 2009). With the introduction of Education Strategic Plan (2003-2015) in 2003, FCUBE was widely covered to ensure every child of school going age enroll in school. The specific goal of ESP focused on achieving 100% Universal Basic Completion rate, for all students, comprising of 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary education (MoE, 2006). "This resulted in significant increase in students enrolled from 2.72 million to 2.96 million over the period from 2001-2004. Primary enrolment growth for girl students was particularly positive with increases of 3.2% in 2003-04 and 9.3% over the period 2001-02 to 2003-04" - (Ampiah, Kwaah, Yiboe & Ababio, 2014).

School feeding programme

The first educational policy of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) was the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) (Adu-Gyemfi and Adinkrah, 2016). Although this plan has among other goals, enshrined in it was the improvement in quality education through upgrading of various facets of the educational system, with particular focus on primary education. However, ADP and the education Act of 1961 did not mention of School Feeding Programme (SFP). The School Feeding Programme (SFP) started by the government in 2005 is similar to the ones carried out by a few Non-Governmental Organization (NGO's) in the country in the early 1950's (Abukari, Kuyini, and Abdulai, 2015). According to USAID-EQUIPS, the implementation of the programme by donor organizations was successful. During the period, enrollment improved by 33% with girl's enrollment recording the highest of 85% increment (Adu-Gyemfi and Adinkrah, 2015).

The school feeding programme was reintroduced in 2005. This time it was solely a governmental intervention supported by New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and other donor organizations (Abukari, Kuyini, and Abdulai, 2015). The programme is part of the several social interventions programmes introduced by government in line with Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy II, Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda GSGDA (2010 - 2013) among other national plans. The programme has similar goals of feeding schoolchildren and increasing enrollment as the earlier one in the 1950's. The policy apart from its primary objective of increasing enrollment also has a twin goal of creating jobs and empowering farmers locally. Government ensured that food supplied to the schools were locally grown and supplied to the schools. According to studies, SFP implemented in other parts of Africa including Nigeria, Uganda and Malawi has been successful. For example, in Nigeria, SFP has been reported to increase enrollment and attendance by 34% between 2001 to 2011(Akanbi, 2011). In Ghana, impact and evaluation study conducted on SFP in the Sekyere Kumawu school and a non-beneficiary school shows that the completion rate of primary education was 30% higher than non-beneficiary schools (Manful, Yeboah, Owusu, Bempah, 2015). In the 2015 Ghana MDG report, "Gross enrolment reached 107 percent in 2013/2014 while net enrolment made slow progress from 88.5 percent in 2008/09 to 89.3 percent in 2013/14".

Capitation grant

A grant can be defined as a relief support or a subsidy to cut down cost. Capitation on the other hand is a form of arrangement for the transfer of some resource (normally financial resource) intended to bring some relief on the beneficiary. Capitation grant as the name connotes is a relief grant normally transferred from government to the most poorest and deprived citizens intended to leverage economic imbalance to promote survivability. Capitation grant is not a new term on the African continent. It is almost inherent in most government policies in developing economies. It is one of the major social policy interventions adopted by most developing countries all over the world (Osei, Owusu, Asem, Afutu-Kotey, 2009). Capitation grant as a major education and poverty reduction policy in Ghana can be traced back to 2005 when Ghana launched its first capitation grant. The grant can be mirrored as a policy to complement the FCUBE intervention. It is a common argument that the FCUBE policy is good but not good enough to produce the fortune expected of the education sector (Osei, Owusu, Asem, Afutu-Kotey, 2009). This is mostly due to the indirect component cost of education. These indirect costs include Parents, Teacher Association dues, transportation cost, library levies, cost of textbooks and many others. These costs are born by household. Proponents against FCUBE states the policy can only be effective if all indirect cost associated with education are abolished. Evidence of this can be inferred from Akyeampong, (2009) which emphasized that based on welfare quintile gathered from GLSS 4 (1998/99 and GLSS 5 (2005/06) the FCUBE policy did not do enough to offset the opportunity cost of schooling. Our conclusion is that the primary school attendance deficit continues to be concentrated among children from the poorest households. Government committed to the tenet of attaining MDGs and promoting quality education in Ghana launched the capitation grant in 2005 (Osei, Owusu, Asem, Afutu-Kotey, 2009). The purpose of this grant as mentioned earlier is to eradicate all associated indirect costs with basic education.

Research methodology

To analyze the education policy with the most impact on the development of primary educational and its implications for attaining SDG4, the researcher distributed questionnaires to a sample size of 100 respondents made up of parents, teachers, students, GES, MoF, West African Examination Council (WAEC) officials and head of primary schools in the greater Accra region of Ghana. Both primary and secondary data was gathered to complete the study. Excel was the main statistical tool used for data gathering. Tables and figures were also used for data analysis.

Analysis and presentation of results

Demographic features of respondents

Questionnaires were administered to all respondents, given a response rate of 100% on most of the questions. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the respondents were males while 37 percent were female. The remaining 1% representing one worker did not indicate his/her gender. In terms of age, virtually all the respondents were adults and young adults between the ages 21 and 50 or older, indicating that they have long periods of working experience (see table 1 below)

Table 1. Summary of demographic features of respondents

Variable	n	%
GENDER		
Male	62	62
Female	37	37
DEPARTMENTS		
Administration	18	18
audit	4	4
Monitoring and compliance	12	12
Finance	10	10
Policy and planning	26	26
Management	10	10

customer	16	16
NUMBER OF YEARS WORKING WITH INSTITUTION		
1-5yrs	0	0
5-10yrs	31	31
10-15yrs	37	37
15-20yrs	12	12
20+	20	20

Data presentation

The data was presented with tables to show frequencies and percentages. Where necessary, graphs were used to present data and demonstrate relationship between variables. Analyses are done based on research questions.

Current education policies and impact on SDG4

Despite the unfinished business of MDGs, Ghana has transitioned on the SDGs. The SDGs have been designed to integrate, complete and add on to the MDGs. Ghana has been implementing SDGs programme for more than two years. However, there is no change in policies apart from the addition of free SHS for first year students. The researcher therefore seeks to investigate if the existing policies can help Ghana attain set targets in SDG4. Surprisingly, 86% of respondents (see figure 1) representing majority of respondent's agreed that the policies should be maintained. The remaining 14% of respondents however, think that government should bring a lot more interventions policies. Understandably, SDG4 is only 3 years into implementation. It is therefore obvious that majority of respondents may want to see how these policies farewell in the system.
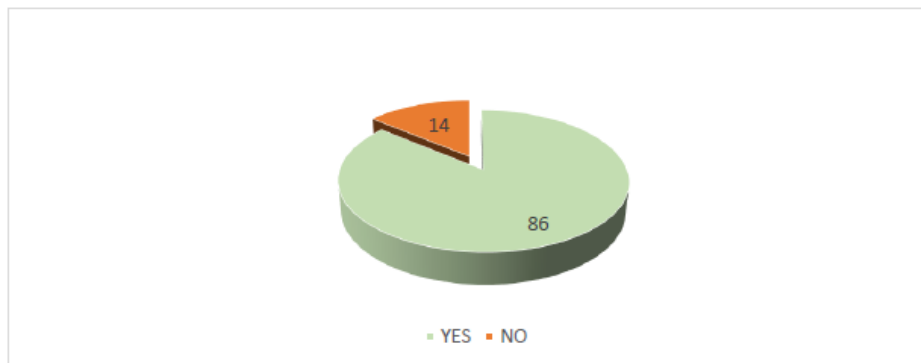
Figure 1. Current education policies and impact on SDG4

Most effective policy to attain SDG4

Concerning the pre-knowledge respondents have regarding the implementation of MDG2 and the outcome of MDGs 2015 Report on education, the study sort to find out the most effective policy to attain SDG4. The data revealed an overwhelming information splitting the respondents into the choice of different policies. However, more than 90% (exactly 90.70%) of respondents, representing 84 indicated that FCUBE is the best education policy, whiles the remaining 9.30% thought that other education policies were better option (Table 2).

Table 2. Most effective policy to attain SDG4

	frequency	Percentage (%)
FCUBE	84	90.70
Sch. feeding	2	9.30

Capitation grant	0	0.00
Decentralization policy	0	0.00
total	86	100

Education policy and structural transformation

This section will help the researcher to know if the best education policy (FCUBE) also brings about structural change. Most respondents (53%) will not readily accept that the FCUBE brings about improvement in the management of primary education but 38 of the respondents (44%) were with the view that the policy brings about increase in the physical structure of primary education (table 3).

Table 3: Education policy and structural benefits

	frequency	Percentage (%)
Improvement in management	0	0
Increase in physical structure	38	44.19
Adjustment in syllabus	0	0
No structural benefits	46	53.49
No response (NR)	2	2.33
total	86	100

Economical and financial benefits of education policies (FCUBE)

For a policy to be classified as best for the survival of a system only makes that policy most beneficial to the system parts. Hence, the study again sort to investigate how economic policies (FCUBE) provide economic and financial benefits to primary education in the country. The results are displayed in figure 2 below.
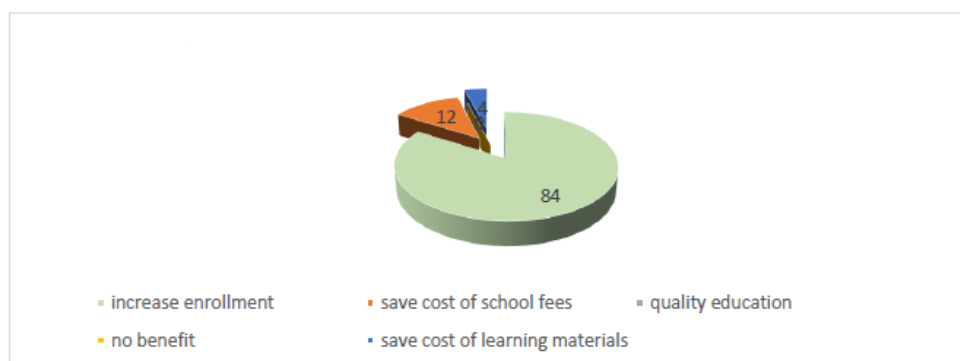

Figure 2. Economic and financial benefit of education policies (FCUBE)

Social and cultural benefits of Education policy (FCUBE)

On the social and cultural benefits of education policy, respondents were generally divided among the three main benefits as displayed in figure 3.
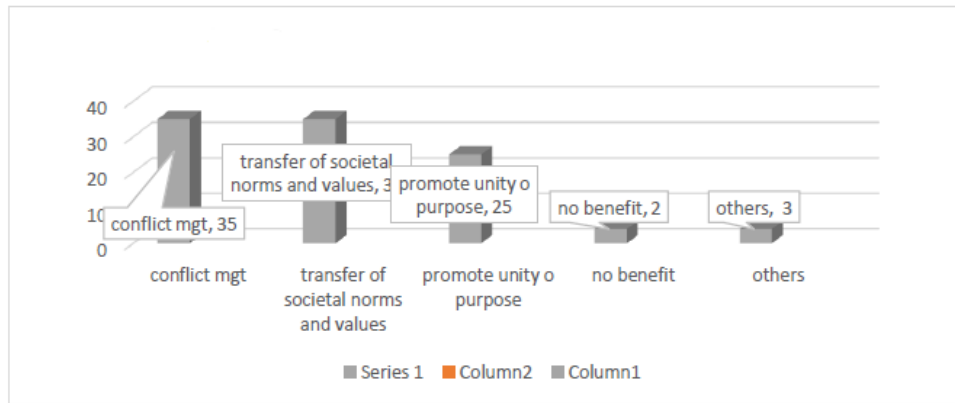
Figure 3. Social and cultural benefits of education policies

Challenges of education policies

The literature indicates that the most dominant and pressing challenge of implementing education policies in Africa is largely due to political interference (Scanlon and Moumouni 2012). According to (Summers, 2000), political influence has no single explanation and manifest into poor economic policies, corruption, civil wars, poor governance among other factors. However, the study revealed that more than 70% of respondents (exactly 72%) disagree that with political interference as the most challenge of implementing education policies in Ghana. Most respondents (72%) rather claimed that inadequate financial resources is the major setback in policy implementation in the education system of Ghana (figure 4).
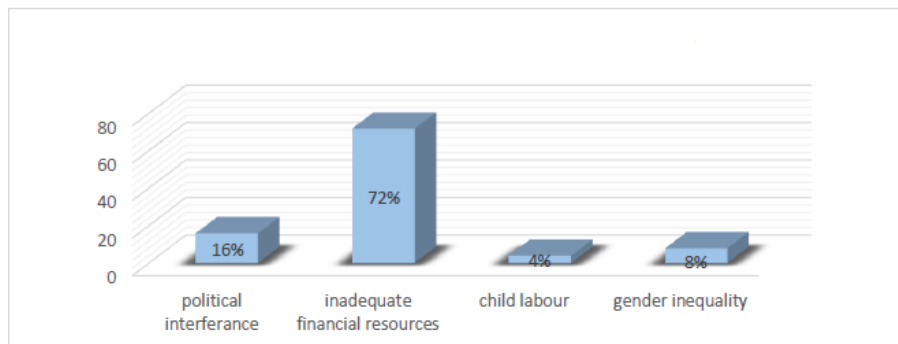

Figure 4. Challenges to implementing education policies in Ghana

Solutions to effective implementation of education policies in Ghana

Over the years, Ghana has adopted a number of system checks and measures to curb the challenges of implementing education policies. A number of them include the establishment of the public account committee to oversee all related government revenue and expenditure. The decentralization of education units both at the MoE and at GES, and currently the establishment of the special prosecution office. However, the challenges of implementing education policies still persist. In response to seeking the best solutions to the effective implementation of education policies, respondents were asked for their opinion on the best possible way to minimize the challenges of implementing education policies (FCUBE) in Ghana. Moreover, 70% of respondents believes that the best way to solve inadequate financial resource problem is through the economic empowerment and job opportunities for the citizenry (figure 5). This is agreement with the MDG1 of eradicating poverty through job creation, implemented in line with MDG2: Attain universal primary education for all. In other words, developed countries with better economies and jobs opportunities for its citizens are more likely to provide quality education to the citizens than under developed countries with huge poverty gap. This also means that when the labour-force is gainfully employed, government can raise enough revenue to undertake more policies. The people can also afford to support with the purchase of learning materials, food among others for their children who are in school.
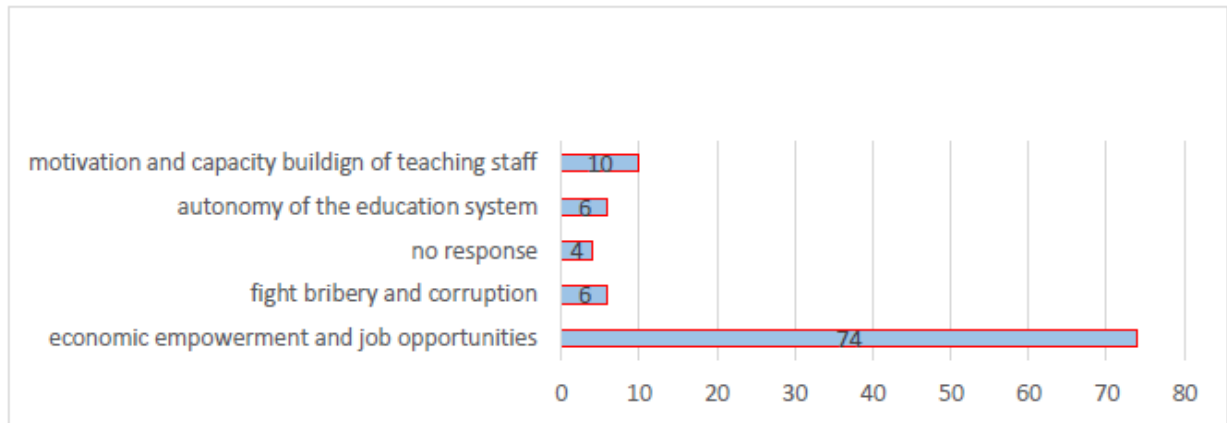
Figure 5. Solutions to effective implementation of education policies in Ghana

Conclusion

From the field data gathered and the perspective of the respondent's, it is clear that although about 10% (exactly 9.30%) of respondents did not agree that FCUBE is the best education policy with the most impact, a whopping 90.70% were certain that FCUBE policy produces the most outcome. Similarly, the most effective way to minimize the impact of the challenges of education policies (FCUBE) on primary education is to provide financial relief through economic empowerment and job opportunities for the citizenry (figure 4.6).

Nevertheless, FCUBE could increase quantity demand for education but for quality improvement, policy implantation should also focus on motivating and building the capacity of teachers (Figure 5).

Future research

Research findings on education policy are not limited. Since the numbers of students keep on increasing year on year, the enrollment of new students will become a problem. There is therefore the need to adapt complementary policies that ensures the growth and increase in physical structure of schools such as libraries, school buildings among others. Furthermore, limitation over choice of sample representation of variables needs to be overcome. This will also assist in determining if there are significant statistical differences in policy impacts from different schools between different districts, across the ten regions of Ghana. A key question to ask might be; is the impact of education policy in greater Accra is the same as in other regions of Ghana with similar background?

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