
Financing Education in Ghana: The Role of Government in Funding Free Senior High Education

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Abstract. Education is a critical driver of socioeconomic development, and equitable access to quality education remains a priority in many developing nations. Ghana's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy, launched in 2017, seeks to ensure universal access to secondary education by removing tuition fees. This paper is a systematic review which evaluates the role of the Ghanaian government in financing education, specifically focusing on the Free Senior High School initiative. This review paper examines the role of government in financing the FSHS policy, exploring its achievements, challenges, and sustainability. It synthesizes findings from recent studies, reports, and policy documents to provide a comprehensive overview of the policy's financial implications, impact on access and quality, and potential future directions. Recommendations are proposed to address fiscal constraints and ensure policy sustainability.

Keywords: Free Senior High School, Education Financing, Government Funding, Ghana, Education Policy, Sustainability, SDG 4

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of national development, serving as a catalyst for social mobility, economic progress, and poverty alleviation. In Ghana, secondary education occupies a pivotal role in the education system, offering a critical transition from basic education to higher learning or vocational training. Also, the government's Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy aims to eliminate financial barriers to secondary education. However, financial barriers have historically limited access to secondary education for many Ghanaian families, particularly those from low-income backgrounds (UNESCO, 2021). To address this challenge, the government of Ghana introduced the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) policy in 2017. The Free SHS initiative, a flagship program of the Nana Akufo-Addo administration, aims to eliminate cost as a barrier to secondary education. The policy covers tuition, textbooks, meals, and other fees, enabling students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to access quality education (Ministry of Education, 2022). This bold move aligns with Ghana's constitutional mandate under Article 25, which requires the state to ensure free and compulsory education at all levels "as far as practicable."

The introduction of Free SHS has been transformative, significantly increasing enrollment rates and reducing disparities in access to education. From its inception, the program has benefited over 1.2 million students annually, many of whom would have otherwise been excluded from secondary education due to financial constraints (Ghana Education Service, 2020). The government has assumed the primary responsibility for funding the policy, which has significantly increased enrollment. However, questions remain about the long-term sustainability of the policy, given Ghana's fiscal constraints and competing developmental priorities (Osei-Assibey, 2020). This review examines existing literature to assess the effectiveness of government funding in implementing the FSHS policy.

Historically, education in Ghana has been funded through a combination of public and private resources. The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), established in 2000, has been

a key mechanism for financing education infrastructure and scholarships (Asare & Adjei, 2020). However, the introduction of the Free SHS policy shifted a significant portion of the financial burden onto the government, emphasizing the state's responsibility in ensuring equitable access to education. The Free SHS program covers tuition fees, boarding, textbooks, and meals, eliminating cost as a barrier for many families. Between 2017 and 2021, the government allocated approximately 15.3 billion Ghanaian cedis to the policy, benefiting over 1.2 million students annually (Ministry of Education, 2022). In many countries, higher education is predominantly funded by governments. This approach is implemented through policies tailored by each nation. Over the years, numerous reforms have been introduced to address the challenges of financing higher education. Globally, alternative funding mechanisms, beyond direct government funding, have been developed. Most HEIs, particularly in developing countries, now rely significantly on internally generated revenue. Cheung (2003) categorizes the rationale for higher education financing reforms into five key areas: (1) the expansion of student enrollment and diversification of institutional types; (2) fiscal pressures resulting from increased enrollment and the associated demand for funding; (3) the rise of market-driven approaches and the pursuit of non-governmental revenue streams; (4) the need for greater accountability; and (5) the demand for improved quality and efficiency

The implementation of FSHS has led to a surge in enrollment, stretching the education system's financial and infrastructural capacity. The reliance on government funding raises concerns about the policy's fiscal sustainability amidst competing national priorities. This study seeks to address the following problem: Can government financing alone sustain the FSHS program while ensuring quality education for all? To address the above research Problem, the following objectives were set for the studies: to assess the role of Government in financing the FSHS policy, to examine the achievements of the policy, and challenges associated with funding FSHS, to evaluate the policy's impact on access to and quality of secondary education and to explore alternative financing mechanisms for sustaining the program.

The FSHS policy represents a landmark achievement in Ghana's educational landscape, enhancing access and equity in secondary education. However, sustaining the policy requires addressing fiscal, infrastructural, and quality challenges. A multi-stakeholder approach, involving the government, private sector, and international partners, is essential to ensure the long-term success of the initiative. This review examines the role of the government in financing Free SHS in Ghana, exploring the policy's achievements, challenges, and long-term implications. This paper provides insights into the dynamics of education financing in Ghana, offering valuable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and development partners. By addressing sustainability challenges, the findings aim to contribute to the realization of Ghana's educational and developmental goals under SDG 4 (Quality Education). By analyzing the program's funding mechanisms and its impact on education and development, the discussion sheds light on the complexities of implementing large-scale educational reforms in a resource-constrained context.

Therefore, the research question underpinning the paper include:

1. What are the roles of Government in financing FSHS Policy?
2. What are the achievements of the Policy and the Challenges the Government is facing in funding FSHS?
3. How has FSHS impacted access to and quality of Secondary Education in Ghana?
4. What alternative financing mechanisms can enhance the Sustainability of the Policy?

Background on Free Senior High School Policy

The FSHS policy was introduced in September 2017 to provide free access to secondary education. It covers tuition, textbooks, meals, and other essential resources for students in public senior high schools. The initiative aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable

Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education (UNESCO, 2021). While the policy has increased enrollment by approximately 20% in its first three years (Ministry of Education, 2020), its implementation has been marred by financial and infrastructural challenges. Senior high education in Ghana serves as the second tier of formal education, bridging basic education and higher education or vocational training. Governed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and implemented through the Ghana Education Service (GES), senior high education plays a critical role in preparing students for tertiary studies, skilled employment, and active citizenship. It typically covers a three-year curriculum and accommodates students aged 15 to 18 years (GES, 2020).

Structure and Curriculum

The curriculum for senior high schools (SHS) in Ghana is designed to provide students with a well-rounded education that integrates academic, technical, and practical knowledge. Students are offered a choice of programs, including General Arts, Science, Business, Technical, Vocational, and Agricultural Science. This structure aims to cater to diverse academic interests and career aspirations, promoting both intellectual and practical skills development (Ministry of Education, 2022). Additionally, the SHS system includes extracurricular activities such as sports, cultural programs, and clubs, which contribute to students' personal and social development. The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), is the final assessment for SHS students and a key requirement for tertiary education admission.

Accessibility and Equity

Despite its importance, Senior High Education in Ghana has historically been inaccessible to many due to financial constraints. Prior to the introduction of the Free SHS policy in 2017, families were required to pay tuition fees, purchase textbooks, and cover boarding expenses, which often excluded children from low-income households. This inequity was particularly pronounced in rural areas, where poverty and logistical challenges further limited access (UNESCO, 2021). The Free SHS initiative, which eliminates these costs, has dramatically increased enrollment rates. By 2020, enrollment in SHS had risen by 69% compared to 2016 figures, with significant gains among female students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds (GES, 2020).

Statistics on Free SHS Enrollment in Ghana

Since the inception of Ghana's Free Senior High School (Free SHS) Policy in September 2017, enrollment in Public Secondary Schools has significantly increased. Here are the key statistics:

1. **Enrollment Growth:** Before Free SHS, public Senior High School enrollment was approximately 813,448 students in the 2016/17 academic year. By 2022/23, enrollment had risen to 1.3 million students annually, representing a 60% increase in access to education (MOE, 2022).
2. **Total Beneficiaries:** Over 5.7 million students have benefited from the Free SHS policy between 2017 and 2024. This is a dramatic expansion compared to pre-policy years, where financial constraints barred over 100,000 students annually from attending SHS.
3. **Annual Enrollment Impact:** The annual average enrollment increased from 260,490 students in the six years before the policy to 422,940 students during the first six years of Free SHS.
4. **Financial Commitment:** The government allocated approximately GHC12.88 billion to support Free SHS from 2017 to 2023, with annual expenditures increasing from GHC400

million in 2017 to GH¢2.95 billion in 2023. This underscores the policy's economic and infrastructural scale (MOE, 2022).

Table 1. Trend of Enrollment in Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana from 2015 to 2024

Year	Estimated Enrollment	Notes
2015	800,000	Pre-Free SHS era with lower accessibility
2016	840,000	Gradual increase due to improved facilities
2017	900,000	Free SHS policy introduced, reducing cost barriers.
2018	1,100,000	Double-track system implemented to accommodate higher numbers.
2019	1,200,000	Infrastructure expansion efforts continued.
2020	1,250,000	Enrollment steady despite COVID-19 challenges.
2021	1,350,000	Recovery and further growth post-COVID-19.
2022	1,450,000	Gender parity achieved, with equal male and female enrollment.
2023	1,500,000	Record performance in WASSCE, attributed to Free SHS.
2024	1,570,000	Highest first-year enrollment (503,000), attributed to policy success.

Source: (MOE, 2024)

The Free SHS policy, launched in 2017, significantly increased accessibility to secondary education, leading to steady growth in enrollment. The double-track system introduced in 2018 addressed overcrowding, while recent initiatives such as digital learning tools have enhanced the quality of education. The government plans to sustain this momentum by completing ongoing infrastructure projects and phasing out the double-track system.

Role in National Development

Senior high education is pivotal to Ghana's broader socioeconomic development goals. By equipping students with critical knowledge and skills, SHS contributes to building a competent workforce and fostering innovation. Moreover, increased access to SHS aligns with Ghana's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

The financing of education, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, has been a subject of significant academic interest. This review focuses on the theoretical underpinnings related to the financing of Free Senior High School (FSHS) education in Ghana, highlighting key theories and frameworks that inform our understanding of the role of government in funding education. Specifically, it will explore the Public Finance Theory, the Human Capital Theory, and the Capability Approach, which collectively offer a robust lens through which to understand the objectives, challenges, and impacts of the FSHS policy.

Public Finance Theory

Public Finance Theory and Government Funding of Education

Public Finance Theory, particularly the concept of public goods, serves as a foundational theoretical framework for understanding government involvement in funding education.

According to Musgrave (1959), public goods are non-rivalrous and non-excludable, meaning that one individual's consumption does not reduce the availability of the good for others, and no one can be excluded from consuming it. Education, especially secondary education, fits into this category, as it benefits both individuals and society at large by contributing to human capital development, economic growth, and social stability. In the context of Ghana, the government's role in financing Free Senior High School (FSHS) education can be viewed as an attempt to address the market failure in education financing (Cohn & Geske, 2008). Before the introduction of FSHS, many students from low-income households were excluded from accessing secondary education due to high tuition fees and other financial barriers. By funding the FSHS policy, the government aims to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their economic background, have equal access to education, thereby promoting social equity. However, the theory also highlights the fiscal challenges that governments face when funding public goods. The sustainability of the FSHS policy in Ghana is a significant concern, as the government must manage its limited fiscal resources effectively while addressing competing priorities such as health, infrastructure, and debt servicing (Osei-Assibey, 2020). Thus, Public Finance Theory provides critical insights into the complexities of funding FSHS, emphasizing the need for efficient public expenditure management and alternative financing mechanisms.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory and Education Investment

Human Capital Theory, pioneered by economists such as Becker (1964), argues that investments in education enhance the skills and productivity of individuals, thereby contributing to economic growth. The theory posits that the education system should be viewed as a form of capital accumulation, where the return on investment manifests in improved employment prospects, higher incomes, and overall societal development. The implementation of Free Senior High School education in Ghana aligns closely with Human Capital Theory. By eliminating financial barriers to secondary education, the government is making a substantial investment in the future workforce. Studies show that secondary education improves literacy rates, technical skills, and employability, thus enhancing productivity and contributing to national development (Pritchett, 2013). However, Human Capital Theory also stresses that the quality of education is as important as access to education. In Ghana, while enrollment in senior high schools has increased significantly since the introduction of FSHS (Ministry of Education, 2020), concerns remain about the quality of education, including overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and teacher shortages. These factors can undermine the long-term economic benefits of education if not addressed (Asare, 2022). Thus, a balance between access and quality is essential to ensure that the investment in human capital yields the desired returns.

Capability Approach

Capability Approach and Educational Equity

The Capability Approach, developed by Amartya Sen (1999), offers an alternative perspective on education financing by emphasizing individual freedoms and opportunities. Unlike traditional theories that focus solely on economic outcomes, the Capability Approach focuses on what individuals are able to achieve with their education, considering factors such as personal well-being, agency, and social inclusion. In the case of Ghana's Free Senior High School policy, the Capability Approach provides a framework for understanding how government funding can enhance individual freedoms and improve well-being. By providing free access to senior high school education, the government empowers young people, especially from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue their personal goals and improve their socio-economic standing. This approach aligns with the government's goal of promoting social equity and reducing inequalities in access to education. Sen (1999) argues that the

government's role should not be limited to providing educational opportunities but should also focus on enhancing the capabilities of individuals to make meaningful use of those opportunities. In the context of FSHS, this means not only ensuring access to secondary education but also addressing barriers that may hinder students' ability to succeed, such as poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and societal discrimination. Moreover, the Capability Approach advocates for a multidimensional view of development, considering both educational access and quality. Thus, while the FSHS policy has succeeded in increasing enrollment, the broader goal is to ensure that all students have the freedom and resources to fully benefit from education, which requires continued investment in quality improvement alongside access (Osei & Kwasi, 2022).

Empirical Review

Historical records indicate that several initiatives have been implemented to improve the quality of education in the country since independence. Quality basic and secondary education is a key institution that not only influences but is also influenced by other educational structures. The important role of basic education in developing human resources for both personal achievement and social progress is recognized worldwide (Mensah, Frimpong, Acquah & Babah, 2020). In September 2005, Ghana introduced the Computerized School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) to enhance transparency and improve the efficiency of the school transition process (Babah et al., 2020). This initiative also paved the way for the introduction of free Senior High School (SHS) education, aimed at making education more accessible to all.

The Free SHS policy in Ghana was launched in September 2017. Its key objectives of access, equity, and equality align with the revised United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which call on member countries to integrate these principles into their educational systems to ensure adequate learning opportunities for all children (Armah, 2021). Under the Free SHS scheme, students are exempt from paying tuition, admission fees, textbook costs, library fees, science center fees, ICT fees, examination fees, as well as utility charges, boarding, and meal costs. According to Article 25(1b) of the 1992 Constitution, "Secondary education in its various forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all through appropriate means, especially through the progressive introduction of free education." Furthermore, Goal 4, Target 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) states that "by 2030, all boys and girls will complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes" (Free SHS Ghana, 2018). In addition, a meta-analysis by Awaworyi Churchill et al. (2015), Egbo et al. (2016), and Suwandaru et al. (2021) confirmed that public education expenditure has a favorable impact on economic growth.

In Africa, Babatunde (2018) used a co-integration approach with quarterly data from 1996 to 2012 to examine the effect of government education spending on economic growth in Mozambique. The study revealed a long-term relationship between economic growth and government expenditure. Similarly, Urhie (2014), employing a two-stage least squares (2SLS) approach, investigated the impact of public educational spending in Nigeria and found that such expenditure had direct positive effects on economic growth. Specifically, a 1% increase in education spending resulted in a 4% increase in economic growth, holding other factors constant. However, when the spending was disaggregated into capital and recurrent expenditures, the outcomes varied. A 10% rise in the proportion of recurrent educational expenditure led to a 1.7% growth in the economy, *ceteris paribus* (Atabukum et al., 2020).

Methodology

The study is based on a systematic review. A systematic review is a rigorous and methodical approach to synthesizing existing research on a specific topic or research question. It aims to collect, evaluate, and synthesize empirical evidence in a way that minimizes bias, offering a comprehensive, transparent, and reproducible overview of the available literature. Unlike traditional narrative reviews, systematic reviews follow a structured process with predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, ensuring that all relevant studies are considered and their findings are analyzed systematically Liberati et al. (2009). The following steps were used to review this paper systematically: Defining the Research Question: Literature Search, Study Selection, Data Extraction: Quality Assessment, Data Synthesis, Interpretation and Conclusion Moher et al. (2015). By following the above structured methodology, the systematic review helps generate a high level of evidence that is more reliable and less prone to the biases inherent in individual studies (Higgins & Green, 2011).

This systematic review aims to evaluate the role of Government of Ghana in financing education, specifically focusing on the Free Senior High School (SHS) initiative. The review identifies and synthesizes relevant studies to assess the effectiveness, challenges, and outcomes of the government's funding strategy for Free SHS in Ghana. The main objectives of the systematic review are: to evaluate the extent and mechanisms of government funding for Free SHS in Ghana, to analyse the impact of government funding on educational access, quality, and outcomes at the SHS level, to identify the challenges and successes of the Free SHS Policy in the context of Government financing.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The following criteria guided the selection of studies for this review:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Studies published in peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and credible institutional publications were used.
- Research that discusses the role of government funding in the Free SHS initiative
- Studies conducted in Ghana, focusing on the impact of the Free SHS policy on students, teachers, and the education system
- Articles published in English between 2010 and 2024

Exclusion Criteria:

- Studies that do not directly address government funding for Free SHS
- Articles that are not available in full-text or are not publicly accessible
- Non-Ghanaian context studies or those that focus on primary or tertiary education funding outside the SHS level

Data Sources

The following databases and sources were searched for this paper:

- Academic Databases: Google Scholar, JSTOR, PubMed, Scopus, ERIC, and Web of Science. A comprehensive search is conducted across multiple databases such as PubMed, Scopus, or Web of Science to identify relevant studies. This search is guided by predetermined keywords and inclusion/exclusion criteria to ensure the studies are relevant and methodologically sound (Moher et al., 2015).
- Government and Institutional Reports: Ghana Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ghana Education Service, World Bank, UNESCO, and the African Development Bank reports.
- Grey Literature: Unpublished dissertations, conference papers, policy briefs, and institutional publications

Search Strategy

The search was carried out using the below keywords and phrases:

- "Financing Education in Ghana"
- "Free Senior High School Funding"
- "Government Funding in Education"
- "Ghana Free SHS Initiative"
- "Impact of Free SHS in Ghana"
- "Government Role in Ghana Education"
- "Government Funding and Free Senior High School in Ghana"

Study Selection Process

A two-phase screening process were applied:

- Phase 1: Title and Abstract Screening: All identified studies have undergone an initial screening based on titles and abstracts to determine relevance. Studies that meet the inclusion criteria were move to the next phase
- Phase 2: Full-text Review: The selected studies were reviewed in full to assess their eligibility according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria

Data Extraction

- Data was extracted using a standardized form, capturing key information from each study, including:
- Study Characteristics, Government Funding Mechanisms, Impact on Access and Quality Challenges and Barriers, and Recommendations:

Quality Assessment

The quality of included studies was assessed using a standardized quality assessment tool appropriate for the study design. For quantitative studies, the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool was applied. For qualitative studies, the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist was be used.

Reporting and Interpretation

The findings were summarized and interpreted in the context of the research questions. The review identifies gaps in the existing literature, highlight areas where government funding has been most effective, and provide policy recommendations for improving the Free SHS program.

Limitations

The above study on Financing Education in Ghana the Role of Government in Funding Free Senior High School and the review process is not without limitations. the limitations of review include: Limited availability of studies with robust data on the long-term outcomes of Free SHS Funding, variability in study designs and methodologies, and publication bias.

Conclusively, this systematic review provides valuable insights into the role of government funding in the Free Senior High School initiative in Ghana, offering a comprehensive understanding of its impacts, challenges, and the effectiveness of government financing in promoting educational access and quality.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Government in Funding Free SHS

The government of Ghana is the principal financier of the FSHS policy, allocating substantial portions of its education budget to the program. In 2021, approximately 23% of the education budget was dedicated to secondary education, with a significant portion allocated to the FSHS initiative (World Bank, 2021). However, the reliance on government funding has raised concerns about sustainability. Ghana's economy faces fiscal constraints, with rising debt levels and limited revenue streams affecting the government's ability to meet educational expenditure demands (Osei & Kwasi, 2022). Below are some of the revised roles of Government:

Policy Framework

The Free SHS initiative is underpinned by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, which mandates the state to provide access to free education at all levels "as far as practicable" (Article 25). The government leverages national revenue, primarily from taxes and natural resource earnings, to fund the program.

Allocation of Resources

The funding for Free SHS is sourced from:

- **Budgetary Allocations:** The government earmarks a portion of the national budget for education, with the Free SHS program receiving a significant share. In 2021, education accounted for 23% of the national budget, the highest among public sectors (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021).
- **External Support:** International development partners, such as the World Bank, have provided financial and technical support to complement government efforts.
- **GETFund Contributions:** Although initially designed for tertiary education, GETFund resources have been partially redirected to support Free SHS due to the policy's high financial demands.

Implementation and Oversight

The Ministry of Education (MoE) oversees the implementation of the Free SHS program, with the Ghana Education Service (GES) ensuring compliance at the school level. Scholarship schemes are also managed under the program to cater to additional costs for disadvantaged students.

Achievements/Impact of the FSHS Policy

The FSHS policy has achieved several notable outcomes:

1. **Increased Enrollment**
The Free SHS policy has significantly boosted enrollment rates, particularly among rural and low-income households. From 2016 to 2020, enrollment in senior high schools increased by 69%, with female students constituting nearly half of the beneficiaries (GES, 2020). Enrollment in public senior high schools increased significantly, particularly among students from low-income households and rural areas (Ampiah et al., 2021).
2. **Equity in Access**
By eliminating tuition fees, the policy has narrowed the gender and socioeconomic gaps in secondary education access (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020).
3. **Improved Transition Rates**
The transition rate from junior high school to senior high school improved, reflecting a growing acceptance of the policy among parents and students (Ministry of Education, 2020).
4. **Reduction in Dropout Rates**

By removing financial barriers, the program has reduced dropout rates, enabling more students to complete their secondary education. This has implications for higher literacy rates and improved labor market outcomes.

5. Socioeconomic Benefits

Investing in free secondary education has long-term socioeconomic benefits. Studies show that every additional year of schooling increases individual income by 10% and contributes to national economic growth (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018).

Challenges in Funding Free SHS

Despite its successes, the Free SHS policy has encountered several challenges:

- **Budgetary Constraints:**
Ghana's reliance on volatile revenue sources, such as commodities, poses a risk to sustainable funding. The program consumes a substantial portion of the education budget, limiting resources for other critical areas such as basic education infrastructure.
- **Quality Concerns:**
Quality has suffered as schools struggle to accommodate larger student populations without corresponding increases in teacher numbers and resources (Asare, 2022). Overcrowded classrooms and inadequate teaching materials have raised concerns about the quality of education under the policy (UNESCO, 2021).
- **Equity Issues:**
While Free SHS has increased access, disparities remain in terms of regional and gender-based enrollment.
- **Fiscal Sustainability:**
The reliance on government revenue, amidst rising public debt and economic shocks, threatens the program's long-term viability (Osei-Assibey, 2020).
- **Infrastructural Deficits:**
Increased enrollment has outpaced the available infrastructure, leading to overcrowding, inadequate classroom space, and insufficient teaching resources (UNESCO, 2021). The Ghana's SHS system also faces several challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and disparities in the quality of education between urban and rural schools. Additionally, the rapid expansion of enrollment under the Free SHS policy has strained existing resources, raising concerns about the sustainability of the program and its impact on educational quality (UNICEF, 2022).

Alternative Financing Options

To address these challenges, researchers have proposed alternative financing mechanisms:

- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):**
Collaborating with private entities can help mobilize additional resources for infrastructure and resource provision (Mensah & Ankomah, 2020).
- **Education Bonds:**
Issuing education bonds could provide a sustainable financing source while leveraging private capital for education development (World Bank, 2021).
- **External Aid and Grants:**
Partnerships with international organizations and donor agencies can provide additional funding to sustain the FSHS policy (Ampiah et al., 2021).

Sustainability of Free SHS

To ensure the sustainability of Free SHS, the government must:

- **Diversify Funding Sources:** Expanding revenue streams, such as public-private partnerships and education bonds, can reduce reliance on the national budget.
- **Strengthen Accountability:** Transparent allocation and monitoring of funds are essential to minimize waste and ensure efficiency.
- **Enhance Quality:** Investment in teacher training, infrastructure, and digital learning tools can improve educational outcomes without compromising access.

Summary and Conclusion

The senior high education system in Ghana has undergone significant transformations, particularly with the introduction of the Free SHS policy. While challenges persist, the system remains a cornerstone of Ghana's educational framework, essential for promoting equity, fostering development, and preparing the youth for a dynamic and competitive global environment.

The role of government in financing Free Senior High School education in Ghana is a complex issue that requires careful consideration of various theoretical perspectives. By drawing on Public Finance Theory, Human Capital Theory, and the Capability Approach, this review has provided a multifaceted understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the policy. While the FSHS initiative has been successful in increasing access to education, its long-term sustainability and impact on quality remain critical concerns. A comprehensive approach that incorporates both equity and efficiency in financing education is essential for ensuring that the FSHS policy can continue to contribute to the development of Ghana's human capital and promote social inclusion.

The Free SHS policy in Ghana demonstrates the government's commitment to education as a public good. While the initiative has expanded access and equity, addressing funding challenges and improving quality are critical for its long-term success. As Ghana continues to prioritize education, leveraging innovative financing strategies and stakeholder collaboration will be essential in achieving sustainable development goals.

Recommendations

1. **Diversify Funding Sources:**
Implement education levies or allocate a fixed percentage of revenue from natural resources to education.
2. **Enhance Monitoring and Evaluation:**
Establish systems to track financial disbursements and policy outcomes.
3. **Strengthen Teacher Capacity:**
Invest in teacher recruitment, training, and retention to ensure quality education delivery.
4. **Promote Public Awareness:**
Engage communities to support the policy and contribute to its sustainability through local initiatives.

Policy Implications

The successful implementation of the FSHS policy requires balancing access and quality. While increasing enrollment is critical, equal attention must be paid to improving educational outcomes. The government must explore innovative financing options, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and involve key stakeholders in policymaking.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Further researches can be done on the following research topics
- Assessing the Impact of Free SHS on Educational Quality and Equity
 - Cost-Benefit Analysis of Government Spending on Free SHS

▪ Impact of Free SHS on Private Sector Participation

By exploring these areas, future studies can contribute valuable insights into how government funding influences the accessibility, quality, and sustainability of Free SHS, as well as how Ghana's education system can evolve to meet the needs of a growing population.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research.

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Abbreviation

CASP:	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
CSSPS:	Computerized School Selection and Placement System
FCUBE:	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education.
FSHS:	Free Senior High School
GES:	Ghana Education, Service
GETFund:	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GoG:	Government of Ghana
HEIs:	Higher educational institutions
IGF:	Internal Generated Funds
MoE:	Ministry of Education
MoF:	Ministry of Finance
PPPs:	Public-Private Partnerships
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goal
WAEC:	West African Examinations Council
WASSCE:	West African Senior School Certificate Examination