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## Perceptions and Preparedness of Senior High School Teachers in Ashanti Region towards the Introduction of Professional Teacher Licensing Policy in Ghana

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### **Abstract:**

*The study sought to explore perceptions and preparedness of teachers in Ashanti Region towards the introduction of professional teacher licensing in Ghana. Three research objectives were used as a guide for the exploration. A descriptive survey, which allowed for an accurate description of activities, objects, processes, and persons, was adopted to help to achieve the objectives of the study. A sample size of 278 teachers from senior high schools in Ashanti Region of Ghana was selected through multi-stage sampling technique to respond to the Teacher Perception and Preparedness Licensing Questionnaire. Data were analysed using means and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The study revealed that the selected teachers perceived the introduction of teacher licensing would not improve any teacher-student performance but would rather enhance teacher reputation; motivate teachers to practice their profession; and have a positive effect on teacher self-efficacy. The study also found that the implementation of teacher licensing policy could be more effective and friendly when some measures are put in place. Some recommendations for practice, such as the Ghana Education Service through its supervisory unit should institute measures beyond the teacher licensing policy to monitor and influence the delivery approaches used by teachers and the Ministry of Education should educate teachers, using professional development programmes to help teachers to appreciate that the policy is about professionalism.*

**Keywords:** Perception and Preparedness

### **1. Introduction**

In nearly every occupation in the world today professional licensing is becoming a practice. Skilled certification is believed to safeguard the public interest by preventing people inept and unscrupulous from interacting for the state (Doherty & Purtilo, 2015; Edlin & Haw, 2013). Professional licensing is not restricted to a particular occupation but obviously in social sciences, and is increasingly expanding into the area of education in sub-Saharan Africa's third-world countries. The principle of teacher certification, according to Cooper and Travers (2012) is motivated by the reality that in recent years the teaching career has been placed under pressure due to unprofessional actions displayed by teachers. The National Teaching Council of Ghana has brought teacher licensing to Ghana in an effort to redefine its core principles and place educational power on its leaders.

Licensing is the symbol of integrity, according to Acosta and Acosta (2016). For any profession such as law, medicine or teaching it is an important requirement. Licensing has seen a cultural change from trade-related licensing to teacher licensing in third world countries such as Ghana. This change may be attributed to the assumption that any community derives an important support from the teaching profession. The teachers' service appears to be more indispensable for any society than any other profession's services. The teaching career is a nation-builder in many ways, and is often referred to as the mother of all professions. Such an accolade is given through its ability to produce well-rounded individuals, which in turn will promote best practices, unlock many opportunities for future prosperity and attract much-needed international investment and expertise (Nenty, Moyo, & Phuti, 2015).

Kusumawardhani, Gundersen, and Tore (2017) stated that a significant issue continually posed by governments around the world is whether they can improve the efficiency of their teaching ability. One approach to improve the productivity of teachers is by the teacher certification system to ensure that teachers have appropriate instructional qualifications and that qualified teachers will also be compensated. In education instructor certification is separate from granting licenses for school. As well as being certified by teacher training schools, teacher licensing in education is about accrediting teachers to teach based on exemplary skills and abilities. Licensing for teachers is about professionalism which is characterized by high results.

Bentea and Anghelache (2012) claim that teaching is not a modern field of study involving specific methods to describe it. The teaching profession is based on professional skills, personal skills and competencies that require professional and ethical standards and models. The job often requires a constant professional growth cycle. In other countries, curriculum improvements and adjustments as in teacher training allow teachers to show continuing expertise in their jobs and respond to current work criteria. Teachers are often pressured to do more work with fewer resources and are required to achieve high professional outcomes in their activities (Bentea & Anghelache, 2012).

Kelly (2017) indicated that the licensing of professional teachers is important in education because it allows the right professionals to be hired for teaching jobs. Kelly cited an illustration to underline the possibility that an engineer with a specific route to qualification and licensing may want to become a teacher different from previous training. Therefore, it is stressed that teacher training is important. In order for teachers to gain the greatest chance of success, they must have completed and be licensed a teacher preparation program, as this provides them with knowledge, skills, experience and guidance to perform (Haberman, 2017; Jacques, Behrstock-Sherratt, Parker, Bassett, Allen, Bosso & Olson, 2017). A successful teacher certification can better train teachers to deal with the various obstacles they encounter each day when they carry out their core duties. Although accredited teacher preparation does not adequately prepare teachers for any issue they encounter, licensing may make them feel more comfortable about several popular issues that occur throughout and after teaching, and teachers can feel incompetent and feel like failures at unfavorable outcomes (Kelly, 2017). Hence, there was the need to look at the perceptions and preparedness of Ghanaian teachers towards the introduction of teacher licensing.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The desire of Ghana to integrate and overhaul the instructor and educational system by licensing strategies has generated much controversy within the teaching fraternity (Ballou & Podgursky, 2000; Brennan, De Vries, & Williams, 1997). The rank and file of the country's recognized teacher unions have expressed divergent views (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Liston & Zeichner, 2013). Some claim it is the deliberate effort by a government to punish teachers under the pretext of bad performance by the students. People are of the view that it is a strategy to retrench teachers to save and protect government's purse. A community of teachers concerned in Ghana has branded the licensing of teachers in Ghana as meaningless since the qualifications earned by school teachers are ample evidence that teachers are already professionals. There is proof in these claims that demonstrate that the success of students in public schools at the fundamental level has been declining year in and year out over the past decade, and teachers tend to ignore that. It is necessary to remember that training teachers is not a recent phenomenon as they are taught both in the Western world and certain areas of Africa (Ballou & Podgursky, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Additionally, teachers could have shortcomings, and if not handled correctly until the certificate is issued, that may impact their efficiency and professional life in general. This might build the policy's inability to acknowledge problem. Government wants to provide teachers a chance to deliver their comments and suggestions. Such comments could form the structure for policies to be more accommodating and appropriate to all educational stakeholders. In Philippines, the Professional Teaching Certificate Advice (2014) described one benefit of licensing as work protection in teaching. This is because for professionally licensed teachers the teaching profession is more secure than many other fields. However, if care is not taken and the necessary consultations are not carried out, teachers in Ghana may misunderstand and misinterpret the licensure. Once it was suggested that may account for their outcry. For uncertain circumstances, teacher training may provide numerous implications for teachers and the community because it will offer hard work, continuity, and career stability (Danielewicz, 2014; Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999).

Meanwhile, in Ghana, qualified teacher certification is recent and it is possible that little to no research will be done thereon. It was based on this background that the present study intended to investigate into the perceptions and preparedness of teachers about the introduction of professional teacher licensing in Ghana.

## 3. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

- What are the perceptions of teachers about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana?
- How are teachers prepared towards the implementation of teacher licensing policy in Ghana?
- What do teachers perceive as the effects of teacher licensing on their professional life?

## 4. Literature Review

### 4.1. Theoretical Review

#### 4.1.1. Structuration Theory

Anthony Giddens developed the theory of structuration in 1979 as an approach to social theory concerned with free interaction between knowledgeable and capable-social agents and the broader social systems and structures in which they are involved. The philosophy is composed of six components, namely: organization, framework, duality of form, structures and dialectical power and relationships between time and space.

In the philosophy of structuration, the word 'unit' implies individuals' right to behave individually and make their own free choice. It emphasizes an individual's moral capacity to decide what to do. Giddens regarded the person as an informed, well-educated and wealthy subject whose activities are often deliberate and purposeful although some behavior

may be affected by both unforeseen effects and known circumstances of the acts. The recognised situation involves the latent basis of inspiration as a constant stream of special agent's intervention in the environment (Cloke, Philo, & Sadler, 1991). The organization is the actual instructor who must be certified as part of this report.

Giddens (1984) conceptualized the 'structure' as laws and tools used in daily encounters between performers. Structure may also be theorized as social structural laws regulating human behaviour. Such laws and social factors which restrict or affect the chances of deciding the agent's behavior may be social status, faith, gender, ethnicity, or customs. The system has been structured to include the usage of tools that are the actors' 'economic infrastructure and' organizational capabilities 'to achieve tasks. Similarly, there are mechanisms regulating all teachers' practices that may impede or encourage the determination by agents to recognize licensing as a teacher.

According to Giddens (1984), duality of nature includes the interaction between the person (agent) and the human society laws or norms. The main concern of this element is how individuals operate or interact within society and the changes that affect society, and thus whether individuals recognize rules and regulations in society and how changes occur due to the interaction between the regulations and individuals. Giddens also regards power as 'an integral element' of all social life, 'just as meaning and norms are.' The social contact that exists includes the use of aggression. In social systems, power can be analyzed by considering the relationships of autonomy and dependence between actors, and how the actors can use and reproduce the structural properties of dominance (Giddens, 1984).

In the structuring theory, an institution denotes the different social, economic, and political agencies that influence the behavior of an individual in society. Such organizations control the actions of people through their authority to monitor or have health care authorization, information through protection. The structures affect the actions of people in society by ensuring that expectations are complied with and designed to make life simpler. Those bodies develop, track and preserve culture and actions in communities (Giddens, 1984).

Dialectical regulation applies to increasing individual's ability to affect culture or group no matter how slight the impact might be. Giddens stresses the power a person has to make a difference for the world. Giddens (1984) added that the individual's agent is a special personality that has the ability to change culture or group, but not through brute pressure, but by depending on their intelligence.

Finally, the dimension of time and space indicates how the social relationships vary with time and space. In other words, at a given point in time some attributes and social changes occur while others occur within a particular geographical setting. Time dimension can be transient or irreversible, while space dimension denotes where the phenomena exists (Giddens, 1984).

Giddens' structuring principle became successful by bringing us a notion of how the daily actions of performers affected the nature of culture and incorporated concepts of geography in time-space. Despite the remarkable contributions the theory with some form of shortcomings is still noted. For example, Whittington (1992) noted that one of its shortcomings was complexity and unfriendliness in the use of the theory.

While an individual, the instructor is regulated by institutional elements that are basically the regulations, procedures, legislation, employment, and basis of knowledge regulating the execution of their duties. Those relationships known as structural duality can encourage or limit the involvement of teachers in licensing. For example, if the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service use appropriate contact networks to enable teachers to understand the meaning and the need to license all teachers, teachers would be more than ready for licensing.

#### 4.2. Empirical Review

In their research, Goldhaber and Brewer (2000) stated that the growth of the current public-school system was followed by the creation of a fairly uniform route by which teachers receive the requisite qualifications for teaching in the system. Throughout the 19th century, teacher education changed from 'normal' schools (often used as a replacement for high school for those who wished to go to teaching) and less rigorous apprenticeship programs to college and university baccalaureate programs that needed to follow a variety of state-level accreditation requirements. (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). In this way, the change is about going towards teacher certification, where focus is put on teacher awareness in both material and pedagogy

Licensure is designed to guarantee a basic level of quality or skill of teachers in schools. There is sufficient data to show that certification acts as a teacher success measure. Using state-wide results from North Carolina, a report by Strauss and Sawyer (as quoted in Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000) showed that average school system success on standardized tests improves with average school teacher output in the area on the National Teacher Licensing Exam. Similarly, Ferguson (as quoted in Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000) observed that school districts with better average teacher success on the test had higher student achievement in mathematics in Texas where teachers are expected to undergo a licensing review. Such results are significant as they indicate state licensing policies will influence the outcomes of students

In a research performed by Darling-Hammond et al (2002), it was discovered that new teachers who have undergone multiple teacher education systems or paths to teaching have distinct feelings regarding their readiness, that these feelings are fairly constant across systems and that there are major differences between programs and paths. Licensing in teacher education therefore needs to harrow teachers' readiness to be considered for the programme. Teachers trained in structured licensing programs feel better prepared than those taking a series of courses from various organizations which in effect feel better prepared than those entering through alternate programs which reduce pre-service instruction.

Darling-Hammond et al (2002) stated that graduates valued their teaching readiness less than satisfactory as they were not qualified until completing the standard teacher training and, while increased from earlier years, it was lower

than other places to satisfy the needs of many less fortunate students. In these regions, non-program instructor hires scored their training much lower when all classes measured their preparedness below satisfactory in terms of readiness for questions regarding current teacher education policies. Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) suggested that the teachers' sense of preparation for teacher licensing is strongly linked to the teachers' sense of efficacy and faith in their abilities to meet teaching objectives when licensed

In a study conducted by Hendricks (2010) on the effects of licensing, it was discovered that the results of having to follow licensing requirements included a perception that the identity and credibility of the teachers were improved in their field of expertise and more changes in their unit appraisal method and better coordination within the teaching fraternity. Nonetheless, some teachers thought licensing would come at a premium, and the sum of money, time, and resources spent on the licensing phase would overshadow the benefits. Therefore, it was suggested that if licensing is not viewed as aligning with teacher education's moral principles and value system, the impact of licensing on teachers would tend to be perceived as 'procedural' and would not have a significant influence or produce positive improvement in the teaching environment (Hendricks, 2010). Study results may suggest that teacher licensing is marked by positive as well as negative consequences based on whether it is treated or addressed. Therefore, a well-thought-out attempt to find agreement will help bring in approved and welcoming teacher licensing system.

## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Research Design

Research design is the research work plan which serves as the basis for the analysis. Polit, Beck, and Hungler (2010) define research design as the general structure for the investigator to address the research problem or evaluate the research hypothesis. A test design is the blueprint for performing a full monitoring analysis on variables that may conflict with the validity of the results (Burns & Grove, 2010). The research employed the concept of the concise sample. Descriptive survey allows for detailed classification of events, artifacts, procedures, and persons relevant to teacher licensing in Ghana (Amedahe, 2002). The descriptive study style helped to provide a description of how teacher licensing was enforced as it actually occurred in Ghana (Burns & Grove, 2010). Thus, the descriptive sample was used to make educated decisions about existing teacher licensing procedure and theories. The descriptive survey was deemed the most suitable method for performing this analysis because the method had a benefit in supplying the researcher with a ton of knowledge gathered from such a broad sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Descriptive sample architecture tends to show patterns in perceptions and behaviors and allows the test study results to be generalized (Neuman, 2000).

### 5.2. Study Population

Furthermore, all qualified teachers in the Ashanti area were the target population for the research. The destination population was 9534. The instructors are all who were taught at senior high schools in the Ashanti area for the 2017/2018 academic year under the Ghana Education Service (GES). The accessible population for the study was 988 where samples were collected. In all 110 High School teachers were chosen for research.

### 5.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

The Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table was employed to pick the sample from the population of senior high teachers in the Ashanti area. A survey of 278 teachers from different senior high schools was collected using multi-stage sampling technique (stratified, purposive, proportional and simple random sampling). First, it stratified the whole Ashanti area into Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. Ashanti has one Metropolitan Area, seven Municipalities and 22 District Assemblies (Boateng, 2014). Second, in order to pick the seven (7) municipalities from the thirty (30), metropolitan, municipal and district legislatures, purposeful sampling technique was used. This was because in each municipal assembly there were three or more senior high schools and, therefore, they had a good number of teachers to take part in the study. Again, this analysis utilized the seven (7) municipalities as it contains the features of both metropolitan and district legislatures. Thirdly, simple random sampling procedure was used to select three out of the seven municipalities

Fourthly, stratified sampling procedure was used to categorize all the senior high schools within the three municipalities into grade A, B, C, D, and D schools. The schools were spread among the four categories of schools approved by the GES. This gave an indication that the teachers sampled were representative of the targeted population. Thereafter, the simple random sampling procedure, which is part of stratified was used in selecting 278 teachers from 12 schools for the study. The researcher resorted to the use of lottery method of simple random sampling procedure.

### 5.4. Instrument

Based on the research questions and main variables of importance to the report, the questionnaire was designed. The instrument was designed by the researcher based on the literature review which was named as Teacher Perception and Preparedness on Licensing Questionnaire (TPPLQ). TPPLQ was structured into five sections. Section A was on the perceptions of teachers about teacher licensing, Section B was on teachers' preparedness towards teacher licensing policy implementation and Section C was on perceived effects of teacher licensing. The score point ranged from 1-4 as follows: Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Agree-3, and Strongly Agree-4

## 6. Findings

- Research Question 1. What are the perceptions of teachers about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana?

Item	Frequency	Mean	SD	%
Teacher licensing is about assessing the basic qualities and skills of teachers	146	2.5	0.96	53.1
Teacher licensing is about improvement in teacher-student performance	112	2.5	1.85	40.7
Teacher licensing is about helping teachers to rethink their own practice to construct new classroom roles	112	2.3	0.81	40.7
Licensing is about helping teachers to teach in ways once taught	80	2.1	0.85	29.1
Teacher licensing is about helping teachers to teach in ways they probably never experienced as students	83	2.3	1.46	30.1
Teacher licensing is about helping project teachers as competent	141	2.5	0.91	51.2
Teacher licensing is about a legal permission to teach	209	3	0.89	76
Teacher licensing is about determining whether prospective teachers have adequate knowledge in concepts	159	2.6	0.95	57.8
Teacher licensing is about determining whether prospective teachers can demonstrate their ability to apply concepts	144	2.5	0.93	52.8
Teacher licensing is about hiring right professionals for the teaching job	172	2.7	0.94	62.5
Teacher licensing is about helping teachers to demonstrate that, all standards required for the profession are met	160	2.6	0.93	58.1
Teacher licensing is about professionalism that is characterized by high results	158	2.6	0.92	57.5

Table 1: Mean Scores on Teacher Perception of Teacher Licensing in Ghana

\*Percentage Agreement= Percent Strongly Agree + Percent Agree

Table 1 shows that teachers licensing is about assessing the basic qualities and skills of teachers ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) while teacher licensing is about improvement in teacher-student performance ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 1.85$ ). Table 1 also indicates that teachers licensing is about helping project teachers as competent ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), teacher licensing is about a legal permission to teach ( $M = 3.0$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), Teacher licensing is about determining whether prospective teachers have adequate knowledge in concepts ( $M = 2.6$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), teacher licensing is about determining whether prospective teachers can demonstrate their ability to apply concepts ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), teacher licensing is about hiring right professionals for the teaching job ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ), teacher licensing is about helping teachers to demonstrate that, all standards required for the profession are met ( $M = 2.6$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ) and teacher licensing is about professionalism that is characterized by high results ( $M = 2.6$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ) were the perceptions of teachers about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana

Furthermore, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data on the perceptions of teachers about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana. The criterion means score (established mean cut off point) for the perception of teachers was 2.50. To attain the test value as the criterion measure, responses on the four-point Likert scale were scored from 4 to 1. That is  $1+2+3+4=10/4=2.50$ . Therefore, mean scores of the perception of teachers which is above 2.50 is what the teachers agreed to it, and a mean score of below 2.50 is what the teachers disagreed to.

- Research Question 2: How are teachers prepared towards the implementation of teacher licensing policy in Ghana?

Item	Frequency	Mean	SD	%
I have good knowledge of the teacher licensing policy	92	2.2	1.47	33.4
I have had answers to all questions in my mind about the teacher licensing policy	62	2.1	2.00	22.5
GES has given teachers education about the teacher licensing policy	57	2.2	2.75	20.7
In our school, we should have met to discuss the roles expected of in-service teachers in the implementation of the teacher licensing policy	145	2.8	2.95	52.8
The GES should have provided us with in-service training and the needed documents for our readiness	168	3.2	4.42	61.1
We members of GNAT, NAGRAT, or CTA have had a seminar to make teachers ready for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy	74	2.1	1.51	26.9
With my level of teaching experience, I am ready for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy	130	2.4	0.94	47.2

Table 2: Mean Scores on Teacher Preparedness towards the Implementation of Teacher Licensing

Percentage Agreement = Percent Strongly Agree + Percent Agree

From Table 2, it could be inferred that in our school, we should have met to discuss the roles expected of in-service teachers in the implementation of the teacher licensing policy ( $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 2.95$ ), while the Ghana Education

Service should have provided us with in-service training and the needed documents for our readiness ( $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = 4.42$ ) were the preparedness of teachers towards the implementation of teacher licensing policy in Ghana.

- Research Question 3: What do teachers perceive as the effects of teacher licensing on their professional life?

Item	Frequency	Mean	SD	%
Teacher licensing will help enhance teacher's reputation in their area of expertise	167	2.8	1.52	60.7
Teacher licensing will help to improve teachers' unit assessment system	136	2.6	1.44	49.4
Teacher licensing will help better communications in the teaching fraternity	131	2.5	2.04	47.6
Teacher licensing will help teachers to feel motivated	142	2.5	1.00	51.6
Teacher licensing will bring about teacher self-efficacy	167	2.7	0.89	60.8
Teacher licensing will help bring about job satisfaction among teachers	130	2.7	3.15	47.2
Teacher licensing will help improve teachers and student outcomes	146	2.5	0.97	53.1
Teacher licensing will bring about low teacher supply	141	2.6	1.52	51.3
Teacher licensing will put extra monetary burden on teachers	169	2.8	2.07	61.3
Teacher licensing will encourage more people to enter into the teaching profession	118	2.3	0.97	42.9
Teacher licensing will lead to monetary extortion from licensing body	183	2.8	1.52	66.6

Table 1: Mean Scores on Perception of Effects of Teacher Licensing

\* Percentage Agreement = Percent Strongly Agree + Percent Agree

Table 3 shows that teachers licensing will help enhance teacher's reputation in their area of expertise ( $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ), while teacher licensing will help to improve teachers' unit assessment system ( $M = 2.6$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ). Table 1 also indicates that teachers Teacher licensing will help better communications in the teaching fraternity ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 2.04$ ), teacher licensing will help teachers to feel motivated ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ), teacher licensing will bring about teacher self-efficacy ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), teacher licensing will help bring about job satisfaction among teachers ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 3.15$ ), teacher licensing will help improve teachers and student outcomes ( $M = 2.5$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), teacher licensing will bring about low teacher supply ( $M = 2.6$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ), teacher licensing will put extra monetary burden on teachers ( $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 2.07$ ) and teacher licensing will lead to monetary extortion from licensing body ( $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ) were the effects of teacher licensing on their professional life.

## 7. Discussions

### 7.1. Perceptions of Teachers about the Introduction of Teacher Licensing in Ghana

The results have shown that teachers view the implementation of teaching licenses as an initiative by the government to provide the teaching profession legal protection. Everything that has been missing from the teaching field in Ghana for ages; motivating everyone to teach. It is when the prospective teachers are deemed unqualified and not fit for jobs after waiting for the teacher certification exams (Aquino & Balilla, 2015). The teachers then believed they needed to complete the certification tests (Acosta & Acosta, 2016) in order to receive a certificate to work.

This result supports the research performed by Mark et al (2006), in which teachers expressed the opinion that teaching is like every other occupation that needs licensing. The teacher's interpreted writing licensure as examination allowing teachers to demonstrate their material and pedagogy skills gained during teacher preparation. It may be because both the Ghana government and the public are in question as to the competence of the teachers of the subjects they have been teaching over the years and attributing the students' poor success to teachers. It is because the success of pupils is due in part to instructor qualifications and abilities (Darling-Hammond, 2000), and Ghana has encountered poor student output in subjects such as English Language, Biology, and BECE and WASSCE mathematics. However, teachers believed teacher certification does not boost instructor-student efficiency because the truth remained that teachers would not reconsider their teaching methods if they missed or passed certification tests.

If the teacher education institutions, educational programs are well organized, prospective teachers will gain the requisite expertise in content and pedagogy to teach as practitioners but not by licensing of teachers. It is because experience and achievement of students has been shown to associate their awareness of teachers (Rockoff et al., 2008). Therefore, the teacher's interpreted licensing test does not motivate them to instruct in respects they never encountered as students once. The licensing test would not cause any improvement in teacher professional practices but would remove public suspicion that teachers in the present day are inexperienced (Larsen, 2013). Consequently, the outcome of this



research reflects the findings of Riney, Thomas, Williams, and Kelley (2006) that most teacher education (89 per cent) claimed that licensing standards were important facets of their professional growth. Students of teacher education acknowledged that teaching was an essential part of their preparation to be qualified much as others.

### *7.2. Teachers Preparedness towards the Implementation of Teacher Licensing Policy in Ghana*

The results indicate that the teachers participating in this research were seasoned teachers but were not able to enforce the licensing program for teachers in Ghana. This is because the teachers thought like they were seeing more unresolved government concerns. The unpreparedness may have been the case of new teachers, because they might have thought the government and the public were out there to doubt their competent abilities to educate the Ghanaian children. Unless the teachers were trained as stated here, they were supposed to have a good understanding that licensing policy is synonymous with discipline worldwide (Wise et al, 1987). The experienced teachers had no good idea of the licensing policy though. Professional development initiatives such as workshops could better train teachers for policy enforcement but there was none. Hence, the shortage of lectures and courses that teachers experience leads to their unpreparedness. If the teachers included in this research were seasoned teachers, they may have understood that licensing is partially about judging the performance of qualified in-service teachers (Larsen et al., 2005), and integrity was in question without licensing.

While teachers would have gained awareness of the teacher licensing policies when they practiced skilled teaching, the government should have trained teachers through professional development programmes, through the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service. This doesn't mean the government hasn't coordinated teacher career development services. Professional learning projects for the education sector were developed throughout the country throughout the years, but were not used to train and equip teachers for policy enforcement when the government first considered the policy. It may, as well, be because the country's teacher unions did not do anything to better train and educate their representatives for the program. When it is, on the scheme, the teachers' unions did not coordinate such career learning programs. This may be because the teacher union members (such as GNAT, NAGRAT, and CTA) themselves reject the enforcement of teacher licensing policy because they see it as an effort by the government to discipline teachers for the success of bad students. There are therefore more questions which require answers on the part of the teacher unions for the smooth implementation of the policy (Darling-Hammond et al, 2002).

### *7.3. Effects of Teacher Licensing on Their Professional Life?*

Findings on the effects of teacher licensing suggest that teachers expected that one of the consequences of teacher licensing implementation in Ghana will be to minimize the number of teachers drawn to the teaching profession. This, the teachers considered as a negative effect of the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana. If teachers believe they have gained adequate expertise, skills, and attitude through long and rigorous academic training (Kissock & Richardson, 2010) to practice their trade as skilled teachers, the low attraction to the teaching career may happen. And writing the licensure exams would not alter their knowledge, skills and attitude. It may also be that the teachers are cautious and over-protective of their technical qualifications and that taking the licensure tests will render the teachers' professional competence the popular issue. If this is the teachers' thought, otherwise qualified teachers will not be drawn and the Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Education Service (GES), will have a low supply of teachers to schools and colleges. Since the teachers anticipated that GES will have low teacher supply as a consequence of teacher licensing, the licensing policies could help deter inexperienced and unscrupulous people from joining the teacher profession (Doherty & Purtilo, 2015; Edlin & Haw, 2013). This is because teachers who are not well qualified may not excel in the licensing exams and thus may not be given the opportunity to work as professional teachers. As a result of teacher licensing, the low attraction of teachers could be the extra monetary burden teachers envisage. This is because prospective teachers can only sit for the licensing exam when they register as candidates and teachers have to travel to the selected exam centers from far and near to sit for the exams. It's a reality that licensing exams come at an expense (Hendricks, 2010). Even the extra monetary pressure felt by teachers may be the theft of money by licensing body from prospective teachers though this is an unconfirmed custom in Ghana.

While the survey findings showed a mixed feeling among Ghanaian teachers over the enforcement among teacher licensing policies, the results of the research by Riney, Thomas, Williams, and Kelley (2006) was clear in that most teachers (93 percent) used for the study assumed that the licensing scheme should render the teaching organization responsible and should therefore advertise the prestige of teachers at the level of certain occupations, such as law and others. The adverse influence teachers feared about, among others, the abuse of teachers as far as money was concerned but this was far from the thoughts of Indonesian teachers, thus the majority did not see any detrimental effects on the enforcement of the licensing scheme.

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

Teachers understood specifically that licensing teachers was about providing teachers the legal approval to exercise their occupation as it is done elsewhere. This is to convince the public that they have what it means to educate the students. Nevertheless, the licensing test prompted teachers to reconsider and carry on different positions in the classroom that would result in high performing students

Teachers believed that the advent of teacher licensing may have detrimental impacts on teachers and their activities (such as a decreased availability of teachers to schools and colleges and a diminished amount of persons drawn

to the teaching profession) and positive consequences (such as teacher happiness, encouragement to teach and enhancement in contact within teaching fraternity).

Teachers were not trained to enforce licensing policies for teachers in Ghana. This is because teachers do not have awareness about both the regulation material and the costs. The shortage is attributed to the GES and teacher associations denial of sufficient schooling by professional learning programmes.

It was proposed that GES institutes steps beyond the teacher licensing program through its supervisory unit to track and control the delivery approaches used by teachers. Again, it was proposed that teacher education institutions educate pre-service teachers in ways that would lead to the acquisition of basic teaching qualities and skills. Further, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should have oversight responsibilities over the activities of the licensing authority to prevent money extortion.

## 9. References

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