

Original Paper

Deontological Perspective of the Free Secondary Education Policy in Ghana

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Abstract

The Free Senior High School (aka. FSHS) policy of the Ghana government has attracted views from both critics and supporters. The objective for this investigation was to examine the deontological ethics of the FSHS educational policy leadership within the framework of utilitarianism-it is as a “duty” and for “public good”. Critics are questioning the policy leadership, intentionality, feasibility, and sustainability. Supporters are also defending the FSHS as a timely social intervention, for equitable access, and the ability of the national economy to afford by re-strategizing government priorities, national indebtedness, and the entire school management system. The research design was exploratory mixed method using a sample study (N=55) that came from six schools (students, head teachers, teachers, and parents) in one region. Data were analysed under the themes: perceptions, benefits, and challenges. Responses showed that the FSHS seems to be a natural progression from the FCUBE policy that is hailed as successful by the international donors. Respondents confirmed the benefits derived from the FSHS policy as altruistic. The discussions followed the theory of ethical deontology, policy leadership implications, democratization of education in Ghana, and the utilitarian concept for future national development. Recommendations include the Government of Ghana (GoG) should ensure “fitness” and “rightness” to align with national priorities in the economy. Secondly, GoG should fight against corruption and “noise” in the FSHS implementation system. Thirdly, the GoG should consider cost sharing and decentralization of education provision in Ghana. Policy makers (legistrators) should ensure that the education system recognizes Ghanaian children as deserving better quality and the incommensurability of values of Education for All.

Keywords

Altruism, deontology, ethical leadership, Free SHS, secondary education in Ghana, utilitarian ethics

1. Introduction

Ghana has always been in the forefront of implementing international agreements on education and poverty reduction agreements as an effort to bring about equity and social justice interventions (Bell, 1997). Again, Ghana is signatory to several international initiatives such as *Education for All* launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Since April 2000 Dakar *World Education Forum* that established a framework for action. Over 35.0% of the national budget is usually allocated to education (Ghana Statistics Report, 2017, 2018, 2019). The focus has been to provide for basic education nationwide and to help poverty elevation among the citizenry so that under the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy, all school going age children irrespective of social economic status, must go through basic education freely, and it is compulsory in Ghana. The FCUBE policy implementation has been a success story in Ghana education system and in granting access to education for all (World Bank, 2015). These measures have been in place for governments to act as “obligations” or “duty” to the citizenry—an ethics of deontology—a moral rationalization rather than consequentialism.

According to Capraro, Sippel, Zhao, Hornischer, Savary, Terzopoulou et al. (2018), a “deontological philosophy, rather than being grounded in moral reasoning, is to a large extent an exercise in moral rationalization” (p. 2). The ethics of deontology is about “obligation, or duty” to the majority of the society (Wikipedia, 2019). This obligation to society is in commensurate of actions or behaviours that are altruistic in nature.

When it comes to secondary education, the 4th Republic of Ghana’s Constitution of 1992 also guarantees equal access to all citizens but on a “*progressively free*” approach (Abdul-Rahaman, Abdul Rahaman, Ming, Amed, & Salma, 2018). From which the previous government took consolation to implement a policy of expanding secondary education through a Community-based Day Senior High School (CDSHS) system. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) under formal President John Dramani Mahama built 210 CDSHSs. Most of the schools were allocated in close proximity to the communities and therefore the philosophy was that children do not need to be housed and could be bused from their neighbourhood to the school freely. The popular *E-Block* designed facilities to cater for the expansion of secondary education had their own challenges and flaws in enticing both teachers and students. Within the communities the children preferred to attend boarding schools away from their respective parents and communities, and to enjoy “better” school facilities and better prospects across the country.

The present Government of Ghana (GoG) under the leadership of President Nana Akufo-Addo has taken a bold decision to implement the party’s flagship campaign promise of providing a free secondary education for all Ghanaians dubbed *Free Senior High School* (FSHS). It has been implemented since the academic year 2017/2018. It allows all qualified students to go through

secondary education with all expenses paid by the GoG. The free secondary education covers tuition, boarding and lodging, feeding, no charges for library, no utilities, science laboratory fees, information and communication technology fees, and no textbooks fees, and certainly, there is no levies for infrastructural development (Ministry of Education Report, 2017). The policy is seen as a practical extension of the FCUBE that guarantees free basic education to all children and had been hailed as successful by the World Bank report (2011). Therefore the FSHS policy offers “fittingness” of the distributed wealth, equal privileges to secondary education as a universal human right, and it has an imbedded moral obligation—the *right* thing rather than *consequences*—that relates to a veracity of *duty* and “*rightness*”. The President said that he is prepared to re-align national budgetary allocations, setting our national priorities right, in an effort to finance *Free SHS* in Ghana (Presidential Speech, 2017) for the benefits of future generations of SHS students. In effect, this resonates a “call to duty”, an “obligation” to citizens; this is deontological based on an action which is judged “*rightness*” rather than consequence.

1.1 The Issues and Inquiry Questions

However, the issues for this investigation is that the concept of FSHS has attracted much criticism despite its axiological values, signs and science of compassion, and the normative ethics of deontology. Critics are poised to question three fronts. First, the *political motives*, practicality, affordability, and sustainability of such an ambitious programme at the time when the economy is not ready, and whether the policy is sustainable as a developing country such as Ghana with a per capita income of about US\$1,350. Secondly, they question the government’s *readiness to sacrifice* all other developments for “fame”; thus, the intentionality of the government to win “cheap popularity” with the masses. Thirdly, the critics further see the policy as a strategy to *destroy the quality of secondary* education in Ghana by promoting a massive dysfunctional secondary school system. These are legitimate questions because of lack of evidence of a pilot study to inform policy implementation, there is no evidence of readiness within the system, and the issue of the robustness of the Ghanaian economy to absorb all cost and the subsequent stress on both teachers and infrastructure in the education system.

Nevertheless, the main objective for this investigation is to examine the deontological ethics of such an educational policy leadership in offering the country’s citizens a free secondary education within the framework of utilitarianism. The following questions are therefore raised for discussions:

- (1) What are the perceptions of beneficiaries of this FSHS policy in terms of their secondary education?
- (2) Do beneficiaries’ views support any claim of deontological distinction in the act of utilitarianism?

2. Relevant Literature Review

2.1 Education and Democratization

Following John Dewey, the American philosopher who believed that “*Education ... is the chief social instrumentality for forming a type of human beings that carry on the beliefs and traditions of a*

community” (Chambliss, 2004, p. 2), and that “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself” (p. 2). Dewey and Gutek (2005) wrote,

Education as training of faculties ... one outcome of education should be the creation of specific power of accomplishment. A trained person is one who can do the chief things which it is important for him to do better than he could without training: “better” signifying greater ease, efficiency, economy, promptness, etc. (p. 66).

Educators could identify with this by looking at the change and development students go through with secondary education after the basic school. So it was said that in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) our shortcomings in developing manpower is in “quality, quantity, and efficiency” of countries to provide secondary education (Unknown author, 2019, p. 109). The author elaborated on how many developed countries at one point in the history of their education system fell short in secondary education and gather courage to institute mass education.

In France, half the children born in 1900 left school by the age 13. In England in the early 1940s. 90 percent of students left school by age 14 (citing Gilland, 2007). In Sweden in 1930, only 15 percent of adult population had education beyond the sixth grade. In Finland, as late as 1960, only 12 percent of the population ages 15-64 had completed secondary education or higher education” (p. 111).

In the United States and Europe, the strategies for further expansion of education opportunities were distinctly different. The transformation from elite to a mass system of secondary education occurred in the first half of the 20th century in the United States; in the 1970s and 1980s in Europe (citing Goldin, 2001; Goldin & Katz, 2003; Briseid et al., 2004); and in the latter part of the century in East Asia (Edwards & Asare Amoah, presentation, 2019).

Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018) cited many researchers (such as Garcia-Penalosa & Wald, 2000; Pettinger, 2012) to support the view that, “acquiring literacy and numeracy is a fundamental human requirement and who argued that educating individual benefits the society more than the individual as it equips a person with social values that enhance national unity” (p. 26).

Secondary education is important in a democracy and in developing society. The official Free SHS policy website (2019) states:

Education and skills training are the most important source of empowering and providing opportunities to the youth to help drive Ghana’s development, and in the process create jobs.

As a nation we are determined to bring education to the doorstep of our children because it is worth it. We dare to do this because we ardently believe that the Ghanaian child deserves it (<http://freeshs.gov.gh/index.php/free-shs-policy/>)

Along this line of thinking is the fact that educating citizenry is partly democratic and belief in human right for all. Secondary education, free and fair, universal and accessible, is a condition of growth. Dewey mentioned that “the primary condition of growth is immaturity ... when we say immaturity means the possibility of growth, we are not referring to absence of powers which may exist at a later time; we express a force positively present—the ability to develop” (Dewey & Gutek, 2005, p. 45). In a true

democracy nations have the obligation to allow individual citizens to grow and develop equally, free and fair, irrespectively.

2.2 Deontology, Policy Leadership, and Utilitarianism Framework

Deontology is a moral philosophy, a concept that falls within the framework of normative ethical theory. The Greek work: δέον, *deon*, means an “*obligation, or duty*” (Wikipedia, 2019, # deontological ethics). According to Milton D. Hunnax (1986), deontology is the study of people’s actions that are “based on whether that action itself is *right* or *wrong* under a series of rules, rather than based on the consequences of the action” (supported by definitions from dictionary.com, n.d.; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.).

Deontology is derived from the Greek words, το δεον (that which is proper) and λογια, knowledge—meaning the knowledge of what is right and proper; and it is here specially applied to the subject of morals, or that part of the field of action which is not the object of public legislation. As an art, it is the doing what is fit to be done; as a science, the knowing what is fit to be done on every occasion (Wikipedia, 2019, #deontological ethics).

Deontological leadership is therefore defined as the influence of actions and behaviours that is morally jeered towards the “good of the whole” based on the “fitness” for the public good rather than the consequences of such actions or behaviour. In other words it is the leadership decision based on what is “good to do” and an action irrespective of the consequences.

Ruth Chang (2007) had this to say: “The most extreme forms of deontology maintain that duties trump utility—one’s duties not to lie, cheat, or steal always outweigh the utility of doing so, however great the latter may be” (p. 1). Chang was comparing deontology to incommensurability (and Incomparability), which is more of a legal terminology. It is about comparing the measurability of concepts that inform actions; but more importantly in this context, it is about the implications on moral reasoning, practical reasoning, and policy implications.

Philosophical (Kantianism) and utilitarianism and altruism: moral and ethical dimension in education falls in line with the belief in doing what is rationally right. According to Milton Hunnax (1986), Kantian philosophy states that, “Right is the rational willing of one’s duty for duty’s sake. Where duty is “the necessity of acting from respect for the moral law Concepts of moral value (the good, etc.) are definable in terms of moral obligation or rational fittingness which are themselves underived, i.e., unanalyzable” (p. 25). Utilitarian ethics is often equated with “the greatest good for the greatest number”. It is equally examined under the construct of altruism (Jarymowicz, 1992; Smith, 2009). Altruistic values, behaviours, and beliefs were empirically examined and found to be a true “compassionate love fully expressed” (Smith, 2009, p. 83). Altruistic values emanates from the ethics of care and responsibility (Jarymowicz, 1992). Jarymowicz, (1992) explained that it is the thinking of unselfish positive attitude or behavior toward others. It is marked by the belief that an action or decision that affects others must be mutually beneficial. For social comparison, Jarymowicz exposed the *Me-We-They* differentiation to expand on the respect a person ought to have for other; the respect

for diverse opinions; and the social responsibility people should have for others and themselves. Therefore in educational policy decisions the deontological ethics is the strongest model for applied public relations ethics as far as leadership is concerned (Chang, 2007).

2.3 Financing Secondary Education

The Literature shows financing education in general is a huge task (Abdul-Rahaman et al., 2018). Most governments pledge in their intentions to reform and develop education when seeking power to govern but fail to implement due to financing issues. A BBC World Education Blog (27 January, 2016) asked: Can Africa afford free education? Responses were diverse and insightful. According to the debate, it has always become more of rhetoric than realities in most developing economies.

UNESCO Statistics (2007) available through the UN Population Division says that Ghana had over three million secondary school-age population (12-18 years). At the moment during the era of FSHS implementation Ghana has over 3.8 million (Free SHS policy website, 2019) (See Table 1). Looking at Ghana's 4th Republic's 1992 Constitution, education is supposed to be free and accessible from basic to secondary for all school going children. The constitution guarantees that. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) supports this move. SDG #4 states: *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

The Policy of FSHS, according to the official website,

The Nana Akufo Addo lead [sic] government has given full effect to SDG 4.1 with the implementation of a Free SHS policy. The programme is anchored in four pillars: (i) *Removal of cost barriers*, (ii) *Expansion of infrastructure*, (iii) *Improvement in quality and equity*, and (iv) *Development of employable skills* (FSHS Policy website, 2019, #Index_page)

And that the policy has resulted in an increase in enrolment. According to Hon. Dr. Yaw Osei Adutwum, Deputy Minister of Education, the gross secondary education enrolment ratio in Ghana is now 62.6 percent, up from 36 percent registered in 2010. He continued by promising the “government was also working hard to transform the country's educational system to ensure quality at the senior high level” (Ghana Business News, November 25, 2019). In Ghana Statistical Report (2007) it was stated that with the result of government policies on basic education “to act as a catalyst in accelerating school enrolment at the lower level ... it may have a positive spill over effect at the secondary level” (p. 31). Hence, governments should think of ways to accommodate the spill over at secondary level similarly to what Goldin and Katz (2003) reported. In their working paper on “*Mass Secondary Schooling and the State*” they stated: “*State governments were also involved in a host of ways that effectively decreased the supply price of secondary schooling to certain individuals and districts*” (p. 2). Decentralization may be the way to financially sustain the FSHS policy in Ghana; Ghana government should consider sharing responsibilities with individuals and districts.

3. Method

3.1 Design, Questions, and Theoretical Underpinning

The study was explanatory mixed method design (Creswell & Plato Clark, 2015). This is because in our data collection process we first collected quantitative data (using a questionnaire) before the qualitative data (interviews). It was grounded on the ethical theory of deontology based on the idea that political leadership has a “duty” and “utilitarianism” towards the citizenry. But the questions raised were:

- (1) What do the beneficiaries of this FSHS policy say to support any claim of deontological distinction in the act of utilitarianism from the government?
- (2) Is there any overarching long term benefit(s) to the nation as a whole of such the FSHS policy qualify to warrant a deontological perspective discourse?

3.2 Participants and Selection Technique

Sixty participants were targeted and selected to provide the needed “narratives” for this study. There were two categories of participants targeted: (i) students and (ii) parents/or teachers. Six SHSs were selected within the Kumasi Metropolitan area. These schools were purposively selected because they are similar in characteristics and as public schools that have large population of beneficiaries. Consent letters were sent to solicit for permission and participations. Five students were identified by already defined criteria in each school for the purpose of the study. The criteria were (i) students who are beneficiaries, (ii) student leaders such as school prefects, dining hall prefects, and class prefects, and (iii) those students who are willing to volunteer their experiences and perspectives freely. Voluntary participation was critical for ethical reasons. Thirty students volunteered.

In the case of parents/teachers (PTA) category, the school headship were made to identify and solicit volunteers. It was for a balancing act that we ask five parents or teachers in each of the six schools. In Ghana each public secondary school have a school head and two or three assistants: administration, academic, and domestic assistants. In most of the schools the heads volunteered their responses and also suggested further interaction with the Domestic Assistant, which was deemed appropriate because of their role in logistics and caretaking of beneficiary students. Through the school administrators, we had participants from teachers and one or two parents as well to volunteer.

3.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

One survey instrument was involved in this study to ask specific questions on the *perception* of the FSHS programme, the *benefits* to the students, and *challenges* in the foreseeable future. The survey questionnaire was used to solicit the opinions or perceptions of participants who were all literate but may be limited by time and business activities therefore had open ended items to allow their candid opinions to be expressed. Participants were allow time to reflect and write anonymously but could indicate if they are willing to be interviewed. The interview guide, however was also fashioned like the questionnaire items with semi-structured and open-ended to mimic face-to-face interactions.

In this case the questionnaire had additional demographics information to solicit whether participants

were parents, teachers, or students. Also, other demographic information such as gender, age, ethnic and others deemed necessary. But for simplicity the questionnaire had few items with a Likert scale of five levels: strongly agree (5), to strongly disagree (1). Four question items were posed as *to what extent do respondents agree with statements*.

- 1) *The government is helping to absorb all cost of your SHS fees freely.*
- 2) *The Free SHS is a “Farce” and not reality that the government of Ghana is using for political gimmick.*
- 3) *I believe the Free SHS education is universal human right in getting education for myself (or my ward).*
- 4) *As a student this Free SHS policy is good and should be continued.*

All the participants were first given semi-structured questionnaires to answer and asked to offer themselves for further interview (thus, purposively a minimum of two students and two PTA category). Eventually, 55 participants presented usable survey questionnaires that offered their responses and certain “narratives” which were coded and analysed to correspond with the intention of the study. There was no focused-group discussion in this case. The questionnaire instrument items were repeated to reinforce their already given responses on the survey questionnaire (as described subsequently).

In the case of interviews, respondents were asked to “talk” further on each statement followed by a discussion on further probing questions, which were driven by the concept of “duty” (deontology ethics) and the greatest good (utilitarian ethics). Thus, in all the interviews we were interested in how their responses “narrate” and/or “correspond” to the understanding of the ethics of deontology based on grounded theory of ethical “duty” and philosophical (utilitarian) belief in “education” by simply probing further but more importantly focused:

- *Do you think the FSHS policy is beneficial to you, to others, and/or the nation as a whole?*

Raw interview data were collected with field notes and voice recording using the mobile phone of which participants were made aware and consented to it. Participants’ respective views were thematically analysed on (i) *Perceptions*, (ii) *Benefits*, and (iii) *Challenges* as par the FSHS policy.

4. Results

A total of 55 respondents with 30 students beneficiaries (54.5%) and 25 PTA (Parents and teachers); majority being females (n=35, 63.6%). The 15 interviewees also gave a comprehensive raw data to be analysed on the three thematic areas: (i) *perception* of the FSHS policy, (ii) *benefits* of the FSHS policy to the students/or parents, and (iii) *challenges* of the policy pertaining to sustainability. These thematic areas were analysed to answer questions raised and reported primarily from the two categories (i.e., students and parents/or teachers). For this particular report there was no need for segregating responses based on other demographics such as gender, age, urban or rural, socio-economic status, and so forth.

4.1 RQ1: What Are the Perceptions of Beneficiaries of This FSHS Policy in Terms of Their Secondary Education?

This question was to find out how beneficiaries perceive this policy for it to support a claim of deontological distinction in the act of utilitarianism. Analyses were done by looking at the critical value for the Meas which was 3.0 (where $M \geq 3.0$ means agreed and $M < 3.0$ also means disagreed).

- *Theme of Perception*

First, on the theme of *perceptions* participants gave their opinions regarding FSHS policy as in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Participants Responses (n=55)

Survey item	M	sd
<i>The government is helping to absorb all cost of your SHS fees freely.</i>	3.24	.86
<i>The Free SHS is a Farce and not reality that the government of Ghana is using for political gimmick.</i>	2.03	.96
<i>The Free education is my (my ward's) universal human right in getting education.</i>	3.55	1.07
<i>This policy is good and should be continued.</i>	2.64	1.24

KEY: Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Not Sure (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly disagree (1). (Mean Critical Value=3.0)

From Table 1, participants agreed that so far, the government is helping to absorb all cost of SHS (Mean = 3.24, sd=0.86). Secondly, participants disagreed with the statement that “*the FSHS is a farce and a political gimmick*” (Mean = 2.03, sd=0.96). Thirdly, participants perceived the FSHS policy as their universal human right to education (Mean=3.55, sd=1.07), and finally, participants, especially those who are benefiting from the policy, saw the FSHS policy as “*good and should be continued*” (Mean=2.64, sd=1.24).

The results from the interviews are as follows based on the question: *Do you think the FSHS policy is beneficial to you, to others, and/or the nation as a whole?*

During the interview sessions one student beneficiaries identified aged 17, a first year student said:

“*My siblings should have been in colleges now, [but] my parents cannot [sip] afford to sponsor them to continue ... so I believe I would have been at home not going to SHS this year.*”

Another female student, this time a student leader said: “*As for the free SHS Nana Akufo Addo has brought ... I see it as a good plan to help people like me. Hmm, otherwise there is no way I can [sip] come here (a category A girls-only school in Kumasi)*” (bold emphasis added).

A teacher with a ward in SHS said:

“*for me the way I see this Free SHS it is God sent oh. I have four children. How could I have afforded three of my children at various levels of their education; one at university and one at secondary school*

here, and the other one at JHS with this my small salary ”

The parent of a beneficiary stated: *“The way I see this policy Nana Addo is going to be president for another four years ... this Free SHS is going to help many children to learn more ... away from the street ... this selling, selling by the street is killing them.”*

- *Theme of Benefits*

One student beneficiaries identified as a 17-year male first year student said:

“My parents cannot afford to bring me to continue my education if the President has not helped me ... so I believe I would have been at home not going to SHS this year.”

A male student leader (dining hall prefect) said:

“I have seen students eat happily at the dining hall. Nobody is afraid of the housemaster sending them home and not allowed to eat ... as it used to be the case”.

Another Prefect supported the colleague:

“The students who are not paying fees they even enjoy the food more. I am in my second year, I paid fees. I should have come this year not last year because I still owe some of the fees”.

An Assistant Domestic teacher said: *“As for the benefits of the Free SHS policy it is really good because it was a big issue driving students to their parents for the school fees. Now we only have to think of how to get the supplies from the government.”*

The parent of a beneficiary stated: *“My girl are [sip] not at home oooh doing market, market with their mother. This policy from the NPP government has helped me to educate my girl too. She is going to be a lawyer, all because of FSHS and now I can sleep because of Nana Addo and his Party”.*

- *Theme of Challenges*

A probing question emerged concerning the issue of anticipated challenges. For instance, a student Boys’ Prefect said: *“I can see the government running out of cash somehow and making students pay oo. Hmm. But you see the only thing is that many poor students will stay home and not come to school again if the free SHS is to stop”.*

A teacher reiterated this fear: *“As for the challenges plenty. I’m afraid... if they had consulted me or some of us, we would have told the President to start small small with those who cannot pay anything”.*

He continued: *“that will also not be fair... you see ... I will not come and say I can pay. Nooo”.*

A head teacher of one of the SHS:

“Now the food distribution from the government suppliers is our biggest challenge. It is not GES, it is the suppliers who are not reliable. I am now relying on those who are paying fees (the final year students) ... to get money to feed the free SHS ones until the FSHS suppliers come later”.

“Eii hmmm as for the accommodation issue, I have been trying to solve it but these students are plenty (the school absorbed over a 1000 students this year alone) ... Infrastructural problem is all over when I speak with other colleagues. But you see this is the beginning so” He continued.

A parent of a beneficiary student emphasized:

Me I cannot see any foreseeable challenge. The Ghana government is rich. Look at their cars,

luxurious big big V8 cars ... it is a matter of priorities. Nana has done it and God bless him for his courage. That man is courageous. Others promised but couldn't start because of same challenges.

4.2 RQ2: Do Beneficiaries' Views Support Any Claim of Deontological Distinction in the Act of Utilitarianism?

- *Theme of Benefits*

One student beneficiaries identified as a 17-year old first year visual arts student said:

"Coming to school my parents told me I can be anything I want to be, so I believe I'm going to design cars and build my own from home, and next time become rich to support others and my parents. I don't think I would have been talking like this if I was at home not coming to SHS this year."

A male student leader (house prefect) at final year said: *"I have seen students happy. There was a student in my "dorm" (a slang for dormitory) who had no "provisions" (essential commodities) and he was talking about becoming a pharmacist"*.

Another second year beneficiary supported: *"I'm the first in my family in the village near 'Nkenkasu' to come to SHS here in Kumasi. I'm not going to be a farmer like my parents and big brother. Aahh, I am thinking of going to KNUST (a University of Science and Technology at Kumasi) to be an engineer. Those of us not paying fees have to learn paa [sip]. I am in my second year, I don't pay fees. But I think the government should give scholarship for University too because I'm poor."*

An Assistant Domestic teacher said:

As for the benefits of the Free SHS policy it is a long term investment into these students. Perhaps we can't see it now but when many of these students get to finish and get to university and start working and paying taxes the government can get its money back

The parent of a beneficiary stated: *"I know that this policy from the NPP government has helped me to dream BIG for my girl. She is going to be a good girl, studying medicine and when I am sick and old I can see her attending to me because of Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo"*.

Triangulate both the qualitative and the quantitative data in Table 1 and we see an overwhelming beneficiaries, many of them that we interviewed, saw the benefits of the FSHS outweighing the challenges. And they sought for sustainability rather than aborting the policy in Ghana secondary education system. Many responded that the decision was based on the utilitarianism of what will benefit the greater majority.

5. Discussions

It was John Dewey, the American philosopher, who said "Every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination" (Dewey & Gutek, 2005; Hunnux, 1986). Leadership cannot be imagining challenges alone; leadership has to imagine the future and have the audacity to smile at challenges. Exemplary leadership is about "*challenging the process*" of how things are done (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). If "education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself...." according to John Dewey's philosophy of education, then the process of education to

the highest level should be challenged by ethical intuitionism (Hunnex, 1986). The kind that emphasizes on the moral *rightness* or *goodness*. John Dewey went on to say then that providing education in a democratic society is a “duty”, the, *το δεον* (*that which is proper*) for leadership to advance education and human capital in the society.

The humanistic claim of deontological distinction in the act of utilitarianism is evident perhaps until one does not have it (education), and that one tends to take it for granted that which is supposed to be a human right. The beneficiaries interviewed perceived this FSHS policy as a great and a significant hope in their lives. The FSHS policy has its challenges. But notwithstanding, the value of education, and for that matter, the benefits for all is comparable to the legal term “*the incommensurability of values*”, which according to Chang (2013) who tried to explain with literature, that from the Pythagoreans, Aristotle era there are some “*values [that] lack a common unit of measurement*” and that “*Two values, such as pleasure and fairness, are incommensurable if there is no cardinal scale of value according to which both can be measured*” (pp. 2592-2594). In this vain, a nation cannot place full monetary values on secondary education of its citizenry; at best it can count quantify the cost of *not doing* what is its “duty”—a veracity of deontological.

Deontological leadership is about the influence of actions and inactions, behaviours that is morally jeered towards the “greater good of the whole”. It corresponds with the utilitarianism of making a decision based on what will benefit the greater majority of a country. The FSHS policy is deemed by respondents’ perceptions, responses, and sentiments that it is the “fitness” for the public good rather than the consequences of such actions or behaviour against the future. Confirming the words of the President Nana Akufo Addo, the Ghanaian children of the future cannot wait. The FSHS programme is anchored on four pillars: (i) it is to remove all of cost barriers to secondary education, (ii) to expand infrastructure, (iii) to improve quality and equity to education, and (iv) to develop employable skills. (FSHS Policy website, 2019, #Index_page). These are novelty of intents, sign of ethical intuitionism encapsulated in actions that stress on the “objectivity of moral rightness or goodness” an irreducible character of moral judgment (Hunnex, 1986) and a show of balance by tenacity of leadership.

One of the characteristics of a deontological leadership is the ability to act, formal or on intuition, and allow your action to be “based on whether that action itself is *right* or *wrong* under a series of rules, rather than based on the consequences of the action” (dictionary.com, n.d.; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.). The consequences of Ghana not responding now to free secondary education is perhaps more damaging to the future than the sacrifices of comfort and other duties to serve the next generation. More importantly, perhaps, critics will see the President Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo as driven by the *wisdom of his ego* to establish a legacy as in the virtues of generativity (Valliant, 2002). Yet, I think there is an overarching long term benefits according to the perceptions and narrations of the experiences of respondents, the indefinable appropriateness of his action to jumpstart such a laudable FSHS policy that warrants a deontological discourse under the theory of utilitarian ethics.

The future prospects should far outweigh the present challenges. Deontology as an art, is the *doing*

what is fit to be done; as a science, the *knowing* what is fit to be done on every occasion (Wikipedia, 2019, # deontological ethics). Under the deontological ethical theory discussions on the belief are concerned primarily with moral obligation – the rightness – rather than ends or consequences” (Hunnex, 1986, p. 25). The moral obligation in this case is the perception of “*duty*”, the *ought*, rightness, or fittingness; it is categorical in nature; and the government ought to do this for equity and moral good—choosing what is right to do.

As demonstrated by a respondent: *“I’m the first in my family in the village near “Nkenkasu” to come to SHS here in Kumasi. I’m not going to be a farmer like my parents and big brother. Aahh, I am thinking of going to KNUST ... to be an engineer. Those of us not paying fees have to learn “paa” [sip]. I am in my second year, I don’t pay fees. But I think the government should give scholarship for University too because I’m poor.”* To him the government should provide free SHS and even do more by providing free University as an “obligation”—a moral duty. The majority of respondents do not see the FSHS as a *farce and a political gimmick* ($Mean=2.03$, $sd=0.96$). But they see it as the citizens’ quest for a categorical imperative, a Kantian philosophy, which says it is as right as “rationale willingness of one’s duty for duty’s sake” towards the citizenry (Hunnex, 1986, p. 25).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

In other words, this is where we agree with the study conclusion of Abdul-Rahaman et al. (2018) that Free SHS should not become a “*pseudo-free*” SHS. Funding of secondary education in developing countries is a huge task because of population growth that is exerting pressure on developing countries’ limited resources. However, with a little sacrifice and a re-alignment of national priorities, policy leadership can oblige their responsive duty of providing quality and equity in secondary education in Ghana. It is an act of utilitarianism; it is an act of humanity for the greater good of the whole nation; and it is for posterity to judge what was “*right*”.

The study revealed the benefits and challenges to the policy’s sustainability. Genuinely, these are threats to the opportunities. However, it takes determination on the part of leadership to remain focus in the midst of criticisms and challenges. Already the provision in the 4th Republic Constitution of Ghana has the armoury for the government to act now; a progressively free since 1992 is relative depending on who is interpreting it; and since 1992 all attempts have failed the citizenry. Now Ghanaian have hope that the President has demonstrated a true altruistic behaviour in caring for the secondary school going children in deprived areas of the nation.

In a democratic dispensation in Ghana the citizenry has to perceive the government as doing what is right, a “*duty*” to serve them for their interest and collective growth (Dewey & Gutek, 2005). The people have to perceive a moral obligation of government in providing “*rational fittingness*” as revealed in reasoning, intuitionistic behaviour, and/or moral sense. Many interviewees perceived the government as such. *“I know that this policy from the NPP government has helped me to dream BIG*

for my girl. She is going to be a good girl, studying medicine and when I am sick and old I can see her attending to me because of Nana Addo Danquah Akufo Addo” (A parent of a beneficiary student). This is hopeful. A policy that guarantees an altruistic value that “people should be willing to help the less fortunate” (Smith, 2009) and allow the less fortunate to dream.

6.2 Recommendations

First and foremost, the Government of Ghana and those in charge of the FSHS implementation should continue to show leadership in daring to envision a brighter future for all secondary going students. The benefits are positively perceived by beneficiaries. Therefore the present government should possess a “new audacity of imagination” and consider the “fitness” to re-align national priorities that alternately will guarantee an overwhelming success of this policy.

Secondly, challenges facing the implementation of the FSHS policy should not deter policy leadership from doing what is right and fitting. There is a call and veracity of duty (deontology) to support the less-privileged. The President Nana Akufo Addo cannot fail, and he dare not fail Ghanaians. It is therefore recommended that he burnish all forms of corruption and “noise” surrounding the implementation of government business of the FSHS. Any hindrance must of necessity be removed to pave way for smooth improvements in quality of secondary education to bring improvement in skilled labour for national development. For the greater good corruption in the education system is a challenge yet to be removed.

Additionally, the government should realize that “the incommensurability of values” of *Education for All* is incomparable to the sacrifices of today against tomorrow. Prioritization is the new game in governance; stakeholders’ involvement through cost sharing may be more practical. Like John Dewey, the American philosopher said; “*Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but [it] is life itself.*” The government should therefore give the next generation a new paradigm of thinking about life, dreams, and the tools to making their life meaningful by decentralizing the financing of education in the country.

Finally, those in the affairs of implementing the government’s FSHS policy must be oriented and exposed to certain humanistic concepts such as utilitarian ethics, altruistic values, behaviours, and beliefs, and the concept of deontology as an ethical decision making tool for the *right* thing to be done, practically, and to ensure that as the government “*we dare to do this because we ardently believe that the Ghanaian child deserves it*” (Free SHS official website, 2019). This is highly recommended because many in the affairs of Ghana government policies may not necessarily accept for the very fact ruling in a democracy calls for that of δέον, *deon*, which means an “obligation, or duty” to the majority of the society (Wikipedia, 2019).

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