

## The Perceptions and Preparedness of Teachers towards Professional Teacher Licensing Policy in Ghana



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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The aim of this study was to evaluate how Senior High School teachers in the Bono Region of Ghana perceive and prepare for the implementation of the professional teacher licensing policy.

**Methods:** The study utilized a descriptive survey approach, which allowed the researcher to directly observe the phenomena under investigation. A sample of 300 teachers from Basic Schools in the Sunyani Municipality was selected using a simple random sampling method. The participants were given a questionnaire to complete, and the heads of the selected schools were also interviewed.

**Results:** The study revealed that teacher licensing aims to showcase the competence of teachers. Additionally, it was found that most teachers have limited knowledge about the teacher licensing policy due to a lack of discussion on the topic. There is a negative but statistically insignificant relationship between teachers' perception and their perceived effects of the licensure policy, and their performance on the job ( $p$ -values $>0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, the study indicates that teachers generally understand that licensing grants them legal approval to practice their profession. However, the policy may impose financial burdens on teachers and potentially reduce the number of individuals pursuing a career in teaching. However, there is no statistically insignificant relationship between teachers' perception and their perceived effects of the licensure policy, and their performance on the job.

**KEYWORDS:** Licensure, Professionalism, Perception, Preparedness, Policy

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background to the Study

The requirement for professional licenses is becoming increasingly common in various fields worldwide. These licenses aim to safeguard public interest by preventing ineffective and unethical individuals from working in government positions (Doherty & Purtilo, 2015; Edlin & Haw, 2013). While professional licensing extends beyond a single profession, it is notably making its way into the education sector of Sub-Saharan Africa's third-world countries. Cooper and Travers (2012) state that teacher certification is driven by concerns about unprofessional behaviour among teachers, which has sparked criticism of the teaching profession in recent years. In response, Ghana's National Teaching Council has introduced teacher licensing as a means to redefine the country's core values and grant educational authority to its leaders.

Integrity is a key characteristic associated with licensing, as highlighted by Acosta and Acosta (2016). It is considered an essential requirement across professions such as law, medicine, and teaching. In countries like Ghana, licensing has transitioned from trade-related licensing to teacher licensing, driven by the belief that the teaching profession plays a vital role in supporting communities. Teaching is often regarded as the "mother of all professions" and is seen as instrumental in developing well-rounded individuals who can promote best practices, foster future prosperity, and attract foreign investment and knowledge (Nenty, Moyo, & Phuti, 2015).

Governments worldwide constantly question how they can enhance teaching efficiency. Teacher certification systems are seen as a means to improve teacher productivity by ensuring that educators possess the appropriate qualifications and receive proper compensation. Teacher licensing differs from granting school licenses in education, as it focuses on authorizing teachers to teach based on their exceptional skills and abilities in addition to being certified by teacher training institutes. The emphasis on teacher education is thus reinforced, with teachers required to complete a teacher preparation program and obtain a license that equips them with the necessary knowledge, skills, experience, and mentorship to succeed (Haberman, 2017; Jacques et al., 2017).

A robust teacher certification can better equip instructors to handle the various challenges they encounter in their daily responsibilities. While licensure may not fully prepare teachers for every issue they face, it can help them feel more confident in

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addressing common challenges that arise during and after teaching. Without proper licensure, teachers may feel inadequate and perceive themselves as failures when unfavourable outcomes occur (Kelly, 2017).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers in Ghana have criticized the licensing of instructors, arguing that the qualifications obtained by school teachers already demonstrate their professionalism. These claims indicate that the academic achievement of students in public schools has been declining steadily over the past decade, a fact that teachers choose to overlook. It is worth noting that teacher education is not a novel concept, as it is taught in both Western countries and certain parts of Africa (Jacques et al., 2017).

Moreover, teachers may have imperfections that, if left unaddressed until they receive their certification, could affect their effectiveness and overall professional life. This could further compound the government's inability to recognize the issue. The government aims to provide teachers with the opportunity to express their opinions and suggestions. These remarks can serve as the basis for more inclusive and suitable policies for all stakeholders in the education sector. According to the Professional Teaching Certificate Advice (2014) in the Philippines, one advantage of licensing is that it safeguards teachers' employment, as professionally licensed instructors have more job security compared to professionals in other fields. However, teachers in Ghana might misinterpret and misunderstand the licensure if caution is not exercised and proper consultations are not conducted, which may have been the cause of their protest. Teacher training can have various implications for teachers and society, particularly in uncertain situations, as it promotes diligence, continuity, and career stability (Danielewicz, 2014).

Furthermore, qualified teacher certification in Ghana is relatively new, and there may be limited or no research conducted on the topic. Based on this background, this study aims to examine teachers' perceptions and readiness regarding the introduction of professional teacher licensing and its impact on their performance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to assess the perceptions and preparedness of Senior High School teachers in the Bono Region towards the introduction of professional teacher licensing policy in Ghana.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the perceptions of teachers in the Sunyani Municipality about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana.
2. Assess how prepared teachers in the Sunyani Municipality were towards the implementation of teacher licensing policy in Ghana.
3. Identify what teachers in the Sunyani Municipality perceive as the effects of teacher licensing on their professional life.
4. Assess the effects of teachers' perception and perceived effects regarding teacher licensing on teacher performance.

### **Research Questions**

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

1. What are the perceptions of teachers in the Sunyani Municipality about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana?
2. How were teachers prepared in the Sunyani Municipality towards the implementation of teacher licensing policy in Ghana?
3. What do teachers in the Sunyani Municipality perceive as the effects of teacher licensing on their professional life?
4. What is the effect of teachers' perception and perceived effects regarding teacher licensing on teacher performance in the Sunyani Municipality?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concepts of Licensure Examination**

The Teacher Licensure Examination is a written test that qualified teachers must take in order to join a larger community of experienced educators who contribute to the teaching profession (Liston & Zeichner, 2013). Licensing plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of the teaching workforce. Similar to obtaining a four-year education degree, which is required to meet the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2015), licensure elevates teachers to the status of highly knowledgeable professionals. Licensing systems are used in various professions to select competent individuals and prevent the practice of those deemed unfit. These systems establish clear distinctions between those who possess the necessary level of competence to begin their careers and those who do not.

Licensure is a vital requirement in professions like law, medicine, nursing, and teaching, serving as a symbol of professionalism. One significant advantage of teacher licensure or certification is job security, as the teaching profession offers more stability compared to many other fields, especially for certified or licensed professionals (Professional Teaching Certification Advice, 2014). Aquino and Balilla (2015) argued that in most countries worldwide, teachers must receive training from a college of education or university and pass a mandated licensure examination to be considered "highly qualified" and eligible for employment. The same licensure examination requirement applies to teachers in other countries, such as nurses in Ghana, allowing them to implement the curriculum in their teaching and learning. The teacher licensure examination is viewed as a standard of dedication, skill, and quality, acknowledged by employers, governments, and the public. Therefore, it can be concluded that the licensure examination plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of basic education in Ghana, as stated by Kent (2015). This license enables basic education

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teachers to demonstrate the utmost professionalism, exhibit good character, and maintain respectful relationships with their students, avoiding any potential issues in the present or future.

### Professionalism

As consumers or users of products, we naturally tend to seek standardized features when making purchases. Likewise, teachers are required to obtain a license to ensure the quality of their services, similar to how physicians and attorneys need to be licensed (Roth & Swail, 2000). It is evident that the most crucial factor for students' success is having skilled and knowledgeable teachers. Therefore, just as we look for standardized features in products, we should also prioritize standardization when selecting the schools, friends, and teachers our children will encounter. The selection of competent teachers is vital for children's development and should be done with care (Mensah et al., 2020).

According to Ingvarson and Hattie (2000), a professional certification system is not designed as a payment scheme but rather as a means to serve the profession, the public, and employers who seek a valid way to reward highly skilled teachers with incentives for professional growth and recognition. Implementing a licensing system ensures that teachers are properly trained and equipped to educate and guide students. This system entails teachers successfully completing a well-established evaluation to demonstrate their ability to effectively impart knowledge.

### Ghana National Registration/Professional Guidelines

In Ghana, a "teacher licensure exam" has been implemented to grant licenses to graduates of colleges of education and universities that provide teacher education. This exam, administered by the National Teaching Council (NTC), assesses candidates' proficiency after completing their diploma or degree programs (Mensah et al., 2020). The initial exams, held from September 10th to 12th, 2018, covered subjects such as literacy (verbal aptitude and essay writing), numeracy (basic calculations), and essential teaching skills (methodology). The success of candidates in these licensure exams determined their prospects of employment as teachers in the Ghana Education Service (GES). Individuals with a bachelor's degree in a specific field but lacking teacher training were required to complete a one-year teacher training program to obtain a "Postgraduate Diploma in Education." Additionally, certification programs were made available for practicing teachers who lacked certification but desired to acquire one (Mensah et al., 2020).

### Pre- /In-Service Training and Student Teaching

The 41 colleges of education provide a three-year Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) program for students who have successfully completed their secondary school exams with a minimum aggregate score of 24. This certification course is designed for aspiring teachers who wish to teach at the primary and junior high school levels. Additionally, practicing teachers who already hold a Teacher's Certificate "A" can pursue the DBE program for a duration of two years. On the other hand, teachers who obtain a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree from the University of Cape Coast (UCC) or the University of Education, Winneba (UEW) are eligible to teach in senior high schools (SHS). The degree programs typically last for four years, while the DBE certificate can be obtained in two years (National Commission for Colleges of Education, 2013).

To further address the need for professional development, the Ministry of Education has introduced a four-year Untrained Teacher Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) program, which has successfully trained 16,000 teachers through distance education (Ghana Education Service, 2012). Additionally, the Ministry has established an In-Service Education Training (INSET) program to support the ongoing professional growth of teachers. This program focuses on various levels, including the school, cluster, and district, aiming to enhance teaching capacity and school management.

### Conceptual Framework

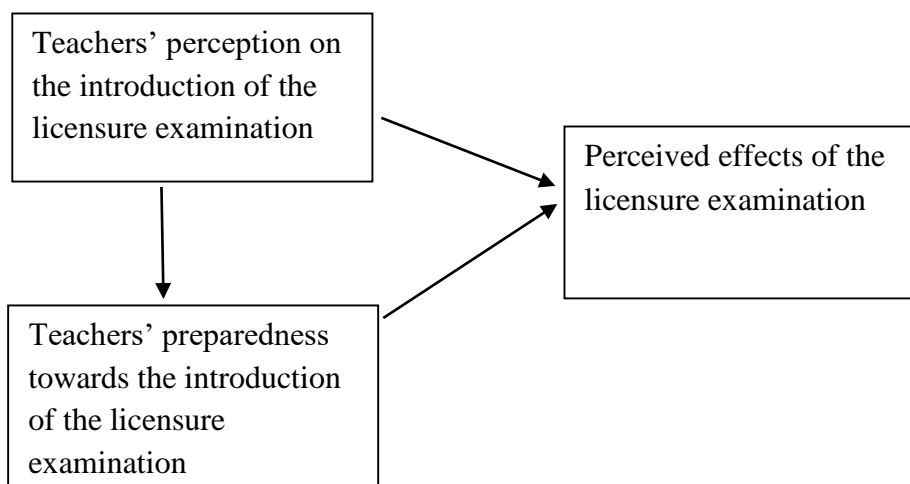


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

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The perception of teachers towards the introduction of the licensure examination has an impact on their level of preparedness for the exam and their overall perception of its effects. If teachers have a positive view of the licensure examination, they will be motivated to prepare well for it and see it as a beneficial aspect of their teaching. Conversely, if teachers develop a negative perception of the exam, they will not adequately prepare for it and may feel demotivated by the policy, leading to negative effects on their teaching. Additionally, the level of preparedness among teachers also influences how they perceive the overall effects of the licensure examination. Teachers who are well-prepared for the exam will view it positively and recognize it as a factor contributing to their performance.

### **Theoretical Review**

This section presents the theoretical bases for the study. The study is based on the Social Cognitive Theory which is a good theory to use for studying teachers' attitudes towards licensure policy. This theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning, self-efficacy, and environmental influences on behavior. It can provide insight into how teachers perceive and respond to licensure policy, as well as how their attitudes towards the policy are shaped by their environment and their own beliefs and experiences.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was first proposed by Albert Bandura in 1986. It is an extension of behaviourism, which focuses on the influence of external factors on behaviour, and emphasizes the role of internal cognitive processes in the development of behaviour. SCT suggests that individuals learn new behaviours by observing others and that the environment can influence behaviour through reinforcement and punishment. It also suggests that behaviour is a result of the interaction between the individual's cognitive processes, the environment, and the behaviour itself. SCT has been used to explain a variety of behaviours, including aggression, depression, and substance abuse. It has also been used to explain the development of self-efficacy, self-regulation, and social skills (Gonzalez, 2021).

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) can be applied to study teachers' attitudes towards licensure policy by examining how they perceive, interpret, and react to the policy (Bandura, 1986). Specifically, SCT suggests that individuals' attitudes are shaped by their experiences, observations of others, and cognitive processing of the information (Bandura, 1986). In the context of licensure policy, teachers' attitudes towards the policy may be influenced by their prior experiences with licensure, their observations of other teachers' reactions to the policy, and their own cognitive processing of the policy's implications for their profession.

For example, teachers may interpret licensure policy differently depending on their prior experiences with licensure. Those who have had positive experiences with licensure may be more likely to have a positive attitude towards licensure policy, while those who have had negative experiences may be more likely to have a negative attitude. Similarly, teachers may observe how other teachers react to the policy and form their own attitudes based on these observations. Finally, teachers may cognitively process the implications of the policy for their profession in order to form their attitudes towards the policy.

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has been applied in studies to understand teachers' attitudes towards licensure policy. For example, a study by Miller, Riggs, and Glessner (2020) applied SCT to explore the influence of teacher efficacy, professional commitment, and collective efficacy on teacher attitudes towards licensure policy. The results of the study showed that teacher efficacy and professional commitment had a significant positive influence on teachers' attitudes towards licensure policy, while collective efficacy had a significant negative influence. The authors concluded that the SCT can be used to better understand teacher attitudes towards licensure policy, and that further research should be conducted to further explore the effects of other SCT-related variables on teacher attitudes towards licensure policy.

### **The perceptions of teachers about the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana**

The quality of an education system cannot surpass the quality of its workforce (Aquino & Balillia, 2015). This assertion has been widely quoted by policymakers and teacher organizations, serving as a catalyst for policy reform. Teacher educators in basic education consider the licensure examination for teachers essential for their professional development. It not only grants them honor and prestige but also provides a competitive advantage over non-licensed teachers (Aquino & Balillia, 2015).

Recognizing the significance of eligibility in the teaching profession, achieving a good score in the licensure examination for teachers establishes highly qualified professionals eligible for employment in both private and public schools. Consequently, the government has a role in regulating the teaching practice by mandating aspiring teachers to register, write, and pass the licensure examination before entering the profession. Research indicates that licensed or certified teachers produce greater student achievement gains compared to uncertified teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). Furthermore, Goldhaber and Anthony (2007) indicate that teachers certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are more effective than their non-certified counterparts in enhancing student achievement.

Amoah, Britwum, and Adu-Gyamfi (2015) concluded in their study that teachers perceive the implementation of teaching licenses as a government initiative to provide legal protection for the teaching profession. When prospective teachers are considered unqualified and unfit for employment after waiting for teacher certification exams, they feel the need to complete these tests in order to obtain a certificate to work. Teachers also believe that teaching, like any other occupation, requires licensing. They view the licensure examination as an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills acquired during teacher preparation. This

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perception may stem from concerns raised by both the Ghanaian government and the public regarding the competence of teachers in the subjects they have been teaching over the years, with poor student performance in subjects such as English Language, Biology, and mathematics in BECE and WASSCE exams. However, teachers argue that teacher certification does not necessarily improve teacher-student effectiveness because they are unlikely to change their teaching methods based on the results of certification tests.

### **How prepared teachers were towards the implementation of teacher licensing policy in Ghana**

Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) found that graduates perceived their readiness for teaching as less satisfactory because they were not considered qualified until they completed standard teacher training. Although there was some improvement compared to previous years, their preparedness was still lower compared to other regions, which posed challenges in meeting the needs of underprivileged students. In these areas, instructors hired outside of formal programs rated their training much lower, indicating that they felt ill-prepared in terms of current teacher education policies. Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) suggested a strong connection between teachers' sense of preparation for teacher licensing and their confidence in their ability to achieve teaching objectives once licensed.

According to a study conducted by Amoah et al. (2015), the findings revealed that the teachers involved in the research were experienced but faced difficulties in implementing the teacher licensing program in Ghana. They perceived unresolved government concerns and felt that their competence in educating Ghanaian children was being questioned. The unpreparedness observed may be attributed to new teachers who doubted their abilities due to perceived doubts from the government and the public.

Unless the teachers received the specified training, they were expected to understand that licensing policies are universally associated with professional standards. However, experienced teachers in the study had limited knowledge of the licensing policy. Professional development initiatives such as workshops could enhance teachers' training for policy implementation, but such opportunities were lacking. As a result, the shortage of lectures and courses hindered teachers' preparedness. If the teachers included in this research were seasoned educators, they may have recognized that licensing partially involves evaluating the performance of qualified in-service teachers. Without licensing, concerns regarding integrity arise (Amoah et al., 2015).

While teachers may have become familiar with teacher licensing policies through their teaching practice, it was essential for the government to provide training through professional development programs facilitated by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service. This does not imply that the government neglected teacher career development services. Over the years, various professional learning projects were implemented across the country. However, they were not utilized to adequately train and equip teachers for policy implementation when the government initially introduced the policy. Additionally, the country's teacher unions may have played a role in not coordinating career learning programs. It is possible that the teacher union members (such as GNAT, NAGRAT, and CTA) resisted the enforcement of the teacher licensing policy, perceiving it as an attempt by the government to discipline teachers for the poor performance of students. Therefore, there are unanswered questions regarding the teacher unions' involvement in the successful implementation of the policy (Amoah et al., 2015).

### **Perceived effects of teacher licensing on their professional life**

The passing of the licensure examination for teachers in Ghana is a clear indication of the quality of teachers and their ability to provide a quality basic education. According to Buddin and Zamaro (2008), the licensure tests are designed to establish minimum proficiency standards for teaching, and teachers who fail to meet these standards may have poorer classroom outcomes compared to those who pass. It is crucial for educators to meet all the required standards and obtain a professional license to ensure they are well-qualified.

Amoah et al. (2015) concluded that well-organized educational programs in teacher education institutions can provide prospective teachers with the necessary expertise in content and pedagogy, making teacher licensing unnecessary. They argue that the experience and achievement of students are associated with their awareness of teachers' qualifications. Therefore, the licensing test does not motivate teachers to instruct in areas they have not encountered as students. It does not improve their professional practices but removes public suspicion of their inexperience.

The findings from Amoah et al. (2015) also suggest that teacher licensing implementation in Ghana may reduce the number of teachers entering the profession, which teachers view as a negative consequence. If teachers believe they have acquired sufficient expertise and skills through rigorous academic training, they may be less attracted to the teaching career. Taking the licensure exams would not significantly alter their knowledge and skills. Additionally, teachers may be protective of their qualifications, and the licensure tests could become a focal point for assessing professional competence. Consequently, qualified teachers may choose not to pursue teaching, leading to a shortage of teachers in schools and colleges. However, the licensing policies could help prevent inexperienced individuals from joining the teaching profession.

The implementation of teacher licensing may also impose financial burdens on teachers. Prospective teachers have to register as candidates and travel to selected exam centers to sit for the exams, incurring expenses. Teachers perceive this as an additional financial pressure, and there are concerns about the potential misappropriation of funds by the licensing body, although this is not confirmed in Ghana (Amoah et al., 2015).

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### Effects of Licensure Policy on Teacher Performance

A study from the United States, conducted by Oliveira (2020), found that teacher licensure was positively associated with teacher performance. Specifically, they discovered that teachers with provisional licensure or full licensure had better performance ratings from principals as compared to teachers without licensure. In contrast, teachers with full licensure from other countries did not show statistically significant changes in performance ratings compared to those without licensure.

Boe and Draper (2010) found that teacher licensure policies were not associated with improved performance on the TPA. Additionally, their results indicated that teachers who held a teaching license longer had poorer performance on the TPA than teachers with shorter licensure periods. Jones et al. (2013) also found that initial teacher licensure did not improve performance, although teachers who held their license for a longer period of time had lower TPA scores than teachers with shorter licensure periods.

Another study from Canada by Gow (2018) showed that teachers with full licensure had higher performance ratings from school administrators than those without any licensure or with conditional or temporary licensure. Gow (2018) also found that elementary school teachers with full licensure had higher ratings than their counterparts without licensure or with limited licensure.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used for this study. It highlights the research design, the population and sampling method used, as well as data collection instrument and data analysis technique used.

### Research Design

In Kothari's (2014) perspective, research design refers to the comprehensive blueprint, structure, or strategy employed to gather data in order to address various research inquiries. The conducted study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional approach and utilized a mixed method. Consequently, a diverse group of teachers from the study area were surveyed to depict and quantify the distribution of the variables under investigation. A descriptive study aims to systematically portray a problem or provide information about a particular situation to illustrate its prevalence (Zikmund, 2013). This type of study involves collecting data through interviews or questionnaires administered to a selected sample of individuals. Furthermore, the mixed method approach enhances the credibility and reliability of the research by integrating quantitative elements with qualitative aspects of the study.

### Study Population

The study population is the group of individuals or objects from which the sample is taken for measurement (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). It is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics. In this study, the study population consisted of teachers of the Basic Schools in the Sunyani Municipality. According to the Municipal Education Directorate, there are a total of 91 public basic schools in the municipality with a teacher population of 1,341 teachers.

### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Sampling is defined by Yin (2014) as a method used in drawing samples from a population usually in such a way that the sample facilitates determination of some theory concerning the population.

The sample size for the study was determined using the relation by Yamane (1973) for a finite population correction factor which is given by; Sample size ( $n$ ) =  $\frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$ , where  $N$  is the study population and  $e$  is the standard error.

Therefore,  $n = \frac{1341}{1+1341(0.05^2)} = 308$ . However, a total of 300 teachers were sampled for the study.

In selecting the study sample, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used by the researcher. The Municipality is put into seven (7) circuits according to the management protocol of the Ghana Education Service.

The circuits were considered as strata, from which a simple random sampling method was conducted to select 5 schools from each zone. In the selected schools, all teachers who were willing to participate in the study were recruited and administered with questionnaire. Also, heads of the schools were also purposively selected and interviewed.

### Data Collection Instruments

The researchers developed two sets of instruments to gather data for the study. These instruments included a structured questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A focused on collecting socio-demographic information from the study participants. Section B aimed to capture the perceptions of teachers regarding teacher licensing. Section C explored teachers' preparedness for the implementation of teacher licensing policies, while Section D investigated the perceived effects of teacher licensing. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to score the questions based on their level of agreement or disagreement, using a scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represented "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represented "Strongly Agree."

On the other hand, interviews were considered the most convenient method of data collection in qualitative studies. When used effectively, interviews provide researchers with a practical means of understanding the reactions, insights, and interpretations of participants in the study's context. The interview guide was used to gather data from the heads of the selected schools.

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### Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, it underwent testing with ten (10) teachers from two basic schools in the Sunyani West Municipal. This testing process aimed to refine certain aspects of the questionnaire, making it more user-friendly and self-explanatory. As a result, the time required to answer the questionnaire was reduced when necessary. Additionally, the pretesting exercise revealed challenges faced by respondents in understanding the questions. Corrections were made based on this feedback, ensuring that the questionnaire still met the objectives of the study.

### Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally handed out the questionnaire to the participants. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the teachers and allowed a week for them to complete it. This timeframe was chosen to ensure that the respondents would cooperate and return the questionnaire promptly. Prior to collecting data, the researcher provided an introductory letter to the school heads, which stated the purpose of the study and requested their assistance. Additionally, the researcher sought approval and support for the study from the teachers.

### Data Analysis Method

Data from the field was cleaned, coded, grouped according to study variables and then entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0. Descriptive frequency tables and charts were then used to represent the analysed data. Qualitative data was analysed using themes in a thematic analysis with codes to represent the study participants.

### Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted in conformity to ethical codes in social science research. The ethical considerations include ensuring voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents. The purpose of the research was explained to all respondents and respondents were given questionnaire to complete based on their informed consent and voluntary participation. Respondents were also assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. The study also adhered to other codes of ethics regarding data collection and information retrieval, as well as attributing secondary data to the valid sources.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the data analysis and a discussion of the results. The presentation of the actual results is done in descriptive statistics and in accordance with the study objectives. Demographic data of the respondents are presented in frequency tables.

**Table 4.1: Response rate**

	Frequency	Percentage retrieved (%)
Total questionnaire sent out.	300	100.0
Questionnaire retrieved.	300	100.0
Questionnaire lost.	0	0.0

The researchers administered a total of 300 questionnaires to the respondents and were able retrieve all the questionnaires for analysis.

**Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age group</b>		
20-30 years	56	18.7
31-40 years	74	24.7
41-50 years	120	40.0
51 years and above	50	16.7
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	224	74.7
Female	76	25.3
<b>Qualification</b>		
Bachelor's degree	178	59.3
Master's degree	122	40.7
<b>Years of working experience</b>		
1-3 years	58	19.3
4-6 years	88	29.3
7-10 years	104	34.7
Above 10 years	50	16.7

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Of the 300 respondents, 18.7% was aged 20 to 30 years, 24.7% was aged 31 to 40 years, 40.0% was aged 41 to 50 years and 16.7% was aged 51 years and above. Most of the respondents were above 30 years and were therefore considered matured enough to understand the concept of the study. Out of the 300 respondents, 74.7% was males whilst 25.3% was females. The senior high schools are male dominated area as reflected in the results.

Of the 300 respondents, 59.3% had attained Bachelor's degree whilst 40.7% had attained Master's degree. The least qualification being a bachelor's degree means that the respondents have a good academic qualification and can make strong argument regarding the study aim.

Out of the 300 respondents, 19.3% had worked for 1 to 3 years, 29.3% had worked for 4 to 6 years, 34.7% had worked for 7 to 10 years and 16.7% had worked for more than 10 years. The results show that majority of the respondents have worked for more than three years and this means that most of them have been in active service before the introduction of the licensure policy in the profession.

**Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' perception on the introduction of licensing**

Statement	N	Min.	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Teacher licensing involves evaluating the fundamental qualities and skills of educators.	300	1.00	5.00	2.92	1.29
Teacher licensing aims to enhance the performance of teachers and students in the classroom.	300	1.00	4.00	2.65	.93
Teacher licensing supports teachers in re-evaluating their teaching practices and adopting new roles in the classroom.	300	1.00	4.00	2.13	.95
Licensing helps teachers instruct using methods that were previously employed.	300	1.00	3.00	1.82	.88
Licensing helps teachers employ teaching approaches they may not have experienced as students.	300	1.00	3.00	1.78	.70
Licensing helps establish teachers as competent professionals.	300	2.00	5.00	3.69	.68
Licensing grants legal permission to teach.	300	2.00	5.00	3.65	.91
Licensing determines if prospective teachers possess sufficient conceptual knowledge.	300	1.00	4.00	2.02	.94
Licensing assesses whether prospective teachers can effectively apply these concepts.	300	1.00	3.00	1.60	.67
Licensing ensures the selection of qualified professionals for teaching positions.	300	1.00	5.00	3.33	1.23
Licensing assists teachers in demonstrating that they meet all required professional standards.	300	1.00	5.00	3.23	1.03
Teacher licensing promotes professionalism, which is reflected in high-quality outcomes.	300	1.00	5.00	3.13	1.19
Valid N (listwise)	300				

From Table 4.3, the results show that most teachers have a negative perception regarding the introduction of the teacher licensure policy. For instance, the participants disagreed that teacher licensing is about improvement in teacher-student performance and also that teacher licensing is about helping teachers to rethink their own practice to construct new classroom roles.

**Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' preparedness towards licensing policy**

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
I possess extensive knowledge regarding the policy for teacher licensing.	300	1.00	5.00	2.99	1.25
I have a thorough understanding of all aspects of the teacher licensing policy.	300	1.00	4.00	2.42	1.17
The GES has conducted training sessions to educate teachers about the teacher licensing policy.	300	1.00	4.00	1.93	.957
In our school, we were supposed to have a meeting to discuss the responsibilities of in-service teachers in relation to the implementation of the teacher licensing policy.	300	1.00	5.00	3.23	1.21
The GES was expected to provide us with training and necessary documents to ensure our preparedness.	300	1.00	5.00	3.29	1.27
Members of GNAT, NAGRAT, or CTA attended a seminar to prepare teachers for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy.	300	1.00	4.00	2.34	1.02



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Given my level of teaching experience, I am fully prepared for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy.	300	1.00	5.00	3.23	1.29
Valid N (listwise)	300				

The findings presented in Table 4.4 demonstrate that the teachers lacked sufficient understanding of the licensure policy and were unprepared for its implementation. The study participants expressed a lack of familiarity with the teacher licensing policy and disagreed with the notion that the Ghana Education Service (GES) adequately educated them on the policy. Additionally, the teacher unions (GNAT, NAGRAT, or CTA) failed to provide any information or guidance to help teachers prepare for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy.

**Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' perception on the effects of teacher licensing**

Statement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Teacher licensing will contribute to boosting the professional standing of teachers within their specialized fields.	300	1.00	5.00	2.7	1.18
Teacher licensing will enhance the evaluation system for teachers' instructional units.	300	1.00	4.00	2.34	1.17
Teacher licensing will foster improved communication among teachers within the education community.	300	1.00	5.00	3.57	1.13
Teacher licensing will promote increased motivation among teachers.	300	1.00	5.00	2.76	1.28
Teacher licensing will cultivate teacher self-confidence and effectiveness.	300	1.00	4.00	3.01	.97
Teacher licensing will contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction among teachers.	300	1.00	4.00	2.06	1.22
Teacher licensing will help elevate both teacher and student outcomes.	300	1.00	4.00	1.95	.90
Teacher licensing will result in a decrease in the availability of qualified teachers.	300	2.00	5.00	3.87	.94
Teacher licensing will impose additional financial burdens on teachers.	300	1.00	5.00	3.35	1.25
Teacher licensing will incentivize more individuals to pursue a career in teaching.	300	1.00	4.00	2.41	1.02
Teacher licensing may lead to excessive fees imposed by the licensing authority.	300	1.00	3.00	1.56	.78
Valid N (listwise)	300				

According to Table 4.5 above, the teachers expressed disagreement with the notion that teacher licensing would enhance their reputation in their specific field of expertise. They also disagreed that teacher licensing would contribute to the improvement of teachers' unit assessment system. Furthermore, they disagreed that teacher licensing would have a positive impact on teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, the influx of new individuals into the teaching profession, as well as the enhancement of both teachers' and students' outcomes.

However, they did agree that teacher licensing would facilitate better communication within the teaching community. Additionally, they acknowledged that teacher licensing would lead to increased teacher self-efficacy. The participants indicated that the Ghana Education Service (GES) should have provided them with in-service training and the necessary documents to prepare for the licensing process. They also expressed concerns that teacher licensing would result in a shortage of teachers and impose additional financial burdens on them.

**Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics on Teacher Performance**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I perform very excellent	300	3.00	5.00	4.25	.51
The thought of the licensure exams put me off my work	300	3.00	5.00	4.19	.61
I sometimes feels that the government and the Ghana education service do not appreciate my work as a teacher	300	3.00	5.00	4.00	.60
The licensure policy has positively affected my performance	300	1.00	3.00	2.19	.85
I am demotivated by the licensure policy	300	3.00	5.00	4.32	.75
I always feel unconcerned with my performance	300	3.00	5.00	4.23	.50
Valid N (listwise)	300				

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The results in Table 4.7 above indicate that the introduction of the teacher licensure policy did not go down well with teachers. Teachers think that the policy is a burden and demotivation to the teaching profession. Teachers feel that the government of Ghana do not appreciate the work they do and they also become unconcerned with their performance.

**Table 4.7: ANOVA**

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.138	2	.069	1.241	.292 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	8.199	147	.056		
	Total	8.337	149			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance  
b. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived Effects, Perception

**Table 4.8: Regression Coefficients**

Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
							Lower Bound
1	(Constant)	4.215	.320		13.173	.000	3.583
	Perception	-.025	.074	-.030	-.336	.737	-.172
	Perceived Effects	-.106	.069	-.138	-1.548	.124	-.242

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The results in Table 4.8 show that there is a negative relationship between teachers' perception and their perceived effects of the licensure policy, and their performance on the job. However, the relationship is not significant ( $p$ -values>0.05).

## DISCUSSION

The study participants perceive that teacher licensing is not aimed at evaluating the fundamental qualities and skills of teachers. Additionally, most teachers disagreed with the notion that teacher licensing is meant to assess the adequate knowledge of prospective teachers in various concepts. The teachers believe that the training they received in Colleges of Education and the examinations they took are sufficient to gauge their basic qualities and skills as professional teachers, rendering licensing unnecessary. This contradicts the perspective of Mitchell and Barth (2001), who argue that licensing serves as a measure of knowledge in basic skills, subject matter, and pedagogy.

Furthermore, they perceive that teacher licensing does not contribute to the improvement of teacher-student performance. Various measures, such as in-service training programs, are considered more effective in enhancing teacher performance. Taking the licensure examination is unlikely to lead to any improvement in teacher performance; instead, it is perceived as a judgmental tool. This aligns with the findings of Amoah et al. (2015), who state that teachers understand licensing as a partial judgment of the performance of qualified in-service teachers, raising concerns about integrity in the absence of licensing.

One of the heads of the schools commented that the teachers had negative perception regarding the licensure policy and did not therefore show any preparedness for it. Below is the comment:

*"Negative perceptions of teachers regarding the introduction of teacher licensing in Ghana primarily stem from the perceived lack of readiness to meet the requirements of the policy. There are fears that the requirements for licensing may be too onerous, that the process may be too expensive, that the timeline for compliance may be too tight, and that support services may be limited."* (Head teacher 5)

Additionally, teachers perceive that the Ghana Education Service (GES) has not adequately informed teachers about the teacher licensing policy. Most respondents also agreed that there should have been meetings in their schools to discuss the roles expected of in-service teachers in the implementation of the policy. Therefore, there is a need for the GES and the GES Council to provide proper education to teachers before introducing the licensure examination. This concurs with the findings of Amoah et al. (2015), who suggest that while teachers may have gained awareness of the licensing policies through skilled teaching, the government should have trained them through professional development programs facilitated by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service.

The views of the heads of the schools were not different from the findings. Government was focus on other stakeholders other than the teachers. Below are some of the comments from the heads of the schools:

*"In preparation for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy, the Ghana Education Service (GES) undertook several initiatives. These included extensive training of stakeholders, capacity building for the Teacher Training Centers, recruitment of teacher and school managers at the regional and district levels, and sensitization of teachers."* (Head teacher 3)

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Furthermore, the study reveals that the GES should have provided teachers with in-service training and necessary documents to ensure their readiness. Most teachers disagreed that, with their level of teaching experience, they were prepared for the implementation of the teacher licensing policy. Teachers expected to be informed about the areas covered in the examination. There were concerns that the licensure examination might not include familiar areas. Additionally, most respondents disagreed that members of teacher unions had attended seminars to prepare for the implementation of the policy. This concurs with Amoah et al.'s (2015) findings, where teacher union members (GNAT, NAGRAT, and CTA) rejected the enforcement of the licensing policy, considering it an attempt by the government to discipline teachers for the failure of underperforming students.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents disagreed that teacher licensing would improve teacher and student outcomes. The licensure examination is not perceived as contributing to the improvement of professional practices among teachers. This is consistent with Amoah et al.'s (2015) findings, where most teachers believed that the licensing test would not lead to any improvement in their professional practices, but rather remove public suspicion of inexperienced teachers.

Moreover, the study results show that teacher licensing will not bring about job satisfaction among teachers. Additionally, most respondents disagreed that teacher licensing would make teachers feel motivated. The licensure examination itself has caused agitation among teachers, demotivating them from the profession. This concurs with Amoah et al.'s (2015) conclusion that the licensing test does not motivate teachers to teach in unfamiliar ways.

*“Teachers perceive that the main negative effect of teacher licensing is the added stress that comes with preparing to meet the licensing requirements. Many feel that having to work towards meeting the requirements detracts from their ability to focus on their teaching responsibilities. Additionally, there is concern that the cost of meeting the requirements would be a financial strain for many.” (Head teacher 1)*

The results further indicate that teacher licensing would impose an additional financial burden on teachers. However, the majority of respondents disagreed that teacher licensing would lead to monetary exploitation by the licensing body. The licensure examination incurs expenses, which burdens teachers financially. There are also concerns that some teachers may intentionally fail and be asked to pay money for licensure. This agrees with Amoah et al.'s (2015) conclusion that teachers may face financial pressure due to the licensing body, although this is an unconfirmed practice in Ghana.

The study reveals a negative relationship between teachers' perception of the licensure policy and its perceived effects, and their performance on the job. However, the relationship is not statistically significant ( $p$ -values $>0.05$ ). This means that while the licensure policy demotivates teachers in their delivery, they are still able to perform as expected. The findings of this study agrees with Boe and Draper (2010) who found that teacher licensure policies were not associated with improved performance on the TPA. Contrary to this however, a study from the United States, conducted by Oliveira (2020), found that teacher licensure was positively associated with teacher performance.

Some of the heads of the schools were also of the view that there are some negative effects of the licensure policy on teacher performance. Below is a comment made by one of the head teachers:

*“One effect of teacher licensing on teacher performance can result in poor morale and a decrease in productivity. This can lead to lower quality instruction and, ultimately, a decrease in student achievement. Additionally, the perceived difficulty in meeting the requirements may lead teachers to avoid pursuing professional development opportunities that could have a positive impact on their teaching practice.” (Head teacher 8)*

### CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study's conclusion is that teachers have a clear understanding that teacher licensing is primarily about granting legal approval for teachers to practice their profession, similar to practices in other places. This understanding is aimed at convincing the public that teachers possess the necessary qualifications to educate students. However, teachers perceive that the current mode of implementation of the policy is not appropriate because they believe that the training they received in Colleges of Education and the exams they took are sufficient to evaluate their fundamental qualities and skills for obtaining a license.

The study also concludes that teachers hold the belief that the introduction of teacher licensing could have negative effects on their profession and activities. These effects include a reduced availability of teachers for schools and colleges, increased financial burden on teachers, a decline in the number of individuals interested in becoming teachers, but also positive outcomes such as fostering connections within the teaching community and enhancing teacher self-confidence.

Overall, the study suggests that teachers would welcome a licensing system that enhances the profession's image and safeguards it against individuals who lack proper training as teachers. However, they disagree with the National Teachers Council regarding the implementation of the policy, particularly the requirement for active-service teachers to take a licensure examination. The study indicates a statistically insignificant but negative relationship between teachers' perception of the licensure policy and their perceived effects, as well as their job performance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Bases on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

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- The Ghana Education Service (GES) ought to provide additional training for teachers who are already employed, educating them on the importance of the licensure examination.
- Teachers who are currently employed should be granted a license to continue practicing their profession, exempting them from the requirement of taking the licensure examination.
- To incorporate the licensure examination into the educational system, it is proposed that the Colleges of Education introduce the examination as the final assessment before completing professional training.
- Additionally, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education assume oversight responsibilities over the licensing authority to prevent any form of financial exploitation.
- The supervisory unit within the GES should extend its role beyond the teacher licensing program and actively monitor and regulate the teaching methodologies employed by teachers.
- It is suggested that future studies should focus on the causes of mass failure in the teacher licensure examination in Ghana.

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