Scrapping teacher trainee allowance is an issue for equitable access to teacher education in Ghana.

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Research Article

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Abstract

The most recent policy on the abolition of the student allowance has generated mixed reactions from students and stakeholders. The study examined the effects of the removal of allowance for trainees in colleges of education on access to colleges of education. The study adopted the mixed methods approach utilising sequential explanatory design to collect both quantitative and qualitative. The investigation in which a quantitative phase of data collection and analysis was followed by a qualitative phase. Descriptive statistics were employed in the analysis. The abolition of the allowance for trainees has led to an increase in enrolment and improved infrastructure in the colleges. With regard to the standard of education, the lack of financial assistance for trainee teachers has led to a low level of attendance and learning outcomes as some trainees miss classes to engage in economic activities to support themselves financially while they are in the teacher colleges of education. It is also clear from the finding that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance puts additional costs on parents and trainees. The reforms have increased access to colleges of education as compared to the quota system. The Government of Ghana should consider abolishing the quota system for student participation in colleges of education. This is because the quota system component of the teacher education allowance scheme is a rather inhibiting factor. Government should also consider decentralizing financing and encouraging distance learning models as an alternative.

Introduction

The origin of education and teacher training can be traced back to the colonial period in the history of Ghana when education was largely informal and based on apprenticeship before the arrival of European settlers (Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The Europeans then built schools in the coast to provide education for their children (Kwamena-Poh, 1975). With the inception of independence of Ghana in 1957 the entire educational system became an important political tool for the post-colonial government to achieve their political interest (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh, Addo, 2016; Adu-Agyemen, Osei-Poku, 2012; Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

Since independence in 1957, teacher education in Ghana has undergone numerous reforms. For example, Colleges of Education were formerly known as Teacher Training Institutes that offered two-year Post-Middle Certificate “B” programmes, followed by four-year Post-Middle Certificate “A” and two-year Post-Secondary Certificate “A” programmes, and two-year programme was later extended to a three-year programme, which was going on alongside with the four-year certificate “A” programmes until it was truncated in the year 1980 (Akyeampong, 2010).

The educational reforms which made teacher education reform in Ghana an inevitable endeavour include quality, access, equality of opportunity, costs, management, effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness in the school system, deficiencies in selection procedure using the quota system, deficient in facilities for student-teacher as problems of teacher education (Armah, 2017). These reforms were as a result of policy changes which were aimed at producing high calibres of modern trained teachers to provide solutions to the educational challenges of the time across the length and breadth of the country. These
changes had resulted in the training of different classes of teachers with different types of certificates (Anamuah-Mensah, 2006). The reasons for these changes were that the four-year Teacher Training Course was established in 1930 to train middle school leavers to teach in primary and middle schools. This was to attract the best-qualified middle school leavers since teaching was highly respected as a profession.

Also, in order to meet the growing demand for more teachers at the primary level due to the rapid expansion of the education system, a two-year 'B' Certificate, a post-middle school training programme, was established in 1937 (Kwamena-Poh, 1975). As a result of the further expansion of the education system, a new two-year programme for Certificate "B" holders was introduced at the time of the Accelerated Development Plan in 1951, which enabled them to upgrade to Post-"B" Certificate "A" after a period of teaching experience in the classroom (Kwamena-Poh, 1975). These changes and extensions were designed to cater for different categories of products in the system and also to maintain the quality of teachers produced for teaching in the various schools in the country (Anamuah-Mensah, 2006).

With the expansion of secondary education, a new two-year programme for secondary school leavers was established in 1950 to train them to teach in middle and secondary schools. These graduates were awarded the "A" certificate. All of the programmes described above have been phased out and replaced by the three-year Post-Secondary Teacher Training Program leading to the "A" qualification certificate. This programme was established in 1978 with the main aim of improving the professional competence of trained teachers (Anamuah-Mensah, 2006; Akyeampong, 2010).

Currently, therefore, Teacher Training Colleges in Ghana have been renamed Colleges of Education. The institutions were established to train professional teachers to educate the Ghanaian in order to effect change in behaviours and thought. In the year 2000, following a comprehensive review of the educational system in Ghana, the Government published a white paper and declared that “all Teacher Training Colleges should be upgraded into diploma-awarding institutions and be affiliated to the education-oriented universities” (Ministry of Education, 2004). Prior to the Government white paper, the teacher training colleges were using the quota admission system where each training college was given a fixed number of students to admit (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Therefore, the Government white paper was taken away the financial burden of paying huge allowances and to increase enrolment numbers. Furthermore, scrapping the allowances would enable government redirect effort at improving educational infrastructure to boost enrolment (Ministry of Education, 2015). In this regard, 38 Teacher Training Colleges operating at a level equivalent to level four of the International System of Classification of Education (ISCED 4) were re-designated as Colleges of Education to offer tertiary education in 2008. Prior to their elevation and re-designation as tertiary institutions, the then Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs) were under the Ghana Education Service (GES). This is the agency responsible for pre-tertiary education. The TTIs were directly supervised by the Teacher Education Division, one of the divisions of the Ghana Education Service. Thus, funding, appointment of staff and determination of requirements to enrol in the institutions were the responsibilities of GES. With the current
reforms, the assessment and certification of the products of TTIs has been the responsibility of the Institute of Education of the University of Cape Coast. The Institute of Education has been in many years collaborated with the Teacher Education Division to develop and constantly evaluate the curriculum of pre-university teacher education in Ghana (Opare, 2008). In all these years, trainee teachers were receiving allowances from the Government of Ghana.

The Teacher Trainee Allowance Policy was introduced in the year 1960 as part of Kwame Nkrumah's education policy to attract more people to the teaching profession. All teacher trainees in public colleges of education, irrespective of their social status, were eligible for this allowance. The teacher trainee allowance was designed to attract people into teacher training to with the aim of obtaining adequate number of teachers within the shortest possible time. The introduction of the allowance was also intended to enable trainees to purchase teaching and learning materials (TLMs), and settle other personal needs. In particular, it helped the needy students who would otherwise have struggled to pay for basic expenses during the semester. In addition, in the final year of out-of-school education programmes in basic schools across the country, made use the allowance to support themselves (Ministry of Education, 2004).

In 2015, the Government of Ghana abolished the payment of allowances to teacher trainees and replaced it with a policy on student loans scheme. The government explained that the move was a barter to increase enrolment in colleges of education and to improve the status of these institutions. Moreover, due to government budget constraints, it was prudent to abolish the teacher trainee allowance in order to increase student enrolment in colleges of education and to improve the status of the institution (Ministry of Education, 2016). The government had put in place the student loan facility for teacher trainees as an alternative means of financial support. Others objected to the student loan scheme for the fact that it would be difficult for some of the students to access it because of the rigid requirements of the system. The withdrawal of the allowances; it is argued, would prevent less privileged individuals from accessing teacher training education, and that access to teacher education in future was more likely to favour individuals with good financial background or good social network (Armah, 2017).

There were other arguments that the removal of the teacher training allowance would increase equity and access into admission in the Colleges of Education in Ghana and paving equal opportunities to everybody (Armah, 2015). The argument on the other hand was that it would rather bring about untold hardships to the teacher trainees in the various Colleges of Education in Ghana.

The above contradictions led to scholarly debates on many issues. The supporters of the new reforms argued that it would bring about equitable access of students to colleges of education whilst those of: their opponents were the view that it would rather bring about untold hardship to the trainees and their families since the trainees used part of their allowance to support the family (Ministry of Education Report, 2015.).

There appears to be a gap remaining in access to colleges of education, particularly admission to and enrolment in Ghana's education colleges. The Government of Ghana decision to abolish the monthly
allowance in the past has been unpopular, especially among trainee teachers (represented by the Ghana Teacher Trainee Association (TTAG), across the country, and the TTAG called on all 38 Education Colleges in May 2015 to boycott classes until the allowances are completely restored (the Daily Graphic, 2015. P.3). Teachers and some educational stakeholders have criticized the government for stopping the payment of allowances to teacher trainees in the country. According to them, most trainee teachers depend solely on the allowance to pay their fees for their livelihood and thus ending payment of the allowances would adversely affect them. They also argued that the abolition of the allowances will worsen the problems of teacher shortages at the basic education rates, because the allowance is the only reason why the trainees were able to bond and be sent to remote areas. Nevertheless, the government insists that it has no intention of returning to the policy because there is strong evidence that the abolition of the payment has resulted in a rise of around 64 per cent in enrolment at the Colleges of Education and that it would help ensure that only those truly interested in the teaching profession are enrolled in the College of Education. Considering such conflicting debate on the retention or elimination of allowances, literature seems to indicate that an in-depth investigation (systematic research) will be required to unravel the core issues of the debate by undertaking a policy review of the policy decision on withdrawal allowances (Armah, 2016, 2017).

According to Armah (2016), the policy-decision to abolish allowances for teacher trainees need to be maintained. However, adversaries of the policy have largely argued that removal of the allowances would lower enrolment into the Colleges of Education since it would increase the cost of education for applicants. Most Ghanaians have argued that removal of the allowance would make teacher education a preserve of the rich. Due to the removal of the allowance, some students were denied access to teacher education and even those who had access to enrol could not complete as a result of financial constraints. This means that students who attend the Colleges of Education are from deprived socioeconomic backgrounds for which reason removal the allowances will put them to the disadvantage and favour people who can afford to pay (Armah, 2016).

However, empirical evidence to support or deny such a claim remains sparse. Rather, the evidence appears to point towards an expanded access to Colleges of Education across the country, even though at an increased cost to the students. So, what is accounting for this phenomenon? To answer this question requires Government to find out who are benefiting more from the new educational reforms.

The aim of this study, therefore was examined the degree to which the elimination of the allowance for trainees in colleges of education had an impact on enrolment of students in colleges of education. In addition, the study also intends to examine how enrolment trends have been affected and what challenges teacher trainees face in accessing the student loan scheme. The findings of this educational research would contribute to the documentation of knowledge, for practical improvement in policy formulation. This research findings can therefore be used by educators to fashion out approaches for their teaching and learning process. Knowledge of research would make it possible for school managers to provide teachers with support for continuous growth and development. This research would help managers, directors and other policy makers to understand which educational policy is helping to
improve the education system in order to promote universal access to education for teacher trainees and to maintain good quality standards in education.

**Fullan’s theory on Educational change**

To enable the authors to state the assumptions underlying the study research design and study setting, the researchers used Michael Fullan’s theory on educational change to underpin the study. According to Michael Fullan (2001), theory on educational change is multidimensional and involves many levels of society. For example, the school, the community, the state, and the classroom, students, parents, and teachers are stakeholders who influence the implementation, form, and type of change proposed by institutional authorities (Fullan, 2007). These stakeholders are constantly interacting, and the dynamic between them is making it extremely difficult for accepting a change or reform. The successful implementation of educational change is a complex process with no clear solution (Fullan, 1991). This explains why educational reforms are frequently not well implemented, resulting in a massive deficit of finance and human resources, a failure to achieve the desired goal of the reforms, and a loss of potential (Fullan, 2006). A variety of factors can either facilitate or obstruct educational change. Furthermore, educational change is a dynamic process involving interacting factors over time (Fullan, 2003). When more factors work against implementation, the process becomes less effective; however, when more factors support implementation, more change in practice is achieved (Fullan, 2011). The findings of various studies on educational change show that influencing factors frequently have a different impact in different educational change settings (Fullan, 1991; Fullan et al., 2005).

The inability of educational change is more than just the problems associated with inadequate of good materials, ineffective professional development, or insufficient administrative support. Essentially, educational change fails at least in part due to planners' presumptions and a lack of solutions to significant problems. (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Reynolds, 1989) The majority of changes fail to consider the local context and culture, which is extremely problematic (Fullan, 2007). Furthermore, according to Fullan (2007), change promoters must be committed to change and skilled in both the change process and the change itself. According to Fullan (2007), educational change is a process of coming to terms with the multiple realities of those who will be the primary participants in the implementation of change. The theory of change has been widely applied to assessing and evaluating educational reforms at all levels (Fullan, 2011).

Despite its widespread use to explain reforms, the theory of educational change faces conceptual criticisms, such as the fact that it does not prescribe specific evaluative methods or how theories of change are articulated (Blamey & Mackenzie, 2007; Sullivan and Stewart, 2006). The theory of change is more theoretical than practical in practice (Mason & Barnes, 2007). Again, rather than theoretical constructs that can be used to guide empirical research, the theory is more of a collection of practical wisdom statements. Furthermore, the theory prevents the concepts from being combined into a single research framework (Morrison, 2002; and McNaught, 2003).
Notwithstanding these major criticisms of Fullan's theory of educational change, using it in the study will aid in understanding the conditions and processes that led to the formulation and implementation of teacher education reforms in Ghana, as well as clarifying how certain internal and contextual factors influence the implementation of teacher education reforms in Ghana. Furthermore, the theory will aid in understanding the implementation of new reforms in the school system and how they can be formulated to achieve the reforms' goals and visions.

**Methods**

**Research design and study setting**

The study adopted the mixed methods approach utilising sequential explanatory design to collect both quantitative and qualitative. The study involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The sequential explanatory design was adopted because quantitative data were obtained from students using closed ended questionnaire whereas qualitative data were obtained from selected school authorities using open-ended questions. According to Creswell et al. (2003) the sequential explanatory design is characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data collection and analysis whereby the qualitative analysis explains the quantitative trends.

The mixed-method research design is deemed appropriate than any other method because with it, it is possible to describe the conditions, situations and events of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2018), that is the extent to which the removal of trainee allowance in the colleges of education impact enrolment in the colleges of education. More so, the researchers believe that a combination of both qualitative and quantitative avoids the shortcomings of using a single research approach by supplementing survey questionnaire with an interview component to strengthen the findings (Bell, Waters, & Ebooks, 2014). The study was conducted in selected colleges of education in Ghana using purposive sampling. The main objective of using purposive sampling was to allow researchers to focus on specific colleges that have the characteristics of the population of interest that would best enable researchers to answer research questions. The Accra College of Education and Ada College of Education have been purposeful selected for this study because they have rich information based on the diversity of students admitted suitable for qualitative research. These colleges are among the largest student population in the country. These colleges have a large population, but few studies have focused on those colleges. Studying these colleges would also help to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena at hand. These colleges also have infrastructure facilities and are well equipped with logistics among the country’s sister colleges of education.

**Study sampling procedure**

The probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed in this study. The random sampling was used to select the students for the quantitative phase while the purposeful sampling was used to select the school administrators for the qualitative phase. The probability sampling technique was used to select level one hundred, two hundred, and three hundred trainees in each college of
education. The criterion for selecting participants for the quantitative phase was that respondents must be a student who has been admitted to college for a three-year diploma in basic education and should be a first, second or third student in the programme. The probability technique was used because it provides an impartial representation of the population. It also produces samples that fully represent the population and every member of the population has a chance of being selected (Creswell, 2009). A simple random sampling technique using a lottery approach was used to select 200 student trainees from the study population. In a lottery approach using a simple random sampling technique, the researchers designed pieces of paper equal to the total number of study units (sampling frames) in each class or level (levels 100, 200 and 300) by gender category. For example, in each school, researchers designed a maximum of two hundred and thirteen (213) pieces of paper. The inscription "Yes" was given to thirty-three (33) pieces of paper while the other 180 pieces of paper were captioned "No." Each group of student trainees during the class year was gathered in the college assembly hall. The paper parts were folded, and placed in a box. The box was turned over and over again to ensure the pieces of paper were well matched to ensure that each student trainee was given an equal opportunity to be picked. During a briefing session, student trainees were expected to pick the pieces of paper at random. In this study a trainee who selected a piece of paper that had 'Yes' answer was enrolled as participants. With each class or level group at each college this sampling method or procedure has been repeated.

The non-probability technique was used to select three school administrators from each college of six participants in that category. The criteria for selectin of the school's administrators were that the persons must a principal of the college for at least one years or more, the person must be an accountant of the college who have served in the position not less than one years, and lastly the person must be admission officer of the college for the period of one or more years. The non-probability sampling technique was used in the category for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest in which the probability sampling technique could not provide that opportunity for sampling (Dodge, 2008).

**Data collection tools**

The research employed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The researchers needed to use the questionnaire as a large amount of information can be collected using questionnaire from a large number of people over a short period of time to validate the interview. Also, the semi-structured interview helps to elicit rich information from the participants (Kabir, 2016). These data collection tools were used to ensure that the holes in the data collected were filled and that incorrect or misleading information was identified (Greene 2007). The questionnaire for this survey included a three-point close-ended Likert-type item: (A = 3), Neutral (N = 2), and Disagree (D = 1) for the closing items. The closed-ended questionnaire was administered to respondents who chose yes to participate in the study.

Also, individual interview was employed to collect qualitative data from six college administrators to obtain rich information. Interviews were conducted to help the researchers to collect in-depth information on cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Using interviews help the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the trend of exploring the degree to which the abolition of trainee allowances influences
students’ enrolment in the Colleges of Education. The researchers used interviews as a data collection method to elicit thoughts, perceptions, and feelings for the sake of a thorough understanding (Creswell, 2018).

In order to enhance reliability and validity, peer-debriefing was performed to ensure that analysis represented the views of the participants. Also, responses were checked to ensure consistency. Besides, alternative explanations were sought for to ensure accuracy.

**Data analysis tools and procedure**

The researchers administered questionnaires to collect quantitative data, while semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. After data collection, the researchers prepared and organised it, printed out transcripts, collection of notes, and documents. The researchers then began to familiarise with data, creation of initial codes, searching for themes, review of those themes, defining and naming of themes, and presentation of themes in a coherent manner, qualitative data was analysed. (Johnson et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2007; Turner et al., 2007). The data from the qualitative interviews were first transcribed in Twi before being translated into English. Two trained independent coders identified the codes (authors). The qualitative data were coded and organized into codes, themes, and categories using predetermined templates.

Quantitative data, on the other hand, were analysed through data validation. The goal of data validation is to determine, to the greatest extent possible, whether data collection was carried out in accordance with pre-set standards and without bias, by editing to ensure that there are no such errors, conducting basic data checks, and coding to a group and assigning values to survey responses. Following the completion of the basic steps, a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and Microsoft Excel were used to perform this descriptive statistic, which was followed by the quantitative data analysis. The investigation in which a quantitative phase of data collection and analysis was followed by a qualitative phase (Creswell, 2018).

**Ethical consideration**

Approval for the study was obtained from the Ethics and Research Committee of University of Education, Winneba. Again, an introductory letter was collected from the Department of educational administration to concern colleges of education to obtain entry permission and to introduce the researcher and his purpose. Informed verbal consent was obtained from each of the respondents. Confidentiality and privacy of the respondents were respected during the interviews. Besides, the questionnaire provided information on ethical issues and it was intended to address the informed consent of the respondent’s anonymity, privacy, dignity, and preserve confidentiality.

**Results**

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data showed that it is unclear whether or not there is an increase in enrolment correspondence with fairness for both low and high socio-economic status of
students in colleges of education. However, overall, it is clear from the findings that there has been an increase in enrolment at educational colleges in Ghana as a result of the abolition of teacher trainee allowances. The findings are showed in the proceeding paragraphs.

**Enrolment before the removal of allowance**

The majority of the teaching stages accepted that the admission of students into the Colleges of Education before allowances were removed was based on the quota system, although 48 (24 per cent) disagreed with their declaration. Furthermore, 16 (8 per cent) of the teacher trainee averaged the protocol accepted only students who knew famous people. By comparison, teacher trainees were disclaimed by 180 (90 per cent), while the assertion was neutral by four (2 per cent) This could be because, under the quota system, many students were unable to gain admission to educational institutions due to the limited number of students that each institution was required to admit each year. Insert Table 1 here
Table 1
The nature of the students' admission to and enrolment in the College of Education before the payment is withdrawn (n = 200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission of students into the COE prior to the removal of allowance was</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on quota system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only students who knew prominent people were admitted on protocol</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was an automatic placement into various choices of COE once a</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student passes his/her exam.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE normally admitted only a half of student applicants each year</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher trainees were bonded to teach after completion of college</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher trainees were bonded to teach in deprived areas in each district</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The program chosen by students was based on their academic skills</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges that admitted more students than the quota given had no allowance</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paid to affected students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some colleges admitted students due to availability of infrastructural</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission was based on tutor-student ratio</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students were admitted based on strong recommendations from high</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data (2017).

**Key**

F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n = sample; COE = College of Education.
Yet again, 116 (58 per cent) of teacher trainees reported that there was an automatic placement in multiple Colleges of Education options after students had passed the test, of which 78 (39 per cent) were rejected and four (2 per cent) were neutral. Just four (2 per cent) female teachers believed that women headed teachers were not fair and unbiased managers but 16 (8 per cent) disagreed. Likewise, four (2 per cent) of female teachers said that only students who knew prominent people were admitted on protocol. Yet 16 (8 per cent) hold opposing opinions. Admittedly, 166 (83 per cent) pupils agreed, although 34 (17 per cent) rejected the idea that only half of students were generally approved by the Colleges of Education each year. According to the trainees’ observations, there was protocol admission during the quota system, which was unfair to them.

It was found that 172 (86 per cent) teacher trainees approved, 26 (13 per cent) disagreed and four (2 per cent) became irresolute with the argument that teacher trainees were bonded to teach after completion of college, 82 (41 per cent) pedagogue trainees, 108(54 per cent) rejected and 10 (5 per cent) were obsessive about the fact that pupils in each district were obliged to teach in the deprived areas. 100 (50 per cent) teaching trainees again claimed that the chosen programs were based on their academic competencies, 94 (47 per cent) did not agree, and 6(3 per cent) were neutral This explanation could imply that districts, municipalities, and metropolitan areas did not want trainees to leave after their training, and that in order to ensure that they remain to serve their districts, they must be bonded.

It was found that 96 (48 per cent) admitted to the teacher levels, whereas 100 (50 per cent) refused and four (2 per cent) were irresolute in stating that universities which admitted more students than the specified quota had no subsidy paid to the student(s) affected. 148 (71 per cent) teacher trainees agreed, while 58 (29 per cent) did not agree that certain colleges were accepting students as infrastructure facilities were available. Likewise, 100 (50 per cent) teacher trainees confirmed that admission was based on tutor-student ratio, while 100 (50 per cent) expressed divergent views. Again 4 (27 per cent) teacher trainees agreed with 146 (73 per cent) that certain students were approved based on good high school recommendations (see Table 2). According to the trainees, applicants who were denied admission due to the quota system blamed it on a variety of factors, including a lack of infrastructure, a high student-teacher ratio, and so on.

This quantitative data was supported by the participants views shared during the interviews. Participants views on enrolment before the removal of allowance. During the interview discussions, a number of issues came about showing the nature of enrolment and access before the removal of the allowance. Participants describe the various barriers to enrolment and access to college education. For example, many individuals describe the quota system as one of the challenges of the admission. One participant said........:

*Every college was given a quota to work with and no one could go beyond that. It was very competitive where the minimum cut out grade was C6 and was on the quota system. So, many students are prevented from accessing teacher education.*
Other participants also cited the quota system as a barrier to admitting many students. One of the participants candidly said:

There was a quota system. We were given a percentage to take even if we had more students who qualified. You must qualify by obtaining 3 credits in core subjects that are mathematics, English language and integrated science and an elective subject. This prevented more students from being enrolled into the colleges of education.

Along with a discussion of enrolment before the allowance is withdrawn as one of the participants put it:

It is competitive. You must apply, attend interview, then qualify. Actually, it is the quota system that brought the removal of the allowance because students may qualify but would not be taken. However, equal opportunities are given but a limited number of them is taken.

To address this, in my opinion, there should be other alternative means of funding teacher education to provide equal opportunity for all students, which may help the situation.

**Access and enrolment after the removal of allowance.**

The majority of 134 (67 per cent) of trainees confirmed that self-financing had increased access instead of a quota system that restricted access to teacher education. However, 86 (43 per cent) disagreed that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance would have increased the access and enrolment of students to the College of Education. This also implies that the quota system prevented many applicants from being admitted to educational colleges. However, the elimination of the quota system facilitates access and enrolment. Insert Table 2 here.
Table 2
The effects of the removal of trainee allowance for teacher education at Colleges of Education before the removal of allowance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students from less privileged homes were denied access to teacher education</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has increased drop-out rates in the colleges of education</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has put financial constraints on teacher trainees</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has led to poor academic performance of trainees</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has increased teacher trainee accessibility (enrolment)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher trainees were not bonded</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student loan schemes was established to aid trainees, but it was a cost to be repaid</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The loan facility was flexible and easily accessible</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was costly to invest in one's own teacher education program</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The withdrawal of teacher trainee allowance has limited access to teacher education</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data (2017).

Similarly, 128 (64 per cent) of the teacher trainees agreed, while 72 (36 per cent) disagreed with the statement that the removal of the trainee allowance led to an increase in enrolment at the college. There was a mixed opinion that only students from rich or wealthy homes had access to and enrolment at the Colleges of Education. Hundred per cent of 100 (50 per cent) trainees agreed, while 100 (50 per cent) disagreed. Also, 106 (53 per cent) of teachers affirmed, while 94 (47 per cent) disclaimed that there had been an improvement in infrastructure facilities at the Colleges of Education as a result of the removal of the teacher training allowance. Approximately 74 (37 per cent) of the teacher trainees confirmed that students from underprivileged families are likely not to enrol in colleges of education due to the withdrawal of the teacher trainee allowance. However, 126 (63 per cent) of the teacher trainees responded incongruously (see Table 3). This could be interpreted as the elimination of the allowance providing equal opportunity to all students regardless of socioeconomic background.
The participants described the withdrawal of the allowance increase enrolment during the interview. One of the participants remarked:

*There was an increased accessibility into the colleges of education. Unlike the quota system students may qualify, but would not be to get admission. As a result of the removal of teacher trainee allowance, the college could admit as many students, and particularly when there are facilities to absorb them.*

This was what another participant has to say:

*We operate a boarding system. So, students are always in school or class. We do not sack students for non-payment of fees. Sometimes, the college has its own resources to finance or pay for students’ examination fees which they pay back.*

The withdrawal of the allowance has been observed to increase access and enrolment in colleges of education; however, the reforms have also brought financial issues to students and management.

**Effects of the removal of allowance**

One hundred and eighty-six per cent of the 186 (93 per cent) teacher trainees agreed, while 14 (7 per cent) disagreed with the statement that students from less privileged homes were denied access to colleges as a result of the removal of the teacher trainee allowance. Also, 72 (36 per cent) teacher trainees also reported that the elimination of the teacher trainee benefits led to a rise in the drop-out rate in education colleges. Nevertheless, 108 (54 per cent) students held differences of opinion. This suggests that the removal favoured students from affluent families, but harmed those from low-income families.
Table 3
The trends in students’ access and enrolment into colleges of education after the removal of the teacher trainee allowance, (n = 200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-funding has expanded open access in lieu of the quota system which limited access to teacher education</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of trainee allowance has led to an increase in enrolment</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only students from the rich homes had access and enrolment into the college of education</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There has been improvement in infrastructural facilities in the college of education</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students from poor families are likely not to be enrolled in the college of education</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data (2017).

Key

F = Frequency; % = Percentage; n = sample; COE = College of Education.

Similarly, 178 (89 per cent) of the teacher trainees affirmed, while 22 (11 per cent) denied that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance had placed financial constraints on the teacher trainees. Thirty-one per cent of the 62 (31 per cent) teacher trainees claimed, but 130 (65 per cent) denied, while eight (4 per cent) said that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance had led to inadequate academic performance by trainees. In addition, 88 (44 per cent) of the teacher trainees admitted, while 112 (56 per cent) disclaimed that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance increased the availability of the teacher trainee (enrolment) to colleges of education. All of the teacher trainees (100 per cent) disagreed with the statement that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance meant that trainees would not be bonded and learning. Also, 178 (89 per cent) of the teacher trainees affirmed, while 22 (11 per cent) disclaimed that the withdrawal of the teacher trainee allowance had limited access to teacher education (see Table 3). This implies that the removal of the allowance imposed a financial burden on the majority of them and had an impact on learning.

Participants described how the withdrawal of the allowance affected students from low socioeconomic status during a discussion on the effects of the withdrawal. According to one of the participants:
Honestly, it affected the people from low socio-economic status to a large extent. After the removal of the teacher trainee allowance, we observed that not many students come to the college as they could not pay or afford it. I mean it was fee paying. I have a lot of debt on my desk.

Participants also described the elimination of the allowance as a recipe for high truancy rates among some students. According to one of the participants:

_The removal of the allowance was a recipe for high rate of absenteeism among the teacher trainees in Ada College of Education. Some of the teacher trainees had to go and work before they come to school. There were a few drop outs. I could recall two ladies who came to my oce to inform me that they cannot finance their education._

The results indicate that the new reforms on teacher education have some flaws that must be addressed in order to achieve the desired goals. These, however, can be addressed through broader stakeholder discussions and deliberation on substantive issues.

**Discussions**

This mixed method study provided a comprehensive and in-depth discussion of the extent to which the withdrawal of the teacher trainee allowance affects enrolment. To gain a better understanding of these educational reforms, the study used Michael Fullan's theory on educational change to state the research design and setting assumptions. The application of Fullan's theory of educational change to the case of the abolition of the allowance for teacher trainees in Ghana resulted in the identification of the impact of the reforms such as increased enrolment, improved school infrastructure, a burden to deprive students, and regular attendance at lectures. Learning how to deal with these changes in relation to new teacher education reforms in Ghana can be used to inform policy-making as well as the relevance of future reforms selection. Education authorities such as the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and the Government of Ghana experimented with or piloted new reforms using Fullan's theory of educational change as a guide to ensure a better chance of success. Furthermore, the theory provides us with a direction in which the colleges of education and the Government of Ghana can achieve their policy goals and objectives. The researchers strongly believe that a lesson can be learned from such a study and applied to the country's teacher trainee's college of education as the result of this research focused on teacher education.

**Enrolment before the removal of allowance**

The results of this study showed that the majority of the teacher trainees who had access to and enrolled in the Colleges of Education were students with low pass grades from high school, and were from deprived families as many of the respondents pointed out. The findings also reveal that the admission of students to college was based on a quota system. This finding was agreed with the Ministry of Education (2015) that as a result of the government's budgetary constraints, only half of the student applicants were admitted to college every year. The results of the interviews were identical. These results indicate
that the Government of Ghana has an additional burden on the funding of education by paying the teacher allowance. In this way, the cost burden of the quota admission program has been minimized. This result indicates Government of Ghana attempts to educate teacher trainees on the basis of the cost burden. This cost burden was a constraint on the admission of students to teacher training colleges in Ghana. This result is consistent with that of Akyeampong (2000), which claimed that some colleges in Ghana were known to accept only approximately 50 per cent of the applicants as admission of all eligible candidates would increase the cost of training teachers in Ghana. The findings are consistent with the issue of low access to tertiary education which has been a challenge for Africa (Bloom, Canning & Chan, 2006). The cost of tertiary education on the continent of Africa can be attributed to high levels of poverty and poor economic management. This study further found that, although the allocation of the teacher allowance is a cost to Government of Ghana, it does play a significant role in students enrolment in tertiary education. This finding is consistent with the literature that rewards help motivate students to participate in teaching and learning (Armah, 2016).

**Access and enrolment after the removal of allowance**

A large number of teachers' trainees have confirmed that self-financing has increased access rather than a quota system that restricts access to teacher colleges of education. This means that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance increased access and enrolment of students to the Colleges of Education. This finding was supported by the literature that the removal of the allowance would increase student enrolment in colleges of education (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Similarly, some trainees agreed, while others disagreed with the statement that the withdrawal of the trainee allowance led to an increase in enrolment at the colleges. There was a mixed opinion that only students from rich or affluent homes had access to and enrolment at the Colleges of Education. Approximately half of the trainees agreed, although they also disagreed with the statement. This work also supported the literature that the cancelation of the allowance would increase the enrolment (Ministry of Education, 2015; Opare, 2008). The infrastructure of the Colleges of Education has been improved as a result of the abolition of the education allowance for teachers. The findings agreed with the literature that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance would increase the development of infrastructure in the colleges of education (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016; Armah, 2017).

The findings of this study show that self-financing has increased the access and enrolment of many of the teaching trainees in the colleges of education. This result is consistent with Armah's findings (2016) that the abolition of the quota system resulted in a significant increase in enrolment in Ghana teacher trainees' colleges of education between 2015 and 2016.

**Effects of the removal of allowance**

The results have shown a negative impact on teacher education and training, particularly in education colleges, as a result of the elimination of teacher trainee allowance in Ghana. Results show that 93% of trainees have financial challenges in the colleges of education due to the removal of the teacher trainees' allowance. This indicates that expenditure on the provision of teacher education and training is expensive
for the less fortunate students due to the abolition of the teacher trainee allowance. Although, literature shows that the elimination of the allowance would provide equal opportunities for all, it failed to look at the financial burden that the trainees go through as a result of the removal of the teacher trainees’ allowance (Ministry of Education, 2015). The removal of the teacher trainee’s allowance also revealed that, most of the trainees have financial constraints. While several of the trainees believed that access to college education was limited by the quota system, the removal of the trainees’ allowance did not also help them financial. However, the literature suggests that the cancelation of the allowance promotes equitable access to teacher education (Government of Ghana, 2015; Ministry of education, 2015).

However, the findings underpinned the existing literature that the removal of teacher trainee allowances would discourage students with financial difficulties from accessing teacher training and that the those who have access to teacher training would be more likely face financial challenges in the teachers’ colleges of education (Oduro, 2014). The findings of the study also contradicted the literature that eliminating subsidies would reduce enrolment in schools, as the cost of education for applicants would increase (Armah, 2016). However, the findings underpinned the literature that many students often come from deprived socio-economic family backgrounds, and eliminating subsidies would put them at a disadvantage and benefit those who can afford to pay for cost of teacher’s college education (Armah, 2016). The findings further agree with existing literature that the abolition of the teacher allowance will lead to situation trainees will face financial challenges in the teacher colleges education (Mulkeen, 2010).

**Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to gain a better insight into the enrolment and access to colleges of education after the withdrawal of the teacher allowance. It focused on how the removal of teacher trainees’ allowance influence of student enrolment in colleges of education and financial condition of the teacher trainees. Overall, it is clear from the findings that there has been an increase in enrolment at educational colleges in Ghana as a result of the abolition of teacher trainee allowances. It is also clear from the finding that the removal of the teacher trainee allowance puts additional costs on parents and trainees. However, the expansion of college infrastructure has opened the way for Government of Ghana to expand access to tertiary education. With regard to the standard of education, the lack of financial assistance for trainee teachers has led to a low level of attendance and learning outcomes as some trainees miss classes to engage in economic activities to support themselves financial whiles they are in the teacher colleges of education. For example, where the teacher trainee become truant and high rate of absenteeism in classes, dropouts and low learning outcomes and does not promote a quality standard of education. The findings of this study show that the removal of the allowance increased access, admission and enrolment to college, which is significant for national policy, practice, theory and subsequent research, but the limitation of the study was that it did not cover large samples of schools, including private colleges of education. On the basis of the findings, it is unclear whether or not there is an increase in enrolment correspondence with fairness for both low and high socio-economic status of students in colleges of education. In regards to equal access, it is not clear that the withdrawal of the teacher trainee allowance paves the way for the low and high socio-economic status of students. A study
should be replicated to cover a larger sample of all colleges of education, including public and private institutions in Ghana. This would help to strengthen the basis for interpreting and generalizing the empirical findings of teacher education funding in Ghana. A follow-up evaluation study should also be carried out to investigate the impact on fair access and quality education indicators of either removal or restoration of the teacher education allowance. Dramatic changes are also needed in the Teacher Education Program in view of the ongoing changes in teacher education funding in Ghana, so that teachers can respond to the changing needs of contemporary Ghanaian society. Recommendations to decentralize funding for teacher education should therefore be seen as an opportunity to sustain the functioning of these institutions and to promote and motivate teaching and learning in schools. Distance learning models should be encouraged as a powerful tool to provide teachers with more opportunities to become better teachers. The Government of Ghana should also abolish the quota system for student participation in colleges of education. This is because the quota system component of the teacher education allowance scheme is a rather inhibiting factor. This research would help managers, directors and other policy makers to understand which education policy is helping to improve the education system in order to promote universal access to education for teachers and to maintain good quality standards in education.

Declarations

Conflict of interest

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interest regarding this manuscript.

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