

Research Article

“It Makes Us Feel More Professional!” Stakeholders’ Perception of the Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination

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Abstract

The professionalism of teaching has been subject of an age long debate. Teachers beseech others to recognize them as professionals and they become belligerent when they fail to receive recognition. Since 2018, Ghana has instituted the Ghana Teacher Licensure Examinations (GTLE) to regulate entry into the teaching profession. This policy has received a mixed bag of reactions with the populace sharply divided in opinion. Given that knowledge gap existed, it was important to interrogate the general perception of all stakeholders across Ghana to unravel how the GTLE is perceived among stakeholders. This paper is culled out of a broader study that employed a mixed-methods research approach in a nationwide study involving over 2800 respondents. For this paper, we report on the qualitative data generated from 145 participants. We describe the concerns of stakeholders who are in favour, against, or ambivalent about the GTLE. Drawing on an adaptation of CBAM model, we discuss stakeholders’ perceptions of GTLE as stages of concern. We conclude that stakeholders opposed to the licensing of teachers do so because of their concerns about its form, content, and other logistical challenges. To sustain the policy, it is recommended for the National Teaching Council and the Ministry of Education to take steps to address these concerns. Regardless, what stakeholders agree to be the biggest strength of the GTLE is that it is a positive step towards professionalizing teaching. It is a useful yardstick to determine who is qualified to perform the function of teaching, and prevents all others who do not qualify from accessing classrooms.

Keywords

Teacher Professionalism, Teacher Licensing, Qualitative Research, Ghana

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1. Introduction

Professionalism has for long been a cherished value of workers generally. Doctors, lawyers, nurses, architects, journalists among others, have positioned themselves as professionals. Professionalism exists “when an organized occupation gains the power to determine who is qualified to perform a defined set of tasks, to prevent all others from performing that work, and to control the criteria by which to evaluate performance” [1] (p. 12). While little questions are asked about the status of most occupations, that of teaching raises a lot more debate. This debate has engaged scholarship for many years. As early as 1956, Gail Inlow, observed that teachers beseech others to recognize them as professionals and they become belligerent when they fail to receive recognition [2]. This situation was occasioned by society’s attitude towards teachers and the recognition they attract. In fact, some have argued that teaching be regarded more like a vocation [3].

While this is a global debate, the Ghanaian context offers a plethora of examples that make teaching somewhat of a vocation. From its earliest history, teachers were recruited based on interest. When the Basel missionaries established the first teacher training college at Akropong, it was for persons who were interested in serving as catechists who were admitted [4]. Thus, their role as teachers was a low priority in comparison with being catechists. Teaching, therefore, assumed the status of vocation and progressed through the 19th Century with this tag. With time, persons who completed Standard Seven (grade 10) confidently took appointments as teachers without any form of training [5].

So widespread was this phenomenon that in the 1920s, Governor Guggisberg introduced what became known as the “teachers’ register.” For this register, only those who qualified to teach (those who had obtained the necessary training) were allowed to register to teach. An exception to this policy was an amnesty that was granted to experienced professionals who were added to the list provided they demonstrated competence in teaching. Prior to this, there had been the “payment by results” scheme which tied teachers’ wages to the number of students who were able to pass a standardised examination [6]. Professionalism was then determined by the performance of a teacher’s students. With the introduction of the “teachers’ register”, “inferior” teachers were driven out of the profession, culminating in the close-down of 150 so-called “bush schools”. This exercise was the first radical attempt in Ghana (then Gold Coast) to professionalise teaching from a government policy perspective [6].

Although several attempts were made (post-independence) to regulate the practice of teaching in Ghana, a sustained rigorous effort has been seen in the last decade. In recent times, Ghana has promulgated laws to institute teacher licensure. Act 1023 [7] established the National Teaching Council (NTC) to regulate the teaching profession. Per this legislation, the NTC has the mandate to “conduct examinations for the li-

censing of persons who successfully complete their teacher education programmes” [7] (Pt. 3). With this mandate, the NTC has introduced the Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination (GTLE). The purpose of the GTLE is to enable graduates from teacher education institutions in Ghana to acquire professional status by obtaining a license. The GTLE is also to ensure that teachers in Ghana meet the demands of the National Teachers’ Standards by acquiring the competencies and experience, including knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are necessary for effective delivery in schools [8].

Since the introduction of the GTLE, there have been mixed opinions about the policy and its implementation. Right from its inception, some teacher trainees have protested the introduction of the licensure examinations [9]. Teacher unions have also opposed the GTLE [10]. Expectedly, the teacher licensure examinations became a subject for political debate in the 2020 general elections with some political parties promising to scrap it should they win power [11]. Moreover, GTLE has also suffered some bad publicity. For example, upon the release of results in January 2021, the banner headline covered by Daily Graphic read “over 8000 teachers fail licensure exams” [12]. Other news stories captured the same negative reportage such as “Licensure exams: About 26000 teachers fail since 2018” [13].

Thus, it appears that a section of the populace holds contrary views about the appropriateness of the GTLE. While there are negative opinions about the GTLE expressed largely in the media, it remains uncertain about what the opinions of other major stakeholders are on teacher professionalism. More importantly, there is a knowledge gap about the perception of licensed teachers who are direct beneficiaries of the GTLE. Therefore, in the wake of negative media reportage, it was important to interrogate the general perception of all stakeholders across Ghana to unravel empirically verifiable findings of how the GTLE is perceived among stakeholders in the education industry. Without this knowledge, policy decisions suffer the required input given that anecdotal evidence available could largely be misleading. It is against this backdrop that an empirical study was initiated to evaluate stakeholder perceptions about the GTLE. As a guiding question, we asked: how do major stakeholders (test-takers), in teacher education perceive the GTLE? Answering this question is important at providing empirical evidence to support policy decision and contributing to filling the gap in research.

2. Theory

This work draws on the Concerns Based Adaption Model (CBAM) [14] for theoretical framing. Promulgated decades ago, CBAM has stayed relevant as a theoretical model for helping researchers understand, lead, and monitor the complex process of change in education [15]. As a more comprehensive model, CBAM comprises three dimensions

namely: Stages of Concern (SoC), Innovation Configuration Map (IC Map), and Levels of Use (LoU). For this paper, the CBAM model is adapted to focus on the first dimension – stages of concern.

According to Hall and Hord [14], change is a process rather than an event. It is therefore important to examine various motivations, perceptions, attitudes and feelings experienced by individuals in relation to change [16]. To this end, they

propose seven levels of concern that may be exhibited by persons affected by change. These stages are named as: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing. These stages represent a range of possibilities, from people who exhibit no interest/concern to those who feel invested in the phenomenon and show commitment towards making improvement.

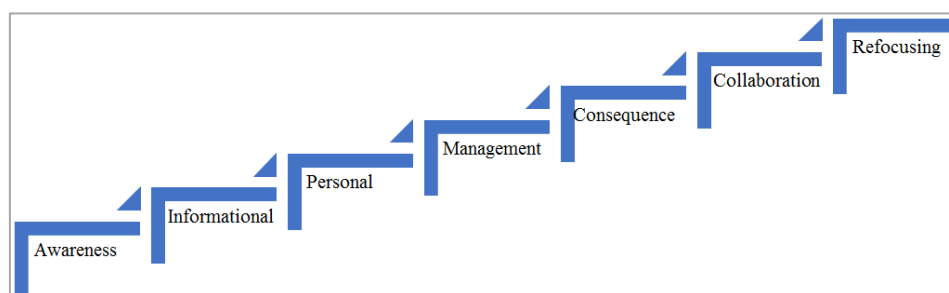


Figure 1. Stages of concerns.

In the earlier stages, people exhibit more self-focused concerns with much interest in what the change means to them and whether they have the capacity to adjust. However, as individuals become more comfortable with and skilled in using an innovation, their concerns shift to focus on broader impacts beyond themselves [14]. In this work, concerns of stakeholders about GTLE are discussed along these stages of concern to gauge their interest, commitment or otherwise.

3. Methodology

This paper is written as an extract of a bigger project that employed a mixed-methods approach to research. The nationwide study utilized 2694 GTLE test-takers who participated in the quantitative phase of the research and 145 respondents for the qualitative dimension. For the purposes of

this article, we focus on the qualitative data. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed to engage stakeholders about their lived experiences, perceptions and concerns about the GTLE [17-19]. Participants for the qualitative phase involved a total of 145 individuals made up of teachers who are GTLE license holders (test takers), student teachers who are yet to take the GTLE, colleges of education tutors, teacher education university lecturers, principals of colleges of education, heads of schools where there are licensed teachers, School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), leaders of teacher unions, educationists, community leaders, NTC staff among others, who were purposively selected. In addition, focus group discussions were undertaken with teacher trainees in colleges of education to solicit their opinions about the GTLE. Table 1 provides a list of respondents engaged in the research.

Table 1. Participants of Qualitative phase.

Strata	Category	Number
Schools	Teachers (Former test-takers)	26
	Headteachers (Basic schools)	12
	Headmasters/mistresses (High Schools)	6
	Principals (Colleges of Education [CoE])	7
	Assessment Officers (Ass Off)	3
Colleges of education (CoE) and Teacher education Universities	Heads of Department (HoD)	6
	Tutors	10
	Union Leaders (CETAG)	5

Strata	Category	Number
National Stakeholders	Student teachers (Individuals)	4
	Student teachers (focus groups)	28
	Lecturers	5
	Renowned educationists	2
	Union Leaders (GNAT & CCT)	2
	National Teaching Council (NTC) Officials	3
	GTLE Chief Examiners	2
	GTLE Assessment Consultant	1
	Community Leaders	6
	Directors of Education	12
Communities	School Improvement Support Officers	4
	Total	145

The total sample size of 145 for qualitative research is quite unusual [20]. However, this number was necessitated by the need to build multiple perspectives into the study, and cover the entire Ghanaian education landscape (see similar decision in from Barton's study [21]). The defining criterion for selection was participant's previous experience and/or association with the GTLE. Mixed purposeful sampling framework involving referrals, snowball, extreme case and (dis)confirming techniques were utilized in selecting participants for the research [22].

Qualitative semi-structured interviews and focus groups were utilised to generate data for this work. Six sets of interview guides were developed for specific targeted stakeholders selected for the study. This was done to capture diverse roles and responsibilities undertaken in the preparation and implementation of the GTLE. The guides were also pre-tested by the research team to ascertain the dependability of the responses. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed using F4 software. The transcribed data were uploaded into Taguette (a qualitative analysis software) for coding and generation of themes for analysis. Themes that were generated for analysis are presented in the ensuing paragraphs as findings. In reporting, verbatim quotes from respondents are presented as data based upon which commentary is provided. In doing this, respondents are identified by labels that showed their status (as in teacher, student-teacher, lecturer, Principal etc.) and also the cluster of Ghana where they lived (as in SZ-Southern Zone, MZ- Middle Zone, and NZ – Northern Zone).

4. Findings

In this section, we present findings relying on data garnered

from interviews. We present about stakeholders' general perception about teacher licensure as well as their concerns about the nature of the process involved in licensure. This we do under the themes of affection, ambivalence, disaffection, which is followed by a section to explain the whys of the disaffection.

4.1. Affection

The interview data obtained from test-takers, student-teachers, and other stakeholders showed evidence of support for teacher licensure. Participants shed light on the benefits of the GTLE and expressed affection for teacher licensure in general. When asked their opinions about the GTLE, here are some extracts culled from what they shared:

I think it has come to help. In the sense that let's take teachers and nurses for example, because they are writing license examinations, people do regard them more than teachers. They will say they are professional and we are not professional. I think the licensure examinations have added value to us teachers. (Teacher 3 MZ)

The benefit that I would like to talk about is that it will boost my morale as a professional teacher who has the license, and this license will definitely lead me to a far place. And it is going to be something that I will be very happy about. It will also differentiate between professional teachers and non-professional teachers. (Student-teacher 1 NZ)

....like I said first, to me writing the examinations, it makes me feel more professional. And it will broaden my horizon. As for knowledge, every time you seek knowledge it enlightens you. (Student-teacher focus group, NZ)

In my opinion, the licensure is good. It really makes us professionals. It can make us compete with other profes-

sions. (SISO 2, NZ)

From these narratives, test-takers, School improvement support officers (SISO) and student-teachers preparing to write the GTLE express positive thoughts about the examination. The issue of professionalism becomes key for these respondents who share in the excitement of moving teaching away from a quasi-professional status to a full professional status. The teacher and student-teachers are right in their expectation because a chief examiner of the GTLE echoed same benefit of the examination:

In Ghana, you and I know that teaching is precisely a quasi-profession. Teaching will only cease to be a quasi-profession only and when we embrace the concept of licensure exams. (Chief Examiner 2)

Other stakeholders affirmed that the GTLE is important and relevant, considering the epochs we find ourselves regarding teaching and learning. They argued that other professions are in the same business of writing professional examinations and teaching ought to be seen to be doing that. Thus, they perceive the introduction of the GTLE as bringing recognition to the profession through the screening it provides to ensure that people allowed in classrooms are of the best quality. Here are some excerpts:

Every organization that views itself as a profession, you need to do certain things that will make you appear as such. My opinion is that the GTLE should continue because in other jurisdictions, it is something that they cherish so much. (Principal 1, NZ)

To me, it is very good. It is a very welcoming step taken in the right direction. It gives us the opportunity to select teachers who are really prepared for the professional work. (CETAG 3, NZ)

It [GTLE] is very relevant because it certifies the teachers and gives them the license to teach, and that certificate and license alone authenticate their duty and their profession as teachers. Apart from that it makes the profession proud because previously, we weren't licensed and nothing was regulated but now, it gives us the opportunity to select good teachers out of the bad ones. (CETAG 1, NZ)

The GTLE gives you a strong professional standing. It will enhance the image of the teacher in the society and quite a number of advantages comes with it. (Tutor 5, NZ)

Respondents in these narratives shared the relevance of GTLE as found in its credentialling and regulatory value. They were particularly happy that the examinations will help screen out substandard practitioners and authenticate the ones who get access to classrooms. This concern collaborates the view of Friedson [1] who defines professions by their ability to screen out persons of low quality who may tarnish the image of the profession. It is for this benefit that they support the GTLE.

4.2. Ambivalence

Although some stakeholders held consistent positions to

support GTLE and licensure, other respondents were more ambivalent as they expressed a neutral stance. Their perceptions are very dependent on other factors. To a number of them, if the examination will meet certain standards and certain incentives are provided, then the examinations can continue, otherwise, it may not stand the test of time:

Maybe for professional identification. But if it is left to the role they play in the teachers output on the ground, I'm not sure. Because I have been involved in the questions they set, the responses and so on and so forth. I'm not too impressed. I can't see how applicable it is on the ground but at least it will give the teaching profession another level of recognition, the fact that you have a license. (HoD 1, CoE MZ)

For me, I would have said they should stop, but it might affect somebody's job so if we have to maintain it, then it should be purely professional. (Principal 1, SZ)

If the licensure has to stay, then we should do more so that it will benefit the students. For now, personally I don't think it benefits them. (Tutor 3, MZ)

Participants here see some value in the GTLE but had some reservations for which reason they cannot speak in favour or against. HoD 1 admitted to its provision of professional identification whereas Principal 1 SZ perceives the introduction of GTLE as providing jobs to some professionals. For these reasons, they opine GTLE is good. However, to Tutor 3, MZ something more is needed to make GTLE perform its evaluative role more creditably.

4.3. Disaffection for GTLE

Regardless of the positive perceptions and ambivalence expressed about GTLE, a few stakeholders shared views expressing dislike for GTLE for varied reasons. These views are related to the overall examination and its content. Some of the stakeholders were not particularly interested in GTLE. They thus argued for its abolishment:

I totally agree with them that it should be discontinued. The GTLE is something that is of no value to me. I have done over 180 credits here at the college and how can only three courses determine my fate as a qualified teacher. So, I think it should be cancelled. (Student-teacher 5, NZ)

After studying all these courses, why should they use only three courses to summarise our lives. So, I think it should be cancelled. (Student-teacher, Focus group, SZ)

The call for abolishment was not only expressed by students-teachers. Some tutors shared similar views calling for the discontinuation of the GTLE:

As for the licensure exam, it is about professional questions and how to go about teaching. I am of the view that they have done some of these things in their curriculum and they have written examinations on it so for me personally, I don't see the need for this examination. (CETAG 3, SZ)

The respondents here are not enthused that GTLE is being prioritised over the varied assessments student-teachers undertake during their teacher education programmes. They

cannot fathom why a single sitting paper can rubbish all the successes they have chalked up in teacher training. Expectedly, some of their tutors shared similar views, showing how widespread this view might be:

So, I think we can still do it without the examination. The best thing is that whatever we think the students should know, we should inculcate it. It should be part of their curriculum at the tail end as now they are in the fourth year. Train them with these skills on campus so that when they finish, you can give them the certificates for them to go. So, yes, we can even scrap it off and then ensure that we embed whatever we want them to learn into their regular school. That is all. (Principal 2, SZ)

There is this speculation that many people are intentionally failing because maybe the government has not got enough money so they give a quota of people who should pass. (CETAG 2 SZ)

The principal and CETAG 2 SZ in these excerpts did not see the relevance of GTLE. CETAG 2, SZ echoed ‘a conspiracy theory’ that the GTLE has only been introduced to absorb some pressure on the government to recruit all graduates from teacher education programmes. For Principal 2, while admitting to the professional standards that teachers should exhibit, he did not support that GTLE be used to authenticate professionals. Rather, he advocates for the screening to be done as part of their exit from teacher education programmes.

4.4. Why the Disaffection

In probing further to understand why some stakeholders are opposed to GTLE, we observed that some did so because they had reservations about the nature and content of the examination. They are of the view that the content of the exam is either too limited or not standardized, considering the programmes the student-teachers pursue in the universities and colleges. Here are some responses:

I believe teachers should be licensed but not through examinations. NTC could come and look at the work of the teachers, maybe this year how are teachers being promoted? Again, they could take advantage of the national service period of teachers for the license. In my view, the period of building a portfolio was the best opportunity for NTC to license teachers since they spent ten months as national service personnel. Getting the license requires you to pass the examinations, but I don't believe just passing the examinations to make one a good teacher. (Tutor 4, MZ)

But I will beg to differ a bit because during the time of licensure exams, we see so many students coming in to write the examinations. My argument is that if you think that you are to examine how professional I am, it doesn't take just an hour or so to test to know who I am. If anything at all, it should be examined in the classroom because that is where you exhibit the skill of what you learn and the theory you learn in school. But just one shot, one day, two hours or so

to test your abilities in your professional areas, to me I think it is not the best. (Tutor 3, NZ)

Tutors 4 and 3 here support the licensing of teachers but they have contrasting opinion to the writing of the GTLE. They opine that assessment of teacher professionalism should be done in the classroom where teachers exhibit those professional skills and competencies. To them, the one-shot examination does not tell the whole story and is not enough to determine a person's professionalism. Interestingly NTC has always maintained that the GTLE only provides “initial license”. Thus, teachers will have to be observed and assessed in classroom situations before they are offered a “full license.” Clearly, these respondents did not appear to have knowledge of this part of the process, raising doubts about whether such key stakeholders understand the licensing regime as being implemented.

For others, their dislike for GTLE relates to the content of the examination and the limited information available for preparation. A lecturer and a teacher shared their opinion in this light:

Yeah. For the content, exactly what I am saying, some people say that, why is it that he is a music student, and he is expected to write mathematics and others also say that why is it that he went there to study language and for example he did "Nzema" and then they are testing him on mathematics and English? So, they think that, at least the content should be based on their specified areas. (Lecturer 1 SZ)

I did not know what to learn. Because there was no curriculum for us to follow ...I consulted some of my seniors who wrote theirs in the previous years. They gave me guidelines that as for the numeracy, it is like the core - mathematics in the SHS syllabus so I had to focus on some of the major topics like Venn Diagram, Ratios and Proportions etc. (Teacher 4, SZ)

Respondents here raise questions about the nature of the examination. The lecturer believes it is not fair to examine teachers using content areas outside of what they studied in college. Similarly, teacher 4 in recounting his experiences expressed challenges with getting the right information about content areas as he prepared to write the GTLE. For these respondents, their concerns relating to lack of information, the content areas examined, and the nature of the GTLE itself explain why they are opposed to it.

4.5. Logistics

For stakeholders who are involved in the conduct of the examination, their concerns were mainly related to logistics. Concerns were raised about the number of candidates per centre and how challenging it is to manage the writing of the GTLE effectively:

There are also challenges with seating capacity for the examinations due to the huge numbers. On the average we get over 800 but we have had over 1200 students on one occasion. Arranging these huge numbers for the examina-

tions is quite difficult, especially where you have re-sitters whose serial numbers do not follow any order. (Tutor Asso-Off 1 NZ)

Our main challenge with our centre here is that normally we have a large number of students coming here and it's because of our school. (Tutor 1 Vice P MZ)

Many of the candidates will register elsewhere and when they are here they can't find their number, they can't find this. (Tutor-Assessment Officer 1 SZ)

Besides the large number of students, their challenges are further compounded by the candidates with special education needs:

some candidates are supposed to be visually impaired, blind, and they don't bring the facilities and they find themselves here, it makes the organization and arrangement a little bit difficult. (Tutor-Assessment Officer 1 SZ).

The tutors are not alone in their frustrations. Perhaps the ones who bear the brunt of these logistical challenges are the candidates themselves. One such person is Amina (Teacher 4), a visually impaired teacher who recounted her experiences writing the licensure examinations. According to her, she took the examinations three times before passing. Although from Bongo in the Upper East region, she had to travel to Wa for the first and second attempts. She described the support she received from the two instances as substandard:

Getting someone to read the questions for me too was a big challenge especially the Essential Professional Skills because the questions were too long for me and there were no provisions made for me to go through the exams successfully. The invigilators told me reading is part of the exams so there was nothing they could do to help. Even when they tried to braille the questions for us, it mostly came with lots of mistakes especially in the October, 2021 questions. I used my hand to read and in most cases, because the questions were too many I tended to forget the initial ones, and even the possible answers. (Teacher 4, NZ)

After two unsuccessful attempts, she took a bold step to write her third examination at Akropong, enduring a 15-hour journey just to get the needed logistical support to write and pass the licensure exams. Indeed, logistics was not just a challenge to tutors and those involved in the examinations, but also the test-takers. For Amina and the tutors involved, they perceive GTLE negatively but only because of the logistical challenges they experienced. This means that if those challenges are resolved, their perceptions about the examination will change.

5. Discussions

Though quite informative, data presented here find nuanced meaning when examined with the lens of Hall and Hord's [14] stages of concern as described in their Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM). From the data, none of the stakeholders were observed to be at stage 1 which would have described them as unaware, or uninterested [23] in teacher

licensure. All stakeholders exhibited some knowledge and interest. For respondents like CETAG 2 SZ and Teacher 4 of SZ, they required more information about the GTLE in order to be convinced that it is the best policy intervention. CETAG 2 SZ's reechoing speculations, was to call for clarification and reassurance that GTLE was not a screening measure because the state could not hire all the graduating teachers. For Teacher 4, SZ, he had concerns about the content of the examinations and required more information about what to learn in order to pass. Clearly these and others with similar concerns can be categorized at the stage two of CBAM because they seek information to learn more about the innovation [14]. At stage 3 of the model, concerns about innovation are filtered through personal interests and preferences with participants asking questions about how much of my time would this take? [14, 15] From the data, we observed student-teacher 5 of NZ and a participant of the focus group SZ expressed sentiments about their dislike for GTLE because it is extra responsibility for them. Having pursued different courses at college and earned enough credits, they could not fathom why they needed to go through another process of validation which according to the student-teacher amounts to "using only three courses to summarise our lives."

Other stakeholders showed interest in GTLE but have concerns about the execution of the policy in terms of management. For Tutor Asso-Off NZ, and Tutor 1 Vice P MZ the large number of candidates writing the examinations poses logistical challenges to those who are involved in the examinations. The same logistical challenges as reported by Teacher 4, NZ caused her failure in the first two attempts at the examinations. Their concerns are thus related to management because they seem to be spending a lot of time and energies towards making the innovation work [14]. Others could not connect the consequences of their competencies in GTLE and their work in the classroom. For example, Lecturer 1 SZ raised issues with the inclusion of Mathematics as examinable area for teachers whose areas of disciplines had not bearing on Mathematics. Other educationists and officials of NTC however argued that teachers regardless of their specialization require numeracy skills in order to be able to assess and report on learners' progress. To them, this is how mathematics relates to other things [14]. Yet, this connection is not very obvious to some stakeholders and remains a concern.

A set of stakeholders, however, were very optimistic about licensure in general and the writing of GTLE because of its collaborative value. "GTLE should continue because in other jurisdictions, it is something that they cherish so much" is Principal 1NZ's supportive remark. Relatedly, teacher 3, MZ connects the writing of GTLE to receiving recognition when he says: "nurses for example, because they are writing license examinations, people do regard them more than teachers." To these stakeholders, teacher licensure and GTLE positions teachers well among their peers in terms of using innovation [23]. Finally, we observed stakeholders who argue for refocusing by seeking more alternatives to the established inno-

vation [14, 23]. Tutor 4 MZ supports teacher licensure but argues for a change in the mode in which it is done, championing the use of portfolios and assessment based on observation. Similarly, tutor 3 NZ supports that, *teachers “should be examined in the classroom because that is where you exhibit the skill of what you learnt”*. These concerns suggest that stakeholders here support teacher licensure, and are looking for better ways of championing this innovation to result in even greater effects [16].

6. Conclusion

Stakeholders in education perceive GTLE as relevant, appropriate and an important policy that is situating teaching on the path to professionalism. There is near consensus among stakeholders in education including teachers, educationists, unions, teacher educators, and policy makers that teacher licensure is a good policy and there is the need to maintain and improve upon it. Even some respondents who demonstrated ambivalence still see some legitimacy to teacher licensure. Again, stakeholders who expressed dislike for the GTLE and teacher licensure in general, did so because they had reservations about the content and processes of the examination. This implies that if their concerns are addressed, their views about teacher licensure can change. For those who favour teacher licensure, their key argument is the professionalism and recognition it offers teachers. As echoed in a student-teacher focus group, GTLE makes teachers feel professional. Yes, teacher licensure does professionalise teaching because it determines who is qualified to perform the function of teaching, and prevents all others who do not qualify from accessing classrooms [1]. For this cause, efforts must be made to sustain the policy. This can be done when the bottlenecks identified have been resolved. The National Teaching Council, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders owe it a duty to teachers to sustain the teacher licensure policy because it is one sure way to professionalise teaching.

Abbreviations

CBAM: Concerns Based Adaption Model
 CETAG: Colleges of Education Teachers Association of Ghana
 GTLE: Ghana Teacher Licensure Examinations
 HOD: Head of Department
 NTC: National Teaching Council
 MZ: Middle Zone
 NZ: Northern Zone
 SZ: Southern Zone
 SISO: School Improvement Support Officer

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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