



## ENHANCING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN GHANAIAN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Gifty Abena Ampong<sup>1</sup>,

Martin Gyambrah<sup>2</sup>,

Joel Schmidt<sup>3</sup>,

Christian Werner<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Med, University of Applied Management, Germany

<sup>2</sup>Ph.D, University of Applied Management, Ghana Campus

<sup>3</sup>Ph.D, University of Applied Management, Germany

<sup>4</sup>Ph.D, Dr., rer. oec, Private University Seeburg Castle, Seekirchen, Austria

### Abstract:

Leadership is considered to be significant for the success of any institution. The present study focused on Enhancing Leadership Development in Ghanaian Senior Secondary Schools. The study employed an exploratory analysis research which was qualitative in nature. Sample included principals, teachers, administrative staffs and some workers from the Ministry of Education. Purposive sampling procedure was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interview protocols. An interpretive approach was used to analyze the data and generate meaning and conclusions. The following findings were observed; some of the leadership challenges faced by principals in the Ghanaian senior high schools include financial challenges, inadequate logistics, and lack of infrastructure, indiscipline among students, unskilled / uncooperative personnel, and lack of motivation. Some of the requisite leadership skills observed were communication, managerial, instructional and social skills. It was further observed that the modes for leadership development capability included In-service training, mentoring, coaching, feedback, seminar and workshop. Both theoretical and practical content was observed for the approaches employed in leadership development delivery. Finally, with regards to support, it was observed that some of the schools had to generate their own internal support due to inadequate or no support coming from the governmental level. The study concluded that given the importance of educational leadership, the development of effective leaders should be a deliberate process

designed to produce the best possible leadership for schools and colleges. In this view, it was recommended that a continuous leadership development program of activities which focus on recruitment of candidates from preparation level to succession level. It was further recommended that Senior High Schools in Ghana should organize in-service training to cover need and context and also ensure suitable variety modes for effective training through a broad body of knowledge supported by practices that identify the content, design and methods of effective programs.

**Keywords:** development, leadership, education, practices, models

## 1. Introduction

There is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory, in the absence of talented leadership. One explanation for this is that leadership serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris, & Hopkins, 2006). Effective leadership enables institutions to achieve the expected outcomes. School leadership is increasingly seen as a vital component of school improvement. In one of the most recent comprehensive review of the impacts of school leadership conducted by Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) concluded that among school-related factors leadership is an only factor next to classroom instruction that contributes to what students learn at school. School leaders have both direct and indirect effects on students' achievement and school success. Principals play a vital and multi-faceted role in setting the direction for schools that are positive and productive workplaces for teachers and vibrant learning environments for children.

The main purpose of education is to produce good and productive citizens. In today's environment of keen expectations, school leaders are expected to improving teaching and learning at school level. They are expected to negotiate with the conflicting interests of parents, teachers, students, bureaucracy, unions, and other state and federal agencies (Stanford Educational Leadership Institute (SELI). The expectations for schools and school leaders have changed profoundly.

The British Office for Standards in Education stated that strong leadership from the head teacher was a characteristic feature of all schools in England that were making good progress with addressing the key issues in the action plan (Ofsted, 2003). Several research studies have shown that high-quality leadership has a significant impact on both pupils' academic and non-academic outcomes. There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that the quality of leadership positively enhances teaching and learning (Harris,

2004). School-level factors such as leadership, organizational learning and teachers' work have a significant impact on non-academic student outcomes such as participation in school, academic self-concept and engagement with the school (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

Leadership is one of the most important predictors of whether groups and organizations are able to effectively adapt to and perform in dynamic environments (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). Deal and Peterson (1999) stated that changes in school process have left many educators consciously or unconsciously mixed up, exhausted and disappointed. And these changes in the process can be seen as evolutionary. To accept change that provides internal steadiness while moving ahead is one of the challenges educational institutions have to face. To improve educational quality a leadership development approach which is oriented toward building capacity in anticipation of unforeseen challenges should be considered. The heads or leaders of the institutions are responsible for managing the resources available effectively for producing the desired outcome. In the school context, the major resources are people in addition to physical and financial resources. In order to be efficient, the heads of the schools must be very dynamic, well qualified and experienced.

Leadership in education is an ambiguous and complex concept, and there are vastly theories and researches on school administration and leadership which reflect this conceptual fuzziness, (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002). Divergent perspectives within the academy, among policy makers at national and local levels, and among school leader and administrators add to a growing swirl of competing and often conflicting role images and expectations.

Over the past two decades, the modernist views of organizations and leadership, in particular, are changing. This in many ways may be connected to the uncertainty, turbulence, messiness, and unpredictability of the milieu of schooling. Essentially, the "people-changing" goals of schools make school administration and leadership a daunting challenge. These factors cause leadership in education not to ensure effective leadership for the good health of the institution, (Murphy & Louis, 1999).

Leadership development is believed to help leaders to ensure effective leadership in an organization. Leadership development is defined by McCauley et.al, (1998) as expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes. The integration of leadership development with career progression and organizational performance (Schleicher, 2012), is essential for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century leadership roles in education.

Alongside this background, this study looks into leadership in Ghanaian senior secondary schools (SHSs). Investigating the models available for development and

eventually, propose possible improvements using examples from countries like UK, USA, and Singapore. Leadership development cases from around the world will also be studied and lessons that are necessary for the development of leadership in Ghanaian senior secondary schools will also be drawn upon. By taking some secondary schools in a suburb of Accra as a study, it is hoped that findings from these schools could serve as evidence on the ground on how leaders in secondary schools are developed to face the unanticipated challenges that may arise in the process of leading and the approaches available for these leaders.

### **1.1 Problem Statements**

Today there are researches made on school leadership in Ghana especially at the primary and junior secondary school level, though not much. The same situation pertains to senior secondary school leadership research. The present study seeks to fill this knowledge gap. Further, for the few researches done, these researchers are with the motives of creating and providing recommendations to improve leadership abilities at both primary and junior secondary schools. And a number of recommendations have been given by these researchers. Bimpeh, (2012) recommended that both heads and subordinates in school administration be schooled on the ethics of school administrations, as part of in-service training. He also proposes that prospective school administrators should consider studying leadership courses before taking up appointments. Afful-Broni, (2012) also suggested that school heads should develop or improve upon their collaborative skills such that they would empower their staff to assist them in ensuring that they are not needlessly overburdened. Finally, Zubeviel, (2012) recommended that course modules on school leadership, school improvement, and school effectiveness should be included in the training college syllabi to abreast teacher trainees with such topics to improve their practice. School leaders should be empowered through sustained capacity strengthening initiatives and motivated to enable themselves to develop the professional and psychological competencies required to meet the complex quality education challenges facing Ghana (Oduro, 2009). The present study on the other hand did not only focus on recommending best practices but also to conduct an in-depth analysis of the current educational leadership models as well as how these programs are implemented in the senior high schools in Ghana.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

Grounded within such recommendations from available literature, this study stipulates five main objectives and these include:

1. Review and analysis of existing educational leadership development modes according to the literature;
2. Investigation of how educational leadership development is currently implemented in Ghanaian senior secondary schools;
3. Examine the impact of the leadership development modes on the effectiveness of educational leaders in Ghanaian senior secondary schools;
4. Identify best practices of educational leadership development modes around to enhance leadership development in Ghanaian senior secondary schools;
5. Propose improvements and policy recommendations where necessary for Ghanaian secondary schools.

## 2. Literature Review

Leadership is central to the management of any organization. It is one of the most important predictors of whether groups and organizations are able to effectively adapt to and perform in dynamic environments (Peterson, Smith, Martorana, & Owens, 2003). The concept of leadership in today's world has become enchanted by organization and institutions worldwide.

A shift has been noticed in leadership thinking in recent times (Gronn, 1995). A range of wide-ranging models of leadership is now emerging which argue for discreet to ensure enhancement of leadership capability which arises from the changing nature of work, especially the need to cope with increased competition (Hirsh & Carter, 2002), increased intellectual flexibility and alertness as well as relevant skills, abilities, knowledge, and self-awareness which are very necessary. The overabundance of leadership responsibilities pose the question, to what extent does the current provision meet the needs of organizations? The global challenges now happening in these times demand approaches to leadership education that are intensely diverse from those that have served well in the past (Taylor et al., 2002). For those reasons institutions and organizations around the world are adapting their strategies, structures, and practices with the intent of becoming more active and responsive to dynamic environments. Effective leadership is needed more than ever.

Leaders in the educational sectors are no exception to the changes and pressures of 21<sup>st</sup> century leadership. Effective school leadership serves as a catalyst for emancipating the potential capacities of both staff and students. It enables the school to achieve the expected outcomes. School leadership is increasingly seen as a vital component of school improvement. It is known be an only factor next to classroom instruction that contributes to what students learn at school. Principals play a vital and

multi-faceted role in setting the direction for schools that are positive and productive workplaces for teachers and vibrant learning environments for children (Leithwood et al, 2004).

Due to multiple roles played by school leaders and the pressures of issues arising and surrounding school management, leadership education is very necessary. The components of school leadership which are competencies, skills, attitudes, and behaviors are important to help leaders to influence effectively the eight domains of school leadership. Instructional, managerial, transformational, and moral and authenticity, distributed, teacher, system, and contingent leadership are the domains of school leadership (Bush & Glover, 2014). These imply influence on instructions, school culture, values, visions, management of resources, and several compositions of what constitute leadership in any social organization. The leader deserve be highly qualified, rigorously prepared to lead (Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Effective school leadership in the Ghanaian secondary schools is a concern for everyone in the country currently due to overburdened roles, insufficient and inadequate support and rewards. People are calling for a better prepared educational leadership in the Ghana. School leaders should be empowered through capacity strengthening programs and motivated to enable themselves to develop the professional and intellectual competencies required to meet the complex quality education challenges facing Ghana (Oduro, 2009).

It also being noted that for a leader to adapt and respond to continual fluctuations and changes in the current state of leadership, capacity development is requirement. Emphasis should be on capitalizing intensively on leaders and their capacities development in all employees across educational organizational levels. The aims of leadership development processes are: to increase awareness of institution goals and objectives, to create a problem-solving platform which will help make opportunities and conditions for searching for solutions to problems. It also creates a conscious awareness of organizational, group and interpersonal progress.

Building leadership capacity includes key activities such as individuals who have special competencies are leading; aligning the vision with activities to achieve the goals; ensuring that the leader inspires others to work towards the goals and objectives, and striving to solve problems and overcome challenges that may be faced. Leadership development is a continuous, systematic process designed to expand the capacity and awareness of individuals, groups, and organizations in an effort to meet shared goals and objectives.

The approaches used in developing leaders whether educational or corporate institutions have been shown to be very important in the any leadership development

process. They help to lay leadership behaviors out in a more manageable framework in order to gain an understanding of what exactly makes an effective performer.

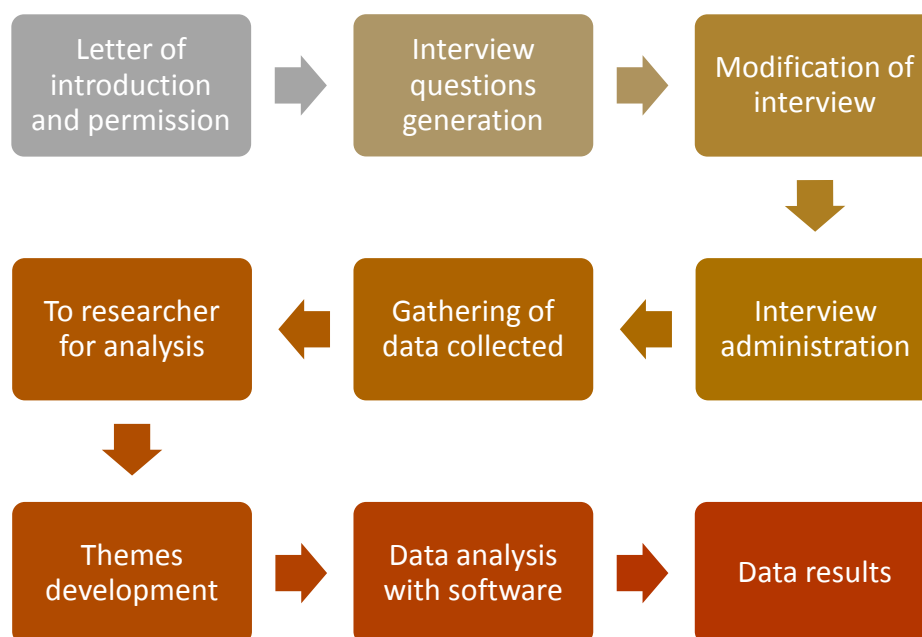
This study reviewed the leadership development mode by Northouse (2004) which explains the elements for effective performance and outcomes. And also discussed Bolam's (1999) leadership development mode which are grouped into four modes: knowledge for understanding, knowledge for action, improvement of practice, and development of a reflexive mode. Finally described Bush and Glover's (2004) leadership development modes which explain further that leadership development programs differ depending on the specific approach that guides the learning activities and learning outcomes reached. From all these ideas, it is established that modelling, coaching, feedback, mentoring; training, job assignments, action learning and Challenging assignments that stretched their capability are effective approaches or modes in developing leaders' capacities. And these approaches have been recommended by Green (2001) to school leaders to consider lessons from such perspectives. The author further urged them to consider strategies to increase opportunities for school leaders at all levels, to enable them to be effective and be able to keep up to the challenges of the school.

Evidence is seen in the English and Welsh secondary schools, where government together with the other agents of the school (heads, teachers, parents, community and students) heeded to these recommendations from research studies (Welsh Government, 2012; Supovitz, 2014). Today they are considered to be effective in the development of their school leaders from prospective leaders through to succession level. This is a very effective career pathway for school leaders.

### **3. Materials and Methods**

The study is an exploratory analysis research and aims to understand leadership development models in the Ghanaian education system, especially at the secondary school level. To identify the strategies and ways in developing the professional capacity of school leaders in Ghanaian secondary schools, qualitative research, through individual interviews protocols and grounded theories was employed to answer the research questions. The study involved key informants to explore the research questions. These key foci are principals, teachers, administrative staffs and some workers from the Ministry of Education. Ten senior secondary schools in the capital of Ghana, Accra were selected. These groups are chosen using purposive sampling. The participants are selected based on their characteristics and knowledge as they relate to the research questions being investigated. The primary concern is to explore individuals

in their natural context, for that matter, purposive sampling is used. According to Patton (1990), *“The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research”*. Based on their knowledge and experiences, 26 participants out of 60 responded. Data were collected through semi-structured interview protocols made up of open-ended questions defining the area to be explored. Semi-structured interview protocols were adopted to help the research assistant to generate key information as data for analysis. Interviews resemble everyday conversations, although they are focused on the researcher’s needs for data. Data collection techniques included digitally audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis. An interpretive approach was used to analyze the data and generate meaning and conclusions. These insights, themes, and conclusions were instrumental in arriving at recommendations and suggestions for a better model in developing school leaders both prospect and experienced school leaders. The data collection procedure has been modelled below:



**Figure 1:** Graphic representation of data collection procedure

After the data was collected, it was read and scrutinized to make sense out of what has emerged. Software for qualitative analysis (QDA Miner) was used to facilitate data into sections which is known as codes (Creswell, 2003, 2007). Codes are consistent phrases, expressions, or ideas that are common among research participants (Kvale, 2007). This process helps the researcher to make sense of the data by reducing the data into



manageable, intelligent pieces of information that communicate the essence of the data (Patton, 2008). The study was analysed using the following procedure;

*(1) Raw data (transcripts) -- (2) organization and preparation of data for analysis-- (3 reading through data-- (4) coding data with the computer-- (5) themes generation -- (6) description validation -- (7) interpretation of themes/description.*

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Demographics**

Each participant is given an index. Private schools are coded with “Rno.r” and public schools are also coded “Rno.u”. The R means respondent, no. means respondent number and the u or r means public or private. Sixteen (16) of the participants were from private senior secondary schools and 10 are from public senior secondary. Participants who responded to the interviews were in different roles. Most of them are headmasters or principals, some are assistant heads and teachers, but few administration staff responded. No educational officer or staff from the ministry of education responded

### **4.2 Analysis of research questions**

The themes developed from the responses of the interviews are used as guide in reporting the findings, starting from leadership challenges through to the subsequent themes. A presentation of the overall the findings are shown in the figure below:

**Table 1: Leadership development in Ghana – Results Frequency Matrix (comprehensive)**

Development topics and sub-topics	Codes (total 272)	Codes (%)	Cases (N=26)	Cases (%)
<b>Leadership Challenges</b>				
Financial (internal)	14	5,1%	12	46,2%
Financial (external)	13	4,8%	10	38,5%
Inadequate logistics	8	2,9%	8	30,8%
Lack of infrastructure	5	1,8%	5	19,2%
Social factors:				
Indiscipline	9	3,3%	8	30,8%
Human factor	15	5,5%	12	46,2%
Unskilled personnel	6	2,2%	5	19,2%
Educational structure	9	3,3%	6	23,1%
Lack of motivation	9	3,3%	8	30,8%
<b>Leadership Skills</b>				
Motivation	5	1,8%	5	19,2%
Communication	12	4,4%	12	46,2%
Managerial	15	5,5%	13	50,0%
Organizational	3	1,1%	3	11,5%
Instructional	5	1,8%	5	19,2%
Social	6	2,2%	6	23,1%
<b>Capacity Development</b>				
Training (in service)	20	7,4%	19	73,1%
Mentoring	1	0,4%	1	3,8%
Coaching	2	0,7%	2	7,7%
Feedback	1	0,4%	1	3,8%
Seminars	7	2,6%	7	26,9%
Workshop	4	1,5%	4	15,4%
<b>Development Model/Approach</b>				
Content (theory)	3	1,1%	3	11,5%
Content (practical)	5	1,8%	5	19,2%
<b>Professional Development Support</b>				
School	12	4,4%	11	42,3%
Government	11	4,0%	8	30,8%
Other sponsors	9	3,3%	8	30,8%
No support	8	2,9%	7	26,9%
<b>Other</b>				
Recommendation	21	7,7%	16	61,5%
<b>Evaluation after participation</b>				
Performance	12	4,4%	12	46,2%
<b>Current Program</b>				
Yes	7	2,6%	7	26,9%
No	15	5,5%	15	57,7%

## 4.2 Leadership Challenges in Ghanaian Senior Secondary Schools

Leadership challenges in Ghanaian school management might not be different from other parts of the world. But in every country, there are unique or special problems that are facing leaders in school. Inducing from the responses of the interviews, the challenges found in senior high school management in Ghana are categorized into nine codes. Some of the responses were answered in a very unnatural manner because they were not more than one-word responses.

Internal financial difficulties challenge both public and private senior secondary schools in Ghana. Money for catering for the welfare of the schools is very hard to generate for both sets of schools. In Ghana, private senior secondary school students pay fees for their tuition and administrative charges while in the public schools tuition and administrative charges are free.

There are no supports of any kind from government to help the private school system in Ghana, and this make the management process very difficult to handle. On the other hand, parents are not able to pay the tuition of their wards in these private schools. A headmaster from a private school said:

*"The main challenge is payment of school fees by parents. Majority of our students have dropped out of school due to inability to pay fees, not because our school fees are high but rather due to economic challenges." (R7r)*

In the public schools, government funding is supposed to take care of all running and infrastructure development costs. But in reality, this is a big challenge to public senior secondary schools because the funding provided by government is usually not sufficient for the management of the schools. A headmaster suggested that:

*'Government can increase funding to schools especially when we are currently running a free senior secondary school system.' (R23u)*

And an Assistant headmaster specified that currently, the government has stopped paying for the fees of students and this is their main challenge. He stated:

*"Now the government has stopped the paying of tuition fees by students yet it does not provide any fund to help in the management of the school." (R8u)*

The second thing that challenges school management is the inadequacy of logistics. This is the transportation of school materials and supplies. The researcher

defined this theme as the insufficient delivery of teaching and learning materials and other necessary school supplies for the management of the school. Without the materials to work with productivity is very difficult to be achieved. One the teachers said:

*"Insufficient laboratory apparatus." (R17r)*

Another also reported:

*"Educational aid is insufficient." (R24u)*

Most headmasters and teachers acknowledged that adequate educational materials facilitate effective productivity and also motivate teachers to do their best.

Lack of infrastructure is another leadership challenge in Ghanaian senior secondary schools. Proper environment and facilities for learning increase teachers and learners concentration to work very effectively. When the school environments are not in good shape, it disturbs both students and leaders. One of the headmaster's stories was:

*"There is an encroachment on our school land however due to the economic challenges (no funds coming from the government) we cannot build a wall around the school and this has made it very difficult to control students movement. Students move in and out of the school without anyone noticing." (R8u)*

Student indiscipline is one of the very troubling issues to school management. Being private or public, headmasters are explaining how challenging it is to handle students who are not abiding by school rules and regulations. One accounted that:

*"Indiscipline is the main challenge I face as a leader. You know as a senior house mistress you are always with the students. Their immoral and deviant behaviors are affecting their academic works." (R6r)*

One also added that due lawlessness of these behaviors:

*"Currently, we had to dismiss about 270 students due to this behavior." (R8u)*

Furthermore, the responses revealed that parents' attitudes and behaviors towards the education of the children are not encouraging, it challenges the management school. A teacher replied:

*"Low interest of some parents in their ward's academic." (R10r)*

Another continued and gave an example:

*"This has to do with parents' inability to understand the mission, vision, and philosophy of our school. Some parents feel that their own upheld doctrines should be same in the school. For instance, there are times where parents want their children to leave schools and go for prayers etc." (R2u)*

Some headmasters mentioned the difficulties in working with some personnel. This is related the code unskilled/uncooperative personnel. They explained that most teachers are unwilling to adhere to changes regarding methods of delivery and some are unskilled to do the job. This is a challenge that affects school management and results in poor performance of students. A headmistress told us that:

*"Our teachers are adamant to change. They keep up with the old ways of doing things when there are new and innovative ideas and approaches emerging. This makes out work very difficult." (R9u)*

The structure of the education system is a challenge to some school leaders. Numerous reforms, diversified and voluminous curriculum contents are making school leadership an onerous endeavour. A headmaster described how these kinds of policies are affecting the proper management of the school. Some teachers accounted that the voluminous curriculum content and the limited number of years given to complete are preventing them to upgrade themselves both professional and academically. One stated:

*"Voluminous syllabus allows no time for training programs." (R17r)*

Most of the participants responded to lack of motivation as a challenge in school leadership in Ghana. This is the extrinsic motivation which is mostly defined as financial in Ghanaian schools. There are so many factors that motivate one to give out their best, but heads and teachers believe that when they are financially motivated they

will be all out at their jobs. One sadly reported that the delays in salaries are real challenge of teachers. A house master's summary was:

*"In the end, it all comes down to money and I will still say senior high school leaders should be well motivated so they can work wholeheartedly." (R23u)*

Looking at the frequency values of the themes, it can be seen that some of the themes are particular to Ghana.

### **4.3 Leadership Skills Needed in Ghanaian Senior Secondary Schools**

The data shows that 50 percent of the cases agreed that managerial skills are at the core of leadership in every organization. Being able to make decisions and lead staff or employees for the development of the school are all the headmasters need. One head described:

*"Decision-making skills, ability to engage staff..." (R8u)*

Communication skills are also much-needed skills to have as a school leader in Ghana. 46.2 percent of the cases revealed that communication skills are must have skills. The skills to convey information to another effectively and efficiently aid staffs in achieving target. A headmistress described how ineffective communication are affecting their work, her response was:

*"Communication challenges in the form of miscommunication due to shift system. Different policies and structures which causes subordinates (teachers) to become confused and give undesired output, there for communication management skill is what one need to lead a school." (R16u)*

Additionally, social skills were shown to be necessary skills for leaders to lead effectively in Ghanaian senior secondary schools, it shown 23.1 percent. Looking at the cultural diversity in Ghana, sometimes it makes it difficult to understand others. Therefore if a head has an intercultural competence skills which the researcher coded it as social skill, will help in relating to others in the school management process. A response from a headmaster to the question was:

*"Understand culture diversity of the people you are dealing with, interpersonal skills ... social skills etc." (R2u)*

Moreover, knowledge in the field of leading is very important skill to have. Instructional skills are very necessary for school running, it helps the leader to understanding what to achieve. 19.2 percent revealed that instructional skills are what they need in their leadership in the schools. One indicated:

*"Field knowledge." (R19r)*

Besides the listed skills, motivational skills are very necessary for Ghanaian school leadership, especially at the senior secondary school level. This comprises willingness to tackle problems, exert influence, and advance overall human good and value of the institutions. Due financial difficulty, it is hard for the school and its workers to be willingly motivated to work. A headmaster told the interviewer that one needs:

*"Ability to motivate employees in the absence of monetary factors." (R12r)*

Last but not least is organizational skills; the ability to align and coordinate knowledge and work in a collective manner. Working collectively and coordinating school processes in accordance with the aims or goals of the school. One headmistress responded:

*"To effectively delegate to your employees." (R15u)*

Another was:

*"Organization of subordinates ... Giving accurate report." (R5r)*

#### **4.4 Capacity Development for Senior Secondary School Leaders**

When participants were asked in what methods are leaders in the various schools develop to face the challenges at work, the frequency value for in-service training counted 20. 73.1 percent responded that either the school or government organize an in-service training to develop them and encourage them to work effectively. It was also reviewed that the schools organize these trainings frequently but for the public schools, the government organize these trainings but it is not a frequent training rather once in a while thing. One head from the public school responded:

*"The Ghana Education Service organizes periodic training for Senior Secondary School leaders. These programs, however, are not frequent." (R21u)*

Mentoring is also a method of developing one to its potentials. From the data, it was seen that 3.8 percent of the responses answered that they use mentoring methods to develop their staffs. An assistant headmaster from one private school said:

*"Engaging in mentorship programs." (R5r)*

Furthermore, 7.7 percent stated that they use coaching as a means of developing both leaders and staff. They encourage their staff to improve both job skills and knowledge in the process. A respondent specified that:

*"We permit weekend upgrading where teachers are encouraged to attend sandwich and distance programs to update their skills and qualifications." (R2u)*

Additionally, few reported that they use feedback as a form of developing themselves and their staff. From the analysis, 3.8 percent responded that feedback is a way which helps to reverse the direction of change. One head said:

*"Staff who have no formal background in education are commended and encouraged to take courses in education." (R1r)*

Besides, 26.9 percent stated seminar as method of capacity development. They organize seminars to exchange ideas. These seminars help them to develop their leadership skills to face the challenges ahead. One female teacher's response was:

*"Yes, I attend seminars for leadership development to upgrade myself for a leadership position in future." (R19r)*

Lastly, on capacity development, some responded that they attend workshops to develop themselves professionally. Workshops are intensive group discussions where ideas and concepts are developed and used. An assistant headmistress responded that:

*"We encourage staff to attend workshops to improve on their skills and develop new ideas. We also encourage them to read wide to help them improve on their skills." (R9u)*



#### **4.5 Leadership Development Approach/ Mode in Ghana**

The Approach or model of delivering leadership development program can be theoretical or practical approach. Both can be very effective in the development of skills and abilities.

Theoretical content gives facts and evident on a particular subjects. Sometimes it is difficult for one to relate these facts. From the responses, it was realized that most of the leadership development programs organize by either the government or school are too much theoretical. And this makes it difficult for participants to relate well to the program because the theories are most of the time different from what are being practiced in the schools. One head's response was:

*"The implementation of the program is very difficult due to the difference between theory and what is really practiced on the ground." (R22r)*

On the other hand, practical content delivery facilitates better understanding. Making the theoretical content more practical and involving participants in the process help them to understand and acquire very practical knowledge to develop themselves. Another heads stated:

*"It is a good programs, it helps to mentor leader also helps to acquire practical knowledge." (R5r)*

#### **4.6 Professional Development Support**

To make leadership development in schools more active, there should be support from all agents of education. The supports for leadership development in this study are grouped into four, namely, the school, government, other sponsors and no support.

The school in this section means the support from the school itself, 42.3 percent described. For the private school, leadership development is supported, financed and organize by the management of the school. One headmaster specified:

*"No support. Everything is generated within. It is only public institutions get the support from government." (R12r)*

Sometimes they are supported by other sponsors, 30.8 percent reported.

*"No external support comes in from the government but we have had several donations from some individuals to help in capacity development" R25r*

Government organizes and supports leadership development for schools, mainly the public schools. But timing of the training programs are not favorable for school leaders to attend. A headmaster's reaction was:

*"The government organizes programs for us; however, the time period it is organized is not convenient. It is mostly organized during schools hours and we cannot leave our work just for the program." (R9u)*

## 5. Discussions

### Theme 1: Leadership Challenges

It has been identified that the advances in science and technology, changes in demography which has led to changes in the nature of work, globalization, and the environmental pressures are also seen in education. And the consequences of the working context are quite crucial for the organization and leadership of schools (Day & Leithwood, 2007). Whether the school is public or private, well-endowed or poor, the school head would have a number of complex issues to deal with, sometimes on a regular basis. These issues are challenging to the school leaders.

Agreeing to Mulford (2003), these issues which are job-related stress from the pressure of long hours, budget cuts, overcrowding, and shortage of qualified teachers; time fragmentation; an unsupportive external environment including the growing pressure of high-stakes testing and accountability - a set of local, state, and federal mandates, many of which are seen by school leaders as unfounded; social problems that schools are assuming in trying to instruct students - the harsh realities from the outside, such as poverty, inadequate health care, and unemployment; inadequate remuneration for the increased responsibility and workload; and the pressures of unrelenting change which are not necessarily to education's advantage.

From the responses, advances in science and technology, and globalization were not seen to be pressures on headmasters' rather financial pressures internally and externally. Not much difference was seen from the data collected for this study compared to Mulford's assertions, although some of the responses are very particular to Ghana. In detecting leadership challenges from the data collected, nine subthemes manifested during the analysis of the data; internal financial difficulties, external financial difficulties, inadequate logistics, lack of infrastructure, indiscipline, human

factors, unskilled/ uncooperative staff, the educational structure and lack of extrinsic motivation.

Leaders and teachers from both set of schools acknowledged that these challenges do not only affect their performance as leaders rather the whole agents of the school. Studies have shown that high-quality leadership has a significant impact on both pupils' academic and non-academic outcomes (Leithwood et al, 2004). In the same way, low-quality leadership also impacts the school as a whole. The responses confirmed that the school leaders are faced with complex and diverse challenges which require of them more tactical skills to help them face these challenges.

One key finding from the data collected was lack of extrinsic motivation from either government or the school. Most of the respondents reported that their outcomes do not match their inputs; they are doing a lot to increase the performance of both students and school notwithstanding challenges such as inadequate logistic and insufficient infrastructure. But they are not rewarded accordingly. Pinder (2008) described that what people receive as a reward for their efforts or input is regarded as an outcome. Different people, including school principals, appreciate different outcomes. Salary, fringe benefits, status, opportunity to learn, physical outcomes/ privileges and job satisfaction are the main outcomes of job satisfaction. Based on the interviews, these outcomes have not been attained and have led to dissatisfaction in their jobs. People usually evaluate their outcomes based on their inputs. If their view is that the outcome befits the input, then equity or satisfaction has been reached.

Another key finding from the study was financial challenges, internally and externally. The private senior secondary schools in Ghana do not get any kind of support from the government. Based on the interviews, few of such schools receive external donor support. They generate funds internally from parents for the management of the school. But payment of such fees is a big challenge for parents given the current economic situation in Ghana. Meanwhile, the public schools run non-fee paying systems. These schools are funded primarily by the government. However, the study revealed that disbursement of financial support by government is irregular, making the running of the public schools perplexing for its leaders. For these reasons, the development of the leaders and teachers are hindered.

These challenges make the school leadership profession unattractive to the most qualified potential candidates. Evidence indicates that potential applicants are deterred by the heavy workload of principals and the fact that the job does not seem to be adequately remunerated or supported (Beatriz, Deborah, & Hunter, 2008).

## **Theme 2: Leadership Skills**

Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of school. Being efficient leader means acquiring the necessary skill for the management of the school. Discussing the challenges of leadership in the world today, Langely and Jacobs (2014) stated the challenges of the school leadership today demand so much of the individual willing to take on that challenge. These require leaders to be visionary, analytical and effective communicator. Leaders in this century must make every attempt to adapt to change in a manner that incorporates specific skills, be they inherent or learned to become successful.

According to Dimmock's (1999), *"leadership means influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals... Leadership... takes... much ingenuity, energy and skill."* Alternatively, Starratt (2001) emphasized leadership as 'cultivation' which means that democratic leadership is primarily concerned to cultivate an environment that supports participation, sharing of ideas, and the virtues of honesty, openness, flexibility, and compassion. Moreover, Bush (1998) linked leadership to values or purpose.

Grounded on these theories and the responses from the interviews, theme two was developed. It was used to understand the skills needed for successful school leadership in Ghana. Motivation, communication, managerial, organizational, instructional and social skills were the components for leadership skills; they are seen to be essential skills for school leadership in this study.

The vast literature on school leadership proves that these skills are inevitable for successful leadership. After scrutinizing 121 articles in four international journals, Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) identified school leadership skills as follows:

- Instructional leadership;
- Managerial leadership;
- Participative leadership;
- Moral leadership;
- Transformational leadership;
- Interpersonal leadership;
- Contingent leadership.

Instructional, managerial and interpersonal leadership skills were perceived to be important skills from the responses of this study despite the above skills listed.

Instructional leadership skills assume that school leaders, usually principals, have both the expert knowledge and the formal authority to exert influence on teachers.

On the other hand, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) categorized instructional leadership into three broad categories:

- defining the school mission;
- managing the instructional program;
- promoting school climate.

Modeling, monitoring and professional dialogue are three strategies of instructional leadership which were shown particularly effective in improving teaching and learning of small schools in England and Wales (Southworth, 2002). Hill (2001) advocated that instructional leadership dimension should be included in leadership development program, *“school leaders may lack sufficient knowledge of teaching and learning to provide adequate, let alone successful, leadership”*.

Participants from the interview concur with (Hill, 2001) that school leaders in Ghana need sufficient knowledge of teaching and learning to leader successful. In contrast, a large number of participants commented on lack of sufficient field knowledge on the part of leaders and teachers. Instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behavior of teachers in working with students. Leaders' influence is targeted at student learning via teachers.

Managerial leadership admits that the focus of leaders ought to be on functions, tasks, and behaviors and that if these functions are carried out competently the work of others in the organization will be facilitated (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). According to Dressler's (2001) reviewed of leadership in Charter schools in the United State, the principal's role has been clearly focused on management responsibilities. Global and societal influences have increased the span of responsibility. Additional responsibilities are said to include interpersonal leadership, such as motivating others, sensitivity and communication skills, and contextual factors, including philosophical and cultural values, and policy and political influences. The responses from the heads during the interview acknowledged managerial skills as a critical success factor to efficient leadership; many therefore suggested managerial training for school leaders.

According to West-Burnham (2001), interpersonal skill is the vital medium. Interpersonal leadership focuses on the relationships leaders have with teachers, students and others connected with the school. Leaders adopt a collaborative approach which may have a moral dimension. They have advanced personal skills which enable them to operate effectively with internal and external stakeholders. Considering the pressures related to the work of school leaders, Johnston and Pickersgill (1992) suggested that personal and interpersonal skills should be a requirement for school.

Considering the communal nature of Ghanaian culture, a school leader with interpersonal skill will have difficulties in succeeding as a leader. Majority of the

responses admitted to the fact that interpersonal leadership skill is a need skill for school leaders in Ghana.

Other leadership skills such as participative leadership, moral leadership, transformational leadership and contingent leadership skill are also necessary leadership skills for the improvement of school in this century, even though they were not seen or mention in the interviews. They need to be looked into and practiced for the success of both private and public secondary schools.

### **Theme 3: Capacity Development Approaches**

The main purpose of this study is to explore leadership capacity development approaches or modes in Ghanaian senior secondary schools. In-service training, mentoring, coaching, feedback, seminar, and workshop are modes of developing competences in both leaders and followers for the improvement of any organization. There are other modes or approaches for capacity development of leaders. A recent review on the most prevalent and promising approaches used to develop leaders, methods like 360-degree feedback and executive coaching, mentoring and networking, and job assignment and action learning were specified (Day & Halpin, 2004). As more as 73.1 percent of participants in the interviews identified in-service training as the most common capacity development approach in Ghanaian senior secondary schools both private and public. Additional approaches emerged as the researcher analyzed the data collected. Limited number also specified that sometimes mentoring, coaching, feedback, seminars and workshop methods are used, agreeing to what (Day & Halpin, 2004) stated as popular and promising.

The private schools indicated from the data that in-service trainings are frequently organized and staff attend them to build up their competences. But their counterparts in the public schools are not able to attend these training sections organized by the government due to wrong timing as one headmaster stated. Furthermore, inadequate resources discouraged them to go for these trainings. In the end, it pans out that most of the leaders and staff in our public schools are not fully equipped to face the perplexing tasks ahead of them.

E-learning for leadership, narrative methods, job rotation, challenging assignments that stretched their capability and networking with peers were found from literature to be effective in the development of school leaders. These methods would not be dragging them from schools to confined places for capacity building. Rather within their various zones, they can bring their best through these methods together with the popular ones. Day (2001) described leadership development as increasing the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and

processes. He goes on to explain that leadership development means capacity building: this means expanded capacity provides for better individual and collective adaptability across a wide range of situations. A leadership development approach is oriented toward building capacity in anticipation of unforeseen challenges.

#### **Theme 4: Leadership Development Content**

Bolam (1999) claims that leadership development can be grouped into four modes:

- Knowledge for understanding;
- Knowledge for action;
- Improvement of practice;
- Development of a reflexive mode.

Leadership development program contents are perceived as predominantly aiming at *“knowledge for understanding”*, particularly those provided by universities (Bush, 2009). Each program has a *“curriculum”* that gives an indication of the topics to be studied. Content of leadership development programs provided for school leaders tend to emphasis greatly on the application of knowledge to improve practice than on theoretical issues (Bjork & Murphy, 2005) claimed. Nevertheless, there has been a widespread shift in the twenty-first century, emphasizing from content to process, from *“what”* is included in development programs to *“how”* they are designed and delivered. For which Chong, Stott, and Low (2003) stressed that *“delivery”* is the main concern of the new leadership development program.

Is the content of leadership development programs in Ghana for school leaders a knowledge for understanding or knowledge for action and improvement of practice? The answers to this question brought out the leadership development theme, including its subthemes of practical content and theoretical content. A number of participants did not answer this question without giving reasons. Those who answered stated emphatically that these training programs organized either by government or school or third party, are too theoretical in content. The program or the model as it is now exposes leaders who in leadership position without the requisite skills to acquire the needed skills to enable them succeed in their leadership careers. It is very elaborate and comprehensive and covers almost every facet of leadership in education (R1r). Even though relevant information for the improvement of the school, sometimes it feels boring, not beneficial (R11r). Moreover, *“the implementation of the program is very difficult due to the difference between theory and what is really practiced on the ground”* (R22r).

Knowledge understanding is very important as leaders of schools, but there is a shift in today's world from *“what”* is included in development programs to *“how”* they

are designed and delivered. The “*delivery*” should be the main concern for leadership development programs in Ghana. “*Knowledge for action*” and “*improvement of practice*” as Bolam (1999) suggested should be the focus on process rather than content. Instead of the adoption of a prescribed curriculum, leaders are developed through a range of action modes and support mechanisms, often customized to the specific needs of leaders through what is increasingly referred to as “*personalized*” or “*individualized*” learning. The researcher believes if more attention are given to the facilitation of learning through approaches such as participant-centered learning, action learning sets, and open learning, leadership development in our secondary schools will be effective.

### **Theme 5: Professional Development Support**

There is considerable diversity in the ways that leadership development programs are funded supported. According to Bush and Glover (2005) countries like Singapore and the Seychelles, school leadership development cost is met by the government. In Singapore for instance, ‘Leaders in Education’ is not mandatory for appointment but, as candidates are ‘handpicked’ for inclusion in the program, they are required to attend and successful completion is expected to ensure promotion (Bush & Chew 1999). On the other hand, in most other countries by being full-time for six months with candidates receiving full pay during the training period.

A review on professional development support and funding in schools show North Carolina’s program also represents a substantial investment as candidates receive a loan, which is repayable only if they leave the state within four years. Likewise, all Chicago’s programs are entirely free to candidates, a commitment to educational regeneration through leadership development. Nevertheless, in Ontario, the model is very different with candidates paying their own fees, although these are tax deductible, and learning in their own time. In England, the government covers the cost of the NPQH, because it is statutory, but other NCSL programs are fee paying after the pilot phase.

Ghana might be using one way or the other similar funding model in Chicago and England. From the interviews, it was revealed that government supports and funds these programs for the leaders in the public schools. Leadership development programs are usually a week long program with officials to update and review leadership practices. Candidates participate freely in these programs but have to sometimes pay for learning materials and accommodation. Some complain of these payments to be expensive for them to pay therefore do not attend the programs. All the same, the private schools fund these programs from within or attend the ones organize by the universities at a cost.



This kind of funding model is not a bad model as other countries practice it. But it is the attitude and mindset of the participants in the program and most personnel in the government or public schools. If they realize it is an investment in their career, they will help support the government in such events. The private schools know and see such measures as an investment for the total success of the school even though they do not get any governmental support.

School leaders, especially in the public schools, should be much more concerned about their own career development and understand that the government will do its part for the development of schools but will not always be enough considering the country's economic situation. Self-funding usually means that candidates apply to join programs and acceptance is independent of state sponsorship. In this scenario, participants are willing to pay the fees because they regard it as an investment in their career development (Bush and Jackson 2002).

## **6. Recommendations**

In light of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- A continuous leadership development program of activities which focus on recruitment of candidates from preparation level to succession level. Recruitment processes can have a strong impact on school leadership quality. Succession planning – proactively identifying and developing potential leaders – can boost the quantity and quality of future school leaders. Eligibility criteria should be broadened to reduce the weight accorded to seniority and attract younger dynamic candidates with different backgrounds. The procedures should include an expanded set of tools and procedures to assess candidates.
- Ensuring in-service training to cover need and context. Leadership development programs should focus more on the individual needs of the school leaders. The learning process should be facilitated through approaches such as participant-centered learning, action learning sets, and open learning. The existing in-service programs should encourage development of leadership skills. It should be also offered periodically to principals and leadership teams so they can update their skills and keep up with new developments.
- Ensuring suitable variety modes for effective training through a broad body of knowledge supported by practices that identify the content, design and methods of effective programs. Approaches such as curricular coherence, experience in real contexts, cohort grouping, mentoring, coaching, peer learning and structures for collaborative activity between the program and school, E-learning for

leadership, narrative methods, job rotation, challenging assignments that stretched their capability and feedbacks were found from literature to be effective in the development of school leaders.

## 7. Conclusions

There is widespread interest in educational leadership. It is believed that effective leadership is vital for successful schooling (Leithwood et al. 2006). It is therefore widely regarded as the second most important factor affecting student outcomes after classroom teaching. Effective leadership is seen to serve as a facilitator for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization. It empowers institutions to achieve the expected outcomes. School leadership is the most vital component for school improvement success. Leithwood et al, (2004) established that among school-related factors leadership is the single factor next to classroom instruction that contributes to what students learn at school. This has both direct and indirect effects on students' achievement and school success.

Given the importance of educational leadership, the development of effective leaders should not be left to chance. It should be a deliberate process designed to produce the best possible leadership for schools and colleges (Bush, 2009). In so doing leaders develop the needed skills for the success of the school. O'Neill and Fisher (2004) added that through this continuous, progressive, sequential and developmental process leaders acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviors required that occurs over time due to both maturational processes and learning (Avolio, 2005).

## Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge all the staff of University of Applied Management for their helpful assistance at all times and the head teachers, principals, teachers, administrators among others in the Ghanaian Senior High schools who contributed greatly to this by providing the needed data for the study.

## About the authors

**Gifty Abena Ampong**, MA, Hochschul Campus-Unna, Germany,  
[gifty.ampong@gmail.com](mailto:gifty.ampong@gmail.com)

**Martin Gyambrah**, Ph.D., University of Applied Management, Ghana Campus,  
[martin.gyambrah@fham.de](mailto:martin.gyambrah@fham.de)

**Joel Schmidt**, Ph.D., University of Applied Management, Germany,  
[joel.schmidt@fham.de](mailto:joel.schmidt@fham.de)

**Christian Werner**, Ph.D, Dr. rer. Oec, Private University Seeburg Castle, Seekirchen, Austria, [christian.werner@fham.de](mailto:christian.werner@fham.de)

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