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Influence of Leadership Styles of Head Teachers on Pupils Learning Outcomes in Junior High Schools in Northern Ghana

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Abstract:

The study examined leadership styles of headteachers in the Junior High Schools in Northern Ghana and how these contribute to pupils' learning outcomes especially in examinations. Survey design was used covering 42 Junior High Schools and 384 respondents. Data was collected and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Themes and testimonies from interviews were strengthened by t-test and ordinary least squares. The study found that Headteachers employ a blend of styles that are more participatory and less consultative in their day-to-day duties. The ability and styles heads adopt in managing their schools are influenced by many variables including gender of heads, years of teaching experience and school location. The most dominant styles were participatory and these showed improvement in pupils' scores in Basic Education Certificate Examination. The study again found that about 85.7% of the schools were rural and deprived of social amenities. Text books remain critical to quality teaching and learning but were mostly unavailable in most of the schools across the regions. Contemporary demand for education of good quality for all children reinforces the critical role of effective school leadership. The study reinforces the need for Headteachers in Junior High Schools in deprived areas who are skilled, capable, have penchant for more participatory and people centred approaches in their leadership and also more in-service training in order to strengthen headteachers' approaches in leading stakeholders to improve pupils' academic performance.

Keywords: Leadership, headteachers, learning, performance, pupils, school

1. Background

Schools can become effective in reaching their vision of improved academic performance if the education systems they belong prioritize leadership (Fuller, 2017). Given the importance in improving learning outcomes education systems in recent times no longer limit the focus on inputs but are increasingly emphasizing leadership effectiveness. For some time now Headteachers particularly in Europe and America are continually challenged to not only serve as managers but also to display effective leadership skills which are very crucial in achieving the goal of equipping young people with skills, knowledge and capabilities that are needed in an ever-changing world (Schleicher, 2012). Educational systems in Africa are equally confronted with this challenge, though to a limited extent but based on the fact that these have been modelled after the European standards (Peeraer, 2015). A conscious emphasis on ensuring effectiveness of Headteachers has to remain critical in the search for solutions to quality education (Day et al., 2010). African countries that already emphasize effectiveness of school leaders are demonstrating improvements in learners' achievements. Rwanda is a notable example and the evidence exists of its significant impact on pupils' academic performance (Day et al., 2010).

Headteacher duties and how they perform vary depending on the context and education system. Jull, Swaffield and Macbeath (2014) maintain that headteachers' professional development and leadership practices in Sub-Saharan Africa have experienced less variation from the model established during colonial times. In Ghana pre-tertiary policies and strategies provide for the duties and responsibilities of basic school heads. Implemented by Ghana Education Service through divisional, regional and district directorates they are expected to reflect in improvements in the quality of education that learners receive. In public Junior High Schools, the Headteacher is the Chief Executive Officer with a mandate to drive all the processes and tasks necessary for learning. How these leads their schools is therefore a critical determinant of what their learners achieve (GES, 2010a).

As evident in more diverse context the Headteacher's responsibilities may cover the entire school or specific departments. Up until now public Junior High Schools in Ghana lacked specific departments and responsibility rests on the head to oversee the entire system in the school. They therefore must model and reflect responsibility as supervisors, managers, school climate developers and change facilitators (MolokoMphale & Mhlauli, 2014; Esia-Donkor, 2014). In specific terms, a Headteacher's duties extend from instructional, administrative, visioning, and collaborative to relationship building. Vision is crucial to the Headteacher's role. The cardinal role of driving vision for school development

is to set a clear and focused goal which is pursued as the mission of the school. This role therefore includes target setting and general planning. The failure to plan properly deprives schools of desired results. Success in school improvement is therefore incumbent on how the school head visions and blends relationships with values (Kieti, Maithya, & Mulwa, 2017). Nyagosia (2011), Helterbran and Sue (2004) claim the most important characteristic of effective schools is the existence of strong instructional leadership whose core business is promoting actual teaching and learning in the classroom. Headteacher's instructional duties therefore need to include identifying opportunities for improving teachers' classroom practicing, planning and conducting professional development and training for teachers, curriculum development, allocating resources meant for teaching and learning, mentoring, supervising and reviewing day to day teaching (MolokoMphale, 2014 and Vaillant, 2015).

In their administrative leadership Head teacher's must manage correspondence between the school and the external community. Teaching and learning cannot take place without an interface between and among teachers, pupils and School Management Committee members. The Headteacher assumes this interface, building relationship, promoting effective communication and collaboration in order to ensure the achievement of agreed plans. Effective records keeping which must including timely production and engagement over learners' performance with parents and other district education managers are critical ingredients of their role. Promotion of safe and conducive environment and discipline of both teachers and pupils represent core relationship-based responsibilities of school heads likewise.

Heads of lower secondary schools are also expected to build positive home-school relations. If parents are to remain aware and involved in school-based matters that affect their children then an effective school head must be involved (Nyagosia, Waweru & Njuguna, 2013). As public institutions where people are the key ingredients, misunderstandings are inevitable. The head therefore is expected to resolve conflict by mediating between and among stakeholders within the school environment. As long as conflicts occur in a school setting, the role of the head in resolving them is crucial (Kor & Opare, 2017).

The diverse responsibilities of school heads may be difficult to achieve without the adoption of behaviours and approaches that are more responsive and reflect accountability. Shehu (2013) maintains that where individuals in leadership positions tend to be relatively consistent in their approaches and behaviour over time and relative to the situations around them, they tend to influence the behaviour of others, and ultimately yield varied results. Within the context of Junior High Schools in Ghana headteachers' responsibilities fit within the key areas outlined. The ways these heads discharge their responsibilities may have direct and indirect influence on teaching and learning and consequently learning outcomes (Lonyian and Kuranchie, 2018).

For close to two decades, not more than 60% of Junior High School graduands pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination (Ministry of Education, 2016). Inadequate and poor-quality inputs notably teaching learning materials, teachers and school grants, teacher deployment tend to dominate the discourse on the poor performance (Amuzu, Ankalibazuk & Abdulai, 2017). While these may be critical Dady and Bali (2014) position that the quality of education may depend largely on how schools are run much more than the abundance of material and other inputs. Confronted with the persistent poor performance in Basic Education Certificate Examination, Government, through the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education, NGOs and researchers are not unaware about the importance of school leadership (Esia-Donkor, 2013). The gaps however reflect in the limited attention that is paid to leadership at Junior High level. School leadership as a course is not taught in any of the colleges of education. Yet majority of college trainees eventually become heads of Junior High Schools and are expected to successfully lead their schools (Esia-Donkor, 2013). Among the few capacity building opportunities for Headteachers has been the Leadership for Learning Programme, piloted by Cambridge Centre for Commonwealth Education and the Ministry of Education (Oduro, 2008). This intervention successfully tested the applicability of leadership for learning principles within Ghanaian context though it benefited few Headteachers and less evident of sustainability.

In more recent times Ministry of Education indicates an intention for rolling out a national programme for headteachers. This reflects the importance Ghana could be placing on school leadership. The Ministry's intentions are however yet to be translated into practice. In Northern Ghana, Non-Governmental Organizations occasionally support the Education Service in the conduct of in-service training for serving Headteachers. The manner professional development is delivered makes it difficult to access by those most in need (Godwyll, Larson & Ahwireng, 2013). Ad hoc and limited in service that rarely takes departure from a detailed needs assessment may hardly reveal how Headteachers presently lead their schools and changes required to improve their leadership practice. Existing leadership styles that head teachers in Junior High schools continue to employ in leading their schools and how these impact their pupils' academic performance have not been adequately investigated and understood with a view to improving them, particularly within the context of Northern Ghana.

2. Theoretical Underpinnings

The study employed transformational and transactional theories of leadership to explain the relationship between the headteachers's leadership styles and their influence on pupils' performance in examinations. Ideal leaders reflect their transformational qualities primarily in their unique but complementary abilities around tasks and relationships (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Individual interests of followers translate into the collective goal of the organization they belong to and this is possible through their leader. How the leader goes about their role in driving these followers through processes to the desired goal reflects his/her styles of leadership.

Leadership styles thus comprise the approaches and behaviours commonly employed by the leader in the exercise of their leadership function (Armstrong, 2012). In transformational, leadership styles are viewed in a continuum; from

those considered most basic and low-level behaviours in which the leader acts in more self-centered, dictatorial and or passive manner towards their followers and situations to more advanced, participatory and result-oriented approaches. Classical leadership theories consider leadership styles as either democratic or autocratic and to an extent a middle ground. While this classification remains valid in modern times especially in global political leadership discourse modern theories tend to emphasize viewing leadership styles as participatory, transformational, transactional and as servant-leader (Aviolo and Bass, 2004).

Some leaders make the most to create participatory and direct involvement of their followers in every bit of tasks and situations. Some may assign the lead role to their followers while assuming absolute responsibility for the outcome of followers' actions. Others act more as servants; leading and demonstrating how change should occur. In task related situations leadership becomes transactional where rewards and sanctions between the leader and followers dominate. In the extreme of the leadership continuum the leader may come across as laissez-faire. Khan, Nawaz and Khan (2016) maintain that in laissez-faire style of leadership, open-ended autonomy exist, in which followers may experience endless freedom with their leader making neither input into what goes on nor taking responsibility for the outcome of followers' actions.

Creative or situational leadership assumes the middle ground between the strict participatory behaviours and laissez-faire. The leader is experienced as not static in their consistency in employing more participatory approaches or relaxed/passive. Rather, when faced with situations the leader stimulates individuals to be able to be creative and excel by introducing ideas and timely solutions to problems (Avolio and Bass, 2002). Transformational leadership identifies seven (7) key areas where the leader's specific styles are reflected and these provide the framework for determining the styles of leadership in this study. Four (4) of these key areas considered more participatory include individualized consideration, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation. In these key styles, Boateng (2014) sums up the leader as having one that exhibits charisma, acting as role model and creating in followers' enthusiasm and optimism. The leader inspires followers with the aim of increasing their commitment and performance. Individualized consideration reflects the leader's focus on the unique needs of each follower and what can be done to bring out the best taking advantage of their unique strengths, with an ultimate aim of eventually making the followers leaders. Coaching, mentoring and support to growth are therefore the key features.

Contrary, styles considered less participatory comprise contingent reward in which the leader is consistent in their motivation of followers based mainly on pre-defined rewards and sanctions. Leaders may also tend to concentrate their effort on little things including being content with minimal standards of performance. More relaxed approaches to situations, neither taking initiative nor feeling responsible for outcomes of their behaviour are characteristics of these styles.

In educational setting schools are organized based on rules, regulations and frameworks. Teachers, pupils, community members and other administrators are required to follow the regulations and the head is required to stimulate these processes (Thakur, 2014). In the context of public Junior High Schools in Ghana Headteacher leadership styles may therefore reflect in the strategies or behaviours employed by the head in dealing with the varied situations as they occur. These may extend from relating to their teachers, learners well as the community members in order to ensure that the objectives of the school are achieved.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted in three geographic districts of Northern Ghana namely West Mamprusi, Jirapa and Talensi for North East, Upper West and Upper East Regions respectively. Northern Ghana has been selected based on its comparatively high incidence of poverty and educational deprivation. Leithwood et al. (2004) do stress that the effect of leadership on education is greatest where the learning needs of pupils are severer. The annual Ghana District League Tables (Government of Ghana/UNICEF/CDD/CSPS, 2019) consistently rank the study districts among the worst performing in terms of average pass rate in Basic Education Certificate Examination and other critical areas such as sanitation, security, governance, water and health. Jirapa District had a total population of 88,402 with 53.0 percent females and 47.0 percent for males (Ghana Statistical Service, 2015). This has been projected at about 104,273 people by 2018. West Mamprusi District had 121,117 people in 2010 which comprise 59,566 males and 61,551 females. The population of Talensi was estimated at 116,643 in 2018. All three districts are classified as rural, with 82% of the people living in rural settlements. Their major occupation is farming-largely food crops with some livestock.

Their rural nature characterized by high incidence of poverty impact on educational development. Jirapa Municipality has 45 junior high schools, 68 primary schools and 73 kindergartens (Government of Ghana, 2016). There are very few secondary schools across these districts with only two nursing training institutions located in Jirapa. West Mamprusi District has 48 pre-schools, 106 primary schools, 36 junior high schools, two senior high schools and one vocational school. Talensi District has 158 schools, 48 public pre-schools and eight private, 48 public primary schools, 35 public Junior High Schools, one special school for the deaf and two vocational schools. The few secondary schools and only two nursing training colleges in these districts imply thousands of pupils who persist and complete Junior High Schools either contend with access limited opportunities or are compelled to move to other regions which proves challenging due to poverty.

A survey design was adopted in the study due to its dual strength in supporting the understanding of phenomena over a given period of time while focusing in more detail on the present. The study covered the period 2010/2011 to 2017/2018. Therefore, the cross sectional enabled an understanding of leadership and head teacher styles and their influence on pupils BECE scores over the seven-year period while dwelling more on the year the study was conducted.

The target population was limited to the key stakeholders of education in the three districts because they had adequate knowledge about the context, appreciable awareness about pupils' performance in BECE and how this may be affected by the leadership of headteachers. These comprised headteachers, current pupils, School Management Committee (SMC) members, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), immediate past pupils who benefited from the heads of schools under study, District Directors of Education (DDE), Circuit Supervisors and Assistant Directors of Education (ADs).

Multi-stage cluster sampling was employed in selecting 384 respondents. Given their diverse nature the stakeholders that formed the population were clustered based on pre-defined characteristics such as school location, category of stakeholder and level of involvement in the day-to-day practice of Headteacher leadership. According to their EMIS data there were 124 Junior High Schools across the three districts. A quota of 33% was assigned to each district and this yielded 42 schools. Junior high schools which had the same headteacher consistently in the last five to seven years were purposively selected and these were less than 20% of schools. The rest of the schools were therefore further clustered based on level of deprivation according to GES criteria and a simple random sampling technique was used to select the remaining schools. From six strata different quotas were assigned in order to arrive at the respondents. The strata comprised pupils who were still in school at the time of the study, teachers, headteachers, circuit supervisors, School Management Committees (SMC) and Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A) executive members.

Qualitative data included the background information of schools, role of SMC and P.T.A. They also included biographical information on school heads, the experiences, views and perceptions of stakeholders regarding the leadership styles of headteachers in junior high schools and pupils' performance in examinations. Other school inputs and pupils' BECE scores constituted the quantitative data. Semi structured questionnaire was employed in obtaining data from heads, teachers and past pupils. Focus Group Discussion Guides aided the conduct and collation of data from the Focus Group Discussion which involved pupils and School management committee members. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Version 6S was adopted and applied in determining key leadership styles of heads. The adoption of MLQ 6S has been due to its popular applicability in leadership research (Rowold, 2004 and Avolio & Bass, 2000). In each school, the head teacher self-rated on 21 statements on the MLQ. In addition, two teachers from same school rated their head against same statements. Qualitative data, once obtained, was coded thematically, based on a pre-arranged coding system. Simple excel sheets and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) supported the analysis. Leadership styles as rated on a Likert scale of 0 to 4 were further computed by grouping the 21 statements into seven factor areas, each factor area representing a leadership style and along the transformational leadership continuum.

As is expected, under the interpretation on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2000), the frequency with which each statement fits the headteacher on their self-rating was determined. The maximum rating is 4 and implying if all 3 statements under a factor area were rated 4 then the total score for that area would be 12 signifying strength of the head in the application of such a style. A score between 9 and 12 are higher and correspond to more participatory and higher outcomes of desired leadership if they are within the first four styles. The opposite represents higher values around the last three passive styles. Scores of 5 to 8 are considered moderate while 0 to 4 are low.

4. Discussions of Major Findings

4.1. Context under Which Head Teachers Function

Around 85.7% of the study schools are rural and deprived of both social amenities. The relationship between sound school environment and head teacher effectiveness is reciprocal. School heads require a climate endowed with the minimum inputs in order to deliver effectively. At the same time the creation of such an environment is a reflection of the effectiveness or otherwise of school head (Kor & Opere, 2016). Ownership and management of these schools are predominantly Central Government through District, Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies. Religious bodies particularly Catholic Education Unit manage considerable number of them. Ownership and management of basic schools in Ghana has implications on how the school should be run and how the headteachers behaves as their appointment, specific duties and adequacy or otherwise of supervisory bodies beyond the head teacher are all a factor of ownership. Casely-Hayford et al (2013) observe that schools managed especially by religious education units are more likely to exhibit some strong dynamics positively contributing to quality learning.

Even though evidence support the position that how school schools are run matter more than availability of inputs the presence of minimum amount of material and financial resources are preconditions in the work of head teachers (Mbunde, 2017). The availability and quality of classrooms, furniture, teaching and learning materials and inclusive sanitation facilities are key physical inputs required in order to facilitate the work of Junior High School heads. Their availability or otherwise can affect the way heads would approach their lead role. The study found that these physical inputs were generally inadequate and of poor quality across most schools. In all the 42 schools there was a total of 3,108 pieces of furniture and this translates into a ratio of 2 or 3 students to a single desk instead of the national standard of a pupil to a desk. Inadequate furniture resulting in congestion and poor seating arrangements would impact negatively on pupils' learning even where their Headteacher is determined. Text books remain critical to quality teaching and learning but were mostly unavailable. In a detailed interview with one female Headteacher she had the following to say;

"Since I took over this school, I have not seen the core textbooks. I have been borrowing English text books from a colleague in a nearby school for my JHS3 pupils. That is the only way by which they can learn. The books are simply not there" (AA JHS Head teacher, 09/09/2018)

Once confronted with a lack of inputs especially in the case of teaching learning materials head teachers adopt varied approaches but overall creativity is paramount. Some heads wait on district offices to provide the inputs while

others adopted innovative ways including borrowing from colleagues and or improvise where that is possible. As immediate followers, pupils and teachers influence the duties of headteachers. Their availability and day to day interactions largely determine the type of leadership styles their heads may employ. In total there were 430 teachers from all 42 schools. About 27% of these were females. Compared with 6,736 learners the teacher to pupil ratio a case of excess teachers may exist in these Junior High Schools which is contrary to Addy (2013) findings which suggest rural schools in Northern Ghana suffer from an acute shortage of teachers. The major challenge to leadership in spite of the relatively good teacher to pupil's ratio is the absence of the required subject teachers in almost all the schools. In their absence these head teachers therefore may face challenges in delivering on their instructional duties and how they approach it; including being more creative or simply giving would reflect their core styles.

In addition to the context the ability and styles heads adopt in managing their schools are influenced by many variables including gender of heads, years of teaching experience and age (Ofeimu, Ahmed, & Kolawole, 2018). In terms of gender, Majority of the heads were males with only 17% females. The gender imbalance in the share of headship is a reflection of the imbalances at many public institutions across Africa (Wendy, 2012). All the headteachers have been professional teachers with significant experience in teaching before assuming the headship.

The minimum number of instructional experiences was three years while majority have been classroom teachers for at least 15 years. This is consistent with Lonyian and Kuranchie (2018) and Esia-Donkor (2014) position that public basic schools in Ghana are administered in most cases by experienced teachers who serve as leaders and that majority serve between five to 15 years. Beyond their instructional experience the average length of headship in their present school is four years. Some heads have led same school for just one year while others have been at post consistently in the same school for 13 years. Overall, there exist frequent transfers of head teachers from one school. The policies on teacher deployment provides for transfers of staff. However, how short or persistent a leader may be in a given school has implications how Overall, followers may feel their contribution. Where a Headteacher tends to have shorter stay in a given school as revealed in the study it may pose challenges in terms of associating a particular achievement in the school, pupils' performance inclusive.

As a phenomenon, many headteachers first acquire a professional qualification and seek employment with the Ghana Education Service before they are appointed headteachers. Others are employed as non-professional teachers and in the course of work they undertake professional teaching courses. Irrespective of the route a head traverses into their present role being a professional teacher prior to assuming the role of head is a positive development especially in matters relating the styles that may be required in supporting the instructional needs of teachers.

4.1.1. Key Leadership Styles

In their day-to-day practice, school heads encounter different needs and situations that require their response as leaders. The study found these situations in terms of critical school needs and what the heads would do, key task and relationships. Managing discipline, ensuring punctuality of both teachers and pupils, seeking the opinions of others in decision-making, managing conflict, attending to personal and individual needs of teachers, pupils and community members and ensuring linkages between the school, district education offices and external stakeholders were dominant relationship-based situations that heads often adopted a particular approach or the other. Leading the development of a school's vision, setting targets and budgeting as contained in the guidelines for managing capitation grant (Ghana Education Service, 2016) also emerged as the major task-oriented situations that the headteachers' leadership approaches become crucial. The graph below represents head teachers' self-rating on the key styles they often employed when confronted with situations.

Figure 1: Headteacher Self-Rating
Source: Field Survey (2019)

From head teacher self-rating their average score on all four styles considered transformational is 52.5%. This implies that at least more than half of the Junior High School heads often employed not just one but a blend of styles, extending from acting as role model for their followers to emulate, initiating, overcoming and or proactively responding to situations as they occur. The most dominant style from the emulate heads' self-rating is supporting the individual needs of teachers and pupils, often done through coaching and mentoring. An inspiring approach to helping school-based stakeholders coupled with a focus on always identifying and supporting followers to lead emerged as the next key style. On the contrary, the culture of promoting creativity and problem solving among their followers particularly teachers were least transformational style commonly adopted. Four in ten Headteachers also believe they often employed styles considered more self centred, inert and least consultative. As transformational leaders seeking to improve their pupils' performance the ability to ensure creativity and innovation especially among teachers are critical; unfortunately, less than 30% of heads practice this. As leaders functioning in rural schools where resources are limited and of poor-quality creativity is paramount. Where the status quo persists, desired results such as an improved performance in examination would be difficult to attain.

Consequent to the headteachers' self-rating, eighty-four (84) teachers also scored their respective heads based on the 21 statements. Twenty-nine (29) of these teachers, representing 34.5%, were females. Given that two teachers from each school were rating the same leader, their average scores on each statement were employed in determining their perspective on the style of leadership as presented below.

Figure 2: Teachers' Rating of Their Heads
Source: Field Survey (2019)

Teachers rated a large majority of their heads (88%) in three key styles notably often employing a more participatory approach, motivating and acting as role models. On the other hand, stimulating their creativity and resolving their personal challenges remained practice teachers believe very few heads employ. Teachers' rating of their heads in their strength in participatory approaches is supported by Omeka and Onah (2012) whose study in Nsukka Nigeria found that though head teachers were applying three styles of leadership the more participatory and consultative were dominant and teachers found these to be enhancing their satisfaction and delivery. However, the rating is not consistent with Karori, Mulewa, Ombuki & Migosi (2013) in Kikuyi District in Kenya contradicts the key findings as they found that teachers perceived their head teachers as too strict, often dictating and or paying less attention to what they do.

Follower rating on the three non-participatory leadership behaviours reveals that they often encounter some heads as far too strict. About 12% of headteachers were rated as not only too strict but as leaders who would hardly consult or seek the inputs of teachers and learners when taking decisions. The adoption of exchange behaviour is a style that teachers-maintained majority of their heads often employ. This often involves constructive feedback, praise and recognition when teachers and learners meet an agreed target e.g., punctuality or teacher's ability to produce timely lessons. The institution of end of term speech and prize awards emerged as a key transactional style commonly employed by majority of the head teachers. In follow up interviews to expatiate approaches they often employ in challenging and rewarding their followers a Headteacher from one of the schools had this to say:

"When I first came to this school the performance was poor; let's say in a year only 15% of the pupils got between aggregate 6 and 36. After discussing with the SMC members and teachers we instituted a speech and prize given every term. Just small prizes like exercise books, pens and pencils. In the case of my teachers and SMC members it is just openly mentioning their names and how hardworking they are. I realized the pupils started studying very hard, competing among them. After one or two three year, I realize the results have started improving and that has since continued" (21/09/2018).

Conversely, sanctions may reflect as a dominant style where headteachers' first step to addressing instances of lateness would be to caution defaulting teachers and pupils. Where no significant improvement is achieved, the next approach that head teachers adopt involves tasking pupils to gather stones for use by the school weed and or clean school environment. Affected teachers may also be cautioned, sometimes reprimanded and in extreme instances blocking of their

salaries. In situations where a blend of sanctions and more passive styles are employed a male headteacher had the following to say:

"I cannot prevent teachers from being absent from class if they have genuine challenges. But once in a while I take some of them on by either scolding them or recommending to education office to block their salaries. I face this a lot especially with teachers who rather go selling instead of teaching" (BB JHS. 04/10/2018)

It is argued that rewards and sanctions motivate followers to perform at higher levels to achieve agreed upon objectives set by the leader. The act of engaging in constructive transaction is a key feature espoused in transactional leadership, which emphasizes that leaders do approach their role more as transaction between them and those they lead, involving incentives where agreed deliverables are met or sanctions where the vice versa. By contrast, failure to achieve agreed goals may result in a sense of incompetence or failure, demotivating followers to pursue such activities. Failed attempts can also give followers a perception that goals are far-reaching or unattainable. Followers may also be demotivated when they perceive inequity in their reward systems where efforts are inconsistent with rewards.

Figure 3: Comparison of Headteachers and Followers' ratings

Source: Field survey (2019)

In figure 3, head teacher self-assessment scores on all seven (7) leadership styles are compared with their teachers' rating in order to determine if congruence or discrepancies exists. The scores support the existence of discrepancies between the head teacher scores and their followers across all schools. The average difference in four transformational styles is 11.8% compared with 9.3% in the more passive behaviors. Aarons et al (2017) assert that differences between leaders and follower ratings are not uncommon in many studies globally. With the exception of supporting the immediate and their individual needs teachers have rated their heads higher in all other behaviour.

It may be sufficient to conclude that the styles head teachers employ and how they feel about their influence differ from the ways their followers perceive and experience them. Being immediate followers' teachers rather sense headteachers may after all be more consistent in their practice than the heads believe. The teachers' ratings of their heads may be less common as Aarons et al (2017) claim that leaders tend to exaggerate their self-assessment. Absael, Evgenia & Sheridan-Pereira (2010) and Aarons et al (2017) in large multicultural study involving over 400 leaders and followers across six countries, concluded that characteristically leaders rate themselves higher than followers would generally do. Leaders' resolve to defend themselves when confronted with feedback from followers especially where the feedback is negative results in wide variation in ratings.

In the conditions where the head teachers and followers reveal significant variation, follower ratings are to be considered as more reliable due to their ability to rule out possible personal biases from the leader (Aarons et al, 2017). Therefore, given the appreciably large difference between the head teachers' self-rating and teachers it is important to pay more attention to the teachers' feedback. This is even more critical given that in the Junior High School context teachers remain the immediate followers with a lot of responsibility in supporting their heads. How they feel and experience these heads goes a long way to determine how they may respond and or contribute.

It may be maintained that as transformational leaders Headteachers would remain committed to ways that only bring out the best in their teachers and learners. However, certain situations require a change in approach and that may justify their adoption of some form of autocratic, unresponsive styles. The adoption of both extremes of leadership styles is not uncommon. While some styles may appear much better than others no one single leadership style may best fit all situations.

Literature supporting the strength of more or less of a particular leadership style on employee productivity is extensive (Khan, Nawaz & Khan, 2016). Leaders act and respond based on constraints arising from organizational settings and as a result their styles particularly around decision-making will often vary (Sendjaya, 2015). The value however is that a transformational leader may always select the style that fits the situation and Junior High School heads that are expected to take action in their daily complex activities are no exception. The importance lies in which style is best fit and the leader's ability to adjust their approach to suite the situations.

4.2. Leadership Styles and Scores of Pupils' Examination

In order to determine influences of head teachers' styles on pupil's performance percentage scores in Basic Education Certificate Examination over the period 2010/2011 to 2017/2018 are compared with head teacher scores along the seven factor areas of transformational leadership continuum. The results of independent t-test for equality of means for all schools and paired sample test for only the drill down schools are contained in the following.

BECE Scores	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Diff	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Best score ever recorded	-2.57	40	0.014	-22.286**	8.648	-39.764	-4.807
Worse score ever	0.107	40	0.915	0.600	5.611	-10.741	11.941
Current year (2018)	-2.05	40	0.047	-16.771**	8.163	-33.270	-2.273

** = Mean difference is significant at 5%

Table 1: Independent t-test for Equality of Means

Source: Field survey (2019)

Independent t-test analysis above yield two mean differences; first under head teachers who were found to employ more participatory styles and those that employ less of these across all years under study and for only current year when data was collected. The mean difference for all heads over the years is -22.3 which is negative and significant at 5%. This suggests implies that the best reported score shows improvement for pupils under headteachers who frequently employ participatory leadership styles as compared with others that hardly do so. When only current year scores are used the mean difference is -16.8 and significant at 5%. This mean difference implies a more positive improvement of 22.3% and 16.8% respectively in scores of pupils under headteachers that employ more participatory approaches.

In order to ascertain any possible differences in mean scores due to differences in length of headship in same school, paired t-test analysis was conducted and this involved only six (6) drill down schools. As noted previously, these were Headteachers who have been in the same school for five or more years. Results of the paired t-test analysis are contained in table 2.

Average BECE Performance	Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Participatory styles – non participatory styles	-27.73	11.49	3.32	-35.03	-20.42	-8.4	11	0.000

Table 2: Paired Sample Test- Drill Down Schools

Source: Field Survey (2018)

The paired t-test analysis revealed a mean difference in pupils' BECE scores under head teachers that employed more participatory styles and those that hardly did so. At 5% confidence level the mean difference was -27.7 suggesting that pupils who learnt in schools headed by the same headteacher in the last five or more years and where the head has been more participatory in approach to situations experienced a 27.7% improvement in their BECE scores over their counterparts.

Overall, the findings support a strong direct relationship between leadership styles of headteachers and pupils' achievements in BECE. Junior High School pupils who learn in schools where heads often employ more participatory approaches in dealing with situations would record more improved grades in their BECE than learners that are not. This revelation is consistent Majoni (2015) who found that in Zimbabwe school heads were adopting more open and participatory style of leadership and this was bringing improvement in the target schools. In an inclusivity of quality of education study in Northern Ghana, Casley-Hayford et al. (2013) in their cross-sectional survey involving 230 respondents confirmed that headteachers who demonstrated strong leadership including the culture of involving all key stakeholders in their decisions were key facilitators of quality education.

Positioned within the broader context considerable literature exists amplifying the value of participatory styles in promoting learner achievements. For instance, in investigating factors that caused mass failures in some community schools in Tanzania Mukeru and Shukuru's (2014) identified ineffective fulfilment of the leadership roles especially in matters of involving followers in planning, organizing, controlling, coupled with a general lack of vision. Such approaches or passive behaviours of heads would often be a bane to learner performance if not addressed. As leaders Headteachers' ability to manage school resources efficiently, engage teachers in planning academic activities and propel the teachers to work towards attaining the vision of the school would result in more positive impact on the academic performance of pupils.

Even though the study reaffirms the relationship between type of leadership and pupils' performance other variables were found to have significant influence. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis conducted on these co-variables yielded an observed R^2 of 0.5656. The implication is that seven (7) other variables accounted for about 56.6% of any variation in BECE scores. At 1% significance level gender of the headteacher ($P > 0.006$), being a rural or urban school ($P > 0.000$), teacher to pupil ratio ($P > 0.004$), schools with vision/ performance improvement plan ($P > 0.01$) and deficit in terms of subject teachers ($P > 0.022$) reflected as having significant influence on pupils BECE scores. On the contrary, Headteacher's professional qualification ($P > 0.386$), instructional experience ($P > 0.610$), time spent on administrative duties ($P > 0.610$) and community support ($P > 0.635$) showed no statistical significance on variation in pupils' scores.

Findings on the influence of key co-variables may not be uncommon though most are striking and inconsistent with feedback from heads themselves, school-based followers and existent studies. District education officers and some heads for instance consider qualities such as professional teacher qualification and extended teaching experience as key ingredients in how effective a head may be in improving pupils' performance. Similar contrary views have been found in many studies including Wallace (2014) study in Malawi which established that seven in every ten superintendents had been classroom teachers before. And this prior experience was known to cause better achievement in pupils' academic grades in public examination compared with school heads that were appointed with no prior instructional experience.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Students' progress beyond Junior High Schools depends on many factors but these revolve around leadership. Variations in duties and achievements due to the context and education system notwithstanding, some consistency and minimum standards are expected of Headteachers of all public Junior High Schools in Ghana. How Headteachers approach their duties determine their effectiveness, reflected more specifically in school-based tasks, relationship and resources which all must blend in order to improve pupils' academic performance. As key objectives the study sought to determine the key leadership styles that Headteachers employ and how these influence pupils' performance in BECE within the context of Northern Ghana.

The outcomes of the study support a relationship between the leadership styles of Junior High School heads and variation in their pupils' BECE scores. The context within which the headteachers function confirms that majority of Junior Schools in the northern part of Ghana are predominantly deprived in terms of accessibility and minimum inputs. Such a context therefore requires headteachers who are able to transform such challenging situations in order to guarantee congenial environment for teaching and learning. In their daily routines these Headteachers continue to encounter varied situations which result in their employment of not just one but blended styles of leadership in overcoming these.

The more participatory approaches notably team work, seeking the inputs of teachers and learners, demonstrating how change occur, modelling good behaviour and a focus on individual needs are dominant. Their frequent adoption of transactional approaches extending from sanctions, albeit punitive in some instances, and rewards are emerging areas. Learners that study under the leadership of Headteachers considered more participatory in their styles achieve at least a 25% improvement in their BECE grades.

Contemporary demand for education of good quality for all children reinforces the critical role of effective school leadership. The study reinforces the need for Headteachers in Junior High Schools in deprived areas who are skilled, capable, have penchant for more participatory and people centred approaches in their leadership. A culture of frequent consultation, team work, involving and supporting their teachers, learners and community members in decisions will significantly improve learning achievement. To realize these qualities the study makes the following recommendations:

- Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should institutionalise and support regular professional development programmes for public Junior High School heads in Northern Ghana in particular and as a medium to long term goal extend to all Headteachers across the country. The content and processes of such professional development programmes should anchor on the system wide acceptance and practice of more transformational styles among headteachers.
- Irrespective of how determined a leader may be without basic inputs they may face enormous challenges in their effectiveness. Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should work in concert with District Assemblies and NGOs to provide for all deprived Junior High Schools minimum inputs such as good classrooms, adequate subject teachers and recommended teaching and learning materials.

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