

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES  
OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HEADS IN CAPE COAST METROPOLIS,  
GHANA



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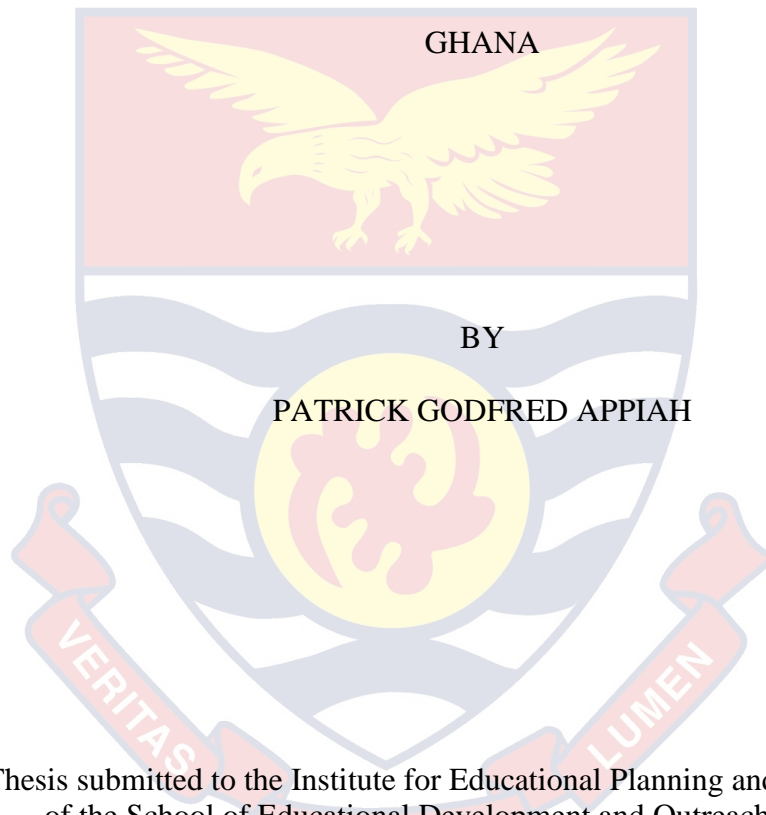
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OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HEADS IN CAPE COAST METROPOLIS,



Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration  
of the School of Educational Development and Outreach, College of  
Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in  
Qualitative Research

SEPTEMBER 2020

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date .....

Name: PATRICK GODFRED APPIAH

### Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature ..... Date .....

Name: DR. ALBERT L. DARE

Co-Supervisor's Signature ..... Date .....

Name: PROF. CLEMENT K. AGEZO

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the lived experiences of leadership practices of senior high school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The study aimed at describing leadership practices and lived experiences of public school heads, leadership practices adopted to ensure quality teaching and learning, measures to overcome the barriers in educational leadership, and factors influencing leadership practices. The study approach was qualitative, while the study design was phenomenology. The population of the study comprised eight heads of public senior high schools in the Metropolis. Using semi-structured interviews, eight school heads with at least three years of experience were sampled for the study. Narrative analysis was used to analyse the data. The school heads adopted different leadership practices for different categories of stakeholders in the school based on their prior leadership experiences and lived experiences in leadership positions with both internal and external stakeholders. This was necessary to meet the peculiar needs and interests of the various stakeholders of the schools. Some of the barriers to effective school leadership administration were inadequate financial resources, and interferences from external stakeholders. The lived experiences of the heads were essential in commanding the needed respect and gaining support for the implementation of the leadership practices and strategies of school heads in the public senior high schools. The study recommends the need for school heads to build consensus with stakeholders to ensure effective and successful leadership administration. School heads should involve staff, students, and other stakeholders in the implementation of critical strategies to achieve institutional goals.

**KEY WORDS**

Educational leadership

Leadership

Lived experiences

Leadership practices

School heads

Senior high school

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## DEDICATION

To my loving parents, Mr. Jimmy Kenny Appiah and Mrs. Anastasia

Regina Appiah





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEY WORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	Xii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	14
Purpose of the Study	15
Research Questions	15
Significance of the Study	15
Delimitation	17
Limitations of the Study	18
Definition of Terms	19
Organisation of the Study	20
Summary of the Chapter	21
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	22
Theoretical Review	22
Concepts of Leadership and School Leadership	36
Leadership Practices	41

Leadership Styles	63
Factors that Influence the Leadership Practices and Styles	84
Barriers to Successful or Effective School Leadership	90
Empirical Review	98
Conceptual Framework	106
Summary of the Chapter	107
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS</b>	<b>110</b>
Research Paradigm	110
Research Design	112
Study Design	115
Study Population	118
Sample and Sampling Procedure	119
Sources of Data	121
Research Instrument	121
Pre-testing	125
Method of Data Collection	125
Field Challenges	129
Ethical Consideration	130
Researcher's Background and Assumptions	131
Data Analysis	134
Summary of the Chapter	138

CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES BY HEADS OF PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS	139
Background Characteristics of School Heads	139
Perceptions about Leadership Practices and Experiences	145
Summary of the Chapter	158
CHAPTER FIVE: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES SCHOOL HEADS ENGAGE TO ENSURE QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING	159
Leadership Practices for Teachers in Promoting Quality Teaching and Learning	159
Leadership Practices for Students in Promoting Effective Learning	169
Leadership Practices for Creating Conducive Teaching and Learning Environment	172
Summary of the Chapter	177
CHAPTER SIX: MODE OF OVERCOMING BARRIERS THAT IMPEDE SUCCESS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP	178
Barriers Impeding Successful Educational Leadership	178
Mode of Overcoming Barriers to Successful Educational Leadership	188
Summary of the Chapter	196
CHAPTER SEVEN: FACTORS INFLUENCING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS IN PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS	197
Gender as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads	197
Age as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads	201
Educational Characteristics as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads	203
Religious Views as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads	206

School Category as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads	209
Summary of the Chapter	211
CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	212
Summary	212
Major Findings	213
Conclusions	219
Recommendations	221
Contribution to Knowledge	224
Suggestions for Further Studies	225
REFERENCES	227
APPENDICES	253
Appendix A: Interview Guide for School Heads	253
Appendix B: Introductory Letter	256

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Procedures in Phenomenology	117



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Framework for investigating the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices and styles	106
2	A framework for research - The interconnection of worldviews, design and research methods	115



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

GES	Ghana Education Service
PTAs	Parent-Teacher Associations
SHSs	Senior High Schools
WASSCE	West African Senior High School Certificate Examination



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices of senior high school (SHS) heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The study explored the thoughts, feelings, and actions of SHS heads regarding their management of a school and their leadership practices. The position of SHS heads has evolved since the job's inception. School heads must develop skills to cope and thrive as new roles and responsibilities are placed on them through laws and accountability expectations. The rationale underpinning the research was that many contextual factors influence the leadership practices of school heads and, as such, exploring how such factors affect the leadership choices and decisions of school heads was considered imperative in the development of leadership theory and practice.

#### **Background to the Study**

Leadership is important in academic institutions as it sets the conditions and expectations for excellent instruction and the building of a culture of on-going learning for educators and for the learners in a school (Kyla & Karen, 2010). According to Marron and Cunniff (2014), effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling. As countries are seeking to adapt their education systems to the needs of contemporary society, expectations for schools and school leaders are changing. Many countries have moved towards decentralisation, making schools more autonomous in their decision making and holding them more accountable for results. In such situations, the role of leadership and leadership practices is paramount in



unifying the ranks to implement policies and strategies to address the concerns of various stakeholders, and issues bordering on both curricula and pedagogy (Hofmeyer, Sheingold, Klopper & Warland, 2015).

School leadership has become a priority in education policy agenda internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment (Marshall, Orrell, Cameron, Bosanquet, & Thomas, 2011). According to Parrish (2015), effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling. Juntrasook (2014) reported that effective leadership plays two critical roles in educational institutions: improving the quality of the workforce; and guiding schools to help each other to improve. According to Hofmeyer *et al.* (2015), effective school leadership should demonstrate strong accountability principles to increase trust and confidence in leadership administration, and establish quality standards to guide the operations of subordinates and students.

As a result, Marshall *et al.* (2011) posited that the function of school leadership is now increasingly defined by a demanding set of roles which include financial and human resource management and leadership for learning. Thus, leadership in educational institutions should be comprehensive by providing guidance and directions in various forms to help establish quality and operational standards. This is quintessential as the focus of leadership research has shifted from leadership as a person or results towards leadership as a position or process (Juntrasook, Nairn, Bond & Spronken-Smith, 2013). This trend in the research field is a clear indication that leadership is a phenomenon

more complex and holistic than the personality traits of leaders or a specific leadership strategy; leadership is also related to relationships and structures (Onukwuba, 2018).

However, in all cases, lived experiences of leaders have been found to play a crucial role in shaping the perceptions and leadership practices of leaders (Cain & Gunter, 2012). Balwant (2016) argued that the situation is more pervasive in educational leadership, where principals are given more autonomy to decide on the governance and management structures that could enable them to achieve their vision and objectives. They are also accountable to various stakeholders on the governance, teaching and learning, safety, and academic achievement of students. According to Harrington, Jeremy and Hynes (2015), the interactions and experiences of educational leaders with the various stakeholders help shape their leadership practices towards each other. Nonetheless, most studies on leadership have relegated the role of the lived experiences of educational leaders in leadership practices (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017). Thus, lived experiences of leaders are core to their level of achievement, leadership approaches, styles, and practices.

Lived experiences of leaders are generally organised under experiences with other leaders prior to their assumption to become school heads, and their experiences with subordinates and colleagues following their assumption into leadership positions. Both leadership situations have critical influence on the leadership style and practices of educational leaders. According to Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015), a people's lived experiences with leaders form part of the foundation in formulating their leadership principles and style. This

is because followers directly and indirectly assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of the leadership experiences and practices exhibited by their leaders to inform them about their leadership style and practices when given the opportunity to administer leadership roles and responsibilities.

This view about leadership development and practice is in consonance with McCall's (2010) 70:20:10 model, which suggests that people obtain about 70 per cent of their leadership skills and practices through their experiences with people in leadership positions; 20 per cent of leadership skill formation is through their relationship with others in networking or feedback they receive, while 10 per cent of leadership practices is through the learning occurring through training in attendance at short courses, workshops or formal education of some sort and participating in programmes geared towards their growth and development. This implies that leadership practices are a function of the experiences of people in leadership positions. As a result, efforts to improve leadership practices of school heads should explore their lived experiences and present positive experiences to them to change their views and perceptions about educational leadership (Hofmeyer *et al.*, 2015).

Juntrasook (2014) also posited that the lived experiences of people in leadership positions influence their leadership practices. Post leadership experiences are expressed in terms of leaders' daily interactions with stakeholders and the outcomes of that interaction as expressed in the form of contribution towards the achievement of their vision and objectives (Walker & Hallinger, 2015). According to Kezar and Holcombe (2017), leaders make adjustments to their style and practices based on the feedback they received

from the system in relation to their delivering to the expectations of stakeholders as well as achieving their operational targets. The implication is that the focus of leadership practices is to help drive forward the achievement of organisational goals. Accordingly, the leadership of educational institutions is expected to use their lived experiences and feedback to adjust their leadership practices in reference to the achievement of their vision and operational targets.

According to Sanzo, Sherman and Clayton (2011), lived leadership experiences could be described from both formal and informal perspectives. The formal perspective of lived leadership experiences involves one's experiences from the structures and systems established to maintain cohesion in the programmes and activities of people. Such experiences are critical as they show the effectiveness of the established structures and systems in delivering leadership practices necessary to achieve the objectives and vision of the leader (Clarke, 2013). Elmelegy (2015), therefore, emphasised that significant power and autonomy should be given to the leadership of schools to review or streamline such structures and systems based on their lived experiences and feedback, and realign the structures to deliver effective leadership necessary to achieve operational targets.

The formal structures include the organisational structure indicating the lines of communication and flow of authority; number of departments and sub-structures; and capacity and functionality of persons occupying various leadership positions. All these elements help to shape the leadership experiences of leaders and also influence the leadership practices of organisational leaders, including those in educational institutions. According to Balwant (2016),

experiences from the formal structures are very critical in determining the leadership practices of organisational leaders as most of the interactions are conditioned through such recognised structures. In some cases, organisational leadership could not surmount or ignore the inputs of such structures in the final decision making processes.

The informal structures, on the other hand, comprise casual interactions and engagements with other stakeholders, including teachers, heads of departments, students, and community leadership. According to Paletta, Alivernini and Manganelli (2017), the informal interactions and engagements among various parties and stakeholders in the management process present useful medium to obtain feedback about the effectiveness of the leadership practice. Thus, the informal processes and structures are less stringent, which allow colleagues, subordinates and other parties to freely and openly express themselves without any fear of retribution or victimisation to provide useful information about the leadership practices of institutions. As a result, Onukwuba (2018) suggested the need for institutional leadership to provide informal avenues to interact with various parties to ascertain their perceptions about the effectiveness of the leadership practices and ways for improvement. All of these elements contribute to building the lived experiences of leaders in organisational management, which eventually help to shape the leadership practices they adopt.

Nonetheless, Paletta *et al.* (2017) posited that examining leadership practices from the lived experiences of leaders is largely missing in literature as leadership practices are mostly evaluated through the perspectives of followers

or subordinates in institutions. Given this current era of significant change in secondary education, there is growing attention to the importance of understanding the leadership required to guide campuses successfully, and a growing concern that existing approaches to leadership are ineffective. Thus, secondary education is considered as an intermediary level of education where foundations of academic and professional specialisations are built based on interests and performance. As a result, Nir and Hameiri (2014) asserted that school leadership practices at the secondary or high school level should focus on measures to harness the strengths and talents of all parties as well as direct their programmes and activities to build strong foundation for students for either the professional front or tertiary education.

Leadership practice is defined by Kouzes and Posner (2017) as a leader's particular behaviour or actions toward individuals in an organisation with the aim of inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, and enabling or encouraging them to act in a direction towards the achievement of the organisational goals and objectives. This suggests that leadership practice should be targeted at achieving organisational objectives. In an educational institution, Kouzes and Posner (2016) reported that leadership practices should be aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Thus, leaders of educational institutions should use their leadership practices to establish clear teaching standards to guide the professional conducts of teachers as well as institute regulations that could help promote effective learning among students (Paletta *et al.*, 2017).



According to Nir and Hameiri (2014), using leadership practice to influence teaching and learning standards should consider issues surrounding instructional time, teacher qualification and professional development, staff size in relation to student population, availability and adequacy of teaching and learning materials as well as creating conducive environment for teachers and students to function effectively. Kezar and Holcombe (2017) also asserted that leadership practices in educational institutions could have significant influence on the functioning of teachers, parents and students when they are made to understand the vision and operational strategies of the school heads. As a result, transparency and participation are encouraged in leadership practices.

Hallinger (2010) categorised leadership practices under transactional, transformational, instructional, and contingency. According to Kouzes and Posner (2016), leaders demonstrate any of the leadership practices based on different contexts, socio-cultural background, and past experiences. Consequently, examination of the leadership practices should be interpreted through the three elements to derive greater meaning.

In spite of the various leadership practices enumerated above, Huggins *et al.* (2017) posited that the traditional leadership perspective in which one person, generally the principal, is responsible for enacting all leadership functions and responsibilities has currently given way to a more distributed perspective of leadership practice. This suggested that the adoption of any of the leadership practices should not centre all leadership functions on the leader or principal but be distributed among various leadership structures within the organisational structure of the schools. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017),

a move for a distributed perspective on the functionality leadership practice beyond the narrow view invites an examination of the leaders in schools that engage in or influence practice that impacts teaching and learning.

Thus, the practice of distributed leadership extends beyond traditional roles and responsibilities to integrate coordinated actions and interactions across the school community (Dimmock, 2012). In turn, these coordinated interactions among school leaders can harness human capital and resources to improve teacher practice, which can have a sustained impact on efforts to close the opportunity gap for diverse student populations (Elfers & Stritikus, 2014). According to Huggins *et al.* (2017), a distributed leadership helps to enhance the effectiveness of the adoption of any of the leadership practices to achieve particular organisational development goals.

Notwithstanding the increased development of leadership practices across the globe, Kuada (2010) stipulated that leadership practices in Africa are so much ingrained in cultural values and traditional beliefs. Thus, such entrenched traditional systems are restricting the quick development of leadership practices among leaders across various sectors of the economy. According to Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012), leadership functions and practices among most leaders in Africa are influenced by their beliefs and experiences in the traditional systems. This makes the studying of leadership practices through the lived experiences of leaders very paramount as it allows for researchers and practitioners to ascertain the extent of influence of traditional systems on the leadership practices of leaders in Africa. However, Onukwuba (2018) reported that the expansion of the private sector and the increased influx of multinational



companies with international corporate governance is gradually modernising the leadership practices of indigenous leaders across the continent.

Leadership practices in the educational sector in Africa have broadly been organised under public and private sector institutions. According to Chikoko *et al.* (2015), leadership practices in the private education sector are more result-oriented compared to the public sector. Thus, whereas the renewal of leadership appointments in many private schools is dependent on performance achievement, that of the public schools is largely depended on the extent of conforming to laid down leadership procedures, satisfying superiors, and maintaining stability among all stakeholders to protect the interests of the government (Kuada, 2010). As a result, Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) indicated that principals in the private schools adopt more innovative leadership practices to achieve their performance targets to maintain their positions, while many principals in the public schools rely on their associations and political links with superior officers to maintain their positions.

In Ghana, leadership practices and expectations in the education sector could be organised along the three major tiers of schools; basic, high school and tertiary. Whereas leadership practice and performance at the basic and high school levels are more focused on students' achievements in standardised examinations, those at the tertiary level focus on increasing visibility of the schools through research and impacts graduates make on national and international levels. According to Edwards and Aboagye (2015), the basic level of education in Ghana focuses on building the general academic foundations of students by identifying their areas of strengths and weaknesses. Leadership

functions of principals at this stage are on curricula and pedagogical development, building strong parental and community collaborations, managing instructional hours, and enhancing students' achievements (Attom, 2010). The tertiary level of education in Ghana is for academic and professional specialisations. Accordingly, leadership practices at the tertiary level create opportunities for the development of more academic programmes that meet the needs of industry, and ensure smooth transition between schooling and career development or professional development.

The high school level, which is the focus of this study, is an intermediary level of education that develops the foundations for academic and professional specialisations of students for tertiary education. This level of education is very critical in the educational system of Ghana, as it requires the leadership guidance of school heads and teachers to guide students to make appropriate choices that inform their future professional development. According to Owusu-Mensah, Bampo and Jabialu (2014), the SHS level is the most difficult stage in the educational architecture of Ghana as the failure of students to excel at this stage could have serious negative implications on both their academic and professional development in the future. The SHS level also falls within the adolescent stage of students' life, where serious physiological and psychological changes occur and several personal choices have to be made.

School heads at this stage in the educational system play multi-purpose roles of providing parental guidance to ensure the social development of students, counselling to ensure their psychological development, and creating good conditions for effective teaching and learning to enhance the academic and

professional development of students. Leadership practice by the heads of schools at the second cycle level of the educational system in Ghana is, therefore, very imperative to promote the comprehensive development of students for further academic and professional progression as well as social acceptability (Edwards & Aboagye, 2015). The SHS education in Ghana is organised under gender structure of students: mixed sex, single sex (boys) and single sex (girls); ownership structure: public and private; grading based on students' achievements in the West African Examination Council's standardised exams: Grades A, B and C; as well as mission and non-mission schools. Any of these categorisations has critical influence on the lived experiences, resourcefulness, leadership practices and functionalities of the school heads.

The Cape Coast Metropolis was considered ideal for this study since it lies in the heart of the regional capital where there are relatively more public senior high schools (SHSs) compared to other parts of the country, and some of them are relatively more resourceful than their counterparts in rural areas. The Metropolis is often referred to as the educational hub of Ghana since it hosts many of the Category "A" schools and other categories of schools. There are a total of 10 public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It is also the metropolis where formal education started in Ghana. As a result, the Metropolis hosts some of the oldest SHSs in the country.

The Cape Coast Metropolitan Area is one of the oldest districts in Ghana. Raised to the status of municipality in 1987 by LI 1373 and upgraded to metropolitan status in 2007 by LI 1927 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013), Cape

Coast is clearly one of the most iconic education towns in sub-Saharan Africa. As a study area for this research, Cape Coast and its schools are of historical significance.

The Ghana Statistical Service (2013) also shows a major social consequence of its long and intensive interaction with the European traders was that Cape Coast became a centre for the spread of elements of European culture and civilisation to the rest of the country. It was the centre of secondary education, and hence the training ground of catechists and teachers for most of the country. It was also the breeding-ground of the Ghanaian intelligentsia, the birth-place of the earliest newspapers in the country and of the first nationalist associations and societies. It was in the vanguard of nationalist agitation in the Gold Coast and its dependencies. It was equally the home of the earliest experiments in Municipal government, which began in the 1850's.

Cape Coast was also one of the earliest centres of Ghanaian entrepreneurship. It is in this light that it is suggested that “anybody interested in a study of commercial ventures among the people of the Gold Coast will have to start with the papers of the merchant princes of Cape Coast” (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013, p. 3). Such historical antecedents of the research area and its leadership role in the history of Ghana make an exploration into the leadership practices of school heads in this metropolis a worthy endeavour. Also, the management of SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis sometimes serves as models for other schools to emulate. This is partly due to the existence of the over a century leadership experience, culture and practice. This study sought to

explore the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices of heads of SHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There has been increased interest in educational leadership development due to the perception that the quality of leadership could have significant influence on schools and students' outcomes (Paletta *et al.*, 2017). However, Huggins *et al.* (2017) posited that studies on leadership in educational institutions have paid little attention to the possibility of leadership antecedents, trigger events or lived experiences that may have impact on leadership practices of school heads. According to Huggins *et al.* (2017), it is such experiences that build the leadership capacity of leaders to handle more complicated issues. It is therefore imperative to incorporate the live experiences of leaders in leadership analysis.

Kouzes and Posner (2017) also expressed that analysing leadership practices from the perspectives of subordinates does not consider critical factors such as politics, personal characteristics, socio-cultural perspectives and beliefs, and organisational characteristics into the analysis. The need to incorporate the lived experiences of leaders in leadership practices has, therefore, been very imminent. As Slater (2011) recommends, "Future research in educational administration should address the lives of principals expressed in their own voices" (p.1). This study was in direct response to this empirical expectation about the examination of leadership practices. In other words, this study explored the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices of heads of SHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis. In this context, the study sought to identify

the components of effective academic leadership practices through the perspectives of the school heads.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices of heads of SHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Research Questions**

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do heads of public SHSs describe their leadership practices and experiences in the Cape Coast metropolis?
2. What leadership practices of school heads enhanced quality teaching and learning in the Cape Coast metropolis?
3. How do school heads overcome the barriers that impede their success in educational leadership in the Cape Coast metropolis?
4. In what ways have lived experiences influenced the leadership practices of school heads in the Cape Coast metropolis?

### **Significance of the Study**

Leadership practice and behaviour have been very essential elements in organisational development. According to Dimmock (2012), leadership is a single element that has the capacity to cause significant changes in organisational development. However, Kouzes and Posner (2016) indicated that leadership practice is still evolving both in terms of theory and practice. As a result, more studies are required in the process to engage more theories to explain various aspects of leadership functions and behaviours. This study was,



therefore, important as it sought to engage various theories to explain how lived experiences influenced the leadership practices of heads of SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Most empirical studies on leadership practices had focused on analysing the concept through perspectives of subordinates. This study deviated from the usual approach and explored leadership practices through the perspectives of the leaders. As a result, this study has made a contribution in building a comprehensive understanding about leadership practices by incorporating the lived experiences of leaders in the discussion.

Further, considering the fact that leadership practice is highly influenced by a number of factors, including cultural values and beliefs, personal characteristics, and organisational factors, examining the leadership practices through the lived experiences of the leaders was necessary.

Leadership at the second cycle institutions in Ghana is very crucial in both the educational system and the development of students. Chronicling the experiences of school heads in relation to the adoption of leadership practices could serve as a guide for heads of other schools and upcoming leaders about the critical factors they should consider in the adoption of leadership styles and practices.

The findings of the study will inform policy makers in the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Metropolitan Directory of Education in Cape Coast about the challenges principals in SHSs go through in their leadership practices and how such challenges could be addressed to enhance the administration and management of the schools.

The findings of the study will also inform the Conference of Heads Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) about the factors and elements to be considered in the professional development of school heads and training workshops for newly appointed leaders to improve their leadership capacities for effective management of SHSs.

It is again expected that the findings of the study will provide a basis of other studies in leadership practices and serve as empirical literature in other scientific investigations.

### **Delimitation**

Delimitation of a study refers to those characteristics that arise from limitations in the scope of the study and by the conscious exclusionary and inclusionary decisions made during the development of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Dusick, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2013). Creswell (2013) explained that delimitations “narrow the scope of a study” (p. 148).

This study was delimited to the incumbent school heads of 10 public SHSs within the Cape Coast Metropolis with only the government funded schools considered as public schools. Also, among other available qualitative methods, this study primarily used in-depth interview as the data collection method. Furthermore, only public secondary school heads who had had at least three years’ continuous experience as school heads of the selected study schools were accepted as participants in this study. The perceptions and understandings of other stakeholders such as staff members, students, parents, and community people were not included in this study. Discussions on leadership practices were



situated within the transactional, transformational, instructional, and contingency leadership practices.

### **Limitations of the Study**

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2013), limitations are those aspects of methodology or design that influence the interpretation of study results. Creswell (2013) explained that limitations are provided “to identify potential weaknesses of the study” (p. 148). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) argue that “regardless of how carefully you plan a study, there are always some limitations, and you need to explicitly acknowledge these” (p. 114). They further aver that by controlling, anticipating, and stating any restrictions of a study within a specific context, “the reader can make decisions about its usefulness for other settings” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 114).

Three possible limitations of this study should be considered. One limitation may be my own bias. I acknowledge that my experiences, values, and beliefs may influence interpretation of the interview data. I guarded against this limitation by allowing each study participant I interviewed to review their transcript of the interview. This ensured that the interview transcripts reflected what was said or intended to be said without any bias. A second limitation was that teacher perspectives of participants’ leadership practices and ability were unaccounted for in this study. I attempted to tell their story through their voice, their perspective, their lived experiences and their understanding. A third limitation to this qualitative phenomenological study, by its design, was the lack of opportunities to generalise it to other areas. Conducting this study in a different district context may have led to different results. Consequently,

transferability was also limited. Finally, this study used only interviews as a data collection method. The use of observations and documents would have helped to triangulate data from the school heads in this study.

### Definition of Terms

Researchers define terms so that readers can understand specific meaning (Creswell, 2013). As a result, the following key terms were operationally defined for this study.

1. *Leadership practices*: Leadership practices refer to all those actions and tasks that the school head undertakes at SHS in order to promote teaching and learning. In this study, leadership practice is understood as the activities both in theory and practice that the school head undertakes to facilitate teaching and learning.
2. *Instructional leadership*: In this study, instructional leadership was used to mean the act of principals influencing the culture of teaching and learning through their practices and interactions with teachers and learners in efforts towards achieving effective curriculum delivery and coverage.
3. *Transactional leadership*: It is a leadership style that focuses on maintaining routines and managing existing relationships within the organisation.
4. *Transformational leadership*: A leadership style that focuses on the organisation's capacity to innovate and develop the capacity of others to increase the school's capacity to continuously improve.

5. *Principal*: An individual designated through appointment by the Ghana Education Service as head of the school and is charged with the responsibility to direct, operate, supervise, and administer the activities of the school. This term may be used interchangeably with the term ‘school head’.
6. *Lived experience*: Lived experience is defined as the practical encounters of the leaders that have shaped their perceptions and understanding about leadership practices.

### **Organisation of the Study**

The study was organised under eight chapters. Chapter One was on introduction. Some of the issues captured under the chapter were background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the study. The second chapter focused on reviewing literature related to the study topic. The chapter considered issues such as theoretical framework, concepts of leadership and leadership practices, conceptual framework and empirical review. Chapter Three was on research methods. The major contents of the chapter were research paradigm, research design, study population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection method, research instrument, field challenges, ethical consideration and data analysis.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven presented the results and discussions respectively on the description of leadership practices by heads of public SHSs, leadership practices adopted by school heads to ensure quality teaching and learning, mode of overcoming barriers that impede the success of school heads in their educational leadership, and factors influencing the leadership practices

of school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The eighth chapter was on the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study, and organisation of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter presents the theoretical, conceptual and empirical reviews. It reviews literature on the concept of leadership and school leadership, leadership practices, leadership styles, factors that influence the leadership practices, and barriers to successful or effective leadership. It also presents the conceptual framework for the study.

#### **Theoretical Review**

Leadership theories seek to explain how and why certain people become leaders. Such theories often focus on the characteristics of leaders, while others attempt to identify the behaviours that people can adopt to improve their own leadership abilities in different situations. The leadership theories discussed in this section are trait theory of leadership, contingency (situational) leadership theory, integrative leadership theory, and entrepreneurial leadership theory. The selection of these theories fall within the recent theoretical developments in the study of educational leadership in school management (Amanchukwu, Stanley, Ololube, 2015)

#### **Trait theory**

The trait approach period from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century concentrated on important individual traits that differentiated leaders from non-leaders (Bass, 1990; Stogdill, 1948). Early research on leadership was based on the psychological focus which was of people having inherited characteristics or traits (Bass, 1990; McClelland, 1960; Stogdill, 1948). Attention was, thus, put in discovering these traits, often by studying successful leaders, but with the

underlying assumption that, if other people could also be found with these traits, then they could also become great leaders. The failure in detecting the traits which every single effective leader had in common, resulted in the development of trait theory, as an inaccessible component, falling into disfavour.

According to Nicholson (1998), scholars such as Carlyle studied the traits of military and non-military leaders and exposed the significance of certain traits developing at certain times. In the earlier leadership theories, the focus was more on the inherent traits (e.g. McClelland, 1960) of leaders, while the focus of the more recent leadership theories seems to be more on leadership competencies and behaviour (e.g. Tannenbaum, Weschler, & Massarik, 2013). Northouse (2011) defined a trait as an inherent characteristic of a person, while competency was defined as ability or capability of a person to do something.

Trait theory assumes that people are born with inherited traits; some traits are particularly suited to leadership; and people who make good leaders have the right or sufficient combination of traits (Yukl, 1989). It explains how leaders inherit certain leadership qualities and traits that make them stand out from the crowd. These leadership abilities propel them to leadership status. The theory believes that people are either born or are made with certain qualities that will make them excel in leadership roles, but not something that could be developed (Gill, 2011).

Trait theory focuses on identifying different personality traits and characteristics that are linked to successful leadership across a variety of situations (Cashman, 1999). It argues that effective leaders share a number of common personality characteristics or traits. The trait leadership theory is based

on the fact that people have the ability to lead because they were born with it, but with no way of learning those leadership skills (Northouse, 2019). The theory expands on the Great Man Theory by defining what makes great leaders 'great'. It analyses mental, physical and social characteristics in order to gain more understanding of the characteristics or the combination of characteristics that are common among leaders.

Trait theory looks at the characteristics of different leaders – both the successful and unsuccessful ones – to predict the effectiveness of leadership (Owen, 2000). That is, comparing identified characteristics of leaders to those of potential leaders to determine their likelihood of leading effectively. The early theorists (Bass, 1990; House & Aditya, 1997; Yukl, 1989) opined that born leaders were endowed with certain physical traits and personality characteristics which distinguished them from non-leaders. Nicholson (1998) reports that trait theories seek to identify leadership characteristics from different perspectives – personality, ability, motivation, power and needs.

Northouse (2011) argues that trait theories often identify particular personalities or behavioural characteristics shared by leaders. Such traits include physiological attributes (such as appearance, weight and height); demographics (such as age, education and family background); and other traits such as intelligence (which encompasses decisiveness, judgement and knowledge), commitment, high self-confidence, courage, sense of responsibility, achievement, trustworthiness, assertiveness, energy, initiative, creativity, emotional maturity, stress tolerance, belief in internal locus of



control, pragmatism, result orientation, fluency of speech, and extroversion that could potentially be linked to great leaders.

House and Aditya (1997) had also identified two leadership traits which are emergent traits (that are heavily dependent upon heredity such as height, intelligence, attractiveness, and self-confidence); and effectiveness traits (based on experience or learning, including charisma, as fundamental component of leadership). McCall and Lombardo (1983) researched both successful and failed leaders and identified four primary traits by which a leader is made:

1. *Emotional stability and composure*: Calm, confident and predictable, particularly when under stress
2. *Admitting error*: Owning up to mistakes, rather than putting energy into covering up
3. *Good interpersonal skills*: Able to communicate and persuade others without resort to negative or coercive tactics
4. *Intellectual breadth*: Able to understand a wide range of areas, rather than having a narrow (and narrow-minded) area of expertise

There were many criticisms against the trait leadership theory. Cleveland (1993) argues that trait theory ignored the assumptions about whether leadership traits were genetic or acquired. By linking certain qualities with leadership, Williams (2005) contends that scholars are literally limiting the scope of leadership. Additionally, many people possess the personality traits associated with leadership, yet many of these people never seek out positions of leadership (Conger, 1999). There are also people who lack some of the key traits often associated with effective leadership, yet they excel at leading groups of



people. Consequently, there have been many studies of leadership traits and they agree only in the general saintly qualities needed to be a leader (House & Aditya, 1997).

Despite the evidence that leaders tend to differ from non-leaders with respect to certain traits, Stogdill (1948) found that the results varied considerably from situation to situation. In several studies that measured situational factors, there was evidence that the relative importance of each trait depends upon the situation. Stogdill, therefore, concluded that, “A person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits ... the pattern of personal characteristics of the leader must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities and goals of the followers” (p. 64).

According to House and Aditya (1997), there appear to be some traits that consistently differentiate leaders from others. The trait theory, therefore, seems to have some claim to universality. For the theory to be truly universal, all leaders would have to have the same traits. However, there is no specific list of traits accepted by all the proponents of the theory.

According to White and Hodgson (2003), many empirical studies have proven wrong all these trait theories and is now widely accepted that effective leadership is not just about the qualities of the leader, but it is about striking the right balance between behaviours, needs, and context. The study adopted the trait theory to explain how school heads were able to exert their leadership authority over others. For example, it was used to explain how school heads of particular gender cohorts were able to exert their leadership influence over the others. This was imperative because of the socio-cultural perception in Ghana

that males have the natural right and personality traits to assume leadership role over their female counterparts. The use of the trait theory was to explore how each of the gender groups engaged the other for effective leadership administration as well as the challenges they encountered with them. A look at Situational or Contingency theory follows next.

### **Contingency (Situational) leadership theory**

In 1951, Fiedler began to develop the first contingency leadership theory which was the first theory to focus on how situational variables interact with leader personality and behaviour (Fiedler, 1964). He studied the relationship (contingency) between the effectiveness of the leadership style and the situation. His theory proposed that there was not one best way in a leadership style to base a leader's effectiveness (Fiedler, 1967). The theory states that leaders should make their behaviours contingent on various aspects of the followers or the situation in order to improve leadership effectiveness. This resulted from two factors: "leadership style" and "situational favourableness", which was later called situational control (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987).

According to the theory, effectiveness and leadership depend on a number of factors, including the situations and the personal characteristics of the leader. The contingency leadership theory is a category of behavioural theory that challenges that there is no single finest way of leading and that the style of leadership that is operative in some circumstances may not be effective in others. This led to theories that the best leadership style depends on the situation. MacBeath (2006) specifies that the contingency theory helps leaders to choose the best course of action based upon situational variables. Different

styles (e.g. authoritarian style, and democratic style) of leadership may be more appropriate for certain types of decision-making. The theory also helps to understand how one situation affects other factors that are important for effective leadership and how, in turn, these affect leadership. The theory, thus, predicts which leadership style is best in which situation.

House and Aditya (1997) report that Fiedler (1964) believed that leadership style is a reflection of personality (trait-theory orientated) and behaviour (behavioural-theory orientated), and that leadership styles are basically constant. To Fiedler (1964), leaders do not change styles, but they change the situation. The situational leadership theory is used to determine which one of four leadership styles (telling, selling, participating, and delegating) matches the situation (followers' maturity level to complete a specific task) to maximise performance (Vecchio, 1983). The theory was used to determine whether the leadership style of SHS Heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis is task- or relationship-orientated, and if the situation matches the leader's style to ensure quality teaching and learning.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) developed the situational contingency leadership theory by emphasizing that no unique leadership style is suitable for all situations. The primary contingency variable of situational leadership is the maturity level of the follower. Their assertion was on the grounds that leaders need to meet their subordinates' needs and wants to ensure their satisfaction, and to keep up-to-date with their subordinates' development, as their knowledge of work increases in time, commitment to get work done become stronger and ability to perform tasks get better. Thus, situational leaders must understand the

needs of their followers, be able to change according to the situation, gain followers' trust and confidence, and choose the correct leadership style based on the needs of their followers and organisation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1972).

The contingency leadership theory focuses on particular variables related to the environment that determines which particular style of leadership is best suited for the situation (Hodgson & White, 2003). It argues that, there is no single right way to lead because the internal and external dimensions of the environment require the leader to adapt to that particular situation. Instead of following a single leadership approach, the contingency theory proposes that leaders should change leadership approach based on the situation (MacBeath, 2006). It, therefore, recommends that no leadership style is precise as a stand-alone, as the leadership style used is reliant upon the factors such as the quality, situation of the followers or a number of other variables. It encourages leaders to act by critically analysing the situation.

The theory of situational leadership proposes that style of leadership should be accorded with the maturity of the subordinates (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The theory is founded on the principle that no specific leadership style is applicable to all situations and that all situations are different. What is done in one situation will not always work in another. People must use their judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style needed for each situation. It theorised that there was no unsurpassed way to lead and those leaders, to be effective, must be able to adapt to the situation and transform their leadership style between task-oriented and relationship-oriented. Contingency theorists assumed that the leader is the focus of leader-subordinate relationship;

situational theorists opined that the subordinates played a pivotal role in defining the relationship. Though the situational leadership plays emphasis mostly upon the leader, it ultimately drives on group dynamics.

Onukwuba (2018) as well as White and Hodgson (2003) suggest that truly effective leadership is not just about the qualities of the leader, but it is about striking the right balance between behaviours, needs, and context. MacBeath (2006) suggested that good leaders are able to assess the needs of their followers, take stock of the situation, analyse the situation, and then adjust their behaviours accordingly. Success in leadership depends on a number of variables, including the leadership style, qualities of the followers, relationship with followers, type of task, and aspects of the situation (Yukl, 2010). The contingency leadership theory therefore suggests that no one leadership style supersedes others and that great leadership is a combination of many key variables.

The contingent leadership theory focuses on how leaders respond to the unique organisational circumstances (in this case, SHSs) or problems they face. It states that there are three elements that dictate a leader's situational control. The three elements are task structure, leader/member relations, and positioning power. Strube and Garcia (1981) also stated that situational theory blends two key elements which are the leadership style and the followers' maturity levels. Northouse (2019) cites that a leader is thus required to exercise a particular form of leadership based on the maturity of one's team. The effectiveness of workers depends on how good a match exists between the leadership style of the leader and the demands of the situation.

Since the contingency theory argues that there is no particular leadership style that works for all subjects, the theory was relied on to explain how situational-contingent factors affect a head's ability to lead and influence their leadership style to ensure quality teaching and learning. This study adopted the contingency leadership theory to assess the leadership practices of SHS heads, how they are able to adapt their approaches to the particular requirements of the school, and of the situation or event requiring attention.

### **Integrative leadership theory**

Integrative leadership is shared leadership of public, private and non-profit actors or approaches to address complex and significant issues that cannot be effectively addressed by a single person, entity, sector, method, form or technique. Integrative leadership is about applying an adaptive lens and developing leadership literacy, leadership competencies that enable leaders to handle the paradoxes and tensions of leadership (Senge, 2008).

Crosby and Bryson (2010, p. 211) defined integrative leadership as a process that involves 'bringing together diverse groups and organisations in semi-permanent ways – and typically across sector boundaries – to remedy complex public problems and achieve the common good'. Alban-Metcalfe and Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) also defined integrative leadership as shared and collective leadership, in which the person succeeds by collaboratively working with one another. Fernandez, Cho and Perry (2010) stated that integrated leadership is known as a combination of certain leadership roles, performed by combining the efforts of employees and managers at different levels of hierarchy, such as tasks, relations, change diversity and integrity. It is therefore

believed that integrative leadership is a dynamic and networking driving ability, which utilises the integration of leadership elements and strategic decision-making among enterprises as its foundation and the integration of relationships as its core by establishing, operating and safeguarding mechanisms to achieve common interests.

Integrative leadership theory fosters collective action across many types of boundaries in order to achieve the common good. According to Crosby and Kiedrowski (2008), the theory brings together leadership concepts and practice rooted in five major sectors of society – business, government, non-profits, media, and community. The theory focuses on leadership development at all levels, from individual to global level.

Through the integrative leadership framework, leaders are able to build multi-sector collaborations to work on the toughest problems (Bono, Shen & Snyder, 2010). The model and framework of integrative leadership includes leadership skills, behaviours, traits, and styles, situational and moderating factors in joint form that explain the leadership effectiveness. The integrative leadership is divided into five integration dimensions: leadership elements, strategic decision-making, relationship, operational mechanism, and security mechanism integrations.

The integrative leadership theory departs from other models of leadership that focus on traits, characteristics or behaviours of individuals; small groups; intra-or inter-organisational leadership; or visionary, political or ethical leadership styles. Integration emphasises developing and adopting effective leadership characteristics and skills to influence followers to achieve the goals



of an organisation (Yukl, 2009). Senge (2008) argued that the most important role for integrative leaders is to promote organisational learning, since it is a significant determinant of long-term performance and survival for organisations and partnerships. The integrative leadership theory studies how integrative leaders communicate, inspire, and mobilise diverse coalitions that are devoid of cultural, national, sector and partisan connotations.

For integrative leadership theory to be effective, Morse (2010) points out that leaders should possess key components such as relevant knowledge, talent and experience. The theory postulates that leadership is not a destination, but a journey or a continuous process which needs to be developed over time. Such leaders believe that they cannot address their purpose and missions by working in isolation or by involving only those who think the same ways as others in the organisation. Crosby and Bryson (2010) emphasise that integrative leadership is not only bounded by partnership working, but also has greater applicability.

However, Yukl (2009) contended that one of the greatest challenges of integrative leadership is to create the type of conditions that encourage, facilitate and sustain a favourable level of innovation and collective learning. This is because the integrative leadership theory concentrates on the quality of the leadership shown by groups (boards, working parties, etc.) as a whole, instead of by individuals. Yukl (2010), therefore, recommends that top management should assume most of the responsibility for leading, recognise opportunities and threats as well as help to avoid obstacles to implementation of activities/actions, differentiate major units within an organisation or partnership

to ensure greater efficiency, and recognise that conflict is likely to arise among different stakeholders about objectives and priorities, decisions, actions and activities to be implemented.

The integrative leadership theory was adopted to assess and explain how SHS heads integrate views of other relevant stakeholders in decision-making, implementation of actions and activities of their schools. It was also used to assess and describe the leadership practices that school heads engage in to ensure quality teaching and learning; and how school heads overcome the barriers that impede their success in educational leadership. It was again used to find out whether school heads build teams and ensure shared vision in their leadership practices in their schools.

### **Entrepreneurial leadership theory**

Entrepreneurial leadership theory refers to leaders who are able to take risks, seize opportunities, pursue innovation and be innovative, producing, interchanging and strategic (Altuntas, 2014). According to Renko, El Tarabishy, Carsrud and Brannback (2015), the main motivation of entrepreneurial leaders is their desire to create social, environmental and economic opportunities. The importance of entrepreneurial leadership in organisational management is due to the fact that resources are naturally scarce, and leaders have to be innovative in mobilising the available limited resources to achieve their targeted goals and objectives amidst competition from other organisations (Esmer & Dayi, 2018).

Altuntas (2014) differentiated between entrepreneur and entrepreneurial leadership. Whereas entrepreneurs focus on creating initiatives, entrepreneurial leaders seek opportunities outside their new ventures to keep their organisations

functioning. Entrepreneurial leaders may adopt a completely independent and guiding role as well as a strategy intertwined with the organisation, which is a complex system (Renko *et al.*, 2015). Esmer and Dayi (2018) reported that for entrepreneurial leaders to be successful, they must possess or demonstrate some major qualities in their leadership administration, including flexibility, innovative, goal-driven, and decisive.

Ruttan (2019, p. 117) also described the six basic characteristics of entrepreneurial leaders as follows:

1. Supporting entrepreneurial skills: Effective entrepreneurial leaders consider the human element as the source of entrepreneurial behaviour and support development of these behaviours;
2. Interpretation of the opportunities: Entrepreneurial leaders should be able to transmit the value of an opportunity to general goals of an organisation or a person benefiting from the opportunity;
3. Protecting the innovations threatening the current organisational model: Individuals perceive disruptive innovation as a personal and organisational threat. An entrepreneurial leader can inform others about potential benefits of the disruptive innovation.
4. Questioning the current organisational logic: Entrepreneurial leadership requires continuous questioning of the assumptions underlying the dominant logic in order to identify a new value-creating opportunity and make sure that the organisation is positioned in a successful way.
5. Reviewing the simple questions: Entrepreneurial leaders review the questions about identification of the opportunities and employment of the

resources needed to sustain the life of the organisation, definition type of organisational goals and achievements and relationships developed with the stakeholders in a continuous manner.

6. Associating entrepreneurship with strategic management: Effective entrepreneurial leaders believe that an organisation should have the skills of entrepreneurship strategically in order to create the highest value.

The study used the entrepreneurial leadership theory to explain the ability of the school heads to take risks in their leadership practices. Further, the theory was used to explore the innovative aspects of school heads. This was important because most situations faced by school heads require that they use their experiences and innovativeness to address them to maintain cohesiveness among the various stakeholders. School heads also have the responsibility of organising the available resources to administer their leadership roles and functions to ensure the effective delivery of their mandate, which are all attributes of an entrepreneurial leader.

### **Concepts of Leadership and School Leadership**

Leadership has been characterised by a variety of definitions, frameworks and meanings; thus there is no agreement on its components. It has been given different definitions by different people in different contexts. Many researchers have investigated the notion of leadership across various disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, political science, and economics) and from numerous theoretical perspectives (e.g., trait, behavioural, contingency, relational, information-processing, transactional, transformational, charismatic, and shared) (Day & Antonakis, 2012).

However, most of the definitions of leadership have been seen to highlight the importance of leadership, describe leaders' characteristics, present it as a process of influence rather than authority, and as a common theme of directing a group towards a goal. For example, Earley and Weindling (2004) cite that leadership is an attempt to influence the followers by using multiple means of communication to achieving the goals. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Northouse, 2019). It is influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends.

Hallinger and Heck (2010) also indicate that leadership is a process that tends to influence people and enable management to make people do voluntarily what should be done and do it well. Leadership thus involves inspiring and supporting others towards the achievements of a vision based on clear personal and professional values.

Matei and Vazquez-Burguete (2012) define leadership as something "about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished" (p. 206). Leadership is inspiring others to pursue your vision within the parameters you set, to the extent that it becomes a shared effort, a shared vision, and a shared success (Zeitchik, 2012). Similarly, Kruse (2013) explains leadership as a process of social influence, which maximises the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal. Leadership is thus the process by which a person sets the purpose or direction for one or more other persons to move along together with them with competence and full commitment.

By extension, Winston and Patterson (2006, p. 7) define a leader as one or more people who select, equip, train, and influence one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organisation's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organisational mission and objectives.

In order to accomplish the goal, leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership knowledge and skills. Leaders exercise their power to influence people by controlling and taking charge of the operation of an organisation (Bush & Glover, 2014). That power is exercised in earlier stages by motivating followers to get the job done and in later stages by rewarding or punishing those who do or do not perform to the level of expectation. Good leaders are able to set optimistic goals and objectives while steering the operation of the organisation towards those goals through effective strategies (Earley, 2013). Thus, leadership is a continuous process, with the accomplishment of one goal becoming the beginning of a new goal.

Just like the previous definition, modern definitions of leadership describe influence and fulfilment of goals. Ganta and Manukonda (2014) explain leadership as a kind of power where one person has the ability to influence or change the values, beliefs, behaviour and attitudes of another person. Gopal and Chowdhury (2014) also define leadership as a dynamic process whereby a person influences others to contribute voluntarily to the



realisation and attainment of the objectives towards the common goal. That is, leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor which binds a group together, improves their performance and directs them towards the achievement of goals (Badran & Khalifa, 2016).

According to Sharma, Sun and Kannan (2012), effective leadership is not simply the result of obtaining a position, but rather possessing the knowledge and understanding of successful leadership skills along with the personal ability to effectively implement those skills. Consequently, Mitonga-Monga, Coetzee and Cilliers (2012) consider leadership as the pattern associated with managerial behaviour, which is designed to integrate the organisational or personal interest and effects for achieving particular objectives. Gandolfi and Stone (2016) as well as Onukwuba (2018) assert that leadership requires a deep understanding about the role of people in the ultimate success of the mission and vision of the organisation. The definitions and notions of leadership provide a foundation for developing effective leadership in various organisational environments.

Good leaders need to have a purpose, balanced personality and skills to put that purpose into action. According to Walker and Hallinger (2015), they should be flexible to adjust and adapt their style in line with the development level of the people they are managing. To achieve such effectiveness in leadership practices, there should be a shift from hierarchical approaches to leadership styles that encourage shared governance and facilitate staff empowerment (Mitonga-Monga *et al.*, 2012).



By extension, school leadership is explained as the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, students and parents toward achieving common school or educational aims (Dimmock, 2012). To Earley (2013), school leadership involves working with and guiding teachers toward improving educational process in secondary schools. School leadership includes the ability to create a vision or an idealised version of the educational organisation. According to Bush and Glover (2014), school leadership also involves advancing and improving educational systems, and creating and enacting policies for secondary schools. The authors argue that school leadership is determined by the values that people have. Thus, much attention should be paid to issues such as individual value of every student, their wellbeing and academic achievement.

School leadership is important to ensure academic success through process, material and training improvements by collaborating with educationists, parents, students, policy makers and the public (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017). It is an important education policy issue because research demonstrates that it is second only to teacher quality in its impact on student achievement (Bush & Glover, 2014). School leadership is widely regarded as a key factor in accounting for the difference between underperforming schools and schools that foster student learning (Gandolfi, Stone & Deno, 2017). Effective school leaders influence others' actions in achieving desirable ends.

Dimmock (2012) and Day and Antonakis (2012) recognise eight interrelated elements of leadership. They claim that the eight elements are regarded as key operational areas of leadership, which provide a convenient and

manageable way of encapsulating school leadership. The elements are collaboration and partnership, motivation, planning, decision-making, interpersonal communication, conflict, evaluation and appraisal, staff and professional development. School leadership is therefore expected to involve the eight elements.

### **Leadership Practices**

Different leadership styles, classified according to the way authority is used, have been adopted by leadership theorists in order to analyse the different perceptions of the concept of leadership. Raelin (2017) proposes that ‘leadership practices’ have a dual approach since practices of leadership should not only focus on physical practices, i.e. a means of doing things, but also include understanding. This understanding requires leaders to have ‘knowledge of practices and inquiry’ within institutions. Here, leadership practices also include the art of knowing how to undertake tasks. Using leadership styles, leaders are classified as transactional, transformational, situational, or pedagogical (instructional). Thus, the effectiveness of leadership is connected to the characteristics of the leaders and the leadership practice (Juntrasook, 2014; Onukwuba, 2018). Most leaders prefer a combination of different leadership styles. They pick which they feel comfortable with.

### **Transactional leadership practice**

In 1947, Weber introduced the transactional leadership concept, and later, Bass (1990) extended upon Weber’s research. Bass theorised transactional leadership as a reciprocated agreement between leaders and followers, in which existing parties trust that the other will fulfil the obligations or terms of a

contract to achieve organisational mission, goals, objectives and expectations. Transactional leadership is characterised by a transaction made between the leader and the followers or subordinates.

Transactional leadership defines an exchange-based influence between leaders and subordinates whereby followers exchange efforts for rewards received from their leaders. Transactional leaders practise the process of exchange or bargain relationship (Katou, 2015). Transactional leadership is a relationship between leaders and subordinates, which is a gratification of exchange design and purpose to give maximum benefit to each individual in the organisation. Saleem (2015) cites that the focus of transactional leadership is therefore on the leader and subordinates, and needs of the organisation or personal self-interest.

Transactional leadership involves a leader-follower exchange in which leaders often influence subordinates to gain something of value and use corrective behaviours, actions or measures to achieve the objectives of an organisation (Holten & Brenner, 2015). It involves values that are relevant to the exchange process, such as honesty, responsibility and reciprocity. Influence in transactional leadership is based on bureaucratic authority which encompasses legitimate power and respect for rules and tradition, rather than influence based on exchange or inspiration (Saleem, 2015). However, Dartey-Baah (2015) argues that it is not automatic that subordinates will be committed or exhibit exceptional performance to achieve organisational goals, objectives and expectations such as increased productivity through reward systems.

Under the transactional leadership, leaders are expected to reward (or punish) followers who meet (or do not meet) specific criteria or organisational objectives and expectations. Avolio and Bass (2004) reiterated that the transactional leadership employs a reward system to achieve desired organisational objectives and expectations. They categorised four components of transactional leadership which are (1) contingent reward (i.e. reward or recognition for exceptional performance by subordinates); (2) active management-by-exception (enforcing corrective behaviour for not adhering to organisational objectives); (3) passive management-by-exception (intervening only when organisational objectives are not met); and (4) laissez-faire (relinquishing responsibilities and decision-making). Transactional leadership is based on contingency, in that, reward or punishment is contingent upon performance of subordinates. However, Jiang (2014) contends that through the exchange process and the institution of reward systems, transactional leadership produces short-term satisfactory outcomes.

Hallinger (2010) defined transactional leadership practice as that style of leadership that focuses on supervision, organisation or performance. The effective adoption of this leadership practice in an educational setting requires greater autonomy and control of school heads in the administration and management of schools (Elmelegy, 2015).

Associated with Elmelegy's (2015) view is the opinion of Harrington *et al.* (2015) that transactional leadership practice is more effective in private schools, with horizontal organisational structure and mostly greater autonomy and performance benchmarks given to principals, compared to the public

schools with vertical organisational structure and greater superior control giving to school boards and school management committees over the principals. The ownership structure of schools could, therefore, influence the leadership practices adopted by heads of schools. However, Klar and Brewer (2013) emphasised that transactional leadership practice is less effective in causing significant structural changes in the administration of an organisation as it focuses more attention on finding faults and deviations rather than transforming organisational processes to achieve long term vision.

Transactional leaders motivate followers by appealing to their self-interest. Deichmann and Stam (2015) emphasise that the motivational package includes praise, salary increase, promotion and other rewards to encourage employee's or subordinate's exceptional performance. Punishments are not always mentioned, but they are also well-understood and formal systems of discipline are usually in place under transactional leadership practice.

According to Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2016), leaders practising transactional leadership possess short-term planning, organising, and controlling characteristics. This requires transactional leaders to possess the necessary qualities and skills. For instance, for transactional leadership to be effective and, as a result, have motivational value, the leader must find a means to align to adequately reward (or punish) followers, for performing (or not performing) leader-assigned task. The transactional leader should work by creating clear structures of what is required of their subordinates. In other words, transactional leaders are most efficient when they develop a mutual

reinforcing environment for which the individual and the organisational goals are in sync (Jing & Avery, 2016).

Transactional leadership issues directives for subordinates to follow, and allows the subordinates to meet their immediate needs, reduce the anxiety, and only focus on the vision and mission of the organisation, such as building high-quality and service, and finding ways to reduce the cost of production. To this effect, subordinates only have to obey what their leaders direct them to do. Subordinates therefore perceive transactional leaders as authoritative people who issue directives for subordinates to follow, and require little input or ideas from the followers. They also perceive the leaders as being task-oriented and not having an anticipated outlook on the future. Prasad and Junni (2016) therefore suggest that transactional leaders should pursue long-term leader-subordinate relationship.

There are many criticisms levelled against the transactional leadership practice because it causes short-term relationship between leaders and subordinates. Leader-follower relationship may be temporary and lack any long-term emotional connections and commitments. In this connection, the transactional leadership practice allows the process of gratification which can bring hatred between leaders and subordinates (Yazeed, Ali & Al- Shibami, 2018).

Dartey-Baah (2015) alleged that subordinates may not automatically be committed and perform exceptionally in achieving the goals, objectives and expectations of an organisation through exchange process or reward systems. This is because transactional leadership is believed to employ extrinsic rewards



to drive or motivate subordinates to produce the desired organisational outcomes (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Coupled with this is the assumption that people are rational human beings who are largely motivated by money and simple rewards, and hence their behaviours are predictable.

Jing and Avery (2016) also point out that the effectiveness of the transactional leadership practice is premised on the fundamental qualities of the leaders. The transactional leader is expected to possess communication skill which is useful in ensuring that subordinates are adequately abreast with how their tasks must be conducted, and the incentive and reward system for good performance. According to Tremblay and Gibson (2016), such leaders should be goal-oriented in order to drive subordinates toward achieving an organisation's mission, goals, objectives and expectations.

Even though the leadership practices could not be rigidly fixed under the various leadership theories, the transactional leadership practice could be seen more related with the entrepreneurial leadership theory. This is because they both engage followers to ascertain how best each could make compromises in delivering the leadership vision. In other words, both the entrepreneurial leadership theory and transactional leadership practice are goal-oriented and focus more on measures to achieve such leadership goals and objectives.

### **Transformational leadership practice**

Burns (1978) introduced the concept of transformational leadership in his research on political leaders. He theorised transformational leadership as a process whereby leaders interact with their followers and inspire them to advance together. Bass (1985) added to Burns' transformational leadership



practice by shifting the focus to the followers. Transformational leadership is the action between leaders and subordinates to reach higher inspiration for the organisation. Bass defines transformational leadership as the process by which a person interacts with others and is able to create a solid relationship that results in a high percentage of trust that will later result in an increase of motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in both leaders and followers.

Transformational leaders seek to transform the organisation, but there is also a tacit promise to followers that they also will be transformed in some way, perhaps to be more like their amazing leader. Burns (1978) specified that people and organisations are transformed due to the leadership style and abilities of the leader, who is able to convey a vision and guide the transformation. Transformational leaders cultivate self-interest and also transcend interest for the organisation or society (Bass, 1990). Bass defines transformational leadership as when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they create awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. He described transformational leadership as a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.

Transformational leaders display several dimensions of behaviour which are idealised influence/behaviour (the leader is respected and trusted, sustains elevated level of morals, is perceived as a role model by the followers); inspirational motivation (the leader emphasises and articulates to their subordinates the desire for superlative performance and assists in the attainment

of the organisational goals); intellectual stimulation (the leader with intellectual qualities stimulates the follower's problem comprehending and identification abilities with the assistance of their own standards and beliefs); and individualised consideration (the leader of such approach ensures equal treatment of the followers with each follower being treated as an individual). Burns (1978) asserts that transformational leadership can be viewed both as an influence process between individuals and as a process of mobilising power to change social systems and reform institutions.

Prasad and Junni (2016) give a vivid description of transformational and transactional leaders. First, the leaders are people-centric and that latter are egocentric. A transforming leadership is superseded by a transcendent leadership, where the whole leadership process completely changes the character of an individual from being a mere leader to one with a noble ethos, and that leader, accordingly brings the led up into the same atmosphere. The leader guides people with the existing values, goals, capabilities, and other resources the followers have through stages of development. Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2016) emphasise that transformational leaders show integrity and know how to develop a robust and inspiring vision of the future. Such leaders motivate people to achieve this vision, they manage its delivery, and they build ever stronger and more successful teams.

According to Jing and Avery (2016), the essence of transformational leadership is that leaders are able to transform their followers through their inspirational nature and charismatic personalities. Rules and regulations under this practice of leadership are flexible and guided by group norms.

Transformational leadership has been regarded by Green (2014) as the practice which has a direct and positive impact on the performance of subordinates, and helps to increase subordinates' concern and strengthens their level of perception as well as their acceptance of the organisational vision, goals and aims. These attributes provide a sense of belonging for the followers as they can easily identify with the leader and its purpose. However, Deichmann and Stam (2015) point out that transformational leadership assumes that people will follow a person who inspires them with vision and passion to achieve great things, and the best way to get things done is by working with passion, and injecting enthusiasm and energy.

Transformational leaders are the visionaries and change agents who encourage individuals and have strong capabilities to handle uncertainty, ambiguity, and complexity (Jing & Avery, 2016). Transformational leaders appeal to higher ideals and moral values of followers such as liberty, justice, equality, peace and humanitarianism. This kind of leadership is a practice and proceed to build the commitment of the followers through organisation goals and by entrusting the followers with powers to achieve those goals (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Transformational leadership motivates group members for teamwork, serves others, and looks beyond self-interest for the group or organisational purpose.

According to Day and Antonakis (2012), transformational leadership prioritises positive changes in an organisation's body, including subordinates. This leadership practice helps to improve the quality of subordinates to become more inspirational and dedicated at the organisation. It involves shaping,

expressing, and mediating conflict among groups of people in addition to motivating individuals. Transformational leaders encourage creativity and innovative ideas of subordinates (Lin, Ma, Zhang, Li & Jiang, 2018). Unlike transactional leadership, transformational leadership produces more long-term organisational results leading to higher subordinate commitment, performance, creativity, self-confidence, and increased productivity. The leaders facilitate new understandings by increasing or altering awareness of issues to subordinates.

Transformational leadership practice involves a leadership style where the leader works with teams to identify the needed changes required causing long-term structural changes in organisational management (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). According to Hallinger (2010), transformational leadership practice requires the creation of vision to guide the change process through inspiration and careful execution of strategies and activities. Central to transformational leadership practice is the leader's inspiration and commitment to organisational processes to convince followers or subordinates to identify themselves with the organisational vision (Nir & Hameiri, 2014). Thus, the posture of the leader in the entire process is critical in achieving the ultimate goal of transforming the organisation. Part of the efforts in transformational leadership practice is to ensure the long-term development of the human resource, creating enabling environment for workers to operate through the provision of the necessary facilities and equipment to operate, and motivating workforce through intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

In an educational setup, Clarke (2013) reported that transformational leadership practice is more effective for heads with long-term tenure that allows them to implement the tenets of their vision to cause the necessary changes. In other words, a clear and secured tenure of office allows school heads to focus their transformational plan and agenda to achieve results. However, Kezar and Holcombe (2017) argued that the extent of transformation in such leadership system critically depends on the level at which subordinates understand and have accepted the vision of the leader.

Yazeed *et al.* (2018) view transformational and transactional leadership as distinct, but not mutually exclusive process, because the same leader may use both types of leadership at different times in different situations. The authors state that transformational leaders are nurturers and build and strengthen the self-confidence of subordinates and change their perceptions in the organisation. Leaders and subordinates work together to accomplish organisational goals and create positive leader-subordinate relationships. Transformational leaders motivate, inspire, and maintain positive working environments in which subordinates feel valued, experience growth, and trained to become potential leaders (Khalili, 2016).

However, Prasad and Junni (2016) argue that transformational leaders often need to adapt their style to fit a specific group or situation, and this is why it is useful to gain a thorough understanding of other styles of leaders. Transformational leaders need to provide vision and mission, inspire pride among subordinates, and attain trust and respect through charisma. One of the traps of transformational leadership is that passion and confidence can easily be

mistaken for truth and reality. Whilst it is true that great things have been achieved through enthusiastic leadership, it is also true that many passionate people have led the charge right over the cliff and into a bottomless chasm. Just because someone believes they are right, it does not mean they are right.

Paradoxically, the energy that gets people going can also cause them to give up (Katou, 2015). Transformational leaders often have large amounts of enthusiasm which, if relentlessly applied, can wear out their followers. They also tend to see the big picture, but not the details. According to Saleem (2015), if the leaders do not have people to take care of this level of information, then they are usually doomed to fail. Finally, transformational leaders, by definition, seek to transform. When the organisation does not need transforming and people are happy as they are, then such a leader will be frustrated.

Transformational leadership practice is more associated with the integrative leadership theory. This is because they both involve bringing together diverse groups of interests to remedy complex problems and achieve the common good. They both attest to the need to assign roles to particular groups to promote participation in leadership administration to achieve leadership goals.

### **Situational leadership practice**

Situational leadership is an adaptive leadership practice that merges both directive and supportive dimensions in a given situation. This strategy encourages leaders to take stock of their team members, weigh the many variables in their workplace and choose the leadership style that best fits their goals and circumstances. Situational leadership thus constitutes leaders who



have to change the degree of supportiveness and directness to their subordinates according to given situations of subordinates and their level of development and commitment, and motivation (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Situational leadership refers to those leaders who adopt different leadership styles according to the situation and the development level of their team members. It encourages leaders to choose the style that fits their goals and circumstances. Judge, Bono, Ilies and Gerhardt (2002) stated that it is an effective way of leadership because it adapts to the team's needs and sets a beneficial balance for the whole organisation.

Situational leadership is not based on a specific skill of the leader; instead, they change their skills to what benefits the followers. Hersey and Blanchard (1972) argue that it is not just the personal characteristics of the leader that are decisive, but also those of their followers. Hence, the situation is determinative and the leadership practice depends on this. Hersey and Blanchard established two basic levels of leadership behaviour under the situational leadership practice:

1. Management: The managerial behaviour of the leader is focused on the definition of tasks. The what, when and how to perform them is established.
2. Support: The supportive behaviour is focused on team development, with emphasis on the participation of all its members. It provides cohesion and motivates people.

Hersey and Blanchard (1977) report that situational leadership is practised when organisations want to develop people and workgroups, establish



rapport and to bring out the best in their people, and use a common leadership style across all units in an organisation, be it local, national, or international. In this respect, Hersey (1984) suggests that the situational leader has four main functions [telling and directing, selling and coaching, participating and supporting, and delegating] to perform:

- a. The situational leader is demanded to lead and make decisions: In order to be successful, while encouraging and motivating subordinates, leaders should give instructions that are clear and concise. This is especially necessary for subordinates who are inexperienced and are not capable enough to carry out tasks independently. Good instruction and monitoring of the entire work process would be the best style of leadership in this situation. This is also sometimes referred to as task-oriented leadership. The leader must ensure that, from the onset, their team members know what is expected of them. Only then will the subordinates be able to take small steps and achieve success after success, to ensure and maintain the motivation of the whole organisation (Judge *et al.*, 2002).
- b. At this level, subordinates have a desire to work independently, but they are not capable of doing this yet. This is because they have not reached full maturity and are hindered by circumstances such as a change or a reform of the organisation, as well as lack of skills and knowledge. This function is called ‘selling’ since the leader has to ‘sell’ the tasks to the subordinates and convince them that they are able to fulfil them (Hersey, 1984). The leader offers constant supervision to their subordinates,

providing constant feedback. It is also during this stage that the leader asks its co-workers for information to gather suggestions, improvements and new ideas that may contribute to improving the organisation.

- c. This stage comprises subordinates that are capable but temporarily reluctant to deliver work expectations. Situational leaders must facilitate, encourage and confer with teammates or subordinates as well as support them in their duties. According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2008), this is the only way to get the best out of subordinates, since they have received guidance and motivation towards the same objective. Leaders are then demanded to provide opportunities for them to discuss and exchange views as well as different perspectives, thus enriching the collaborative process. By having subordinates participate in the decision-making process, acceptance will increase and they will be able to work independently (Zeitchik, 2012).
- d. It is essential that leaders know how to delegate tasks to their team members or subordinates. At this level of situational leadership, individuals are mature - they know how to behave and carry out their tasks independently, what their role is, and what is expected of them, because their leader has been able to explain everything clearly. For this reason, the leader is able to delegate responsibilities to colleagues and respect their way of carrying out the tasks entrusted to them and the decisions they make. However, Jiang (2014) cautions that leaders must realise that delegating involves keeping distance while subordinates are responsible for the decisions.

Situational leadership brings attention to the role of the followers. This leadership is flexible and uses the needed leadership style to nurse a given development level of a follower to be successful in a given working environment. Situational leadership implies that leadership is influenced by the competence, skill set, and maturity level of the subordinates (Graeff, 1997). The situational leadership practice proposes that no one style of leadership pertains to all given workplace situations. This means that, the leadership style changes according to the followers' knowledge and skills in a given task. Under situational leadership, a leader should be able to place less or more emphasis on the task, and more or less emphasis on the relationship with the people one is leading, depending on what is needed to get the job done successfully (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009).

Mulder (2012) suggests that situational leaders need to consider some contextual factors in assessing situations for the best leadership approach. They have to consider the relationship between the leader and the subordinates and the level of expertise of subordinates. The leader needs to consider the task itself which may range from simple to complex. However, the leader needs to have a clear idea of exactly what the task entails in order to determine whether the task has been successfully and competently accomplished. The level of authority that leaders have over their subordinates should also be considered. Finally, leaders need to consider the level of maturity of each individual group member, which is a measure of an individual's ability to complete a task, as well as their willingness to complete the task.

Situational leadership requires leaders to vary their behaviour and leadership style according to commitment and motivation of their subordinates. It is a mixture of task behaviour, subordinate commitment, and relation behaviour. Moreover, every situation has different demands. The situational leadership practice simply tells leaders to change their leadership styles according to the parameters given. However, like any situation, every task is different and so is every leader, their strategy to lead and their working styles are also different. Thus, merely classifying the leadership practice into four main functions is not enough (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). According to Mulder (2012), the biggest criticism of this theory is that if there is no consistency in the behaviour of leaders, it will lead to confusion and misunderstanding.

It must be noted that situational leadership practice is more related to the contingency leadership theory. This is because the leaders adopt particular leadership approaches based on the situation at hand. This allows the leaders to use their experiences to guide their decisions and actions in addressing issues at hand. Both contingency leadership theory and situational leadership practice give some level of flexibility in the administration of leadership.

### **Pedagogical (instructional) leadership practice**

Pedagogy is defined as the understanding of how learning takes place and the philosophy and practice that support that understanding of learning (Andrews, 2009). It is simply the study of teaching and learning process. It recognises the cultural, moral and societal aspects of what is learned and why it is learned. Coughlin and Baird (2013) explain pedagogical leadership as leading

or guiding the study of the teaching and learning process. Pedagogical leadership is therefore an act that motivates others, thus facilitating culturally and morally conscious learning in a second party.

Instructional leadership is generally defined as the management of curriculum and instruction by the principals of educational institutions. It involves establishing clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth (Basham, 2010). Thus, instructional leadership practice is committed to the core business of teaching, learning, and knowledge. According to Harrington *et al.* (2015), the quality of instruction is the top priority for the instructional principal. As a result, Chikoko *et al.* (2015) suggested that principals should regularly meet staff members to discuss and review mode of operations to help improve the performance of their jobs and ultimately help students learn more effectively.

Pedagogical leaders are considered to be persons who by their actions and speeches promote pedagogical activities. Chen and Yang (2012) specify that such leaders require readiness and ability based on the hidden attitudes of the leader. They regard themselves as partners, facilitators, observers and co-learners alongside educators, children and families. Most importantly, pedagogical leaders challenge others to see themselves as researchers in the teaching and learning process (Chen & Li, 2013). In turn, this practice builds a culture of reflective teaching that helps people to sort through the complexities of work.

The concept of pedagogical leadership brings leadership close to people's interaction. Judge *et al.* (2002) argued that pedagogical leadership is the management of personnel learning and its implementation is defined by each leader's own learning concept. The authors add that pedagogical leadership should move beyond the simplicity of the literal functional description of teaching and learning, but should be more concerned to subvert authority, bridge disciplines and achieve a visionary learner environment where the contemporary is set for standard and visionary classrooms.

Pedagogic leadership can be seen as just one component of school leadership or alternatively as a distinct style of school leadership. It emphasises the importance of establishing clear educational goals, planning the curriculum and evaluating teachers and teaching (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). It sees the leader's prime focus as responsible for promoting better outcomes for students, emphasising the importance of teaching and learning and enhancing their quality. Irrespective of which view is adopted, the effective leadership of teaching and learning is characterised by specific attributes of the principal, staff and operations of the school. It is proposed that pedagogic leadership will be evidenced by:

1. Discharge of moral obligations concerning societal expectations of schooling;
2. Presence of a shared vision and sense of mission about student learning;
3. Commitment to mission realisation by staff and students;
4. Application of expert knowledge about student learning and development;



5. Improvement of pedagogic practice;
6. The engagement and empowerment of staff;
7. Presence of multiple leadership within the staff;
8. Emphasis on pedagogic rather than administrative functions by leaders;
9. Creation and sharing of knowledge throughout the school;
10. Development of relationships and a sense of community; and
11. Application of a re-culturing approach towards school improvement.

Pedagogical leadership conveys a purposeful role which is characterised by leading people, where those involved develop an attachment and feelings of responsibility towards the ethics, values and beliefs central to the standards (Caughlin & Baird, 2013). Part of the role of the pedagogical leader is to create systems and structures that support the values and vision they have for growing a quality-learning environment. Decisions that are made around how to spend money, organise time, set up environments and support the success of others come from the greater vision that they have for children, families and themselves.

Basham (2010) asserted that strong leadership commitment is required to effectively execute the instructional leadership practice since many workers mostly deviate from the established performance standards at the initial phase. In addition, experience gap between the principals and the teachers is critical in the adoption of the instructional leadership practice. In other words, principals with many years of working experience in relation to their teachers are mostly considered as mentors and as such the teachers easily conform to their instructional guidelines. The opposite, however, occurs when the years of



experience of the school principals are similar to that of their teachers. Chikoko *et al.* (2015) also indicated that some background characteristics of school heads, such as gender, age and years of managerial experience are critical in the effective adoption of the instructional leadership practice. Thus, the age differential between school heads and teachers is important in generating the needed response from instructional leadership practice.

Talat, Rehman and Ahmed (2013) note that pedagogical leadership respects values and teachers, and considers approaches and actions that benefit the ecology of the community. However, pedagogical leaders have to acknowledge the complexity of the interplay between theory and practice, teaching and learning (Khuong & Hoang, 2015). They also need to consider the intimate relationships among learners' identities and the community ecology. Pedagogical leadership is therefore a collaborative process among teachers, learners and other members of the community.

To be a pedagogical leader requires much more than a deep understanding of the teaching discipline – it involves a number of behaviours that can be learned (May, Huff & Goldring, 2012). Habits of pedagogical leadership include building relationship, innovation, self-reflection, goal setting, discipline, and education. According to Hallinger and Huber (2012), the real key to successfully building relationships is to engage in platforms where people share similar interests with the leader. The real power in innovation is how you try something new – the process of researching, testing, observing and reviewing. Hallinger and Huber point out that pedagogical leaders have two great strengths in applying a process of innovation. First, they have a deep

understanding of educational practices with the first-hand experience of what is possible and what works. Secondly, they have built relationships with other pedagogical leaders who can provide invaluable feedback on each step in the process of innovation.

One of the most important skills for the leadership of any kind is self-reflection, which provides a valuable guide to our strengths, weaknesses and individual uniqueness (May *et al.*, 2012). Unlike other forms of feedback such as performance reviews, self-reflection avoids a negative focus on areas for improvement. Instead, self-reflection provides a plan of action to heighten personal talents. With this method, pedagogical leaders invite feedback from their network on their strengths, competencies, weaknesses and uniqueness. Pedagogical leaders are expected to rely on their prowess to scaffold their goals.

For pedagogical leaders, Khuong and Hoang (2015) assert that discipline provides more than a path to successful leadership and enables them to model their behaviour, the change, and the innovation that they want to inspire in their educational team. Pedagogical leaders bring innovative pedagogy into staff training, meetings and even personal interactions. The road to pedagogical leadership becomes a superhighway when leaders embark on further education (Caughlin & Baird, 2013).

In order to exercise leadership of learning, Robinson *et al.* (2009) caution that school heads need to be knowledgeable about it. Without an understanding of the knowledge necessary for teachers to teach well – content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, content-specific pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge and knowledge of learners – school leaders

will be unable to perform essential school improvement functions such as monitoring instruction and supporting teacher development (Andrews, 2009). While this would seem to be an impossible task for one person, it provides a sound justification for the distribution of leadership responsibilities. It also links closely with the leadership functions of setting directions and developing people. Since pedagogical or instructional leadership is focused on the core business of schools in enhancing effective teaching and learning, it is likely to have a larger impact on student outcomes (Hallinger & Huber, 2012).

Instructional leadership practices could also be related to the transactional leadership theory. They both try to assert leadership authority through clearly defined standards and goals. Subordinates have to share in the vision of the leader by playing their expected roles with clear rewards and punishment systems.

### **Leadership Styles**

People generally want to be fully engaged and committed in the work they do, as well as, believe in the leaders. There is a therefore debate on and choice between top-down and bottom-up management and leadership styles. Leadership style generally refers to the way leaders provide direction to their organisation, how plans and programmes get implemented, how staff are motivated to do their work, and how leaders influence a group of people in an organisation to a widely understood future state that is different from the present one (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016).

There are many leadership styles with each having unique characteristics. Gandolfi and Stone (2017) assert that effective leaders vary their

leadership styles based on the context, the individuals concerned, and the desired outcome although they may have a dominant one. The ability of a leader to adjust their leadership style based on some variables, including leadership experience, is directly correlated with leadership effectiveness and ultimate success of the leaders. Leadership effectiveness in the eyes of followers is closely tied to the leader being driven, able to inspire, and prioritise needs, which, in turn, produces a sense of safety and calm for followers (McDermott, Kidney & Flood, 2013). This points directly to the connection between leaders and followers.

### **Authentic leadership**

Authentic leadership is a modern and more inclusive approach to leadership. It is a type of management style in which people act in a real, genuine and sincere way that is true to who they are as individuals (Rouse, 2018). Proponents (e.g. Bill, 2016; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa, 2005) of authentic leadership believe that this type of leader is best positioned to inspire trust, loyalty and strong performances from employees or subordinates. As an approach to or style of leadership, authentic leadership emphasises building the leader's legitimacy through honest relationships with followers through valuing their input, which are built on an ethical foundation. Rouse (2018) asserts that authentic leaders are positive people with truthful self-concepts who promote openness.

Authentic leadership works on the principle that a leader can prove their legitimacy by nurturing sincere relationships with their subordinates and giving importance to their input (Grant, Gino & Hofmann, 2011). They monitor their

words and behaviours carefully to be attuned to their subordinates. According to Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn and Wu (2018), they believe their words and behaviours are sensitive to the impact their words and actions have on others. Authentic leaders inspire trust in their subordinates to pull together, work hard and communicate. Rouse (2018) asserts that people are more willing to be open about problems, which means that problems are more likely to be fixed than to be ignored.

Authentic leaders are ethical leaders who have identified their ethical codes, and do not compromise on what they believe to be right or wrong (Leroy, Palanski & Simons, 2012). They have integrity and are guided by morals, while also displaying strong ethical characters. An authentic leader encourages their subordinates to be more open; they appreciate their support in the success of the organisation. Their leadership style promotes both individual and team performance (Northouse, 2016).

All leaders have power, but authentic leaders know how to use the right kind of power for the good of the group and for the goal that needs to be achieved (Hoch *et al.*, 2018). Authentic leaders use the power of example to put their words into action so that their subordinates look up to them because of their skills, knowledge and experience, as well as gain the respect and admiration of their subordinates (Rego, Lopes & Nascimento, 2016). They are also excellent communicators who use different communication strategies to pass along the values, inspire their subordinates, give clear instructions, listen actively to other people, receive feedback and accept good advice (Rouse, 2018).

Authentic leaders work hard to create a culture of open communication. They believe in open communication and combine their directness with empathy, which more often than not brings success. Grant *et al.* (2011) point out that the image they project in public is not drastically different from how they really are in private. Such leaders do not hide their mistakes and weaknesses and have the courage to actually be who they really are. Northouse (2016) categorised the monitoring role of the authentic leader into two: low self-monitors who tend to say whatever comes to mind, whereas high self-monitors watch carefully what they say for its impact on others.

However, Rouse (2018) criticises authentic leaders as often locked into a rigid sense of themselves, much like their immature teenage selves. Authentic leaders, according to Northouse (2016), do not hide behind their flaws; instead, they seek to understand them. Being authentic, as a leader, demands hardwork and experience to function well in such leadership roles. Hoch *et al.* (2018) assert that the essence of authentic leadership is emotional intelligence and key to performing well as an authentic leader is having the self-awareness to recognise inauthentic behaviours and listen to close colleagues who point them out. An authentic leader reflects upon all of their actions and decisions and examines their own strengths and weaknesses without any bias. They put in a lot of effort to overcome their fears and use their strengths to the maximum (Rouse, 2018). Thus, self-awareness plays a vital role in authentic leadership development.

Northouse (2016) asserts that when a leader demonstrates the following qualities or characteristics, they will be more authentic as leaders and their

followers will respond positively and the organisation will benefit. There are five dimensions described by Bill (2016), and each is associated with an observable characteristic: purpose and passion, values and behaviour, relationships and connectedness, self-discipline and consistency, and heart and compassion.

Firstly, authentic leaders have a sense of purpose and vision, knowing what they are about and where they are headed (Northouse, 2016). Purpose manifests itself as passion. Northouse reports that passionate people are interested in what they are doing, are inspired and intrinsically motivated, and care about the work they are doing. Authentic leaders add value to people they interact with and help them to realise higher professional goals which lead to better personal lives as well. They push themselves and others around them to raise the bar and aim for excellence.

Secondly, authentic leaders have values, know what they are, and do not compromise on those values (Northouse, 2016). This quality manifests itself through the leader's behaviour – authentic leaders acting in accordance with their values.

Thirdly, authentic leaders build relationship with others and have connectedness with their followers. They are willing to share their experiences and listen to others' experiences, and are communicative with their followers (Northouse, 2016).

The fourth dimension of authentic leadership is self-discipline, which gives leaders focus and determination – ability to focus on a goal, and move forward towards that goal even in the face of setbacks (Northouse, 2016). Self-



disciplined and consistent leaders remain cool, calm, and consistent during stressful situations (Bill, 2016). Authentic leaders' behaviour is consistent, and they are not easily swayed by superficialities. According to Rouse (2018), authentic leaders focus on long-term results in patience and hard work. Authentic leaders are driven by the organisation's mission and needs and not their own ego.

Finally, authentic leaders have heart, which shows in their compassion. They are sensitive to others' needs and are willing to help them (Northouse, 2016). They lead their team with courage and empathy that only comes from listening to the heart.

Bill (2016) recommends the following qualities in order for authentic leaders to develop a deeper understanding of themselves:

1. The process of learning, growing, and developing an integrated self is a process of construction and meaning making. As leaders explore their life stories and crucibles, and process their experiences, they develop deeper understanding of themselves and feel increasingly comfortable being authentic. As leaders discover their truth, they gain confidence and resilience to face difficult situations (Gardner *et al.*, 2005).
2. Engagement in reflection and introspective practices by taking time to reflect on what is most important to them. In this way, the urgent actions do not take precedence over the important ones, and leaders examine how they are living their lives and engaging with the world around them (Grant *et al.*, 2011).

3. One of the hardest things for leaders to do is to understand how other people see them, which is often quite different than how they want to be seen (Leroy *et al.*, 2012). To gain greater understanding of how they are coming across, authentic leaders obtain real-time feedback by listening to their people who give them candid critiques about their leadership.
4. Such leaders need to understand their leadership purpose so they can align people around a common purpose. According to Hoch *et al.* (2018), purpose defines the unique gifts people bring to leadership challenges, through which they can align others with their purposes in order to create positive impact. This is far more important than focusing entirely on achieving success in metrics like money, fame and power, yet ultimately produces sustained success in those metrics as well.
5. Authentic leaders are skilled at tailoring their style to their subordinates, imperatives of the situation, and readiness of their teammates to accept different approaches. They make difficult decisions that sometimes displease people though they need to be inspiring, good coaches, and consensus builders (Leroy *et al.*, 2012). In this sense, leaders' styles become the outward manifestation of their authenticity. As leaders gain experience and develop greater self-awareness, they become more skilful in adapting their style, without compromising their character (Rego *et al.*, 2016).

Proponents of authentic leadership (e.g. Bill, 2016; Luthans & Avolio, 2003) opine that these qualities and characteristics do not only inspire trust and loyalty in employees, but also when taken together, give leaders the ability to

influence others and contribute to an organisation's success. Authentic leaders are self-aware, genuine, and lead with the heart.

There are some criticisms to the model of authentic leadership. For example, as authenticity is heavily dependent upon the authentic leader's life story, it will likely be affected by their race, national origin, socio-economic status and other factors (Zhang, Everett, Elkin & Cone, 2012). Moreover, the extent and effectiveness of a leader's authenticity is relative to the cultural, organisational and situational context and so no singular interpretation of the theory is possible (Zhang *et al.*, 2012). Sanchez-Runde, Nardon and Steers (2011) note that leadership is a cultural construct, its meaning based in various cultures where it is exercised and thus global leaders should act in authentic ways that are compatible with local expectations. Therefore, the practices of an authentic leader in an organisation based in an individualistic society may come across as rude or disrespectful in a collective society.

Gardiner (2011) suggests that the construct of authentic leadership is deeply flawed because it fails to take into account how social and historical circumstances affect one's ability to be a leader. Zhang *et al.* (2012) also suggest that authentic leadership theory lacks validity in non-Western contexts; however, as economic growth of countries occurs, the construct can be used to form greater cross-cultural understanding and thus might lead to more applicability in non-Western countries.

Critics have charged that authentic leadership can promote rigidity in individuals who think that being true and genuine excuses them from evolving their ideas following new challenges, experiences and insights (Rouse, 2018).

They have also argued that authentic leadership's belief in presenting one's true self, and not a persona, can prevent someone from being an effective leader. For example, these critics contend that, sometimes, those in leadership positions need to adapt to the expectations and cultural norms of their workplaces, employees and audiences.

Despite its criticisms, the four core elements of the theory, namely, self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalised moral perspective, make authentic leadership theory a modern leadership theory to be studied in understanding the lived experiences of school heads' leadership practices.

#### **Autocratic or authoritarian leadership style**

Autocratic (or authoritarian) leadership is vital in many workplace environments. It is defined by the fact that the leader makes all the decisions and the followers are simply there to follow orders and to execute without deviating from the decision (Northouse, 2016). It is characterised by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers (McDermott *et al.*, 2013). Thus, all processes operate under rigid rules and procedures, creativity and free-thinking are not a priority.

Although autocratic leadership has fallen out of favour in recent decades, Gandolfi and Stone (2016) point out that the autocratic leadership style is still prevalent. Autocratic leadership can range from strict authoritarian military leaders to modern manufacturing department directors (Northouse,

2016). At its worst, autocratic leadership can be stifling, overbearing and demoralising, while at its best, it is liberating for people who work well with clear directives under leaders who understand exactly what people do and why their roles are important.

An authoritarian leader exhibits close control over the workforce and motivates individuals through application of strictly enforced rules, regulations and penalties (Grant *et al.*, 2011). The leader's word is final and subordinates are not expected to question the directives they have been given. The prevailing view is that the autocratic style depends on the ability of one person while disregarding the input of other skilled people. Still, many workplaces can benefit from autocratic leadership. An effective autocratic leader is expected to communicate clearly and effectively to subordinates. Subordinates therefore know what is expected of them, especially when the leader sets specific expectations for all subordinates (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017).

Since the leaders do not accept input from colleagues, they are made to rely on their intuitions and beliefs. McDermott *et al.* (2013) specify that autocratic leaders likely possess determination, and a tenacious nature to succeed and get things done. The leaders have to be ready for challenging times, failures, and uncertainty. Confidence is also a primary quality autocratic leaders possess, and autocratic leaders operate with a level of transparency (Gandolfi & Stone, 2016).

Exceptional leaders adopt the style that fits their vision, behaviour and personality. Autocratic leadership style is necessary within organisations and companies that demand error-free outcomes (May *et al.*, 2012). It is most

effectively deployed in situations where control is essential and there is little room for error, such as the military. It can also be used effectively in situations where subordinates are inexperienced and require close monitoring until they become familiar with their work (Saleem, 2015). It is effective when decisions must be taken quickly, without time to consult others. It prevents businesses or projects from becoming stagnant because of poor organisation or lack of leadership; and keeps individuals, groups or teams from missing important deadlines and negatively impacting productivity. During stressful periods, autocratic leaders can be more effective, and their teams appreciate their leadership (Gandolfi & Stone, 2017).

McDermott *et al.* (2013) caution that autocratic leaders need to make sure that they are respectful and make the creation of trusting relationship a priority even if they are making the final decision. Gandolfi and Stone (2016) contend that the competencies of the authoritarian leader matter tremendously, as most of the decisions are made by the individual. Autocratic leadership is often effectively adopted and implemented when subordinates do not have access to some information due to confidentiality and therefore cannot provide adequate input or make decisions without all the information; do not have enough competency, knowledge, experience; and are put in potentially hazardous and dangerous settings (Northouse, 2016).

As time, cultures and work ethics have changed, there has been a negative connotation attached to autocratic leadership. Some people are uncomfortable working for autocratic leaders because they feel it epitomises authoritarianism or dictatorship, even if it is the most suitable management style

for training inexperienced staff or implementing consistent quality control processes (McDermott *et al.*, 2013). Others also feel that the traits and beliefs held by such leadership style is damaging for subordinates in the long-run. Essentially, this type of leadership style leads to low morale and commitment of subordinates, which bring about reduced efficiency on the job among the subordinates. According to Northouse (2016), autocratic leaders take away creativity, innovation and lower the motivation and commitment of subordinates.

Autocratic leadership implies that one person makes all the decisions for a group or team or assembly. Accordingly, autocratic leaders have ominous responsibilities. Not only are they expected to make all the decisions, they are also expected to make all the right decisions (Grant *et al.*, 2011), and are held accountable for unsuccessful projects, actions and endeavours. Autocratic leadership invites potential abuse by overly powerful personalities; can stifle staff and discourage team creativity; and can discourage open communication between leaders and subordinates (Northouse, 2016).

### **Consultative leadership style**

Consultative leadership is one of the leadership traits. It is task-oriented and focuses on the end result. It assumes the individuals involved are more adept at making best possible decisions. Northouse (2011) asserts that consultative leadership is about developing the ability to influence people rather than impose on them your authority, and engaging subordinates effectively in the decision-making and problem-solving process. This kind of leadership style endorses the fact that the servant of the people is the leader.



Subordinates have the power to engage in consultation with the leader and are able to make suggestions which they know would be taken into serious contemplation by the leader. Consultative leadership involves asking subordinates for input and opinions while the leader ultimately has the authority to make the final decision (Delgado, 2014). This is often because consultative leaders are not in a position to know the whole situation and require the views and opinions of the team on the ground to help make informed decisions. Another reason a person can choose the consultative leadership style is because the leader is humble enough to listen and considers all views before taking a final decision.

Despite having the complete authority to make a final decision, the leader chooses to listen to the team because one does not have the relevant information (Saleem, 2015). As a result, the quality of decisions made will often be far better than if the leader had made the decision without consulting team members or subordinates. The implication, according to Northouse (2016), is that the consultative leader trusts the subordinates to a great extent, but not completely. Here, information flow is from both top-down and bottom-up. Rewards and sometimes punishments are used to motivate subordinates.

To be an effective consultative leader calls for the creation of a culture of speaking up to subordinates, and learning of effective facilitation skills which saves the leader a lot of time and helps to achieve the best results through the collective and collaborative thinking of the group members. Gandolfi and Stone (2016) advise that consultative leaders also need to know subordinates in deeper ways, treat subordinates the same, and ensure the best relationships with

subordinates. Consultative leaders should also respect subordinates' values to deepen relationships, be responsive to subordinates, be visible on a regular basis by staying in constant touch with subordinates, and delegate more often to subordinates.

Gandolfi and Stone (2017) note that consultative management promotes a deeper bond between leaders in corporate structures and the people who work with and under them by imparting importance to the opinions and input of every member of the team. Consultative management allows leaders to be comfortable with their own incomplete knowledge of a situation and to learn and grow along with their employees through the process of consulting. It also pushes them to build trust with their subordinates (Saleem, 2015).

Consultative leadership can create an attitude of involved pro-activity within a workplace. The ability of subordinates to speak up and voice their opinions makes them more likely to participate in problem solving and to bring concerns to managers so that they can be discussed and solved together (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016). Consultative leadership can also serve to develop admirable traits in a leader and to make them an approachable figure to those they manage (Jing & Avery, 2016). Traits a leader can develop through exercise of the consultative style include humility and the ability to communicate as equals with anyone.

The challenge with consultative leadership is that it takes a little more time than a directive decision (Jiang, 2014). It relies on the participants' knowledge and expertise so the leader needs to take the appropriate amount of time to discuss and hear all sides before making a decision.

### **Democratic or participative leadership style**

Democratic leadership (also known as participative or shared leadership) is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. The ideas about democratic leadership were developed in 1939, experiment undertaken by Kurt Lewin and Ronald Lippitt in the United States. Democratic leadership is concerned with meaningful participation and decision making to establish conditions for respectful relationships, collaborative associations, active cooperation, and enable the formation of social, learning and culturally responsive educational organisations, in part by employing strategies for achievement, enabling particular conversations and struggling to determine what is needed, when, and how to get there in specific situations by developing a politically informed commitment to justice for all (Gale, 2010). It entails a manager who is more in tune with their subordinates and is able to share responsibilities as well as decision-making and authority with subordinates (Al-Momani & Ajlouni, 2018).

Democratic leadership works best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi & Shaikh, 2012). It is also important to have plenty of time to allow people to contribute, develop a plan and then decide on the best course of action. This leadership style is needed in dynamic and rapidly changing environments where very little can be taken as a constant.

Since leadership plays a vital part in democratic movements, understanding the character of democratic leadership is crucial. Some key

aspects that define democratic leadership are team decision-making, joint goal setting and improved listening skills for two-way communication. Democratic leaders ensure open and honest communication, easy accessibility, improved development among subordinates and consideration for followers and support for subordinates. Delgado (2014) states the distinctiveness of a democratic leader as erudite, influential, motivating, a winner of cooperation, a provider of logical consequences, encouraging, permitting of self-determination, guiding, a good listener and respecting, and situation-centred. Bhatti *et al.* (2012) emphasised the core elements of democratic leadership as leaders expecting subordinates to report to them regarding tasks, to exhibit self-confidence and ability to get things done without constant supervision, and to involve others in decision-making process.

According to Delgado (2014), benefits of democratic leadership include its opportunity for team involvement, participation and engagement. Since team members are encouraged to share their thoughts, democratic leaders facilitate better ideas and more creative solutions to problems. The performance of subordinates is usually acknowledged and best results are rewarded. Al-Momani and Ajlouni (2018) cite that there is high morale and commitment in an environment under the democratic leadership. This tends to improve productivity and develop innovative and creative ideas of subordinates.

Gale and Densmore (2010) state that subordinates are more likely to set their own reasonable goals within a democratic environment as well as grow and advance their career. This is likely to bring about greater job satisfaction because of collaboration and team building activities that take place. Gale

(2010) reports that democratic leaders tend to offer greater flexibility and adaptation for their subordinates through an open communication process, which motivates subordinates and brings out more potential out of subordinates towards the achievement of organisation mission, vision, goals and expectations.

Unfortunately, democratic leadership is also somewhat slow to make a decision in this structure. So, while it may embrace newer and better methods, it might not do so very quickly. Leaders may organise many meetings without consensus being reached on issues or nothing being accomplished. Democratic leadership style can bring the best out of an experienced and professional team. However, Northouse (2011) contends that it capitalises on their skills and talents by letting them share their views, rather than simply expecting them to conform. Some subordinates may not be able to make the right contributions to decision-making in terms of specific actions if they do not have the necessary skills or expertise. If a decision is very complex and broad, it is important to have the different areas of expertise represented and contributing input – this is where democratic leader shines. Although the significant drawbacks to democratic leadership are time consuming activities and lengthy debate over policy, participation plays a key role for increasing the productivity of leadership (Harris, 2011).

### **Distributive leadership style**

Distributed leadership has become popular in school management and leadership discourse as means to provide teachers' participation and empowerment in schools (Torrance, 2013). School leaders may not accomplish

all the leadership tasks alone in the school and request support from school staff and other stakeholders in order to achieve the mission and goals of the school. The concept of distributed leadership posits it as an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals in which team members pool their expertise together in reaching an expected goal. Indeed, distributed leadership highlights a multi-faceted leadership, involving both formal and informal leadership positions (Harris, 2011; Torrance, 2013).

Distributed leadership is a shared process of enhancing the individual and collective capacity of people to accomplish their work effectively (Yukl, 2010). In distributed leadership perspective, leadership is not considered as a school leader's characteristic, knowledge or skill, rather it is regarded as a process based on daily interactions or functions of multiple leaders in the school and the situation, including organisational routines, structures and tools (Spillane, 2005). Spillane (2006) further notes that distributed leadership is stretched over a number of individuals and based on expertise, rather than hierarchical authority. Thus, the responsibilities for leadership functions can be distributed on multiple leaders working in a coordinated manner (Gunter, Hall & Bragg, 2013).

### **Laissez-faire or Delegative leadership style**

Laissez-faire leadership, also known as delegative or free-reign leadership, is a passive leadership style. It is a type of leadership style in which leaders are hands-off and allow group members to participate in the decision-making process (Mathieu, Hare, Jones, Neumann & Babiak, 2013). It requires a lot of trust and faith from the leader to the team, but it can reap great rewards



when the team is given full authority to do their tasks (Bush & Glover, 2014; Chin, 2015). It is characterised by very little guidance from leaders, complete freedom for followers to make decisions, leaders providing the tools and resources needed, subordinates solving problems on their own, and power being handed over to subordinates, but leaders take responsibility for the team's decisions and actions (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2014).

However, Aldousari, Robertson, Yajid, and Ahmed (2017) warn that work should not be fully delegated to a direct report unless the leader believes that the direct report is ready to do work unsupervised and is motivated to work. This is on the backdrop that not everyone is ready for such autonomy and some may abuse the freedom they get to laze off. Al-Malki and Juan (2018) therefore suggest that effective delegative leaders should not only delegate responsibilities to subordinates, but should also empower such subordinates by giving them the necessary competencies to do the task well, the resources needed for the task to be completed, and the necessary authority to complete the task smoothly.

Day and Antonakis (2012) assert that giving employees clear expectations keeps them engaged. Without a clear sense of direction, subordinates often work somewhat aimlessly on a variety of tasks and get frustrated because they do not know if what they are doing is valuable. At the start of work, leaders are expected to give their team members a scope of work that clearly defines all of the deliverables they are expected to submit and the time (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2014). To increase engagement, leaders are



supposed to discuss the deliverables with subordinates to incorporate their opinions about the tasks before finalising expectations (Chin, 2015).

There are also certain settings and situations where a laissez-faire leadership style might be the most appropriate. Laissez-faire leadership can be effective in situations where group members are highly skilled, motivated and capable of working on their own (Earley, 2013). Since these group members are experts and have the knowledge and skills to work independently, they are capable of accomplishing tasks with very little guidance. Chin (2015) states that the delegative leadership style can be particularly effective in situations where group members are actually more knowledgeable than the group's leader. As team members are the experts in a particular area, the laissez-faire style allows them to demonstrate their deep knowledge and skill surrounding that particular subject (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018). This autonomy can be freeing to some group members and help them feel more satisfied with their work. The laissez-faire style can be used in situations where followers have a high-level of passion and intrinsic motivation for their work.

However, Anbazhagan and Kotur (2014) maintain that laissez-faire leadership style leads to low productivity among subordinates. There is an absence of relationship interaction between the leader and the subordinates. Laissez-faire leadership style represents a non-transactional type of leadership where vital decisions are not initiated, action delay, ignorance of leadership responsibilities, and absence of the authority use (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2014). A leader with this style may struggle in situations that require great oversight, precision, and attention to detail. In high stakes and high-pressure work settings

where every detail needs to be perfect and completed in a timely manner, Al-Malki and Juan (2018) advise that a more authoritarian managerial style may be more appropriate. Using a laissez-faire approach can lead to missed deadlines and poor performance, particularly if group members are unsure of what they need to be doing or do not have the skills they need to perform tasks with little to no direction.

In some situations, the laissez-faire style leads to poorly defined roles within the group (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland & Hetland, 2007). Since team members receive little to no guidance, they might not really be sure about their role within the group and what they are supposed to be doing with their time. Some leaders might even take advantage of this style as a way to avoid personal responsibility for the group's failures (Johansen, 2012). When goals are not met, the leader can then blame members of the team for not completing tasks or living up to expectations.

Laissez-faire leaders are often seen as uninvolved and withdrawn, which can lead to a lack of cohesiveness within the group (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2014). Since the leader seems unconcerned with what is happening, followers sometimes pick up on this and express less care and concern for various tasks. Thus, one of the biggest complaints about the delegative leadership style is that individuals feel disconnected from their leaders (Anbazhagan & Kotur, 2014). Though most talented individuals thrive when given autonomy, they still need positive feedback to feel valued and know they are on the right track.

At its worst, laissez-faire leadership represents passivity or even an outright avoidance of true leadership (Mathieu *et al.*, 2013). In such cases, these

leaders do nothing to try to motivate followers, do not recognise the efforts of team members, and make no attempts at involvement with the group. Although in laissez-faire leadership approach, the leaders prefer not to interfere in the work and decisions of subordinates, it is advisable for leaders to periodically check on subordinates, acknowledge their progress and show that they care (Gopal & Chowdhury, 2014).

Laissez-faire leadership style can be effective, particularly if it is used appropriately in the right settings and with groups that respond well (Chin, 2015). While the conventional term for this style is 'laissez-faire' and implies a completely hands-off approach, many leaders still remain open and available to group members for consultation and feedback (Aldousari *et al.*, 2017). They might provide direction at the beginning of a project, but then allow group members to do their jobs with little oversight. This approach to leadership requires a great deal of trust. Leaders need to feel confident that the members of their group possess the skills, knowledge, and follow through to complete a project without being micromanaged (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018).

### **Factors that Influence the Leadership Practices and Styles**

In the usual workplace environment, different leadership practices and styles are used depending on the changes in each situation. A good leader uses a combination of practices and styles to ensure proper running of the organisation. Typically, factors from the inside and outside of an organisation can directly or indirectly influence the choice of leadership practices and styles (Yukl, 2009). The factors include personality traits of the leader, leadership mentorship, organisational environment and culture, subordinates'

personalities and response to work, the type of task at hand, organisation resources, sociological factors, the role of subordinates, socio-economic and political factors, technology, and time.

The first influence on leadership practices and styles is the leader's personality traits in upbringing, gender, introversion, extroversion, education, religious views, heritage, self-worth, and life circumstances. Aligning a leader's basic nature with a particular leadership practice and style is most often successful, because the leader will be comfortable with it (Nazem & Mazaiini, 2014). According to Walker and Hallinger (2015), a competitive person is inclined to become a pacesetter that shows the team members that high-levels of output are possible. Likewise, leaders who possess a charming demeanour that draws people to them are likely to adopt a charismatic style that develops a faithful staff desiring to please the leader. Tremblay and Gibson (2016) mention that there is a good chance that a woman who was brought up (or self-taught) to assert herself in a healthy, non-aggressive way, with a sense of strength and empowerment, and to practise fairness for all, not just for herself will display a democratic leadership style, encouraging good communication on all levels and making an approachable and influential leader.

Secondly, the influence of the leader's mentorship influences leadership practices and styles. Yukl (2009) explains the leadership practice and style of a leader who comes up through the ranks of an organisation in a coaching environment with a mentor who took him to meetings or reviewed calls and appointments for ways to improve may approach his team in the same manner.

Bloom and McClellan (2016) narrate that, if a leader is nurtured in a more democratic environment where management seek the opinions of the team, the leader might see this as the key to success, since it was a key to their rise to leadership.

The third influence on leadership practices and styles is the organisational environment and culture. The constant interplay between leadership and organizational culture is well documented in literature (Nazir, Lone, Shah, & Azeem, 2012).

Organizational culture includes a system of assumptions, values, norms and attitudes manifested through symbols, developed and adopted by members of an organization through their shared experience which helps them to determine the meaning of their surrounding environment and how to behave in the same (Lunenburg, 2011). It is argued that the right organisational culture supports the implementation strategy, and enhances productivity and innovation, which leads to an organisation deriving competitive advantage (Talat *et al.*, 2013). Organisations have their own particular work environment and culture with their own values, which is a legacy of founders as well as past and current leadership. The values are the care the organisation has for investors, customers, staff and the community, and they determine how the operations of the organisation will be managed. Goals, values and concepts that define products or services make up the environment and personality of the organisation (Nazem & Mozaiini, 2014).

Organisational culture is difficult to change because it is the result of long-held information and formal systems, traditions, customs and rules that

represent the self-image and shared expectations of the organisation (Bloom & McClellan, 2016). Established routines and the way of doing things impact organisational norms such as how a subordinate can be in good standing and respond appropriately to various circumstances. The culture of organization creates a frame for leaders which may orientate them to adopt the kind of leadership styles they would adopt. Schimmoeller (2010), among others, argues that the survival of an organisation depends on the responsiveness and adaptability of its leaders in selecting a leadership style which fits the context and members' emotion (Acar, 2012, Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Subordinates' personalities and response to work also influence leadership practices and styles. According to Sharma *et al.* (2012), people respond differently to leadership practices and styles. Hassan, Gallear and Sivarajah (2018) assert that a subordinate who is timid might be overwhelmed by a coercive or even a pacesetter leader. Such a subordinate will wonder whether it is possible to measure up to the greatness shown by the pacesetter, thereby putting their preparedness to work in doubt.

The types of task requiring different leadership styles equally plays a key role in influencing leadership practices and styles. Some tasks require a certain type of leadership style and practice. For example, using a coercive style for correcting insubordination of subordinates instead of a democratic leadership style. While the democratic approach may work for brainstorming and creative tasks, Almog-Bareket (2012) points out that the authoritative approach will be more beneficial in establishing a clear vision and direction for the organisation.



Another influence of leadership practices and styles is organisational resources on which leaders depend for achieving the mission, vision and goals of the organisation. The organisational resources include staff, technology, finances and physical resources. The success of leaders depends on how well resources are acquired and used (Bloom & McClellan, 2016).

The next factor that influences leadership practices and styles is sociological factors which leaders need to understand in order to be successful leaders. Leaders need to understand the demographic make-up and cultures of the clients and customers of the organisation and trends in the marketplace to design products and services for particular populations (Hassan *et al.*, 2018).

The role of subordinates influences the type of leadership practice and style. When subordinates take on a role in an organisation, their position is defined by the tasks and responsibilities assigned to them. Nazem and Mazaiini (2014) note that subordinates have varying levels of maturity in approaching tasks and relationships that impact the practice and style of leadership needed to guide them. Subordinates also affect organisation by their work ethics and personal values. Bloom and McClellan (2016) specify that roles have pitfalls and roadblocks that leaders must recognise and reduce in order to help subordinates accomplish their tasks.

Another factor that influences leadership practices and styles is economic and political factors. Leaders educate themselves on their suppliers, customers and competitors to determine the economic and current political factors that affect the marketplace. These factors influence how leaders accomplish their goals through the adoption of different leadership practices



and styles. Sharma *et al.* (2012) mention that the primary economic factor that influences leadership style is the organisation budget. If an organisation is financially sound, the budget is a bit loose, which provides opportunities for leaders to offer monetary incentives (e.g. increase in salary and allowances) to subordinates in order to inspire and motivate them to reach the goal of the organisation. Alternatively, when the organisation is not doing well financially, leaders may take autocratic style to ensure that work is being done within the allotted time frame and much more restrictive budget.

Technology can dramatically change the business environment, overnight. Leaders need to adjust their management styles to help the organisation adapt to technology. Research and development help leaders to create innovative new techniques that make operations easier (Nazem & Mazaiini, 2014).

One other factor influencing leadership practices and styles is time. According to Hassan *et al.* (2018), if time is available, a good leader will use it to help subordinates to develop skills and commitment. However, when things get wild and hairy around the office, a leader may not have the necessary time it takes to employ the coaching style of leadership which demands considerable time for the one-on-one involvement.

It is expected that school heads, as leaders at the SHS level in the Ghanaian education system, would also be influenced by the above factors. This is because they are also influenced by both internal and external stakeholders, and developed their own personal traits based on their prior and lived experiences as leaders. Further, the leadership experiences and practices

of the school heads may have been influenced by organisational, environmental, sociological, technological and cultural factors, which have to be studied into detailed to ascertain the nature of influence and how they can be used to improve leadership practices at the SHS level.

### **Barriers to Successful or Effective School Leadership**

Leaders are usually judged on their ability to deliver results. However, leadership continuously presents challenges or barriers to leaders and their abilities. While some barriers might be obvious, others are not. Barriers to great leadership can be set up by others or self-imposed (Day & Antonakis, 2012). The challenges are mainly of three kinds – external (coming from people and the situations); internal (stemming from within the leader); and those arising from the nature of the leadership role. The challenges are presumed to test leaders and improve the leadership process. This section considers the barriers to successful or effective leadership.

Leadership is faced with the challenge of complacency. Leaders and their team members usually reach a point where it is easier to continue along the path of least resistance instead of pushing forward towards growth and innovation (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012). Earley (2013) points out that it is easy for a leader to forget that there are different expectations and challenges associated with the leadership position with time. This attitude, according to Chin (2015), leads to lackluster performance, stagnant productivity and reluctance to successfully compete for new contracts, customers, and resources. To overcome complacency, Edwards and Aboagye (2015) suggest that leaders and their teams must engage in learning new concepts and skills. It is only

through continuous learning that complacency can be replaced with motivation, creativity and excitement.

Leadership is also affected by the challenge of over-control. Attom (2010) reports that many leaders lack the ability to delegate effectively, which creates the culture of micromanagement that stifles independent thinking, crushes creativity, and leaves leaders too focused on the short-term. Clarke (2013) advises that leaders should relate active learning to the bigger picture, and empower their subordinates to learn, think, and act for themselves.

Lack of relevant skills is another barrier to effective leadership of an organisation. Leadership might be innate, but leadership is also a skill that can be learned and developed. Some people are placed in a leadership position without the necessary skills and experience and need to learn quickly. Relevant skills such as problem-solving and negotiation skills are essential skills that leaders, teams and individuals should possess and master regardless of the sector, type or size of their organisation (Day & Antonakis, 2012). However, these skills are not typically taught in a way that enables true understanding, successful application, and positive outcomes. Leaders also face the challenge of developing the relevant skills such as time-management, prioritisation, strategic thinking, decision-making, and getting up to speed with the job in order to be more effective at work.

While some leaders are tempted to adopt and implement personal rather than corporate agenda, others are also distracted to do same. People look up to their leaders to provide clear direction in achieving the goals and expectations of the organisation. Gopal and Chowdhury (2014) state that leaders are full of

new ideas and enthusiasm at the start of their leadership, but they start to focus on their own survival rather than on delivering success later. In this regard, leaders usually focus on their personal agenda instead of those of the organisation. Gandolfi and Stone (2016) therefore opine that leaders should remain or maintain focus on the leadership roles.

A concern or challenge for learning-centred leaders will be maintaining the focus on learning – to concentrate their efforts on professional and pedagogic matters rather than administrative and financial concerns. The growing number of competing pressures and demands on school leaders' time will make this an increasingly difficult task which calls for even more distributed leadership where all leaders' focus is learning (Earley, 2013). It will be important to ensure that staff members in charge of teaching and learning keep it as a high priority and know how to lead and effectively promulgate their vision of teaching and learning (Hutchings, 2015). Related to the implementation of personal agenda is the inability of leaders to clearly communicate and sell organisational vision, goals and values to all levels of the organisation.

Although confidence is an important leadership quality, having a little too much of this is considered as arrogance which affect leadership success. Earley (2013) mentions that leaders are required to use their confidence to influence others and to communicate intention and ideas. This information should be delivered in an inspired manner that encourages and motivates subordinates. However, Jing and Avery (2016) emphasise that confidence has a tendency to grow if not managed properly, and when this happens, arrogance

takes over and begins to make demands. Arrogance shows leaders have no respect for their team and can impact on individuals in many negative ways. It is therefore important for leaders to understand and learn how to balance confidence with other leadership skills.

Micro-managing on the part of leaders also poses a challenge to effective leadership in organisations, including educational institutions. Whilst it is undeniably a leader's role to support and coach their team to help them perform at the best of their abilities, there is a thin line between managing and not giving people the space to do their work (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Micro-managing is an issue in that it does not give people enough guidance on what is expected of them. Even in cases where subordinates are aware of their individual tasks to be completed, a leader is expected to ensure that everyone is fully aware of how their work aligns and contributes to both the team and the wider organisational goals (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Leaders should be able to give a sense of direction to their team, steering everyone in the same direction. Earley (2013) reveals that a common misconception of leadership is the controlling and overseeing of all works, double checking all work done, and acting as quality control. Earley (2017) maintains that this behaviour can quickly become stifling for team members, who may feel trusted and will no longer have the freedom to do their work. Without trust, it is very difficult for a leader to get others to work as expected. When subordinates do not trust a leader, they will become resistant to whatever the leader suggests or requires.

Lack of trust is also another barrier to effective leadership. A leader's role is to impart knowledge, information and ideas in a way that demonstrates honesty and integrity. A leader enables team members and grants them space to complete their work schedules, whilst helping them to make progress as individuals and take ownership of their development (Day & Antonakis, 2012). This means supporting their schedules so that they can get their work done, helping them to prioritise, and acting as the buffer between the team and upper management, amongst other things. To motivate and inspire others to achieve organisational goals, a leader has to inspire trust, as well as act accordingly in situations (Cranston, 2013). This is best achieved by a leader being honest and trustworthy at all times.

Leadership is again affected by disorganisation by leaders. Team members look up to their leaders on how things in the organisation should be done. According to Hutchings, et. al. (2012), if a leader constantly works at a frantic pace, but gets little done, or asks for information many times, but fails to move an intention into action, it creates a disorganised state that stops the flow of progress in an organisation. Walker and Hallinger (2015) add that this disorganised way of working also unleashes stress and frustration and impacts on all members of a team. A leader must therefore be able to organise their schedules so that it encourages others to emulate the example. By being organised, a leader also demonstrates a wider selection of skills and management capability (Earley, 2017).

Another barrier to effective leadership in an organisation is fear and negativity of the leader. Most leaders have fears about the success of work,



which is rooted in the fear of failure (Sharma *et al.*, 2012). Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) note fear of failure has the potential to stop leaders from taking risks which prevent them from achieving results. Chin (2015) adds that leaders with negative mind-set do not inspire confidence in the people around them. However, being positive about the work, information or ideas that a leader delivers is important because the general mood and feeling impacts on motivation and inspiration of subordinates (Hutchings, 2015). This is on the grounds that a positive person can lead a team of people to accomplish tasks in a confident manner, which encourages communication and progress (Earley, 2017). A negative leader, on the other hand, struggles to influence a team to move forward.

Lack of communication is considered an obstacle to successful leadership. Hutchings, *et. al.* (2012) point out that communication issues are probably the main stressor of leaders. Talat *et al.* (2013) opine that it is important to keep communication frequent and open so that everyone in the organisation is on the same page. Practising one's skills at being clear and brief is beneficial to the entire organisation. Developing a culture of feedback (both upward and downward) within a team is an essential way to make subordinates feel more inclined to share their issues and problems, which helps to ensure the team members can really progress together and individually (Earley, 2013). Hutchings (2015) reports that it is equally important to celebrate the successes of subordinates, however big or small, in order to make them feel recognised is an important way to feel motivated and want to contribute more to achieving the goals and expectations of the organisation.



One of the most challenging tasks for leaders is managing people or stakeholders. Talat *et al.* (2013) assert that the challenge of managing relationships, politics, and image is a daunting one. This is particularly relevant in gaining managerial support, managing up, and getting buy-in from other departments, groups, or individuals. Coupled with this challenge is the issue of inspiring or motivating others to ensure that they are satisfied with their jobs and working smarter. Chin (2015) argues that each person is inspired and motivated by different factors, be it intrinsic or extrinsic.

According to Sharma *et al.* (2012), the biggest challenge in leadership is to listen to everyone's opinions and come to a mutually beneficial solution. Acknowledging that there are all types of people within an organisation, leaders are neither expected to ignore nor dislike any member of an organisation (Talat *et al.*, 2013). Cranston (2013) advises leaders to be impartial in treating team members. Leaders tend to develop feelings of jealousy and hatred towards people they do not like. Hutchings (2015) opines that subordinates expect their leaders to sit with them, listen to their grievances and always try to come up with innovative solutions to identified problems. A leader must be able to strike a balance between listening and delivering information, and must also be able to balance their own perspective with that of other people (Earley, 2017).

Organisations equally face significant uncertainty that creates pressure, requiring leaders to make quick responses and solutions. Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) said that when crises hit, there is usually no time available for learning. Leaders are required to cope with other challenges such as lack of funding and other resources, time constraints, opposition from forces in the

community, and social, economic and political forces. Hutchings (2015) also lists leadership challenges with ensuring consistently good teaching and learning; integrating a sound grasp of basic knowledge and skills within a broad and balanced curriculum; managing behaviour and attendance; strategically managing resources and the environment; building the school as a professional learning community; and developing partnerships beyond the school to encourage parental support for learning and new learning opportunities.

The obstacles mentioned above are important in determining the success or effectiveness of leadership in an organisation. Being a leader is not easy. Being aware of and willing to address barriers to success leadership is essential. To get the most outstanding results, leaders should adopt a leadership approach that builds a sense of teamwork among subordinates, and values and utilises the talent and skills of the people within the organisation (Earley, 2017; Hutchings, 2015).

These challenges impede effective administration of school leadership. Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) posited that the enormity of leadership challenges in school administration affects both teachers and students. The seriousness of these challenges in school leadership is that they could have serious implications on the academic achievement of students, which could change the academic focus and life trajectory of students. As a result, Edwards and Aboagye (2015) suggested the need for school leadership to effectively address such challenges at their early stages to ensure effective leadership administration. Further, Gandolfi and Stone (2016) reported that barriers to effective school leadership could affect the achievements of school heads,

which could further deteriorate their relations with both external and internal stakeholders. The implication is that barriers to effective leadership has critical effects on both intended and unintended stakeholders.

### **Empirical Review**

No doubt, leaders play a crucial role in the success of the educational system. For years, several studies on educational leadership have been conducted to establish the connection between educational leadership and school effectiveness. School leaders exhibit leadership practices and styles in their role and character, but not merely perform administrative duties that are akin to an administrative position.

Christensen (2010) compared the leadership practices and styles of administrators in Missouri's Secondary Schools. A questionnaire was used to gather demographic, descriptive and open-ended response data from 195 superintendents in the state of Missouri. The data was analysed using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients, mean sub-scale scores, independent sample t-tests, Pearson correlations, frequencies and percentages. Additionally, emerging themes were gathered and analysed from open-ended responses.

High school principals and superintendents were found to be the individuals most responsible for a school's scheduling system. However, a group of individuals (administrators, teachers, counsellors, board members, etc.) were found to be the third most likely decision-makers regarding a school's scheduling system. The study found no significant differences between transformational and transactional leaders' willingness or ability to change their

schools' scheduling system. It also did not find a significant difference in laissez-faire leaders' willingness or ability to initiate change in a school.

Adeyemi (2011) conducted a study to investigate the leadership styles of principals and how that affects the job performance of teachers in senior secondary schools. A total of 240 senior secondary schools and 1800 teachers were sampled using the stratified sampling technique. Data were collected from respondents using the principal's leadership style questionnaire and teacher's job performance questionnaire. Analysis of data was done using frequency counts, percentages, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and t-test.

Results of the analysis showed that democratic leadership style was found to be the most common leadership style used by the principals. Job performance of teachers was found to be moderate. Comparing leadership style and job performance, it was realised that the job performance of teachers was better when the principals adopted the autocratic leadership style than when the principals used the democratic and laissez-faire leadership style. The study recommended that mixtures of democratic and laissez-faire leadership style should be adopted and implemented by principals or school heads.

Magee (2012) explored the perceptions of gender differences in leadership practices and styles and school performance. The study also determined whether there are differences in overall school performance for male versus female school principals. The methodology involved a mixed-model ANOVA analysis of findings from 31 principals and 236 teachers across elementary, middle, and high school. The study revealed no significant differences in overall school performance or in the relationship between gender

and leadership style for male versus female principals. It concluded there were no significant differences in the leadership styles for male versus female school administrators and leaders.

In a study by Adeyemi and Bolarinwa (2013), the researchers examined principals' leadership style and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Using the correlational survey design, a sample of 140 secondary schools out of 175 was selected through the simple random sampling technique. Out of the 7284 teachers' in the schools, 2560 teachers were selected for the study through the stratified random sampling technique. Two instruments for the study were principals' leadership style questionnaire and the students' academic performance inventory. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient.

Out of the 2560 teachers, 1262 (49.3%) endorsed that the democratic leadership style was the prevalent leadership style used by principals of secondary schools in the State. Although, some of the principals (40.6%) were using the autocratic style of leadership in their schools, evidences from the findings of the study indicated that the bulk of the principals of secondary schools in the State were using the democratic leadership style. However, the autocratic and democratic leadership styles were all found to be significantly and positively related with students' academic performance. The correlation was stronger between autocratic leadership and academic performance. On the contrary, no significant relationship existed between principals' laissez-faire leadership style and students' academic performance.

Gyeabour (2015) conducted a study on the effects of leadership style on teaching and learning in SHSs in Kumasi. He investigated the perceptions of both teachers and students on the leadership styles of their school heads, the difference in leadership practices and styles of both low and high performing SHS heads within Kumasi, and the correlation between the leadership styles of school heads and teaching and learning behaviours in SHSs in Kumasi.

The results of the study showed that school heads of high ranked schools exhibited instructional leadership qualities, whereas heads of low ranked schools exhibited laissez-faire leadership qualities. It was also observed that there was a significant positive correlation between the leadership style of heads of high ranked schools and teaching-related behaviours of their teachers. On the other hand, teachers in low ranked schools did not respond positively to teaching behaviours in relation to their school heads' leadership style. The students of high ranked schools also responded positively to the leadership style of their school heads. This was observed in the significant positive correlation between school heads' leadership style and learning behaviours of students. The response from students in low ranked schools on the effect of leadership style of school heads on learning behaviours was negative. The study concluded that leadership practices and styles of school heads do influence the outcome of teaching and learning in schools.

Shortridge (2015) examined the impact of middle school principals' leadership styles on students' academic achievement. Particularly, the study analysed the leadership styles of middle schools' principals that headed schools that had met or not met their school achievement indicators. The study also



examined whether school achievement indicator outcomes differed based on the principals' self-identifying characteristics of age, gender, total years of experience as principal, and years of experience in education. The transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles were singled out for investigation and specific leadership styles were analysed within the content of student achievement outcomes. Thus, the survey, through the use of questionnaire, measured the extent to which each leader uses transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership.

Consequently, the findings of the study supported the notion that differences in leadership styles exist among principals that have met or have not met their students' achievement indicator. The study found that school achievement indicator status accounted for 22.4 per cent of the variability in leadership style taken together; while school achievement indicator status accounted for 7.6 per cent of the variability related to transformational leadership; and school achievement indicator status accounted for 5.7 per cent of the variability on transactional leadership, laissez-faire had nearly no relationship. It was important to note that the laissez-faire leadership style explained nearly none of the variability in student achievement outcomes. Given that laissez-faire leadership is characterised by inactivity, passive and avoidant decision-making, the results did not greatly differ from established leadership theory.

The results of the multivariate analysis, Wilks' Lambda (0.935) found that gender had nearly no association with the adoption and implementation of leadership practices and styles. The statistical analysis on the variable age



obtained similar results. Comparably, the results of the multivariate analysis, Wilks' Lambda=0.917 found that age, too, had nearly no association. While it could be argued that principals' gender and age should not have factored into principals' leadership styles, it was more reasonable to believe that principals' years of experience as a principal or years of experience in education could have been associated with differing leadership styles. However, the multivariate analysis did not yield evidence of such an association.

With a Wilks' Lambda of 0.963, principals' years of experience as a principal showed no significant statistical effect on leadership style. Moreover, similar results were uncovered when the analysis was conducted on principals' experience in education. The results of the multivariate analysis found that principals' years of experience in education explained no variability in principals' leadership styles. Moreover, the results confirmed that multivariate effect of leadership on students' achievement indicators continued to be statistically significant and account for about the same amount of variance when controlling for principals' characteristics, including gender, age, years in education, and years as a principal.

The study recommended that school districts should consider assessing principals' leadership style and develop professional learning activities that promote greater use of effective leadership behaviours. Supported by the study was the notion that leaders are effective when they adopt and implement a variety of leadership practices and styles.

Hejres, Braganza and Aldabi (2017) investigated the effectiveness of leadership styles on instructional leadership and teachers' job expectancy in

Kingdom of Bahrain. The study focused on moderating effect of four leadership styles – Directive, Supportive, Participative, and Achievement-oriented on instructional leadership and teachers' outcomes (job satisfaction, job expectancies and acceptance of leader). The study used mixed methods to develop a model based upon empirical data. The findings were based on a survey of 536 participants, including teachers, principals and senior chiefs at various levels of primary, elementary and secondary schools across the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The statistical and thematic analysis of the data showed that there is a direct and positive relationship between instructional leadership and teacher's outcomes when moderated by the four leadership styles. According to job expectancy, the study showed that principals must consider rewarding teachers based on high performance instead of misplaced emotional and personal appreciation to increase job satisfaction. The study also found that principals share their vision and responsibilities for all members of the school community, encourage participation, discuss and present dialogue, which promoted educational processes to higher levels of improvement.

The study further highlighted that the most effective criteria of supportive leadership style by the principals allowed teachers the ability to participate in professional development programmes with no discrimination, helped them to relate well with the teachers, and enabled them to make suggestions to teachers with respect to the subject of interest in the educational process, helped them to express positive feedback verbally in reference to the teachers' achievement, assisted them to do follow-ups on the application of

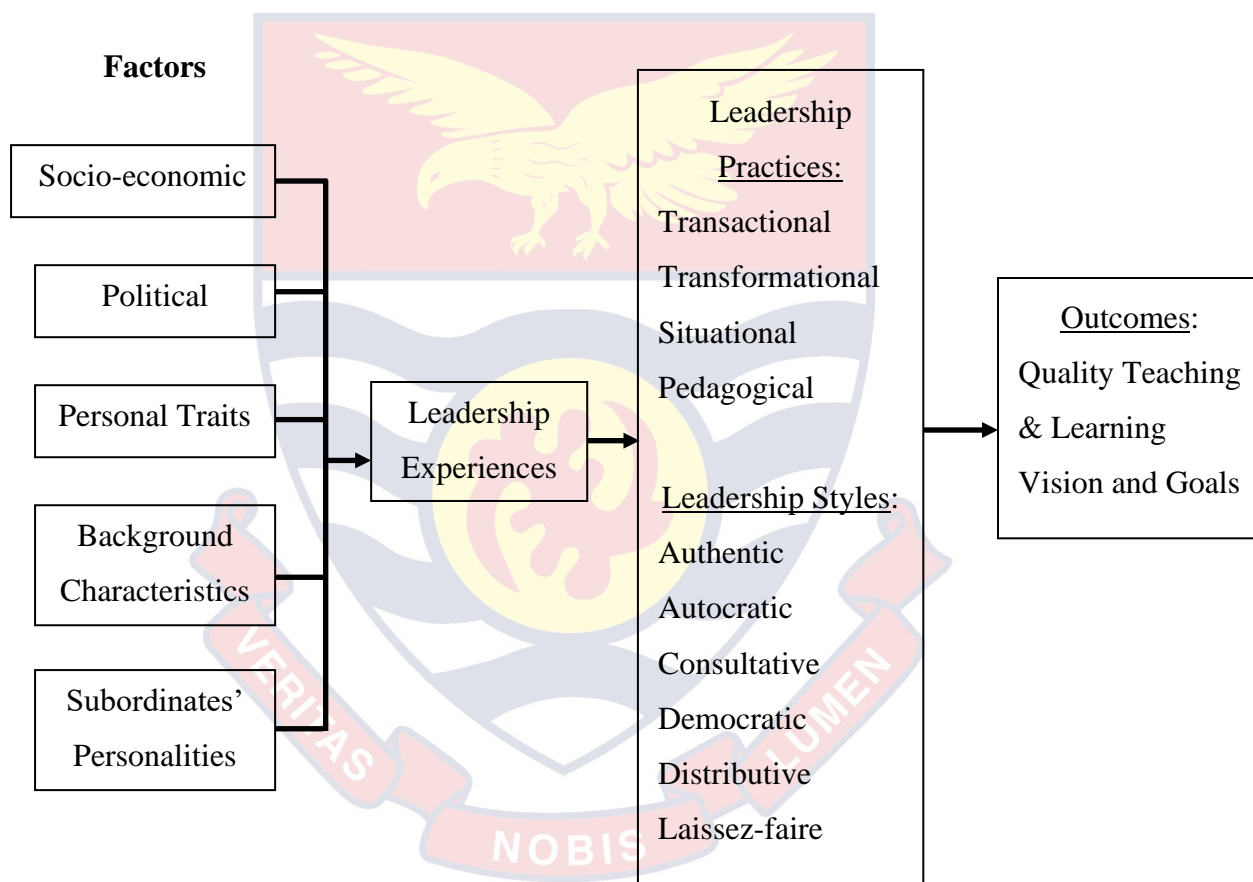
technology in the educational process. It also found the most effective criterion of the participative leadership style to be when school heads share their vision and responsibilities with members of the school community.

Hansen (2016) explored the effectiveness of school leadership practices in schools with positive climates in the age of high-stakes teacher evaluations. The aim was to understand the leadership practices and characteristics of school leaders within schools identified as having a positive school climate. Qualitative research design was adopted for the study. Three focus groups of teachers were interviewed and asked a series of questions about their principals' professional practices and characteristics. The principals from these schools were also interviewed individually. These responses were scripted and analysed using an open-coding model and then compared to recent educational leadership literature. Key findings from this research include professional practices and characteristics of principals in schools with positive climate, as well as recommendations for current and future school leaders and possibilities for future research.

From the empirical review, it could be seen that the authors did not relate the leadership practices, leadership styles and leadership theories to ascertain their effectiveness in the administration of schools. Providing such relationship would have enabled researchers to situate some of the leadership styles and practices into particular leadership theories. This could have enhanced the predictions of leadership styles and approaches as well as the possible actions likely to be taken by school heads in particular situations.

### Conceptual Framework

The role of leadership in the realisation of quality teaching and learning as well as the achievement of the vision and goals of an educational institution cannot be over-emphasised. According to Juntrasook (2014) and Onukwuba (2018), the effectiveness of leadership is connected to the characteristics of the leaders as well as the leadership practices and styles. The study was guided by the conceptual framework as presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Framework for Investigating the Influence of Lived Experiences on Leadership Practices and Styles

Source: Author's Construct (2019)

Figure 1 presents the framework for investigating the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices and styles. Leadership experiences are

influenced by socio-economic and political factors, personal traits and background characteristics of leaders as well as subordinates' personalities. In other words, the aggregate influence of the nature of these factors determine the leadership experiences and eventual leadership practices of leaders in organisations. The adoption of leadership practices such as transactional, transformational, situational, or pedagogical (instructional) is also influenced by the lived experiences of the leader. In the same vein, the adoption and implementation of leadership styles are informed by leadership experiences and practices.

The leadership styles include authentic leadership, autocratic (authoritarian) leadership, consultative leadership, democratic (participative) leadership, distributive leadership and laissez-faire (delegative) leadership. Most leaders, however, prefer a combination of different leadership styles depending on the situations they face within both the internal and external political system (Onukwuba, 2018). It is believed that the adoption and implementation of leadership practices and styles influence the organisational outcomes such as quality level of teaching and learning as well as the realisation of organisational vision and goals.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

Much as some people may be born with inherited leadership traits; some traits are particularly suited to leadership. However, the literature points out that there is no one best way in a leadership style to base a leader's effectiveness on, and that leaders should make their behaviours contingent on various aspects of the followers or the situation in order to improve leadership effectiveness.

Hence shared leadership approaches address complex and significant issues that cannot be effectively addressed by a single person, entity, sector, method, form or technique.

Different leadership practices and styles are adopted by various leaders depending on the changes in each situation. Generally, factors from the inside and outside of an organisation can directly or indirectly influence the choice of leadership practices and styles. Key among the factors are organisational environment and culture, personality traits of the leader, leadership experiences, leadership mentorship, subordinates' personalities, the type of task at hand, the team of workers and their preparedness to work, organisation resources, socio-economic and political factors, and technology.

Leaders also face challenges which emanate from external (coming from people and the situations); internal (stemming from within the leader); and the nature of the leadership role. The challenges include complacency, over-control, lack of relevant skills, micro-managing and untrustworthiness.

Based on the reviewed literature, the study intended to explore how the leadership practices and styles could be situated in any of the theories underpinning the study and reasons for their use to administer leadership in the schools. Further, the study intended to investigate the situations, experiences and conditions that required the adoption of any of the leadership practices and styles. The study sought to be guided by the methodological approaches and techniques demonstrated by other researchers in the empirical review in investigating the lived experiences of school heads of SHS in the Central Region of Ghana. The literature showed that organisational, environmental,

sociological, technological and cultural factors influenced leadership. This study superimposed these factors onto the leadership practices of the school heads to ascertain how these factors influenced their leadership practices and styles.





## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter describes the research methods and approaches adopted to arrive at the study findings. It again describes the philosophical underpinnings of the various methods and approaches adopted for the study. Some of the issues considered under the chapter were research paradigm, research design, study population, sample and sampling procedures, instrument design, method of data collection, ethical consideration, and data analysis.

#### **Research Paradigm**

Research paradigms address the philosophical dimensions of scientific enquiries in social sciences. According to Jonker and Pennink (2010), research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived which then serves as a thinking framework that guides the behaviour of the researcher. As a result, the researcher's view about the world in terms of being either implicit or explicit of social actors has critical influence on the research process, findings and outcomes. Creswell (2012) stipulated that the choice of a research paradigm is essential because particular paradigms may be associated with certain methodologies. Accordingly, the methodologies of every research study are conditioned on the tenets of the selected paradigm. In other words, deciding on a methodology begins with a choice of the research paradigm that informs the study.

Mertens (2012) suggested that the choice of a research paradigm and its associated methodological process should be guided by philosophical beliefs about the nature of reality, knowledge, and values and by the theoretical

framework that informs comprehension, interpretation, choice of literature and research practice on a given topic of study. Shannon-Baker (2015) classified research paradigms into three major philosophically distinct categories as positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. The study was guided by interpretivism. This is because the researcher perceived the world as implicit of the social actors and as such critical interrogation of their actions and perceptions shape trends in major occurrences around them. In other words, the uniqueness in people's culture explains the differences in the events that happen around them.

The development of interpretivism was based on the critique of positivism in social sciences. Its starting point was its insistence on differentiating between the nature of the phenomena investigated by the natural sciences and the nature of those studied by historians, social scientists and educational researchers. According to Frels, Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2011), interpretivism is a generic approach to social science research that comprises phenomenological sociology, philosophical hermeneutics and constructionist perspectives. Proponents of interpretivism such as Max Weber and Alfred Schutz argue that the social sciences should not imitate the natural sciences; they should instead emphasise empathetic understanding (Freshwater & Cahill, 2012). They further emphasise that understanding in the social sciences is inherently different from explanation in the natural sciences. They also believe that social scientists should be concerned with the interpretive understanding of human beings. They claim that meaning could be found in the intentions and goals of the individual.

Interpretivist paradigm emphasises the examination of text to discover embedded meanings, how people use language and symbols to define and construct social practices in order to understand people's actions and behaviours (Silverman, 2011). The world is interpreted through trends and through the logic of situations; not the laws of social reality. Thus, intepretivists seek to understand knowledge based on social reality through detailed understanding and interpretation of meaning of events and specific life experiences (Freshwater & Cahill, 2012). Freshwater and Cahill differentiate between the nomothetic, rule-governed methods of the latter and idiographic methods that are not linked to the general laws of nature, but to the actions of human beings. They stress that social science research should be much concerned with qualitative approaches. As a result, interpretivist's view of research lends itself to qualitative methodology. Details of the qualitative methodology are explained in the research design.

### **Research Design**

Research design is defined as a framework of methods and techniques chosen by a researcher to combine various components of research in a reasonably logical manner so that the research problem is efficiently handled and adequately addressed (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). Thus, the research design provides insights into the mode of conducting research using a particular methodology. According to Neuman (2011), research design integrates the different components of a study into a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the research problem is effectively and adequately addressed. As a result, the selected research design influences sampling procedures, data

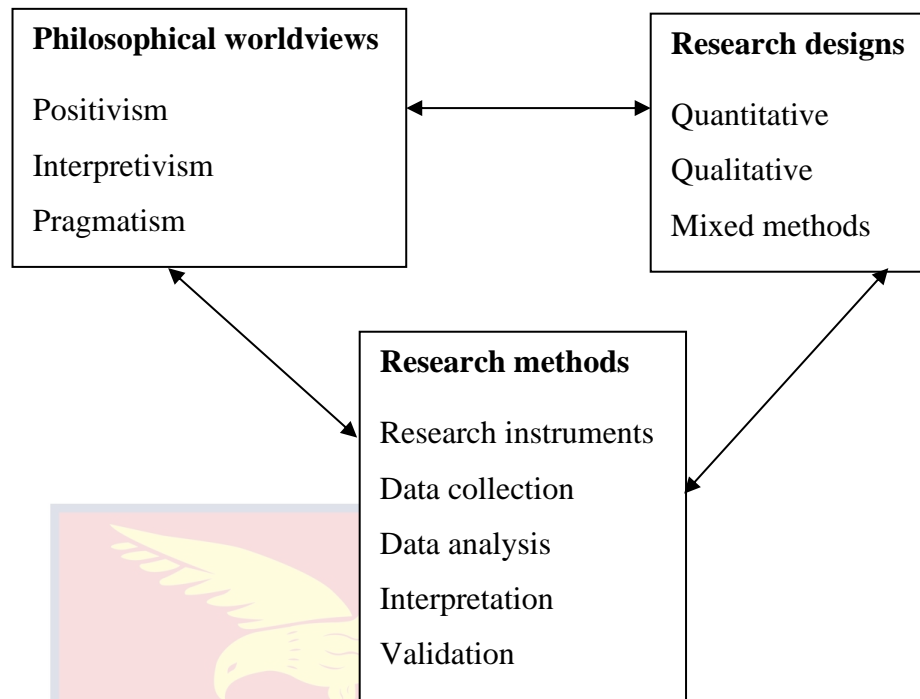
collection methods, research instruments, and data analytical techniques of a study. Bryman (2016), therefore, indicated that researchers should be mindful of the research design before adopting particular research methodologies.

Since research design directly emanates from the research paradigm, there are three major types of research design; namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research designs (Shannon-Baker, 2015). Thus, the research design types correspond with the research paradigms. In other words, the positivist research philosophy translates into quantitative research design, interpretivism translates into qualitative research design, whereas mixed methods research design is a direct manifestation of the pragmatic research paradigm. Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic process for obtaining information about the world (Creswell, 2014). It is used to describe, test relationships, and examine cause and effect relationships mathematically through statistical analysis. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning. It is often used to study ideas, beliefs, human behaviours and other research questions that do not involve studying the relationship between variables. Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study to address a research problem.

Since the interpretivist research paradigm lends itself to qualitative research design, the study adopted it to guide its methodologies. Thus, the researcher believed studying the lived experiences of school heads and leadership practices require critical and deeper engagement of research participants to understand the underlying reasons for their actions and

preferences for particular leadership practices in some situations. Qualitative research design is defined as a scientific method of observation to gather non-numerical data (Neuman, 2011). This type of research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things and not to their counts or measures. According to Bryman (2016), qualitative research design answers why and how a certain phenomenon may occur rather than how often it occurs. Figure 2 presents a framework for the research showing the interconnections of philosophical worldviews, research designs and research methods.

The study adopted the qualitative research design to enable the researcher to probe deeper into the lived experiences of SHS heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. One of the main advantages of qualitative research design is that it enables researchers to delve deeper and explore new areas to understand people's beliefs and culture. It also does not require large sample size for data gathering. One of the disadvantages is that qualitative researchers cannot be generalised to cover the entire population. This is due to the elements of subjectivity and purposiveness in the sampling, data gathering and data analysis.



**Figure 2.** A framework for research - The interconnection of worldviews, design and research methods.

Source: Creswell (2014, p. 5)

### Study Design

The study employed phenomenology as its design. Phenomenology is a qualitative research method that is used to describe how human beings experience a certain phenomenon (Neuman, 2011). According to Frels *et al.* (2011), a phenomenological study attempts to set aside biases and preconceived assumptions about human experiences, feelings, and responses to a particular situation. It allows the researcher to delve into the perceptions, perspectives, understandings, and feelings of those people who have actually experienced or lived the phenomenon or situation of interest. Therefore, phenomenology can be defined as the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced by people living those experiences (Bryman,



2016). Phenomenological research is typically conducted through the use of in-depth interviews of small samples of participants.

According to Freshwater and Cahill (2012), phenomenology, is a philosophical approach to the study of experiences. Although phenomenologists have different emphasis and interests, they all tend to share a particular interest in thinking about what the experience of being human is like in all of its various forms, but especially in terms of the things which matter to us and which constitute our lived world. Patton (2015) stipulated that a phenomenological study is one that focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience. By studying the perspectives of multiple participants, a researcher can begin to make generalisations regarding what it is like to experience a certain phenomenon from the perspective of those that have lived the experience (Neuman, 2011).

The study, therefore, adopted the phenomenological study design to understand lived experiences and leadership practices of school heads. In addition, a phenomenological study design was aligned to this study as it provided an effective means for the researcher to gather, analyse, and describe data collected during interviews, follow-up observations, and documents review from participants currently active in the roles the researcher sought to examine. The researcher sought to capture and describe how SHS heads perceive, describe, feel, judge and remember their experiences in their day-to-day administrative tasks to improve student learning as described by Patton (2015).

Table 1 presents the procedures and assumptions in the phenomenological study and how it was used to gather and analyse data.



**Table 1: Procedures in Phenomenology**

Phenomenological stages	Mode of application
Determining approach	Selected phenomenology as approach for describing the leadership practices of SHS heads
Determining phenomenon	Common experiences of leadership practices of SHS heads
Recognising philosophical assumptions	The study was guided by the interpretivist worldview because it focused on the participants' views, voices, and their multiple realities
Determine individuals who have experienced the phenomenon	Identified eight SHS heads to participate in the study
Collect data	Broad questions to describe experiences and the contexts of those experiences
Analyse data	Analysed the data from the interviews with research participants
Description of participants' experience	Provided descriptions about the themes or meanings that emerge
Description of the composite or essence of the phenomenon	Synthesised the above descriptions

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2007)

## Study Population

The population of the study comprised all heads of public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The school heads are the apex in terms of the leadership structure of the schools responsible for directing and supervising the daily activities of the schools. As a result, the leadership styles and practices of the sub-structures as well as the performance of the schools are influenced or conditioned within the leadership approach, guidance and vision of the heads. This informed the decision by the researcher to engage the heads of the SHSs in the study.

There were a total of 10 public SHS heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The target population was school heads of SHSs with at least three years of continuous experience in such leadership position. Literature suggest that school heads become more effective as they gain experience, and they are able to make significant improvement in their first few years in a leadership role, and then make more modest improvements in the following years (Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009; Coelli & Green, 2012; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, no matter how effective at their previous school, when school heads transfer to a new school it takes approximately five years to fully stabilize and improve the teaching staff as well as fully implement policies and practices to positively impact the school's performance (Seashore-Louis et al., 2010). Out of the 10 heads of the SHSs in the Metropolis, eight qualified for the selection criterion.

Further, the study focused on the heads of the public SHSs due to the relatively greater autonomy given to them to adopt their leadership practices to

achieve operational targets. Thus, the authority of heads of private SHSs is mostly significantly reduced by the active involvement of proprietors in the management of the schools. As a result, their leadership practices were not considered to be natural. Further, there were only two private SHSs within the study area with small students' population in the Metropolis. Thus, the introduction of the free SHS for public schools had significantly depleted the student population of the private schools in the Metropolis.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

Census was used to for the study. Thus, all the eight school heads that qualified based on the selection criteria were engaged for the study. The total number of research participants engaged in the study was eight (8). This was obtained from the total number of SHS heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis with at least three years of continuous experience in their leadership positions. The use of census was due to the small number of members in the population as well as their concentration in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Thus, the concentration of the research participants in the Cape Coast Metropolis made it easy for the researcher to reach them and engage them for the study. A purposive sampling approach was undertaken to engage all the eight (8) research participants. According to Babbie (2020), qualitative research design does not require large sample sizes to make meaning. This is because qualitative research design does not believe in the principle of generalisation.

The purposive sampling procedure was used to select the heads of SHSs. This was because the study targeted the heads of the selected SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The use of the purposive sampling in the process was because

the researcher considered the heads of the SHSs as having in-depth knowledge and experiences in leadership practices for the effective management of their schools. As a result, purposively engaging the heads of the schools was seen as necessary to get direct response to the critical issues of the study. The engagement of all the members in the targeted population enabled the researcher to conduct a comprehensive examination of the lived experiences and leadership practices of heads of SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This was to enhance the principle of validity in the research.

The sampled schools were Mfantsipim SHS (student population – 2984; staff population – 255), St. Augustine’s College (student population – 2413; staff population – 202), Adisadel College (student population – 2995; staff population – 186), Wesley Girls High School (student population – 2281; staff population – 208), Holy Child School (student population – 2035; staff population – 157), Ghana National College (student population – 2732; staff population – 193), Efutu SHS (student population – 3216; staff population – 161), and Academy of Christ the King SHS (student population – 1954; staff population – 144). Out of the eight schools, three were boys’ schools, two were girls’ school, while three were mixed schools. In other words, five of them were single sex schools, whereas three were mixed schools. In terms of grade, five of the schools are categorised as Grade A schools, two are categorised as Grade B schools, with one being a Grade C school. Four of the schools were headed by male school heads, while four were headed by female school heads. Five of the schools are faith-based, whereas the remaining three are non-faith-based schools.

### **Sources of Data**

The study used data from primary and secondary sources. Creswell (2013) defined primary data as using data from data collection exercise purposely collected for the study at hand, whereas secondary refers to the use of data originally gathered for a different purpose or study in a different study. The primary data were gathered from the heads of the SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. In other words, the data gathered through the interview guide from the heads of SHSs were considered as the primary data for the study. Secondary data, on the other hand, were gathered from journals, books, published research works and internet articles that are related to the subject matter under investigation.

### **Research Instrument**

An interview guide (see Appendix A) or unstructured interview was used as the research instrument for gathering data for the study. Interview guide was adopted for the study because of the in-depth knowledge and experience about the subject under investigation. Thus, the use of unstructured interview allowed the researcher to probe for more information about the lived experiences and leadership practices of the heads of SHSs. Such additional information was based on the responses of the research participants. It enabled the researcher to gather information about the reasons behind the leadership practices of the research participants.

The interview questions in this research were planned prior to the interviews which allowed the participants to digress and explore their thinking on particular issues (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Lindlof and Taylor (2002)

explain that an interview guide generally provides a direction to “ensure that all interviewees hear roughly the same questions in the same way although spontaneous follow up probes are usually allowed in order to clarify remarks or to ask for elaboration” (p.194). The interview guide was appropriate because this was an exploratory study; therefore having informal and flexible parts allowed for clarification and elaboration (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The flexibility of the interview guide is appealing because as Lindlof and Taylor (2002) state, I could “adjust to the verbal style of the participants” ...because “questions could be rephrased, broken up into smaller units or altered in other ways in order to achieve the goals set out by the researcher” (p. 195).

Open-ended questions were used in a way that helped in focusing on the theme of the study while allowing enough flexibility for the school heads to take the interviews into new areas of inquiry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The purpose of using questions in a descriptive form (“what” and “how” questions) was to allow participants to portray their experiences and perceptions in their own words and in their own contexts, and to “elicit spontaneous descriptions from the subjects rather than to get their own, more or less speculative explanations of why something took place” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 58). As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) emphasizes, it is important that interviews be conducted in a dynamic and unprompted way that will allow “spontaneous, lively, and unexpected answers from the interviewees” (p. 57).

School heads were made to feel comfortable in sharing their narratives; this was achieved in part by presenting them with questions that brought to light the key experiences in their careers. The scope of the interviews was enhanced



by making use of silence (Seidman, 2006), ensuring that the school heads had “ample time to associate and reflect and then break the silence themselves with significant information” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 61). As Seidman (2006) recommends, it is crucial that the interviewer be sensitive to the unintended signals and nonverbal clues that appear during the interviews, such as nervous or ironic laughter that may have revealed some hidden and deep emotions and reflections. This is part of what Moustakas (1994, p. 114) means by the “informal, interactive process” of a phenomenological interview.

Probing questions were used to elicit detailed information when needed. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), probes “signal the interviewees that you want longer and more detailed answers” (p.148). Probes, as defined by Creswell (2013) are sub-questions that can be used to clarify points of confusion or used to encourage the participant to elaborate. Probing questions that began with “how” and “what” were utilized instead of follow-up questions that began with “why” to avoid participants perceiving they were being asked to defend their decisions (Dale, 1996). I agree with Seidman (2006) about the use of the word probe, which sounds intrusive. Regardless of the term used, the goal was to allow for clarification and to follow up on the participant’s responses. This also enabled me to move the interview forward based on the participants’ responses (Seidman, 2006).

The research instrument was organised under four sections. Section one was on the description of leadership practices by the heads of the SHSs. Some of the issues captured under the section were leadership background characteristics of the school heads, perceptions about leadership practices, and



reasons for the adoption of particular leadership practices. The second section was on the leadership practices adopted by the school heads to ensure quality teaching and learning. Some of the issues considered under the section were operational goals for teaching and learning in the schools, effectiveness of the leadership practices adopted to achieve the operational goals, and feedback from key stakeholders about the effectiveness of the leadership practices adopted to achieve the operational goals.

Section three focused on the mode of overcoming barriers that impeded the successes of school heads in educational leadership. The issues considered under the section included barriers encountered in educational leadership, mode of handling such challenges, and effectiveness of the approaches adopted to handle the challenges. Section four was on the factors influencing the leadership practices of school heads in the metropolis. Some of the issues captured under the section were background characteristics, internal stakeholders, community stakeholders, and external stakeholders from the Ghana Education Service. All the questions in the research instrument were open-ended. This allowed the research participants to express themselves fully to provide more information about the phenomenon under investigations.

The research instrument was also peer reviewed to enhance its validity in addressing the research problem and questions. Further, the research instrument was reviewed by educationists and educational researchers to further enhance its validity. The questions in the research instrument were largely teased out from the literature to improve on its reliability as well as afford the researcher the opportunity to relate the findings to issues in the literature.

### **Pre-testing**

The research instrument was pre-tested at the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipal Area. The KEEA Municipal Area was selected for the pre-testing because of shared similar characteristics with the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area (CCMA). The selected public schools in the KEEA were Edinaman SHS, Komenda Senior High Technical School, and Eguafo Abrem SHS. Three research participants were engaged during the pre-testing which was conducted in the month of February 2018 for a period of three days. The aims for the pre-testing were to check for the clarity of questions, sensitivity of the questions, timing for the data collection engagement, and adequacy of the instrument. Accordingly, feedback from the pre-testing exercise was used to rearrange the questions, change some of the questions, add some more questions, and change the diction of some of the questions.

The average timing for the pre-testing was one hour and 13 minutes. However, the questions were reduced to contain an interview session within 45 minutes. The aim was to reduce the interview time to enable the school heads to focus on their activities.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Interviewing was used as the method of gathering data for the study. Creswell (2012) noted that interviewing is a powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have hitherto been implicit. With the interviewing method, the researcher first had initial meetings with the research participants to introduce himself, the purpose of the study, seek their consent of participation, and the appropriate timing for the data collection. This was done

through an introductory letter (see Appendix B) from the University of Cape Coast. Upon agreement to participate in the study, the researcher scheduled appointments with each of the research participants about their free days and times that were convenient for the data collection exercise. This was to ensure that the data collection process did not seriously interfere with their daily leadership administrative duties of the schools. It was also to ensure that the research participants were prepared to provide more detailed information for the study.

The researcher honoured the times scheduled with the research participants and interviewed them for the study. The setting of the data gathering for all the heads of the selected schools was that it was one-on-one engagement without any third party. This enabled the research participants to freely give their candid opinions about their lived experiences and leadership practices in the schools. The researcher asked the questions and recorded the responses of the research participants, accordingly. The recordings were done through both writing and audio. The audio recordings were done upon the permission from the research participants. The average time for the interviewing was 42 minutes. Each interview ended with a polite note of thanks to the interviewee for spending the time and effort willing to contribute to the study (Creswell, 2014).

Participants were asked if they agreed to the interview being recorded through a digital audio recording device. Although hand written notes can be less obtrusive or intimidating to some participants, an audio recording provides a more precise account of the content of the interview and allows the researcher

to pay closer attention to the verbal and nonverbal cues presented by the participant being interviewed (Glesne, 2006). Another advantage of utilizing digital recording during data collection was that an actual recording of the interview allowed the researcher the ability to study the information more thoroughly (Gall et al., 2007). Finally, and most importantly, the use of a digital recording “reduces the tendency of interviewers to make an unconscious selection of data favouring their biases” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 256). In this research study, each of the research participants agreed to the interview being digitally recorded.

During the interview, the researcher took notes in addition to recording the interviews. Patton (2015) stated that taking notes during an interview help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along, and during data analysis, they can be used for key quotes, and as a backup. At the close of the interview, participants were asked if there was any additional information or insights the interviewees wanted to share. After participants shared remarks, the researcher thanked participants for engagement in the study and concluded the interview. The audio-recording device was turned off.

To acquire an intimate and accurate understanding of this phenomenon, it was imperative that the interviews took place in the “natural setting . . . where participants experience the issue or problem under study” (Creswell, 2014, p. 1168); hence, school heads were interviewed at their respective schools. This helped school heads to recount their experiences in the setting in which their day-to-day leadership practices occur. King and Horrocks (2010) suggest that the location of the interviews is commonly held on interviewees’ home turf. The

school heads' offices also served as a place where they could retreat in times of crisis and reflect on their experiences and the challenges they face. In a sense, they frame their perspectives in this context, so it is natural to ask them to recall those perspectives in the same context.

Finally, the office site was chosen to make the interviewees feel more in control, and as the hosts of the interviews, they were expected to feel more confident and trusting in the interview process. All of these factors in site selection provided opportunities for school heads to share their personal and authentic perceptions and to promote experiential accounts that were as wide and deep as possible. The interviews took place after the end of the school day, a time when school heads were free from the majority of their labour and their emotionally intensive tasks. The researcher thus provided a safe and comfortable environment for participants to share their experience truthfully and candidly.

I arrived at least 30 minutes before the scheduled interviews and stayed 30 minutes after the interviews, allowing adequate time to prepare and wrap up the interviews. This extra time also allowed me to observe the culture of each site. The data gathering, using interviews took three months (April-June, 2018). I allowed for a further two months until all transcripts were completed and returned to the participants for checking to ensure that the transcripts were recorded accurately.

In order to limit researcher bias, a journal of notes of my impressions, reflections, and insights regarding the interviews was taken (Creswell, 2013; Seidman, 2006) within a few hours of conducting them. These memos

documenting my reflections on the processes of the interviews and observations were useful in analyzing the data and writing the final report. The research literature on phenomenological studies shows agreement on the necessity for reflexivity (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). These reflective memos helped me analyse my own perceptions of the phenomena that appeared in the interviews and helped bracket my personal experiences in providing an accurate phenomenological record.

In addition, to facilitate taking field notes during interviews, a two column format was utilized (Rajendran, 2001). The left column was for me to highlight information from the participant that spurred a probing or clarifying question. The right column was where I wrote my own thoughts about the interview. It was important to remain an outsider to the data analysis process, and not allow personal preference or personal knowledge to leak into the interpretation and analysis of the data (Rajendran, 2001).

The transcripts of the data were validated with the research participants. They were made to provide further clarity on some of the issues and other issues they wanted to change. In addition, the researcher built triangulated questions in the research instruments to ensure consistency and confirmability of responses. In areas where there were divergence in responses, the research participants were asked to provide further information to enhance the credibility of the data.

### **Field Challenges**

Some of the challenges encountered during the data collection exercise were difficulties in securing appointments with the research participants due to



their busy working schedules, and initial scepticism to participate in the study for fear of political victimisation. Thus, the researcher had to go through long protocols and queues before getting in contact with the research participants for the initial engagements. This caused some delays in the data collection exercise. Some of the research participants also feared their responses could be used against them and as such were sceptical at the initial stage to participate in the study. However, upon assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses and anonymity, they eventually agreed to participate in the study.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical issues in research are critical to ensure that the research process does not cause any injuries to the research participants, expose them to public ridicule or compel them to go against their personal beliefs. As a result, Maxwell (2005) indicated that researchers should always explain the modalities in a particular study in terms of the data gathering process, uses of the research, as well as mode and format in presenting the findings to the research participants. Some of the ethical issues considered under the study were seeking the consent of participation from the research participants before engaging them in the data collection exercise, assuring them of their anonymity, and allowing them to indicate the appropriate timing and place for the exercise. The researcher, therefore, did not gather data on the personal characteristics of the research participants. In addition, dummy names such as Head A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H were used to represent the school heads to ensure the anonymity of their identities.



## Researcher's Background and Assumptions

In the qualitative research process, the researcher serves as the primary instrument from which decisions are made such as who would be in the study and what questions are asked. In addition, data collection and analysis may be coloured by the researcher's experience and background. As a result, the researcher cannot claim to be completely "objective," as that is just not possible. As Creswell (2013) points out, the researcher needs to be aware of the personal presuppositions that might have a potential influence on the research process before initiating the study. This process involves a description of the researcher's experience with the phenomenon under study. It is known as "bracketing" or "epoche", which is a Greek word meaning to stay away from or to abstain (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). The purpose of epoche for the researcher is to identify biases and preconceived ideas about the specific experience. van Manen (2014) suggested that it allows the researcher to clear his mind of personal biases and to see the world from participants' perspectives.

This is especially important as the research questions are so intertwined with the researcher's epistemological assumptions or views of what is valuable and important to know about the world. In theory, the ideal phenomenologist is required to completely fulfil the epoche experience. However, in practice, as Creswell (2013) noted, this is a difficult task and experience. Nevertheless, it is important for the researcher to be aware of the subjective experience in order to see how it might influence the research. Thus, the following is a description of my preconceived notions about the leadership practices of senior high school

heads and their potential influence on the interviews as well as on the data analysis.

At the beginning of the research process, I considered various personal perspectives on school leadership and identified two that might have potential influences on the research process; my personal experiences as a teacher and as a college chaplain, and my assumptions about what the role of the school head should be. These personal assumptions and experiences were reflected upon prior to the interviews and data analysis and were suspended as much as possible in order to gain the perspectives of the interview participants as well as to preserve the credibility of the study.

Although I have no experience as a school head, my perceptions on school leadership have developed from my personal experience as a teacher and a college chaplain where I have worked closely with two school heads. During these moments, I had the opportunity to observe how school heads deal with and solve problems of practice as well as to observe their relationships with teachers, students and parents. As I recall, these school heads, like their counterparts in other schools, worked under highly centralized school systems. This created a narrow scope of the role played by the school head, as many of the important decisions were made by higher authorities and, consequently, the school heads' professional autonomy was very limited.

While, to some extent, these school heads worked under similar education systems, the way they managed and led their schools was quite different. One of these school heads was very proactive and supportive of teachers, while the other used to spend most of his time in his office doing

paperwork. As a result of this experience, I have come to realize that, even though there are some common aspects found across the work of school heads in other schools, the meaning each school head constructs for his role and the perception each holds toward such roles are different.

Another potential source of bias may come from my perspective on what the role of the school head should be based on my immersion in the literature on school leadership. During my graduate studies in the University of Cape Coast, I have learned more about school leadership and developed new ways of viewing school leadership, particularly the leadership role of school heads. Numerous readings on school leadership have given me a new perspective on the work of school heads in a Western context. This theoretical perspective was reinforced by firsthand information where I had the opportunity to visit schools and conducted interviews with school heads concerning their views on the role of trust in a school culture. This practical experience gave me a glimpse into the life of a school head, including the opportunities and the challenges. As a result of this experience, I have come to realize the multiple tasks that school heads are expected to fulfill in order to lead their schools effectively.

Therefore, I was fully aware not to let any of these preconceptions and understandings influence the interviews and data analysis processes as much as possible. Throughout the course of the interviews and data analysis, I reminded myself to listen closely and carefully to what my participants have to say, to represent the full range of their views, and to re-examine how my assumptions may be influencing my analysis of the data.

However, I am cognizant of how my own preconceptions may affect what I chose to note or emphasize. Once I had bracketed my preconceived notions as much as possible, I started the process of data collection and such conscious reflection continued throughout the research process. I concur with Creswell (2013) that this is a difficult experience.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the masses of data collected (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The analysis of data was an on-going and iterative process where data were transformed into findings. This implies that data were collected and analyzed throughout the research process, which made data collection and analysis a simultaneous activity (Merriam, 2009). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) argue that qualitative data analysis requires the researcher to immerse oneself in the data, to cycle back and revisit the data while you continue to read and collect data. Creswell (2014) states “you cycle back and forth between data collection and analysis” (p. 1230). Patton (2015) maintains that data analysis involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what data reveal. The use of analysis data was a way of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. The carrying out of data analysis was a way to tease out essential meaning from the data and share the findings with the reader. Schwandt (2014) describes this process as “the activity of making sense of, interpreting and theorizing data” (p. 6).

During data analysis, researchers have a general sense of what they think they know about the phenomenon beforehand; however, the data may transcend this prior knowledge and allow new meanings to be discovered (Englander, 2012). The goal of phenomenological research is to describe the essence of meanings that are reported by the participants as part of their lived experiences. In the current study, the researcher analyzed the interviews to acquire an understanding of: (a) important experiences of leadership practices as described by participants, (b) the contexts or situations that have typically influenced or affected leadership practices of school heads (c) explanations of how they apply the leadership practices on a daily basis, and (d) experiences described as challenges in the performance of their roles as school heads.

In analyzing the data for this study, a modified version of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method as outlined in Creswell (2014) was used. This method, described by Moustakas (1994) uses the following six steps, as modified by Creswell (2014):

1. The researcher describes his own personal experiences with the phenomenon being studied. Creswell (2014) defines this as creating an “epoche” or bracketing. The aim of epoche is to achieve direct contact with the world by suspending prejudices, bracketing assumptions, deconstructing claims, and restoring openness. This permits the readers to understand better the researcher’s personal experience and how it might impact the study.

2. Reading through the transcribed interviews, the researcher manually develops a list of significant statements that illuminate the researched phenomenon. Creswell (2014) defines this as horizontalization of the data (p.

159). Here, it is important to get a good feel for the data to generate some emergent insights. As Merriam (2009) points out, qualitative data analysis usually results in the identification of recurring patterns and themes that “cut through the data” (p. 11).

3. The researcher manually takes significant statements and groups them into larger units or themes. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) describe this step in the initial phases of working with data as data reduction. This process of reduction includes questioning the data, identifying, and noting common patterns in the data, creating codes that describe the patterns in the data, and assigning these codes into categories (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This phase of the process includes reducing overlap and redundancy of codes and collapsing the codes into themes. Themes are similar codes brought together to form a major idea in the database (Creswell, 2012). At this point in the study, confirmability was conducted. The researcher solicited the help of two Professors who have received advanced degrees (Ph.D.) in leadership studies and conducted their dissertations utilizing qualitative research methods to review the codes and themes to see if my codes were appropriate and relevant to the research questions. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) argue that important insights may emerge from the different ways in which researchers look at the same data set.

4. The researcher writes a “what” description using verbatim examples from the participants’ interviews about what they experienced with mentoring. Creswell (2014) calls this the “textual description” (p. 159).



5. The researcher writes a “how” description of the setting and context in which the participants experienced mentoring. Creswell (2014) refers to this as the “structural description (p. 159).

6. Finally, the researcher writes a composite description of the participants’ experiences with the phenomenon, which incorporates both the textual and structural descriptions. This provides the “essence” of a phenomenological study. This step in the process also includes the researcher consulting the literature and linking these patterns of behaviour and themes in the light of previous research and existing theory.

I used a transcription service to produce written text from the recorded interviews. Following transcription, the researcher listened to each interview multiple times to ensure the accuracy of the transcription, and took notes in the margins of nonverbal elements. The researcher also returned the transcripts from the interviews back to the participants to ensure accuracy and correct for errors (member checking).

Next, I used the steps outlined above for data analysis. I used *epoché* to view each transcript freshly and minimize pre-assumptions. I highlighted specific statements, sentences, and quotes through the use of horizontalization. I then developed clusters of statements into meaningful units and subsequently developed themes from these units. Finally, I wrote composite narratives on lived experiences and leadership practices among heads of SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.



### Summary of the Chapter

The chapter presented the research methods adopted for this study, which was guided by the interpretivism research paradigm, qualitative research design, and the phenomenological study design. The population of the study comprised all the heads of public SHSs (i.e. eight) in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Interview guide was used for gathering data for the study and narrative analysis was used to analyse the data.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES BY HEADS OF PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

This chapter presents the results and discussion on the description of leadership practices and experiences by heads of public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This was important to ascertain the perceptions of the school heads on leadership practices and experiences. Thus, it is envisaged that the perceptions or views of school heads on the description of leadership practices and experiences could influence their leadership administration and lived experiences. Some of the major themes captured under the chapter were background characteristics of the school heads, and perceptions about leadership practices and experiences.

#### **Background Characteristics of the School Heads**

This section examined the background characteristics of the school heads. This was deemed critical because Chikoko *et al.* (2015) posited that the leadership practices of school heads are sometimes influenced or determined by their background characteristics. Some of the background characteristics of the school heads that were considered in the study were gender, education, years of service as teachers, and years of leadership experiences as school heads.

#### **Gender**

In reference to gender, it was found that half of the schools were headed by male school heads, while half were headed by female school heads. The study also found some association between the gender of school heads and the sex categorisation of the schools. In other words, all the boys' schools were headed by males, while the girls' schools were headed by females. This was

partly attributed to the fact that having the same gender characteristics of schools as school heads has implication on leadership approaches in terms of restrictions and accessibility for monitoring and supervision.

Thus, ethical issues associated with privacy between gender groups were cited as part of the reasons for appointing particular gender groups for the single sex schools. According to Magee (2012), gender plays a crucial role in leadership administration and practices of schools as leaders from same gender cohorts could better understand the situations and issues confronting their students or followers and institute measures and systems that are more responsive to their peculiar needs. The study also found that the gender composition of the school heads for the single sex schools was also influenced by their association with the schools. Thus, all the school heads for the single sex schools were past students of the schools, hence, boys' schools were headed by males, while girls' schools were headed by females. With respect to the mixed sex schools, two were headed by females, while one was headed by male.

### **Education**

From the study, all except one of the sampled research participants had Masters academic qualification. Even though postgraduate academic qualification was not an explicit requirement for getting appointment as school head at the SHS level, it was however revealed that such a qualification boosts one's chance of securing such a position. This was because postgraduate academic qualification was perceived as necessary to improve the leadership practices and experiences of school heads in the SHSs. Postgraduate academic qualifications deal with theoretical underpinnings of concepts of leadership,

management and administration, which are likely to influence their leadership practices.

The study, however, found that the academic areas of specialisation of the school heads ranged across different fields, including religion, educational administration, sociology, history, entrepreneurship, human resource management, and English Language. The diverse areas of academic specialisation of the school heads are likely to influence their leadership practices as posited by Bloom and McClellan (2016), that educational characteristics of leaders shape their perceptions on leadership administration which eventually influence their leadership styles, approaches and practices.

#### **Years of service as teachers**

The study also explored the years of service of the school heads as teachers. This was considered as important in influencing their leadership experiences and practices. According to Shortridge (2015), long years of service gives useful and rich experience for people to administer leadership roles and implement leadership practices that are responsive to the needs of the organisation. The study found that all the sampled school heads had spent more than two decades as teachers in the education sector. These long years of service could act as rich source of building leadership experiences to enable them administer leadership roles and practices to advance the course of their schools.

In other words, such long years of experience as teachers may have afforded them the opportunity to encounter a number of issues and how they were dealt with by their leaders at the time, which could serve as important guide in their leadership administration. Under the Ghana Education Service,

one has to rise to the rank of Deputy Director before qualifying to become a school head at the SHS level. This takes quite some time for teachers to rise to such a rank to qualify for school headship. It also allows the teachers to acquire some level of leadership experience by learning from others and also understand processes of educational administration.

Northouse (2011) reported that leadership traits and experiences could be learnt or acquired from leaders through common interactions and association. Such acquired traits and experiences could empower or equip people with the necessary set of skills to administer leadership roles and practices (Onukwuba, 2018). Accordingly, the long years of service of the school heads puts them in a great position to identify the challenges and frustrations various stakeholders (teachers, parents and students) go through and adopt leadership practices and styles to achieve their institutional targets. School head A narrated,

*The teachers accord me with the necessary respect because of my years of experience. They know that I have been in the terrain for quite a long time with many connections at the metropolitan, regional and national levels. They, therefore, trust my judgements and suggestions. However, I try to explain the principle behind whatever I do to them to enable them to learn.*

*You know, some of them may end up as school heads so you need to carry them along to build their capacities.*

The extract shows the importance of years of service in education or teaching in leadership administration of school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Thus, long years of service provides the school heads with some

political clouts to secure the support of other stakeholders in leadership administration and practices. According to Gale (2010), political factors play essential role in the effective administration of leaders in any major organisation. Such political capital is important to garner stakeholder support for the adoption of particular leadership practices to achieve organisational goals (Al-Momani & Ajlouni, 2018). The narration also showed the importance of using the experiences of leaders to build the capacity of followers to assume leadership positions in the future. In other words, some of the school heads used their long years of experience in teaching to build the leadership capacity of their teachers.

#### **Years of leadership experiences as school heads**

This section explored the years of leadership experiences as school heads of the research participants. This was important as described by Day and Antonakis (2012) that long years in leadership positions helps to build the confidence of leaders to implement various leadership styles and practices, based on the outcomes of previous strategies, to achieve organisational development goals. The study found that the leadership experiences of the school heads in their current positions ranged from three years to 10 years. All the research participants admitted that confidence in leadership administration and practices is partly derived from their years of occupying the position of school heads.

From the study, it was indicated by the research participants that leadership experiences of school heads were built from their mistakes and successes in previous situations that confronted them as leaders of the schools.



The implication is that confidence in leadership administration and practices of the school heads were positively associated with the years of experience of the school heads in leadership positions. This finding is in consonance with the assertion of Kezar and Holcombe (2017) that leadership traits and experience are developed through regular practice. School head B narrated,

*Even though I went through some form of orientation, the actual leadership administration and practices at the initial stages were a bit challenging. This was because you will be confronted with some many issues that you need to address, while ensuring the smooth running of the school at the same time. However, as time went on you begin to know the behaviour of your staff members and how to deal with them in terms of which persons to assign particular roles and responsibilities. You sometimes get frustrated about people's behaviour and responses to your leadership style. But you learn how to manage all of them to make your leadership administration a success.*

Similar views in relation to building leadership experiences through years of service as school heads were expressed by other research participants. The results showed that years of experiencing leadership positions enabled the school heads to gather more leadership experiences to effectively implement their leadership practices. This suggests that the leadership practices may change as the school heads gain more leadership experiences over a period of time.



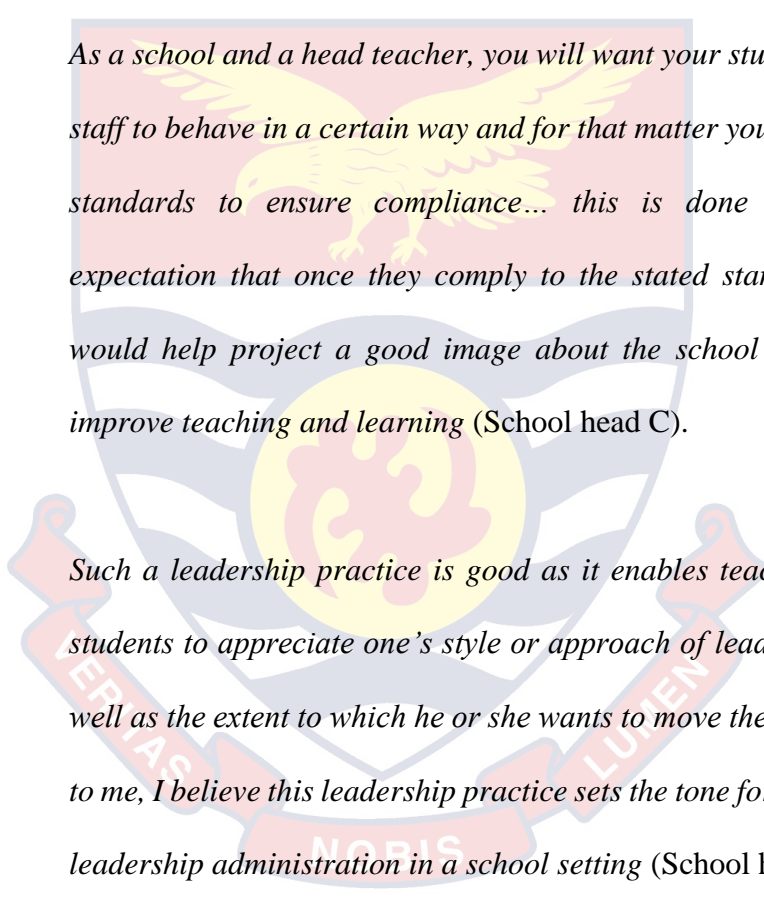
## Perceptions about Leadership Practices and Experiences

The second major theme under the chapter was on the perceptions of school heads on leadership practices and experiences in public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. According to Hofmeyer *et al.* (2015), the lived experiences of educational leadership contribute to form psychological view which informs the choices of school leadership about the leadership practices to adopt in other situations. As a result, Kezar and Holcombe (2017) suggested the need to explore the perceptions of educational leaders about their leadership practices and experiences to be able to predict their choices of leadership practices in various situations.

The study found that the research participants generally had positive perceptions about the leadership practices. This was because they acknowledged the need to adopt any of them at particular points in time to address some peculiar needs. The section was organised under the perceptions of school heads on transactional, transformational, instructional and contingency leadership practices. The school heads were asked to share some of their lived leadership experiences and how they handled them. Based on the mode of handling, the researcher organised the leadership practices under the various leadership practices. The aim was to ensure that the research participants provided natural responses to the issues under investigation. It was also to avoid the situation where some of the school heads misinterpret the various leadership practices.

### Perceptions on transactional leadership practice

From the study, all the sampled school heads admitted that transactional leadership practice is central to leadership administration in the SHSs. This was largely due to the standards the leaders wanted to set for their schools under their administrations. The aim for such administrative and operational standards were to guide the performance of the schools. Some of the quotations from School heads are chronicled as follows:



*As a school and a head teacher, you will want your students and staff to behave in a certain way and for that matter you set some standards to ensure compliance... this is done with the expectation that once they comply to the stated standards, it would help project a good image about the school and also improve teaching and learning (School head C).*

*Such a leadership practice is good as it enables teachers and students to appreciate one's style or approach of leadership as well as the extent to which he or she wants to move the school... to me, I believe this leadership practice sets the tone for effective leadership administration in a school setting (School head D).*

*It is very useful in the early days of leadership positions as it enables school heads to set their own standards, which give clear directions as to where the head wants the school to be*

*headed to... it's a way of communicating leadership agenda to various stakeholders of the school (School head F).*

*Even though the transactional leadership approach, which is more of standards and compliance is good, I believe it is more rigid and may not promote innovations among teachers... it could sometimes create serious problems between school heads and teachers who may not be in support of the direction of the heads... it may sometimes depend on the popularity of the head and his or her strategies among the teachers as well as the commitment of the teachers to ensuring the school leadership succeed (School head G).*

*With my experience as a school head with the transactional leadership practice, I realise it was useful to some point. After which one has to adopt other leadership practices to augment it (School head H).*

It could be deduced from the above extracts that the school heads perceived the transactional leadership practice as a way for newly appointed leaders to demonstrate their leadership goals and directions for internal stakeholders of the school. Thus, the establishment of benchmarks to guide school activities by school heads is a clear indication of providing new strategies in line with their vision and performance targets. This suggests that the extent of deviation of the new order, as established by the leader's benchmarks, is a

reflection of how the school head intends to change the mode of activities of the school. The information provided through the benchmarks allows stakeholders to be aware of their roles and responsibilities to ensure effective leadership administration in the schools.

Nonetheless, Klar and Brewer (2013) stipulated that leadership administration and practices in schools are not linear; rather, complex and multifaceted, which could not be regulated by only standards and compliance. Kouzes and Posner (2016) indicated that there are several cross-cutting issues that need to be attended to which may be ignored by teachers and other stakeholders in transactional leadership practices in educational institutions. The implication is that transactional leadership practice could be adopted at certain stages in the leadership administration processes of a school head, but has to be complemented by other leadership practices to increase flexibility in leadership administration in the public SHSs.

It must, however, be noted that in as much as the transactional leadership practice is important for the achievement of organisational development goal or the achievement of the vision of a leader, the processes leading to the establishment of structures and standards to guide activities of the schools should be more participatory to increase general acceptance and ownership of the systems created. This was because it was found that the commitment and dedication of the teachers are crucial to ensuring the successful administration of school heads. In other words, the use of a democratic leadership style could help to promote the success of transactional leadership practice as indicated by Elmelegy (2015) that the engagement of followers or stakeholders in

establishing operational structures and benchmarks encourages them to own the process and helps to increase their levels of commitment towards the adherence of the standards to guarantee the achievement of organisational development goals.

It was also found that the transactional leadership alone may not be adequate to deliver all the organisational development outcomes of the schools. This was because Klar and Brewer (2013) posited that the transactional leadership practice is too structured and more centred on the leader with limited involvement of the followers. It is mostly associated with the autocratic leadership style to ensure compliance (Harrington *et al.*, 2015). This was because it requires a central figure to administer rewards and punishments associated with compliance and non-compliance of the established benchmarks and standards.

The extracts further showed that transactional leadership practice was used by the school heads to communicate their vision to the various stakeholders (students, teachers and parents) of the schools. The use of the standards is a way of communicating the benchmarks of leadership performance to the stakeholders. This enables the stakeholders to ascertain their expected roles and responsibilities. Harrington *et al.* (2015) however indicated that the effective adoption of transactional leadership practice to advance the course of a leader's vision should be accompanied with punishment and reward system to encourage compliance.

### Perceptions on transformational leadership practice

The research participants were also asked to express their perceptions about the transformational leadership practice in public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The study found that the structured nature of the public SHSs in terms of houses of residence, departments, and gender cohorts for the mixed schools compelled or enabled the school heads to practise transformational leadership. The schools were organised into houses of residence with house masters and senior housemasters, academic departments with heads of departments, administrative departments with administrative heads, and sectional heads such as security and transport, finance and administration, maintenance, and kitchen staff. It was, therefore, found that the school heads had to work in collaboration with such established structures to administer their leadership. School head B indicated,

*The school is already structured to ensure smooth leadership administration... one just has to share his or her vision and performance targets with the various departmental and sectional heads to devise strategies to achieve them.*

The extract shows that the traditional structures and systems for managing the public SHSs automatically set the tone or encourage the practicing of transformational leadership. The implication is that the nature of organisation of the schools partly dictated the leadership practices of the school heads. According to Clarke (2013), the dispersed nature of power and authority across various structures and systems under transformational leadership practice helps to promote democratic leadership style, which also helps to



increase the popularity of organisational policies and strategies among other stakeholders. Some other perspectives shared on the transformational leadership practice in the public SHSs by School heads were as follows:

*As the head, you can't do all the work by yourself... you will definitely have to include the various departmental heads to ensure successful achievement of your policies and programmes* (School head A).

*I believe transformational leadership practice is important in school leadership administration, as you will need the support of colleague teachers and other stakeholders to succeed* (School head C).

*Transformational leadership practice helps to take some of the burden of responsibilities off you as a school head... this is because it empowers the departmental heads to be innovative to implement various strategies to achieve operational goals and targets* (School head F).

*With the transformational leadership practice, you are able to inspire your teachers to support your vision... they feel part of the entire transformation agenda and play important role for the collective achievement of the vision* (School head H).

From the extracts, it could be deduced that transformational leadership practice is perceived as mandatory in the public SHSs due to the structured nature of their operations. Thus, the traditional structures of the school offered

the opportunity to the school heads to practise transformational leadership. This is in agreement with the assertion of Klar and Brewer (2013) that organisational structures and systems influence the leadership practices and approaches of leaders. Nonetheless, Kouzes and Posner (2017) argued that the effectiveness of the contribution of the various structures in an organisation is largely dependent on the level of power and authority wielded to such structures to function. This suggests that the general positive perception on transformational leadership among the public school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis is an indication of some level of power and autonomy given to various departmental heads, sectional heads and house masters to operate in the schools.

The results also showed that the transformational leadership practice could be implemented effectively in a decentralised system of organisational operations. In such occasions, the school heads only have to provide leadership in terms of clear vision, direction, performance targets and timelines, in consultation with the various sectional heads, to operate or function. The acknowledgement of the support of departmental and sectional heads in leadership administration in the public SHSs was important they realised the need to gain support from their followers to effectively implement their leadership policies and strategies to achieve organisational development outcomes. According to Nir and Hameiri (2014), effective leadership administration and practice should be by regular collaboration and coordination between the leader and other stakeholders to ensure unity of purpose in setting operational goals and objectives as well as inspire confidence in the stakeholders to achieve such goals.

A careful review of the perceptions of school heads on the transformational leadership practice suggests that they perceived the practice within the perspective of the integrative leadership theory. In other words, they all agreed to the critical role of sub-central leadership structures and the need to incorporate them in the leadership administration in the public SHSs. According to Nir and Hameiri (2014), acknowledging sub-central leadership roles in the achievement of organisational goals and objectives helps to bring harmony in efforts and strategies, which are critical elements in effective leadership administration. Transformational leadership practice is thus, important in creating and sustaining the partnership between school heads and teachers for effective leadership administration.

#### **Perceptions on instructional leadership practice**

This section explored the perceptions of the school heads on instructional leadership practice in the public SHSs. From the study, all the school heads admitted that instructional leadership practice was central to their leadership functions and administration of the schools. This was because one of the ultimate goals in the assessment of their performance was the academic achievement of the students. As a result, instructional leadership practice, which focuses on the establishment of clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth (Basham, 2010), was imperative in the achievement of such leadership performance target.

One of the selected public school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis expressed that every school head will want to improve the students' academic

achievement over their predecessors to win the support of the community, old students, appointing authorities and other stakeholders. He continued that the improvement in the students' academic achievement is a justification for one's appointment to head a school. The implication is that some of the school heads were motivated to adopt instructional leadership practice as a way of achieving performance targets. Another school head stated,

*You cannot be a school head in a SHS in Ghana and fail to attend to issues surrounding punctuality and regularity of teachers and students in class, managing the availability of teaching and learning materials, and monitoring or supervising academic processes to promote academic development and students' achievement... the various stakeholders, including the old students, parents, teachers and even the community could force authorities for your dismissal or transfer (School head F).*

Similar views were expressed by the other selected school heads. The narration showed that the involvement of other stakeholders in the adoption of instructional leadership practice was important to ensure the successful improvement of students' academic achievement. It could also be deduced from the extract that the school heads did not consider the instructional leadership practice as substantive enough to address all leadership issues in the administration of the public SHSs.

It is evident that instructional leadership practice could be implemented alongside other leadership practices to address various aspects of issues in the school. This was because instructional leadership practice was considered to be

more focused on improving students' academic achievement, which is just an aspect of the leadership expectations of school heads in public SHSs. Accordingly, whereas instructional leadership practice was perceived as important to achieve particular school development goals, other leadership practices were required to achieve the broader perspectives of leadership. Nonetheless, the leadership style to the practicing of instructional leadership could vary depending on the personality trait and other background characteristics of the school heads.

### **Perceptions on contingency leadership practice**

Another leadership practice that the research participants expressed their views on was contingency leadership. From the study, there were mixed perceptions about the contingency leadership practices in the public SHSs. Whereas some of the selected school heads perceived the contingency leadership practice to be ideal for effective leadership administration based on their lived experiences, others perceived it as not giving signals about consistency about the leadership style and approach of the school head. For example, one of the research participants stated,

*It is important for a leader to couch your leadership strategy that your people could understand and predict your line of action based on your previous encounters with them... this enables them to always be in line with your principles... me, I don't believe in a system that you change your leadership styles and approaches on different situations or to different people... you are likely to favour some people against others which will create*

*camps of favourites and non-favourites... as a leader, your yes should be yes from the onset and no be no (School head A).*

Similar expressions were given by the school heads who were not in favour or had poor perceptions about contingency leadership practices in educational leadership administration. From the expression, it could be found that some of the school heads perceived the contingency leadership practice as not appropriate in demonstrating consistency in leadership principles, which is likely to create some leadership challenges in the management of some critical situations and experiences. The implication is that some of the school heads were very much concerned about leadership principles in the administration of leadership practices. According to Thompson and Vecchio (2009), leadership principles and consistency in their applications are necessary for followers to predict the reactions and responses from their actions by their leaders. Such knowledge about leaders' administrative principles among followers is important to compel them to conform to organisational standards and ethics (Mulder, 2012).

Some of the school heads who had positive perception about the adoption of contingency leadership practice also expressed their views. One expression which captured the various dimensions of the views indicated by such school heads is quoted below:

*As a leader, you can't use one leadership practice throughout... you will encounter so many experiences that will require different leadership approaches, styles and practices to address them... what I mean is each experience is unique and a leader*



*has to be innovative to devise different leadership practice to promote unity and win the trust of teachers and other stakeholders even after addressing particular situations (School heads B-F).*

The extract showed that some of the school heads perceived that lived experiences of leaders should determine their leadership practices. This was because leadership experiences in the administration of public SHSs were dynamic, and some situations call for different leadership approaches and practices. One of the school heads reported that interferences from other stakeholders such as chiefs and old students sometimes require that the leader changes the leadership style, approach and practice. The results imply that some of the school heads perceived the use of contingency leadership practice as inevitable. Elmelegy (2015) indicated that one of the key attributes of contingency leadership practice is the promotion of innovativeness in leadership administration. This is because it allows leaders to find easy solutions to every situation or experience without jeopardising relations and administrative structures.

From the study, school heads in the public SHSs are entrusted with so much authority and some degree of autonomy to administer leadership roles and functions to develop robust school structures to ensure the comprehensive development of students to improve academic achievement. The enormity of the administrative functions and responsibility of the schools affords the school heads the opportunity to adopt varied leadership practices to address various issues from different stakeholders. Even though some of the school heads had

poor perceptions about the contingency leadership practice, all of them admitted that it is not practically possible to avoid the use of contingency leadership practice. The study further found that the use of contingency leadership practice was popular among the school heads since it could be used with the other leadership practices.

Nonetheless, all the sampled school heads indicated that the leadership style adopted in the implementation of the leadership practice was imperative in achieving success. In other words, leadership practices alone may not be effective in achieving the intended goals associated with leadership administration in the public SHSs. However, the extent to which the leader is able to secure the support of the various stakeholders to implement his or her ideas and strategies was important.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

The study found that the school heads had different perceptions about the leadership practices. Even though the leadership practices are unique in terms of their focus in leadership administration, the study found that all of them could be employed by a leader at different points in time to achieve particular goals. They could also be administered for different stakeholders to achieve specific outcomes. This gives some level of flexibility to school heads to determine the most appropriate leadership practice for a particular incidence. After exploring the perceptions of the school heads on the leadership practices, the subsequent chapter focuses on the leadership practices the school heads engage in to ensuring quality teaching and learning.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### LEADERSHIP PRACTICES SCHOOL HEADS ENGAGE TO ENSURE QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

This chapter investigated the leadership practices adopted by the school heads to ensure quality teaching and learning. This was important because the adoption of particular leadership practices must be directed towards the achievement of specific school development goals, for which quality teaching and learning is one of such critical goals. The focus of the chapter was also in consonance with the conceptual framework of the study, which demonstrated that the adoption and implementation of leadership practices and styles influence the organisational outcomes such as quality level of teaching and learning.

The major themes identified under the section were leadership practices for teachers in promoting quality teaching, leadership practices for students in promoting effective learning, and leadership practices for educational stakeholders to promote a conducive learning environment. The organisation was in line with Northouse's (2019) elements of quality teaching and learning, which focuses on teachers, learners and the creation of conducive learning environment.

#### **Leadership Practices for Teachers in Promoting Quality Teaching and Learning**

Teachers are important stakeholders in the promotion of quality teaching and learning in every educational institution, including public SHSs. This is because they are the main medium and instrument responsible for delivering academic lessons and imparting knowledge to students. As a result, Northouse

(2019) posited that efforts to examine the quality of teaching and learning should explore issues surrounding the teaching staff. The major sub-themes identified under the section were leadership practices to ensure regularity and punctuality to school, and teacher motivation to enhance effectiveness.

The study found that issues related to the content and mode of teaching were handled by the Ghana Education Service through curriculum development and professional development of teachers. As a result, the major areas the school heads had control in the process of promoting quality teaching and learning in the schools were through ensuring their punctuality and regularity at school and motivating teachers to enhance effective teaching. The section, therefore, interrogated the leadership practices adopted by the school heads for teachers in promoting quality teaching and learning in the selected public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Leadership practices to ensuring regularity and punctuality of teachers at school**

In this section, the school heads described the leadership practices they employed to ensure the regularity and punctuality of teachers at school. The study found that different leadership practices were engaged by different school heads in the process of ensuring the regularity and punctuality of teachers to school. From the study, the general leadership practice adopted by the school heads to ensure punctuality and regularity at school was transactional leadership. Some of the narrations associated with the adoption of this leadership practice in relation to ensuring the regularity and punctuality of teachers at school were expressed by School heads as follows:

*Regularity and punctuality at school are issues you can't play with as a head if you want to improve the quality of teaching and learning in your administration. This is because it is these same teachers apart from teaching, will help supervise activities on campus to ensure that the students are learning effectively... so as head, you have to be firm on them (School head B).*

*I don't joke about punctuality and regularity at school at all... latest by 7:30am you have to be at school... a teacher also should not be more than five minutes late to class... you know now the Ghana Education Service is very much particular about contact hours and school engagement time... so sometimes, some of these lateness and absenteeism affect the quality of engagement students could have with their teachers (School head C).*

*I have set the standards myself... latest by 7:00am I will be in school... so you as a teacher cannot report after eight when students are in the classroom... if you are not hard people will relax and it will go against you as the head master... you know, some of these students are children of big men in the society... you will start receiving phone calls all over about your administration... and people will start comparing you to other head masters of the school and their achievement... I have to also make significant achievement under my administration for such comparison in the future (School head D).*

*We have set clear rules that one has to communicate to the head of department if he or she cannot come to school ahead of time and with tangible reasons... we do so that we can get other teachers to fill in the gaps created... I don't want any situation where students will be in class without any teacher delivering lessons. Then what are they here for? So I often go round inspecting classrooms to ensure that teachers are really present, which has been helping to put a check on them* (School head F).

The extracts showed that the school heads were very much concerned about the punctuality and regularity of teachers at school in the process of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. This was in agreement with the finding of Paletta *et al.* (2017) that teachers play a central role in academic improvement exercises and as such all efforts should be made to get the best out of them. Northouse (2019) indicated that ensuring punctuality and regularity in schools is one of the avenues for promoting teacher effectiveness. Punctuality and regularity are important elements in improving teaching and learning because they contribute to ensure that the scheduled engagement times for teaching and learning are adhered to (Northouse, 2019). In other words, punctuality and regularity of teachers in the classroom helps to enhance the effectiveness of the instructional hours of schools by promoting supervision, teaching and learning.

It could be deduced from the tone of the narrations from the school heads that the use of transactional leadership practice in this regard was as a result of the fact that punctuality and regularity at school were not negotiable. According



to Hallinger (2010), transactional leadership practice enables head teachers to gain greater control over activities in the schools by monitoring quality standards against the performance of stakeholders and acting accordingly to guarantee the achievement of the intended goals and objectives.

It could also be deduced from the extract that the school heads adopted the transactional leadership practice for immediate response. This was because they established the standards in terms of the reporting times to school and class, which does not require long decision making processes and negotiations. However, Harrington *et al.* (2015) stipulated that the effective adoption of transactional leadership practice requires strong leadership presence through effective monitoring and supervision. The implication is that the success in the adoption of the transactional leadership practice among the school heads in the public SHSs should be complemented by strong supervision to ensure compliance among teachers to help promote quality teaching and learning in the schools.

One of the fundamental difficulties in the application of transactional leadership practice to the achievement of quality teaching and learning in schools has been the over emphasis on punishment towards non-compliance. There is little regard about rewards for compliance which is equally good in motivating teachers to comply with laid down regulations and procedures to achieve quality teaching and learning. The study, however, found that the schools did not generate enough resources to be used in motivating teachers in this regard. Further, some of the school heads perceived punctuality and

regularity as a fundamental responsibility to every teacher which does not require motivation or rewards to encourage them to adhere to.

The study, however, found that some of the female school heads adopted transformational leadership practice to promote punctuality and regularity of teachers at school. One of the female school heads of a girls' school stated,

*You know, as a woman, if you become too strict on your subordinates they start saying all sort of things and describing you with so many things... so I engage them about reporting times and how to stick to them (School head E).*

Another female school head of a mixed-sex school added,

*In a male dominated teaching staff, if you adopt leadership practice that is seen to be a bit autocratic, they become agitated and begin to undermine your leadership, which could make your administration quite difficult... its natural that men do not want submit under women... so the strategy is to be more opened and involve them in the decision making process (School head G).*

The above narrations showed that the gender composition of the school heads and the teaching staff sometimes influenced the leadership practices adopted by the school heads. In other words, some of the female school heads were very much concerned about the feedback on their leadership practices and styles from their teaching staff, which influenced their adoption of transformational leadership practices in their schools. The study, therefore, found that whereas the male head teachers were more autocratic in their leadership style towards ensuring punctuality and regularity of teachers at

school, the female school heads were really participatory in the administration of leadership styles to encourage the teacher to be punctual and regular at school.

It must, however, be noted that these leadership practices were adopted by the school heads based on their lived experiences. In other words, the school heads were very much aware of the characteristics of their teaching staff and the leadership practices that could help achieve particular targets at any point in time. For example, one of the female school heads (E) reported,

*My predecessor was complained to be too autocratic and had serious problems with the teaching staff. I tried using some level of autocracy to enforce some school regulations, including punctuality in classes but the reception was very poor. So I decided to build consensus through school structures in almost everything, and it seems to be working... you know, as a leader, you have to be dynamic and innovative in getting the best out of your followers.*

A male school head (B) also indicated that he had to be strict on the teaching staff at some points to get the best out of them hence, his decision to adopt transactional leadership practice, which is more related to the autocratic leadership style. These showed the importance of lived experiences in the deployment of leadership practices among school heads in public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. In other words, the different lived experiences encountered by the school heads in the administration of the schools compelled

them to be innovative in the deployment of leadership practices to achieve institutional goals and objectives.

### **Leadership practices for teacher motivation to enhance teaching effectiveness**

The second section on leadership practices for teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning focused on teacher motivation to enhancing teaching effectiveness. According to Day and Antonakis (2012), teacher motivation is imperative and should be factored into efforts in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The study found that the school heads adopted both transformational and contingency leadership practices in the efforts to motivate teachers to enhance their effectiveness in the schools. In reference to the adoption of transformational leadership practices by the school heads to motivate the teachers, the study found that the heads relied on the various heads of departments to determine the professional development needs of the teachers and issue them the permission to build their capacities. For example, one of the school heads (School head H) narrated,

*One of the things to motivate teachers to enhance their teaching effectiveness is promoting or allowing them to participate in professional development programmes such as workshops, training programmes and seek higher academic qualification... Many of them want to have Masters' degree qualifications... so when I receive their applications to further their education or attend workshops, I consult their departmental heads in terms of the usefulness of area they want to advance their education to*

*the school and the plan to manage the engagement times likely to be affected... I also meet the heads of the department to agree on the maximum number of people we could allow for study leave every year... I do same for workshop programmes, and if possible sponsor their transportation and sometimes feeding and accommodation... all these are done to motivate the teachers to enhance the commitment and effectiveness in the school.*

Similar expressions were given by the other school heads who also adopted the transformational leadership practice to motivate their teaching staff to enhance their effectiveness in the schools. The statement showed that teacher motivation in relation to enhancing their teaching effectiveness focused largely on their professional development. The aim was to help build their capacity to deepen their knowledge on conceptual, theoretical and pedagogical issues to enhance their teaching skills. The creation of opportunities for teachers to balance their teaching career and advancement in academic development by the school leaders was considered as an avenue to meet some critical needs of the teachers to help motivate them to perform better in their teaching delivery.

The adoption of transformational leadership practice was considered as appropriate to ensure proper back-up system to ensure continuous teaching and learning in the schools. The engagement of the sub-structural leaders was also aimed at verifying the importance of such professional development programmes on the quality of teaching and learning in the schools. In other words, the use of transformational leadership practice was considered as a system of ensuring that teaching and learning will not be affected in the process

of promoting the professional development of teachers in the schools. This was due to the previous experiences of the school heads as some of them reported instances where some of the teachers pursued academic programmes that were not in line of their focus of teaching in the schools and switched to other organisations after their academic programmes.

The study, therefore, found that the careful scrutiny adopted by the school heads through the transformational leadership practice was partly used as the contribution of the school towards the professional development of the schools and based on that to bond them to serve the schools for some number of years. The implication is that the school heads used the transformational leadership practice as a measure to ensure that the schools benefited from the professional development programmes of teachers. In other words, the transformational leadership practice acts as a systematic process of regulating teacher motivating mechanisms to improve effective teaching and learning in the schools. This suggests that efforts to understand the leadership practices of school heads should be evaluated through the perspectives of their lived experiences, which is in line with the conceptual framework of the study and also agrees with the statement of Kezar and Holcombe (2017) that lived experiences of organisational leaders inform their subsequent choices and leadership strategies.

Apart from the transformational leadership practice, other school heads adopted the contingency leadership practice in the efforts to motivate teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness in the public schools. From the study, the main argument for the adoption of contingency leadership practice to



motivate the teachers in the public SHSs to improve their effectiveness was that every situation or experience is unique and has to be dealt with based on the merits and demerits. As a result, the school heads used various leadership approaches and practices to examine various cases to ascertain the impact on the entire school to arrive at a decision.

Nonetheless, some of the school heads indicated that some of the teachers interpreted the use of the contingency leadership practice as a way to favour some teachers over others in the approval of professional development programmes in the schools. This was because even though the same criteria were used to assess the possibility of approving professional development programmes, the differences in the approach and practice created different impressions for the teachers.

The implication is that different leadership practices create different impressions for the teaching staff, which is likely to have different impacts on their levels of motivation in delivering effective teaching in the schools. One of the school heads (C) indicated that even though he had set the criteria for qualification to obtain permission to continue education, he had to adopt leadership practices to ensure that school activities will not be affected in the process.

### **Leadership Practices for Students in Promoting Effective Learning**

Under this section, the study explored the leadership practices adopted by the school heads in promoting effective learning among students in the SHSs. The study found that the school heads generally adopted transactional and instructional leadership practices to ensure effective learning among the

students. The aim was to maintain law and order as well as instil discipline among the students.

It was also found that the adoption of transactional and instructional leadership practices afforded the school heads the opportunity to use autocratic leadership style to control or regulate the learning activities of the students to enhance the quality teaching and learning for improved students' academic achievement. It was deduced from the perspectives of the school heads that the use of autocratic leadership style was the most appropriate to get the best out of the students. Some of the narrations associated with the leadership practices of the school heads for students to promote effective learning were as follows:

*The students are very difficult to deal with because of their numbers and as such, setting clear rules and standards with associated punishments for breaching them is necessary to ensure compliance and main law and order (School head F).*

*With the students, you need to be clear and straight with them in terms of what to do at any point in time... but you need to supervise and apply the necessary sanctions as possible to put fear in them to enable them comply with school's regulations (School head G).*

*As a head, you need to regulate the activities of the students in school to ensure that their main goal of behavioural transformation for the achievement of good academic*

*performance in realised upon completion... the easiest way to do so is to set the protocols with clear timetable (School head H).*

From the above narrations, it could be deduced that the school heads perceived the use of instructional and transactional leadership practices to create a controlled environment through regulations and standards with associated punishments as the best approach to administer leadership to the students. Thus, school heads across the three categories of SHSs (Grades A, B and C), based on the gender compositions of the schools, held the same perceptions about leadership practices for students to ensure quality learning. One of the school heads added,

*As head teachers we act as their parents in school... and if the way the students are you need to control them to get the best out of them... otherwise, they will enjoy playing around without committing to the main reasons they were brought here (School head D).*

However, in as much as strict and non-negotiable leadership practices and styles could be critical in ensuring smooth and effective leadership administration among the school heads, it is likely to cause some problems to the school heads as students may not clearly understand the reasons and principles behind the various protocols to encourage them to comply with them. According to Kezar and Holcombe (2017), greater engagement of followers by leaders on leadership decisions are quintessential to enable them provide free support to the implementation of such decisions without agitations. The difficulties in handling the students as described by some of the school heads

could be due to their poor appreciation about the tenets behind some of the school protocols. As a result, Edwards and Aboagye (2015) suggested the need to use school counselling to regularly engage students to explain the motives behind some school regulations and protocols.

### **Leadership Practices for Creating Conducive Teaching and Learning Environment**

The third element about quality teaching and learning was on the creation of a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning. The section, therefore, investigated the leadership practices adopted by the school heads in the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment in the public SHSs. The study found that the school heads adopted contingency leadership practices to engage different categories of stakeholders in the bid to create conducive teaching and learning environment. This was because various stakeholders, including the Ghana Education Service, Old Students Associations, school management boards, and Parents-Teachers' Associations played essential roles in the provision of facilities and resources for the creation of conducive teaching and learning environment in the schools.

It was revealed from the interactions with the school heads that the Ghana Education Service (GES) was responsible for the provision of teaching and learning materials to promote effective teaching and learning in the schools. The GES was also in charge of the professional development of teachers and curriculum development of the schools. The Old Students Associations of the schools were also found to be playing enormous roles in the process of creating conducive teaching and learning environment for the schools by constructing facilities such as classroom blocks, dormitories, teacher bungalows, and

computer laboratories as well as providing school buses. The Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) also supported the schools by constructing some infrastructural projects in the school and contributing some financial assistance to support the administrative function of the schools.

The school management boards were responsible for school management policy decisions, which influence efforts to create conducive environment for effective teaching and learning in the schools. The compositions of the school management boards comprised astute personalities in the societies or communities within which the schools were located, including chiefs or members from the traditional councils, religious leaders, old students, parents, and students. The school heads provided some leadership practices in their engagements with these critical stakeholders to promote the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment.

With the contingency leadership practice as adopted by the school heads towards the aforementioned stakeholders, the study found that almost all the school heads attempted to build good rapport and interpersonal relationships with these stakeholders to get maximum support from them to improve the teaching and learning environment. Some of the narrations from the school heads explaining the reasons for their adoption of contingency leadership practice for such stakeholders in creating conducive teaching and learning environment are presented as follows:

*As a head teacher, you have to be innovative in your dealings with the GES because they are parent agency responsible for providing almost all the things you will need to effectively run*

*the school... you have to establish good rapport with them both formally and informally... this enables you to get prompt messages and responses on your requests (School head A).*

*All these stakeholders act as oversight roles over the schools by the head teacher... as a result, one has to be very strategic in dealing with them... this is because as a head, if you run into challenges, it is these stakeholders that you will run to for guidance, support and protection... so I handle them with great care and caution (School head B).*

*I prepare very well anytime I am going to meet my board, GES management, PTA or old students' association... I have to sound convincing to get support for approvals of my plans and also get support from them in the provision of essential resources and facilities to create conducive teaching and learning environment for both teachers and students (School head D).*

*You know the old students are very vibrant and active in terms of providing us infrastructure, so you need to acknowledge their leadership in whatever you do and involve them in your decision making processes... they are so much into teacher motivation to boost academic performance and winning the National Science and Maths Quiz... so you should know where the interest of the various stakeholders are and tailor some programmes and activities to secure their support (School head F).*



*You just have to be tactical in interacting with these critical stakeholders to get the best out of them... you know, there are competing demands for resources and attention from different schools. So you just have to manage them with decorum and engage them in your activities to share in your vision... one has to let them know the problems in the school, how they are affecting academic exercises, and what could be done to address the challenges (School head H).*

The extracts above showed that the school heads perceived the use of contingency leadership practice as the most appropriate to effectively handle the various critical stakeholders responsible for providing critical facilities and resources to create conducive teaching and learning environment in the schools. Thus, the critical control and contributions of the stakeholders towards the development of the schools compelled the school heads to adopt contingency leadership practice, which was considered as unique in meeting the varied needs and interests of various groups of people.

According to MacBeath (2006), leaders practising contingency leadership practice should be innovative to be able to combine different leadership styles on various scenarios and situations to achieve a particular goal. White and Hodgson (2003) suggested that truly effective leadership is not just about the qualities of the leader, but it is about striking the right balance between behaviours, needs, and context.

MacBeath (2006) also stipulated that the use of contingency leadership practice among various stakeholders requires experience to avoid conflicting

ideas and principles to help maintain leadership integrity. However, Onukwuba (2018) reported that organisational leaders are able to maintain leadership principles and credibility in the application of contingency leadership practices when they are guided by their vision and organisational or industrial issues with regard to the possible roles various stakeholders could play to achieve a common goal. This suggests that the school heads needed to be guided by the school's strategic vision or plan to help maintain their credibility in their application of contingency leadership practice for the key stakeholders responsible for the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment in the schools. This was important because Hofmeyer *et al.* (2015) indicated that leadership credibility is imperative to win the trust and confidence of stakeholders and followers to offer critical support to ensure successful leadership administration.

Nonetheless, the study found that most of the school heads did not have clear and documented strategic plans guiding their leadership administration of the schools. This was quite problematic as the lack of a comprehensive strategic plan to guide the leadership administration and practices of the school heads could affect the effectiveness and commitment of the roles of the various stakeholders in providing their support for the comprehensive development of facilities to help create conducive teaching and learning environment.

The study, however, found that the leadership style adopted by the school heads in relationship to the contingency leadership practice for the above stakeholders were more consensus, democratic and participatory. This was because the school heads perceived that these stakeholders had some influence

over their positions and on the evaluation of the quality of their leadership administration. As a result, the school heads wanted to be more participatory in their leadership styles to absolve them from any wrong leadership administrative outcomes that have the capacity to influence their continuous assumption of leadership roles in the schools. In addition, the adoption of contingency leadership practices enabled the school heads to adjust leadership approaches to satisfy the interests of the various stakeholders. This was important to enhance responsive leadership as it helped to whip the interests of the various stakeholders into the leadership administration of the school heads.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

In summary, the study found that the school heads adopted different leadership practices for different categories of stakeholders in the school. This was necessary to meet the peculiar needs and interests of the various stakeholders of the schools. Stakeholders of the schools were largely organised under three: teachers, students, and institutional (school management boards, PTA, GES, and old students' associations). Whereas instructional and transactional leadership practices coupled with autocratic leadership styles were administered to the students, transformational and contingency leadership practices coupled with participatory leadership style were respectively administered to the teachers and institutional stakeholders.

## CHAPTER SIX

### MODE OF OVERCOMING BARRIERS THAT IMPEDE SUCCESS IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Under this chapter, the study explored the barriers encountered by the school heads in their leadership administration of the schools as well as the mode of overcoming such barriers to effectively administer leadership in the public SHSs. This was imperative because adopting effective and innovative approaches to address leadership challenges was critical in ensuring the successful leadership administration of school heads. The chapter is organised under two broad themes: barriers impeding successful educational leadership, and mode of overcoming barriers to successful educational leadership.

#### **Barriers Impeding Successful Educational Leadership**

This section investigates the barriers encountered by the school heads that impeded the success of their educational leadership in the public schools. According to Day and Antonakis (2012), barriers to leadership administration and practices could frustrate the capacity of organisational leaders from effectively implementing their vision and strategies to cause significant transformation in their institutions. As a result, Earley (2013) indicated that one has to acknowledge the challenges confronting leadership in the bid to examine their effectiveness. From the study, the barriers impeding the successful educational leadership of the school heads were broadly organised under internal and external.

#### **Internal barriers impeding successful educational leadership**

The school heads encountered some internal barriers that impeded the success of their educational leadership in the schools. Some of the internal

barriers as indicated by the school heads were inadequate financial resources to effectively execute leadership plans and strategies, and difficulty building consensus among staff on critical issues. Some of the narrations advanced by the school heads on the financial difficulties they encountered in their leadership administration were as follows:

*As a head teacher of a public school, I am a bit limited in generating financial resources for teacher motivation and other critical areas not captured on the itemised bill... the situation is even worse under the free SHS, where we are not allowed to charge any fees from parents to augment government's subventions... this has really affected the funds we were generating through the PTA and their contribution towards infrastructural provision and the general development of the school... it is a bit challenging when you want to implement some ideas and strategies to move forward the school but limited with financial resources... for me in particular, I believe the government should reconsider the financial role of the PTA and even make it voluntary... with this, we can solicit funds to address some of the critical needs of the schools (School head B).*

*One thing is that innovative leadership administration requires readily available funds to fully and effectively implement your plans and ideas to achieve full vision for the school. But as you know, access to financial resources are limited in almost every*

*school... last year for example, I wanted to give financial rewards to my best performing teachers from each subject area to encourage them to increase their performance. But I could only give them plaques due to financial constraints (School head F).*

*We have a maintenance section in the school. However, anytime something goes beyond repairs, it takes quite some time for us to replace it because of financial constraints and budget restrictions associated with public expenditure and accountability principles... some of these spending restrictions sometimes frustrate the capacity of head teachers in functioning effectively... I am forced to use my own resources in some occasions. This is because I want the things fixed to enhance my achievements (School head G).*

Similar issues were given by other research participants. The narrations show that the public school heads were limited in their capacity to organise financial resources to effectively execute their leadership agenda. This could have serious negative implications on their achievement since financial resources play critical role in leadership administration and practices. According to Altunas (2014), on the entrepreneurial leadership theory, excessive regulatory and procedural restrictions on leaders frustrate their ability and capacity to adopt innovative strategies to create the needed social, environmental and economic opportunities needed to stimulate organisational



processes for growth and development. In other words, the school heads were restricted through regulatory mechanisms to practise entrepreneurial leadership.

This could be attributed to the fact that the entrepreneurial leadership is more appropriate in a private setting with limited oversight institutions and regulatory bodies to protect the interests of the public and other critical stakeholders (Esmer & Dayi, 2018). Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) posited that strict procedural and regulatory mechanisms are established in public sector management to ensure compliance to auditing processes and principles, and to ensure the judicious use of public resources. According to Chin (2015), it is always important to allow for some dedicated sources of resource generation for leaders to enable them create the necessary financial space to adopt innovative leadership practices to advance their administration towards the achievement of organisational goals and development.

In reference to the difficulties in building consensus among internal stakeholders to implement strategic activities to advance the development of the schools, some of the challenges as stated by the school heads are as follows:

*One major internal leadership challenge has been building consensus among internal structures of both teaching and non-teaching staff... some critical decision could be delayed unnecessarily just by trying to build consensus through the internal structures to increase popularity of programmes and strategies among workers (School head B).*

*Internal politics is a major concern in leadership administration as the head of this school... you know we have those who think they have been here over a long period of time and are also in the same rank with me, and so think they deserve to be the head or they should have been appointed as the head... so they sometimes team up to undermine my administration to show that I am not performing... it is a huge problem (School head C).*

*You know men naturally find it difficult taking instructions from females... so sometimes it is a bit of a problem when you want to carry your staff along in the implementation of strategies to achieve your vision... some of them become obstacles trying to discourage others from whatever idea you bring up (School head G).*

The extracts showed that internal politics posed a major challenge to the smooth and effective leadership administration of school heads in public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. From the narrations, some of the factors that contributed to the difficulty in building consensus for effective leadership administration in the schools were gender and seniority in serving the schools. Thus, gender differences in terms of school heads and staff of the schools were in some instances creating leadership challenges. This is inherent in the socio-cultural setting of most Ghanaian societies, where males automatically become the head of the household and the family and as such, females have to take instructions and directives from the males (Edwards & Aboagye, 2015).

This seemingly socio-cultural attribute of the people has entered into the leadership structure and authority of the schools, where some males found it difficult in taking instructions from females. This is so because the taking of instructions from females is considered as a travesty to the socio-cultural norms of most Ghanaian societies. Nonetheless, Gopal and Chowdhury (2014) argued that modernisation of societies and globalisation are gradually eroding such power struggle between gender groups in most African societies. This is because Gandolfi and Stone (2016) reported that leadership administration and appointment in the modern society pays little regard to gender and focus more on competence and delivery to drive forwards the attainment of organisational goals and objectives. The implication is that some staff members of the schools had their values not modernised to accept females as leaders or heads of their schools.

Another factor contributing to the internal politics causing serious challenges to leadership administration and practices of school heads in the public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis was long service in the schools. The study found that some of the schools preferred appointing their old students and people with same religious affiliations with the schools (missionary schools) to head the schools. This sometimes caused discontent to some teachers who had served in the schools over long years and equally qualify to be heads. It was some of these scenarios that were creating internal political issues to distract the leadership administration and practices of school heads in the public schools. Thus, some of the teachers perceived themselves as equally or more qualified to assume the headship roles of the schools hence, their reluctance to submit

themselves to the authorities of their school heads. The implication is that the appointment processes of some of the schools create avenues for school heads to face some leadership challenges through internal politics from their staff members.

### **External barriers impeding successful educational leadership**

Apart from the internal barriers encountered by the school heads that impeded their successful educational leadership and administration, the study found that some external elements also caused some significant challenges to the smooth administration of leadership in the public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. From the study, the critical external barriers encountered by the school heads in their leadership administration and practices, included interferences from external stakeholders, and delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders. Some of the school heads expressed their issues concerning interferences from external stakeholders in their leadership administration of the schools, which include the following:

*I am mostly unable to implement full disciplinary actions against teachers and students who especially hail from the community... they mostly go and bring prominent traditional and religious leaders to come and plead on their behalf... sometimes, someone could indulge in some activities that require total withdrawal or dismissal from the school but you will get a traditional or religious leader to lead a delegation to come and plead on their behalf... you know disciplinary actions are set for people to learn their lessons. But with such a system, where traditional*

*and religious leaders are always ready to come and plead on behalf of their people it doesn't make them learn... and you know we operate in a traditional society that we give so much reverence to our traditional religious leaders... so you can't look at them in face and ignore their plead... some of them are even members of the school board... so we are mostly forced to compromise on our standards and rules... such a system has created precedence for others to follow, which makes it difficult to strictly administer leadership practices that require standards... the unfortunate thing is that these same people will turn around and criticise about low standards in the school... it's a huge problem (School head F).*

*Sometimes, you realise the old students doing the bidding for their colleagues to become the head of the school... you know we also have people at the GES offices who give us information... it is as if you have to be an old student of the school before you can administer effective leadership in the school... meanwhile, their colleagues are heading other schools which don't see any problem with that... oh its serious... and sometimes you feel discouraged as a head (School head H).*

*As heads, we always get interferences from the GES... you know the GES has a political head, so based on feedback from the public or policy directions of the government of the day, they try*

*to dictate how things are done internally, which sometimes are not in line with the leadership principles and ethics of you the head... but what can you do? You just have to comply to avoid being tagged as a saboteur of the government (School head D).*

The above narratives showed the nature of interferences the school heads encountered with their leadership administration of the schools. Similar expressions were given by other school heads. The results showed that the external interferences had critical influence on the leadership practices of the school heads as they were unable to remain firm with their leadership principles and ethics. Such external influences and interferences were likely to affect the innovativeness and independence of the school heads to gain critical control over the administration of the schools. According to Hutchings (2015), influences from external superior officers in leadership administration frustrate the capacity of leaders to adopt innovative ideas to address critical issues in their institutions.

Jing and Avery (2016) also indicated that external influence over school leadership is a disincentive to empowering school leaders to adopt innovative strategies and practices directly responsive to the challenges of their schools. Accordingly, the interferences from the external stakeholders of the schools could cause the school heads of the public SHS to be less empowered and innovative to adopt critical practices and strategies themselves to help address issues confronted by their schools. This is because such interferences sometimes put fear in the leaders and cause them to always wait for their superior officers to direct them on various actions and strategies to be taken.



Further, the interferences from such critical stakeholders of the schools cause disunity among the leadership front of the schools as such stakeholders also form part of the school management board. A critical analysis of the results showed that some of the interferences were politically motivated. According to Earley (2013), politically motivated interferences mostly defy logic and sometimes threaten the continuous leadership administration of organisational leaders. This sometimes compels organisational leaders to ignore suggestions and contributions from stakeholders they perceived to be driven by political motives (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

The implication is that some of the school heads were likely to lose trust and confidence in some of the key stakeholders that they perceived to be motivated by political factors to undermine their leadership. In addition, interferences from external stakeholders are likely to erode the leadership confidence of the school heads and also affect the effective implementation of leadership practices. Further, the political interferences from external stakeholders could reduce the amount of support school heads could obtain from such stakeholders for effective administration of leadership in the schools.

With respect to the delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders as a barrier to successful leadership administration in the public SHSs, the study found that the school heads significantly relied on the support of the external stakeholders for critical support to effectively administer leadership practices in the schools. Delays in the provision of such support mostly delayed the implementation of some activities and strategies as planned by the school heads.

From the study, some of the school heads (A-D) complained about delays in the provision of teaching and learning materials, government subventions, and human resource from the GES. Others (School heads G and H) also complained about delays in the delivery of promises mostly given by the PTA and old students associations.

The study found that such delays sometimes frustrated the capacity of the school heads to effectively implement leadership practices. This showed the importance of the support from external stakeholders to effective leadership administration of the public SHSs. This is due to the fact that the public SHSs do not generate funds by themselves to allow the school heads to finance most of their activities by themselves. However, the schools rely on subventions from the central government, through the GES and the Metropolitan Assembly, to provide some of the critical support in terms of infrastructure and resources to aid the effective leadership administration of the schools.

### **Mode of Overcoming Barriers to Successful Educational Leadership**

The second major broad theme under the chapter was to investigate the approaches adopted by the school heads in addressing their leadership challenges to ensuring successful educational leadership. This was important because the ability of the school heads to overcome their leadership challenges empowered them to effectively implement their leadership vision and strategies to achieve successes in their tenure. Sub-themes identified under the major theme were mode of overcoming internal leadership challenges and mode of addressing external leadership barriers. The ensuing sections, therefore, describe in detail the mode of overcoming both the internal and external

challenges the school heads were confronted with in their leadership administration in the public SHSs.

### **Mode of overcoming internal leadership barriers for successful educational leadership**

Under this sub-section, the study explored the strategies adopted by the school heads in overcoming the internal leadership barriers they were confronted with to help achieve successful educational leadership. The major internal leadership barriers were inadequate financial resources to effectively execute leadership plans and strategies, and difficulty building consensus among staff on critical issues. In reference to the barrier of inadequate financial resources, some of the narrations from the school heads are presented below:

*As a head, you need to be innovative to generate resources from other source to enable you to succeed... I mostly fall on support from old students and PTA to enable me overcome some financial barriers (School head B).*

*Sometimes you need to spread your activities over a long period of time so that you implement them gradually... even though it takes quite some time to achieve some successes with this approach, it is better than not doing anything (School head D).*

*I sometimes write letters to the GES and other influential people in the society about the seriousness of issues in the school and the need for urgent attention... sometimes, you need to scare them for them to act quickly on your issues (School head F).*

The above narratives showed that the school heads adopted strategies to generate financial resources from both traditional and non-traditional sources to address internal financial challenges to leadership administration of the schools. This was important because financial barrier to leadership administration was common to all the school heads. As a result, the ability of the school heads to either partially or fully overcome such a critical barrier was imperative for promoting effective and successful leadership administration. The study found that the school heads used the PTA and old students to address some infrastructural problems of the schools. This was because budgets for the implementation of such projects to advance leadership administration were mostly beyond the subvention and resources available to the school heads.

The implication is that the school heads had some limitations in their freedom to implement their leadership strategies to achieve success. This is incongruent with the tenets of the entrepreneurship leadership theory by Day and Antonakis (2012) that a leader should be given access to the critical support, factors or inputs to combine them effectively to implement their leadership strategies to bring critical changes in their institutions. The results are, however, in consonance with the assertion of Kouzes and Posner (2017) that resources are generally scarce and organisational leaders have to be innovative to generate resources to achieve some level of success.

The study, however, found that school heads for the schools with less vibrant old students' associations and less affluent PTA members had serious challenges raising financial resource outside the traditional sources of government subventions. Thus, some of the old students were ready and willing

to support their alma mater to enable them compete with other SHSs in national contests and as such, provide some financial and infrastructural resources to their schools. Such gestures contribute positively to the success of leadership administration in the public SHSs.

With respect to the barrier of difficulty in building consensus among staff on critical issues, the study found that some of the school heads adopted autocratic leadership style in some instances to have such issues implemented. One of the school heads (A) stated, “Sometimes, you just have to be autocratic to get issues done quickly to achieve the expected results”. Thus, the school heads perceived that consensus building was not feasible in all aspects of leadership administration in the schools due to varied political interests. In as much as autocratic leadership style is considered as an innovative approach in addressing the barrier associated with building consensus among staff for critical issues to be implemented, Earley (2017) argued that autocratic leadership style should be critically scrutinised in public office administration to guarantee the judicious use of public resources. Another school head also reported of using various levels of departmental leaderships to get things done instead of trying to build consensus among all teachers or staff.

Other school heads (C-F) used either majority views or engaged few staff members who share in their leadership vision to implement some of their leadership strategies and activities. Further, one of the school heads indicated to use some of the few supporters as points of influence to convince other staff members through informal processes to ensure that some strategic activities in the schools gain greater support from the internal stakeholders. The results

suggest that in as much as the school heads wish to implement their strategic activities even with autocratic leadership style, they were also sometimes concerned about securing the support of internal stakeholders to enhance the success of the activities. Thus, Earley (2017) posited that greater support and appreciation from stakeholders are critical inputs that give confidence to leaders in strategic leadership endeavours.

### **Mode of overcoming external leadership barriers for successful educational leadership**

Overcoming external barriers in leadership administration in the public SHSs was imperative to enhance the level of control of the school heads to further help to promote successful leadership administration. From the study, the main external barriers confronted by the school heads were interferences from external stakeholders, and delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders. With the barrier on interferences from external stakeholders, the study found that the school heads tried to manage them through either discussions or ignoring them. One of the school heads stated,

*You know they are elderly and respected persons in the society... so you just need to engage them one on one to explain the reasons behind your actions and your expectations about the course of action... sometimes, they understand you and change their positions but some are just adamant and will continue to come back with issues (School head F).*

Similar narrations were given by other school heads. The above expression showed that the school heads were sometimes tactical in handling interferences from the external stakeholders. This was largely due to the fact



that the external stakeholders had critical influence in their continuous stay in office as school heads of the public SHSs. As a result, they were sometimes unable to dismiss the interferences from the external stakeholders outright, as it may have serious implications on their positions as school heads. According to Cranston (2013), interferences from members of appointing bodies in organisational leadership administration sometimes erode the independence and control of leaders and dip their confidence in adopting strategic measures to address critical issues in the course of their institutional administration.

Thus, even though discussions with the external stakeholders sometimes worked, their persistence in their interferences could be frustrating and cause the school heads to set aside their leadership values and principles to meet their demands. Some of the school heads, especially those with few number of years in their leadership positions, actually indicated that they sometimes had no options than to compromise or yield to their persistent quest to ensure peaceful administration.

The study, however, found that some of the experienced school heads (those who had occupied the position over a long period of time i.e. above five years) sometimes ignored the concerns from the external stakeholders when they perceive their interferences as not necessary and not in line with their leadership strategies and goals. One of them narrated,

*Sometimes you have to remain resolute, otherwise they will make you like a puppet... but you as the leader has an agenda to accomplish that you have to remain focus and ensure that any external concerns come to add to yours to address issues in*

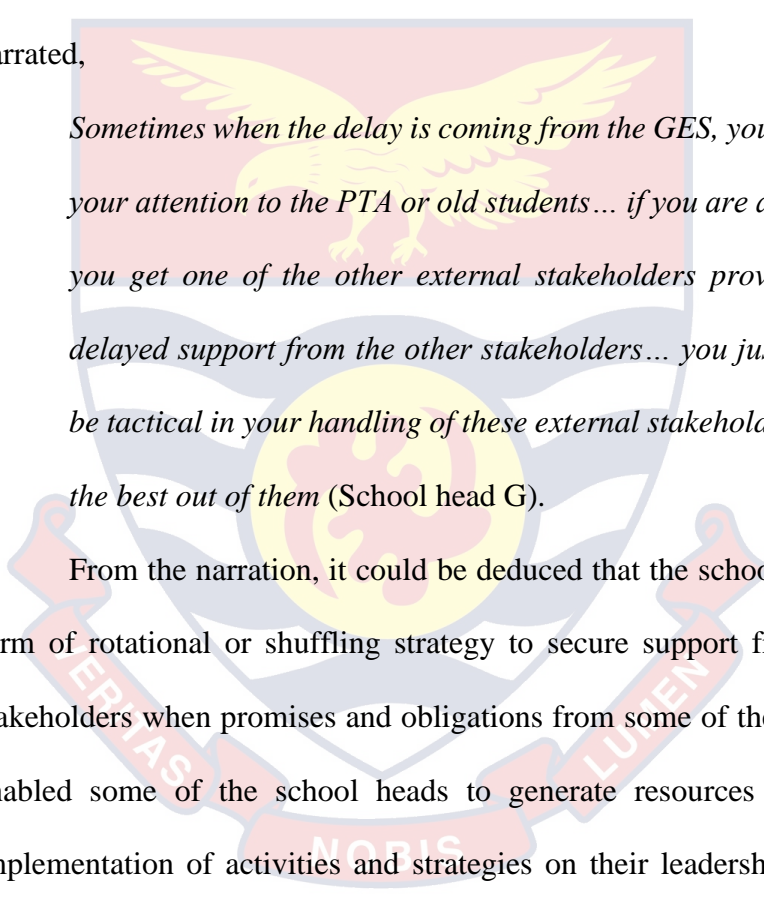
*moving the school forward and not to create extra problems for you... so if I see that their concerns are not necessary, I ignore them... if you do that they begin to be cautious about the things they bring up* (School head C).

The result showed that effective management of external interferences was essential for the school heads to implement their leadership strategies and agenda. In other words, some of the external interferences were perceived by the school heads as distractive to their focus to implement their leadership agenda and as such tried as much as possible to ignore them to enable focus on their leadership goals and strategies. This is imperative as described by Hutchings, et. al. (2012) that successful leadership administration requires leaders to remain focused on the vision and agenda, and implement key strategies and activities to help achieve key targets in their leadership agenda.

In all cases, the study found that the level of experience of the school heads, regarding the number of years served in leadership positions, was important in handling the interferences from external stakeholders. This was because the school heads gain experiences based on their previous encounters with the external stakeholders to appreciate the subsequent approaches to be used to manage them to maintain balance in relationship between their leadership agenda and that of the external stakeholders. This is in consonance with the statement of Walker and Hallinger (2015) that leadership skills and experiences are evolutionary, which require constant practice to guide the decisions and actions of leaders in their subsequent handling and management of issues. In other words, the results disassociate from the argument of

Onukwuba (2018) about trait theory that leadership qualities are innate or inborn, and about values and attributes peculiar to some groups of people, who are naturally born to be leaders.

On the barrier about delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders, the study found that the school heads managed the situation by shifting focus among the various stakeholders, and managing the situation with the little resources available to them. For example, one of the school heads narrated,



*Sometimes when the delay is coming from the GES, you can shift your attention to the PTA or old students... if you are a bit lucky you get one of the other external stakeholders providing the delayed support from the other stakeholders... you just have to be tactical in your handling of these external stakeholders to get the best out of them (School head G).*

From the narration, it could be deduced that the school head had some form of rotational or shuffling strategy to secure support from the external stakeholders when promises and obligations from some of them delayed. This enabled some of the school heads to generate resources to maintain the implementation of activities and strategies on their leadership agenda in the public SHSs. However, some of the school heads reported that they had no option than to wait till such supports were delivered by the external stakeholders to enable them to implement some critical issues on their leadership agenda. This suggests that delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders has a rippling effect on delaying the implementation of activities on the

leadership agenda of school heads at the public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The study, however, found that the school heads that waited until the external supports were provided were either those with less vibrant old students' association and less affluent members on their PTA or those with strained relationships with some of the external stakeholders. The implication is that irrespective of the barriers posed by the external stakeholders, maintaining good relationships with them was imperative for school heads to generate resources to implement critical issues on their leadership agenda and vision to ensure successful educational leadership administration.

#### **Summary of the Chapter**

From the study, the barriers impeding the successful educational leadership of the school heads were broadly organised under internal and external. Some of the internal barriers as indicated by the school heads were inadequate financial resources to effectively execute leadership plans and strategies, and difficulty building consensus among staff on critical issues. The critical external barriers encountered by the school heads in their leadership administration and practices, included interferences from external stakeholders, and delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders. The school heads adopt strategies to generate financial resources from both traditional and non-traditional sources to address internal financial challenges to leadership administration of the schools. With the barrier on interferences from external stakeholders, the study found that the school heads tried to manage them through either discussions or ignoring them.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### FACTORS INFLUENCING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SCHOOL HEADS IN PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

This chapter explores the factors influencing the leadership practices of school heads in public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This was imperative to ascertain the factors to be considered during the appointment of school heads for particular public SHSs. Understanding the factors influencing leadership practices of school heads in public high SHSs was essential to determine the likely successes and challenges to be expected in leadership administration of the schools. From the study, some of the critical factors identified as influencing the leadership practices of the school heads were gender, age, educational characteristics, and religious views.

#### **Gender as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads**

The research participants were requested to indicate how their gender characteristics influenced their leadership practices in the public SHSs. From the study, the school heads generally admitted that their gender attributes played an important role in their leadership practices and experiences. One of the female school heads stated,

*As a woman, I understand the concerns of my girls... I have been there before so I know... so I am mostly able to determine the truth and lies from their expressions... I am also able to liaise effectively with the school nurse to provide basic drugs and facilities for students as first aid to their sickness and also manage their monthly issues associated with their puberty*

*rites... some of these things may elude a male school head but as a woman and a mother, you are able to explain body and growth changes associated with puberty to them and teach them how to manage them (School head D).*

One of the male school heads also narrated,

*As an old boy of the school, I knew all the loopholes in the security architecture of the school... the first thing I did as a head teacher was to place security men at vantage points to ensure that one goes through the proper protocols to secure exit when going out... this has helped to improve discipline in the school (School head H).*

The extracts above showed the importance of the synergy between the gender of school heads and their schools in leadership administration and practices. Thus, a leader has to understand the conditions and situations of the followers to be able to institute measures and strategies to address some critical issues. In other words, male school heads for male schools or female school heads for female schools were found to be an important factor for the heads to appreciate the conditions of the students and adopt the appropriate leadership practice and strategy to effectively address them. This argument was further corroborated by one of the female school heads heading a mixed-sex school that she sometimes consulted the male assistant school head of the school about some conditions expressed by the male students to ascertain their truthfulness and seriousness, especially in the initial stages of her leadership administration.



The implication is that the experiences of the school heads in relation to peculiar needs of particular gender group partly informs the leadership practices of the school heads. A male school head for a mixed-sex school also posited that he has delegated some of his leadership responsibilities, concerning the female students to housemistresses and some female teachers in the school. He added,

*You know it is somehow unethical to delve so much into female issues... so you leave them to the female teachers to handle them... they are more effective and understand their issues better*  
(School head G).

The extract showed that differences in the gender characteristics between school heads and students sometimes compelled them to delegate some of their functions and leadership authorities to other teachers. The implication is that the gender characteristics of school heads in relation to that of the school partly determined the approach of engagement of teachers in the leadership administration of the public SHSs. The result further suggested that appointing a school head with different gender characteristics from that of the school could affect leadership performance and effectiveness of the school heads.

The study further interrogated how the gender of school heads influenced their administration of leadership over the other gender cohorts. From the study, School head C stated,

*It is naturally normal for female school heads to sometimes receive cold attitudes and opposition from their male subordinates. I therefore task the trouble makers with deliverables to get them*

*engage. They are therefore compelled to deliver to prove their perceived superior mentality and ideas. So its all about how you use them in your administration. I also encounter more challenges with the female subordinates.*

Another female school head narrated,

*Some of the male subordinates are difficult to with. Especially, those at the Deputy Director rank, who also qualify to head schools. They virtually try to challenge your decisions and actions. They sometimes organise camps among the teachers to oppose your decisions and undermine your administration. They see themselves as better equipped with leadership skills than myself. But you have to be resolute as a head because the responsibility lies on you to deliver (School head D).*

However, a male school head indicated,

*The female subordinates are very submissive and easily comply with directives and instructions. The only challenge is that they are sometimes distracted with family issues which sometimes delay the delivery of some of their assigned job tasks (School head H).*

The above narrations showed that the female school heads had to navigate through some opposing forces from the male subordinates in their leadership administration. This is due to the socio-cultural perception about males as a natural leader over females. Thus, in Ghana, males are considered as the heads of their households, while family heads are naturally reserved for males within its socio-cultural norms. These norms and perceptions are

sometimes extended to the job front to frustrate female leaders in their administration. Within the school system, some of the subordinates failed to acknowledge that leadership is not necessarily about traits or rights in the modern society but based on one's fitness to set criteria such as years of experience, competence, and vision, among others.

It was however interesting to note that the female subordinates subjected themselves to the leadership power of the male school heads. This was because of the socio-cultural perception that makes it normal for males to assume leadership roles over females. It was again interesting to note that the male subordinates in the female schools were submissive and supported the leadership administration of the female school heads. This was largely because it was virtually not possible for males to head such schools. Thus, appointment of school heads in the single sex schools was intricately linked to their old students, who belong to the same gender cohort. As a result, the male subordinates in the female sex schools know that they cannot assume the headship in such schools hence, their supportive role to their female heads. The implication is that the submissiveness of one gender cohort under the leadership of the opposing gender group was largely due to power-play on who best fits for the headship position.

### **Age as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads**

Another issue identified from the study as a factor influencing the leadership practices of school heads of public SHSs was their age characteristics. The study found that all the school heads were above 50 years. Some of the school heads were older than all other colleague staff members,

while others were same or younger than some of the staff members. From the study, it was found that the school heads who were generally older than their staff members were accorded with much respect which allowed them to freely implement their leadership strategies. On the other hand, school heads with many staff members older than them had some challenges of insubordination from such colleague teachers. Some of the narrations to buttress the aforementioned issues were as follows.

*Oh for my staff members, they see me as a father because I'm older than all of them... so mostly if I present an idea, they hardly challenge me (School head A).*

*You sometimes get challenges and some seemingly competition from the older colleagues... they believe their views should be superior to you as the head because of their age... you are sometimes unable to scold them for some of their actions because of their age as you will have done with the younger ones... so sometimes I delegate some of my activities to them for them to feel part of the leadership administration... you just have to manage them (School head F).*

From the above narration, the age characteristics of the school heads in relation to that of their colleague teachers was crucial for the effective implementation of their leadership vision and strategies. This association could be explained from the socio-cultural perspectives of the people in Ghana, which accords some respect to the elderly as having superior ideas over younger ones because of their experiences and level of exposure to many situations and

experiences. This suggests that the age characteristics of the school heads in relation to the staff members should be considered by the appointing authorities in the process of selecting school heads for particular schools.

This was because such age characteristics of the leader critically affects their level of control and ability to rally support among colleague teachers to implement leadership vision and strategies. Chikoko *et al.* (2015) posited that one of the important aspects of organisational leadership is the readiness of the subordinates to accept leaders as qualified and having the required attributes to lead them. This forms the basic foundation for the effectiveness of organisational leadership that enables them to gain support for the implementation of their ideas and vision.

### **Educational Characteristics as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads**

The study inquired from the research participants about the influence of their educational characteristics on their leadership practices and experiences. Some of the extracts presented by the sampled school heads are as follows:

*I am able to bring my teachers along with my leadership administration because of my higher educational attainment... aside my extensive experience and years of service, the teachers also accord me with the necessary recognition because I either have same or higher educational qualification than most of them... you know as a leader, you need to have such high personal attributes to avoid unnecessary competition from followers (School head C).*

*You know higher education expands one's views and perception about human interaction and behaviour... I mostly use my experiences from human resource management to determine the needs of my teachers and implement some leadership practices and human resource management practices to carry them along in my leadership administration (School head D).*

*My knowledge and experience in educational administration have equipped me with some leadership skills in education that enables me to implement some leadership strategies and practices to address particular issues in the school (School head E).*

*Sometimes staff members with same or higher levels of education try to undermine my leadership... they are of the view that they are equally qualified to be appointed as school heads... but they don't know experience counts a lot (School Head F).*

The extracts above showed the critical role played by educational characteristics of school heads in leadership experiences, practices and administration of public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Thus, the knowledge and experiences gathered by school heads through their areas of academic specialisations contributed to their development of particular views and perceptions about leadership styles and approaches, which influenced their leadership practices. Juntrasook *et al.* (2013) reported that education helps to build the leadership characteristics and experience of people and as such, the



level and areas of specialisation in education are critical in shaping the leadership attributes of individuals. Juntrasook (2014), therefore, suggested the need to interrogate the educational background of people to ascertain the extent to which they could fit particular leadership positions or roles. In other words, efforts to understand the leadership practices of leaders could be done through a retrospective analysis of their background characteristics, including their education characteristics.

According to Gandolfi and Stone (2017), leadership experiences and practices could be developed through educational advancement and practical leadership exposures or training programmes. The implication is that the content of the educational training of the school heads was imperative in developing their leadership perceptions and strategies for the effective administration of public SHSs. Gandolfi and Stone (2017) posited that educational programmes on leadership training and educational administration expose leaders to various leadership theories and concepts and allows them to choose the appropriate theories or concepts to govern their administration of schools. The results further suggested the need for school heads in public SHSs to be given some level of training or orientation in educational administration or human resource management to enable them appreciate certain issues and concerns from the staff.

It could also be deduced from the narrations that the educational level of the school heads in relation to that of the teachers had influence on leadership administration in terms of support or otherwise of leadership practices. This shows the importance of the educational characteristics of school heads in their

leadership appointments and administration. The implication is that the educational characteristics of the school heads should be comparable with that of the colleague teachers aside all other criteria used for their appointments. Such comparable educational characteristics enable the school heads to implement their leadership practices with much ease. In other words, colleague teachers are more likely to have confidence in their school heads and adhere to their leadership principles when they perceived them to be superior in terms of educational qualification.

The finding is in consonance with the conceptual framework that the background characteristics in terms of education characteristics and subordinates' personalities have critical influence on leadership experiences. According to Afegbua and Adejuwon (2012) leaders should possess some characteristics that are superior to and unique from that of the followers to enable them accord the leaders with some level of respect and accept their leadership and leadership practices. Such superior characteristics enable leaders to exert their influence and authority to effectively implement their leadership practices to achieve the expected outcomes (Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012).

### **Religious Views as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads**

Another sub-theme explored by the study under the factors influencing the leadership practices of the school heads was religious views. This was very crucial as religion plays a critical role in the socio-cultural environment of the people of Ghana and for that matter Cape Coast Metropolis. According to Hassan *et al.* (2018), leadership experiences and practices is a function of one's socio-cultural experiences and appreciation of role of such experiences in

achieving particular organisational outcomes, which religion plays an immense role. From the study, the research participants acknowledged the role of religion in their leadership experiences and practices. The study found that some of the school heads drew inspirations from their religious leaders to guide them in their leadership administration and practices. It must be noted that five out of the eight schools were affiliated to religious institutions. All the single sex schools were religious affiliated schools, while the mixed schools were not affiliated to religious institutions. Some of the narrations about the role of religion in the leadership experiences and practices of the school heads are outlined as follows:

*As a school head with a number of teachers and students under my administration and care, I first subject my leadership plans to my religious values and principles, and pray about them before implementation (School head B).*

*As a head teacher of a mission school, you have to ensure that your leadership practices are in agreement with religious values and principles of the church... that is why they appoint people from the church to head the school... in some cases I consult my religious leaders for guidance (School head C).*

*Religion is part of us as a people. So sometimes you use religious beliefs to settle issues and provide clear leadership directions for the people you lead... you know religious values are becoming like universal principles, so I am able to use such values and principles to bring the parents, teachers and students*

*together to provide effective leadership to advance the course of the school (School head D).*

It could be deduced from the extracts that school heads of public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis drew some leadership experiences from their religious values, beliefs and principles. Thus, the religious practices and the interactions between school heads and religious leaders helped to shape their leadership experiences and eventually influence their leadership practices. The implication is that religious beliefs sometimes serve as the basis for some of the leadership practices, approaches and strategies of the schools heads. This was so because religion was an integral part of the socio-cultural practices of the people of Ghana. The study, however, found that the use of religious beliefs and values to rally followers behind school leadership and leadership practices was largely due to the dominance of Christian religion in the Metropolis coupled with the high participation of the Christian religion in the administration of the schools.

Even though the selected schools were all public schools, most of them were established by religious bodies, who have various degrees of influence in the administration of the schools. Accordingly, the leadership values and principles should bear some resemblance with the religious background of the schools. Nonetheless, the approach of always appointing school heads who share same or similar faith with the established religious institutions could narrow the appointment process and ignore competence, which will be disincentive to staff members who do not share same or similar faith. This is likely to affect the level of motivation and commitment of teachers, who do not

share same or similar faith, to strive to rise through the leadership or promotional rungs of the schools.

### **School Category as a Factor Influencing Leadership Practices of School Heads**

The study further found that the categories of the schools had influence on the leadership administration and leadership practices of the school heads. This was because various categories of the schools had particular focus and targets in terms of students' academic achievements and infrastructure that shaped the leadership practices of the school heads. The study found that the category A schools were more focused on National Science and Maths Quiz and students' achievements in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. Some of the narrations given by the school heads from the Category A schools were as follows:

*You know our old students are very much particular about National Science and Maths Quiz. So you have to convince them about the strategies you intend to use to win the ultimate prize or beat our rival schools. They come in to provide all the necessary support when they are convinced (School head A)*

*Here we have standards to standards and integrity to protect. So as the head, you have to make sure the students do well in the WASSCE exams to win the support of the PTA and old students. When they gain trust in you, they come in to support your activities and provide your requests. From there, you also have to be strict on teachers and students to meet their expectations (School head B).*

*The topmost priority as head of this school is to always be among the best in everything. So you lay down your vision and strategies to get the support from the Board. Once they see the results, they come in to support your administration (School head D).*

The above narrations showed that the school boards, old students and PTA played critical role in influencing the leadership decisions and actions of school heads in the Category A schools. Thus, the leadership focus of such schools is on results and achievements in terms of students' performance. Accordingly, leadership attention, practices and efforts are largely geared towards such direction to win the trust and confidence of stakeholders. This is imperative for the school heads to assert their leadership authority in the schools as well as maintain their leadership positions.

However, the school heads of the Categories B and C, even though were also concerned about academic achievements, were also too much focused on infrastructure. Some of the narrations were as follows:

*You know over here we have serious infrastructure problems which affect everything in the school. So as the head, you always lobbying the Member of Parliament, Metropolitan Chief Executive and other stakeholders on how to improve on the infrastructure. Without these critical infrastructure, people are a bit measured about academic achievement because they are all aware about the challenges we face. But we do our best to improve our academic achievements (School head F).*



*Here, you have to challenge yourself as a head to do more because you are a bit handicapped in terms of infrastructure. Student quality is also not as good as the other schools. But you have to do your best by encouraging both teachers and students within the limited constraints (School head H).*

The extracts showed that there is generally low pressure on the categories B and C schools to perform in terms of academic achievements as compared to the Category A schools. This was due to the low pressure from old students and infrastructural challenges. The implication is that the categories of the schools influenced stakeholder expectations from the school heads, which eventually influenced their leadership practices.

### **Summary of the Chapter**

In summary, the study found that some background characteristics of the school heads in terms of age and gender characteristics in relation to their schools had critical influence over leadership practices in the public SHSs. Further, religious views and educational characteristics influenced the leadership practices of the school heads. Thus, it was deduced from the entire analysis that the superiority in background characteristics in terms of age and educational characteristics was essential in commanding the needed respect and gaining support for the implementation of the leadership practices and strategies of school heads in the public SHSs.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study, including major findings. The chapter also presents the overall conclusions of the study and makes recommendations on measures to improve leadership practices of school heads in public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

#### Summary

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices of senior high school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The study explored the thoughts, feelings, and actions of senior high school heads regarding their management of a school and their leadership practices. The rationale underpinning the research was that many contextual factors influence the leadership practices of school heads and, as such, exploring how such factors affect the leadership choices and decisions of school heads were considered imperative in the development of leadership theory and practice. The study, therefore, focused on the description of leadership practices and experiences by heads of public SHSs, leadership practices adopted by school heads to ensure quality teaching and learning, measures adopted to overcome the barriers that impede successes in educational leadership, and factors influencing the leadership practices of school heads.

The study adopted the interpretivist's research paradigm and qualitative research design. The study design was phenomenology. The population of the study comprised heads of public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis with at least three years of experience as head. There were a total of 10 public SHS

heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Out of the 10, eight had school heads with at least three years of leadership experience in their current positions. A purposive sampling approach was used to engage the qualified school heads for the study. Interview guide or unstructured interview was used as research instrument for gathering data for the study. Some of the ethical issues considered under the study were seeking the consent of participation from the research participants before engaging them in the data collection exercise, assuring them of their anonymity, and allowing them to indicate the appropriate timing and place for the exercise. Narrative analysis was used to analyse the data.

### **Major Findings**

This section presents a summary of major findings of the study. The section is organised under description of leadership practices and experiences by heads of public SHSs, leadership practices adopted by school heads to ensure quality teaching and learning, measures adopted to overcome the barriers that impede successes in educational leadership, and factors influencing the leadership practices of school heads.

#### **Perception of leadership practices and experiences by heads of public SHSs**

1. The study found that all the sampled school heads had spent more than two decades as teachers in the education sector. The long years of service of the school heads in the education sector afford them the opportunity to gain much insight into the problems in the sector and the political clouts on measures to engage both internal and external stakeholders to address such

challenges. It was also found that the school heads were using experiences from such long years of service to build the capacity of their staff members to assume leadership roles in the future.

2. From the study, it was indicated by the research participants that leadership experiences of school heads were built from their mistakes and successes in previous situations that confronted them as leaders of the schools. The implication is that confidence in leadership administration and practices of the school heads were positively associated with the years of experience of the school heads in leadership positions. In other words, the school heads became more confident in their leadership experiences and practices as they remained in their positions over a period of time.
3. The study found that the school heads adopted transactional leadership practice as the first line of getting control over leadership administration of the schools. Thus, the use of standards enabled the internal stakeholders (staff and students) to appreciate the leadership trajectory and goals of the school heads to encourage support and compliance. The information provided through the benchmarks allows stakeholders to be aware of their roles and responsibilities to ensure effective leadership administration in the schools. It was, however, found that the processes leading to the establishment of standards under the transactional leadership practices should critically be considered to promote successful leadership administration of the schools.
4. The transformational leadership practice was perceived as mandatory in the public SHSs due to the structured nature of their operations in terms of

houses of residence, and academic departments. Thus, the traditional structures of the school offered the opportunity to the school heads to practise transformational leadership. The school heads were naturally compelled to engage these sectional heads in the leadership administration processes to help build consensus. This was important to encourage participatory leadership style in the public SHSs.

5. Some of the school heads perceived that lived experiences of leaders determined their leadership practices as described by the contingency leadership strategy. This was because leadership experiences in the administration of public SHSs were dynamic, and some situations call for different leadership approaches and practices. However, the major concern about the adoption of the contingency leadership strategy among the school heads was the corporate view about their leadership style from various stakeholders and their commitment to the leadership strategies as they exhibit different strategies and styles on different occasions.

#### **Leadership practices adopted to ensure quality teaching and learning**

1. From the study, whereas transactional leadership strategy was deemed the most appropriate for promoting punctuality and regularity, transformational and contingency leadership strategies were found to be most appropriate for motivating teachers to enhance effective teaching and learning. Thus, the heads relied on the various heads of departments to determine the professional development needs of the teachers and issued them the permission to build their capacities. The aim for the use of transformational and contingency leadership strategies was to ensure proper preparation of

the schools in providing some support to motivate teachers in their quest for professional development to boost the quality of teaching and learning.

2. The study found that the school heads generally adopted transactional and instructional leadership practices to ensure effective learning among the students. The aim was to maintain law and order as well as instil discipline among the students. It was also found that the adoption of transactional and instructional leadership practices afforded the school heads the opportunity to use autocratic leadership style to control or regulate the learning activities of the students to enhance quality teaching and learning for improved students' academic achievement.
3. The study found that the school heads adopted contingency leadership practices to engage different categories of stakeholders in the bid to create conducive teaching and learning environment. This was because various stakeholders, including the Ghana Education Service, Old Students Associations, school management boards, and Parents-Teachers' Associations played essential roles in the provision of facilities and resources for the creation of conducive teaching and learning environment in the schools. With the contingency leadership practice, the study found that almost all the school heads attempted to build good rapport and interpersonal relationships with these stakeholders to get maximum support from them to improve the teaching and learning environment.



## **Measures to overcome barriers impeding successes in educational leadership**

1. Some of the internal barriers as indicated by the school heads were inadequate financial resources to effectively execute leadership plans and strategies, and difficulty building consensus among staff on critical issues. The study found that the public school heads were limited in their capacity to organise financial resources to effectively execute their leadership agenda. This was having serious negative implications on their achievements since financial resources played critical role in leadership administration and practices. Gender played a major barrier influencing the building of consensus among staff for critical activities and strategies to be implemented. This was because some of the male teachers were finding it difficult taking instructions from female heads.
2. From the study, the critical external barriers encountered by the school heads in their leadership administration and practices, included interferences from external stakeholders, and delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders. Thus, interferences from external stakeholders sometimes erode the confidence and reduce the authority of the school heads, which affect their capacity to effectively implement their leadership agenda for the schools.
3. It was also found that the school heads adopted multiple strategies to generate financial resources from both traditional and non-traditional sources to address internal financial challenges to leadership administration of the schools. Thus, some of them relied on the PTAs to generate funds for

the implementation of critical issues for effective administration of the schools. Some of the school heads also adopted incremental approach by implementing their activities gradually over a long period of time due to the unreliable flow of funds for effective leadership administration.

4. The study found that the school heads sometimes held discussions with the external stakeholders about their interferences in their leadership administration, while some of them ignored their interferences to avoid compromising on their leadership principles and ethics. It was also found that some school heads had no option than to succumb to the pressure from the external stakeholders.

#### **Factors influencing the leadership practices of school heads**

1. From the study, the school heads generally admitted that their gender attributes played important role in their leadership practices and experiences. The synergy between the gender of the school heads and the gender dimensions of the schools was found to influence leadership practices in the public SHSs. Thus, male or female school heads heading mixed-sex schools were compelled to delegate some leadership functions to teachers from the opposite sex to perform some roles due to ethical and moral values. It was also found that there was positive synergy between the gender of school heads and the single-sex schools. This enabled the heads to take critical control over activities in the schools as they appreciated the situations of the students and implemented the needed strategies to address them.

2. From the study, it was found that the school heads who were generally older than their staff members were accorded with much respect, which allowed them to freely implement their leadership strategies. On the other hand, school heads with many staff members older than them had some challenges of insubordination from such colleague teachers. The age characteristics of the school heads in relation to that of their colleague teachers was, therefore, crucial for the effective implementation of their leadership vision and strategies.

3. The knowledge and experiences gathered by school heads through their areas of academic specialisations contributed to their development of particular views and perceptions about leadership styles and approaches, which influenced their leadership practices. The study found that the possession of a higher level of education in relation to those of staff members coupled with having educational qualification in educational administration and human resource management were imperative in ensuring effective leadership administration of the public SHSs.

### **Conclusions**

The study explored the thoughts, feelings, and actions of senior high school heads regarding their management of a school and their leadership practices. The rationale underpinning the research was that many contextual factors influence the leadership practices of school heads and, as such, exploring how such factors affect the leadership choices and decisions of school heads was considered imperative in the development of leadership theory and practice. The study found that the school heads had different perceptions about the

leadership practices. Even though the leadership practices are unique in terms of their focus in leadership administration, the study found that all of them could be employed by a leader at different points in time to achieve particular goals. They could also be administered for different stakeholders to achieve specific outcomes. This gives some level of flexibility to school heads to determine the most appropriate leadership practice for a particular incidence.

The school heads adopted different leadership practices for different categories of stakeholders in the school. This was necessary to meet the peculiar needs and interests of the various stakeholders of the schools. Stakeholders of the schools were largely organised under three levels: teachers, students, and institutional (school management boards, PTA, GES, and old students' associations). Whereas instructional and transactional leadership practices coupled with autocratic leadership style were administered to the students, transformational and contingency leadership practices coupled with participatory leadership style were respectively administered to the teachers and institutional stakeholders.

Some of the internal barriers as indicated by the school heads were inadequate financial resources to effectively execute leadership plans and strategies, and difficulty building consensus among staff on critical issues. The critical external barriers encountered by the school heads in their leadership administration and practices, included interferences from external stakeholders, and delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders. The school heads adopted strategies to generate financial resources from both traditional and non-traditional sources to address internal financial challenges to leadership

administration of the schools. With the barrier on interferences from external stakeholders, the study found that the school heads tried to manage them through either discussions or ignoring them.

Some background characteristics of the school heads in terms of age and gender characteristics in relation to their schools had critical influence over leadership practices in the public SHSs. Further, religious views and educational characteristics influenced the leadership practices of the school heads. Thus, it was deduced from the entire analysis that the superiority in background characteristics in terms of age and educational characteristics was essential in commanding the needed respect and gaining support for the implementation of the leadership practices and strategies of school heads in the public SHSs.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the major findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to improve the leadership practices in the public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

1. The study found out that in as much as the transactional leadership practice is important for the achievement of organisational development goal or the achievement of the vision of a leader, the processes leading to the establishment of structures and standards to guide activities of the schools should be more participatory to increase the general acceptance and ownership of the systems created. Therefore, it is recommended that heads should develop more democratic leadership style to encourage participation

from the teachers. This will encourage the teachers to own the process and strive to ensure the success of the strategies adopted by the school heads.

2. From the study, the school heads were finding it difficult to adopt contingency leadership strategy due to the need to exhibit different leadership styles on different occasions to various stakeholders. Therefore, the study recommends that the school heads should be governed or directed by their leadership principles and ethics to maintain a secured positive leadership perception among the various stakeholders.
3. The study uncovered that interferences from external stakeholders sometimes eroded the confidence and reduced the authority of the school heads which affected their capacity to effectively implement their leadership agenda for the schools. Therefore, it is recommended that school heads need to continue to build good rapport with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure effective and successful leadership administration of the public SHSs. Heads should continue to build good relationships with the stakeholders by engaging them in leadership administration decisions for their inputs as well as providing them with regular update to enable them feel part of the leadership administration process of the school.
4. The study found out that gender played a major barrier influencing the building of consensus among staff for critical activities and strategies to be implemented since some of the male teachers were finding it difficult taking instructions from female heads. The study therefore recommends that the Ghana Education Service should organise leadership orientation programmes for public school teachers about gender and leadership in order



to disabuse the perceptions of some teachers about school leadership as male-dominated, and the associated difficulties in taking instructions from female school heads.

5. The study also unearthed that the public school heads were limited in their capacity to organise financial resources to effectively execute their leadership agenda with serious negative implications on their achievements. Therefore, the study also recommends that the GES should institute resource and infrastructural fund for the SHSs to aid the leadership administration of the public school heads with contributions for the fund being made voluntary for stakeholders, including PTA, old students' associations, traditional authorities, religious organisations and philanthropists.
6. The study discovered that the critical external barriers encountered by the school heads in their leadership administration and practices, included interferences from external stakeholders, and delays in the provision of support from external stakeholders. It also became evident that school heads sometimes held discussions with the external stakeholders about their interferences in their leadership administration, while some of them disregarded their interferences to avoid compromising on their leadership principles and ethics. The study therefore recommends that the GES should organise orientation programmes for the school management boards, comprising members from the traditional and religious authorities, alumni and other members about the remit of their roles in the leadership administration of the public SHSs.

7. The study found that the long years of service of the school heads in the education sector gave much insight into the problems in the sector, afforded them the opportunity to build the capacity of their staff members to assume leadership roles in the future, and gave them the political clouts on measures to engage both internal and external stakeholders to address such challenges. The study therefore recommends that the appointment of school heads into certain public schools should take into consideration the long years of service in the educational system regardless of the person's academic qualification.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

This study contributed to theoretical and conceptual development by building synergies among leadership theories, leadership practices and leadership styles. The study explained the relationship among them in terms of the most appropriate leadership styles to implement particular leadership practices, and how they relate to particular leadership theories. Previous studies had focused on the individual issues by explaining how they are actualised in various organisations. Nonetheless, this study found that transactional leadership practice could be most effective under autocratic leadership style. This was because the transactional leadership practice is too structured and more centred on the leader with limited involvement of the followers. The use of autocratic leadership style helps to ensure compliance to laid down benchmarks and standards. In other words, the transactional leadership practice requires a central figure to administer rewards and punishments associated with

compliance and non-compliance of the established benchmarks and standards to guarantee effective leadership administration.

Transformational leadership practice was also found to be more related to democratic leadership style and integrative leadership theory. Thus, they all agree on the principle of greater participation of all major stakeholders who will affect or be affected by a change in the organisational or development processes. They all also agree on the important roles of sub-central leadership structures and the need to incorporate them in the leadership administration.

The study found that the school heads adopted different leadership practices and styles for different stakeholders in the administration of the schools. Whereas instructional and transactional leadership practices coupled with autocratic leadership style were administered to the students, transformational and contingency leadership practices coupled with participatory leadership style were respectively administered to the teachers and institutional stakeholders.

### **Suggestions for Further Studies**

The study suggests that further studies on lived leadership experiences and practices should include the staff, students and other stakeholders of the schools to get a comprehensive view on the effectiveness of the various leadership practices in promoting quality teaching and learning. This would be important to incorporate the views and interests of the various stakeholders in the exploration of the nature of relationship between leadership experiences and leadership practices in schools.

Another study could be a comparative study between public SHSs and private SHSs on lived leadership experiences and leadership practices. This is imperative because the differences in regulations between leadership at public and private schools could influence the leadership practices to be adopted by school heads in the two schools.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Interview Guide for School Heads

Dear Sir/Madam,

This research instrument is designed to explore the influence of lived experiences on leadership practices of senior high school heads in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It aims at describing leadership practices and experiences of public school heads, leadership practices adopted to ensure quality teaching and learning, measures adopted to overcome the barriers in educational leadership, and factors influencing leadership practices. This is a partial fulfilment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Cape Coast. As a result, any information given would be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are free to ask any questions about the study to ensure your maximum satisfaction about participating in the study. You are assured of your anonymity and confidentiality associated with your responses. You are also assured that your responses will not be directly link to you. The researcher will not also disclose your identity to any third party. As a result, the study will not gather data on your personal identity. You are therefore kindly entreated to provide answers to the following questions.

#### **Description of leadership practices and experiences of public school heads**

1. Kindly provide a brief background about yourself in relation to your current position as a school head in a public senior high school.
2. Kindly provide a brief description about your leadership experiences in the school.

3. How do you perceive a leadership practice where you set standards to guide the operations of teachers and students (transactional)?
4. How do you perceive a leadership practice where you have to engage the leadership in the sub-structural levels in decision making (transformational)?
5. How do you perceive a leadership practice where you focus most of your attention and leadership goals on efforts to promote quality teaching and learning, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating the performance of teachers (instructive)?
6. How do you perceive a leadership practice where the leader demonstrates different leadership styles and approaches at different times or to different stakeholders (contingency)?

**Leadership practices adopted to ensure quality teaching and learning**

7. How do you promote quality of teaching and learning in your school through your leadership practices?
8. How do you promote regularity and punctuality among teachers in the school through your leadership practices?
9. How do you promote motivation of teachers to enhance teaching effectiveness in the school through your leadership practices?
10. How do you promote effective learning among students in the school through your leadership practices?
11. How do you promote the creation of a conducive teaching and learning environment in the school through your leadership practices?

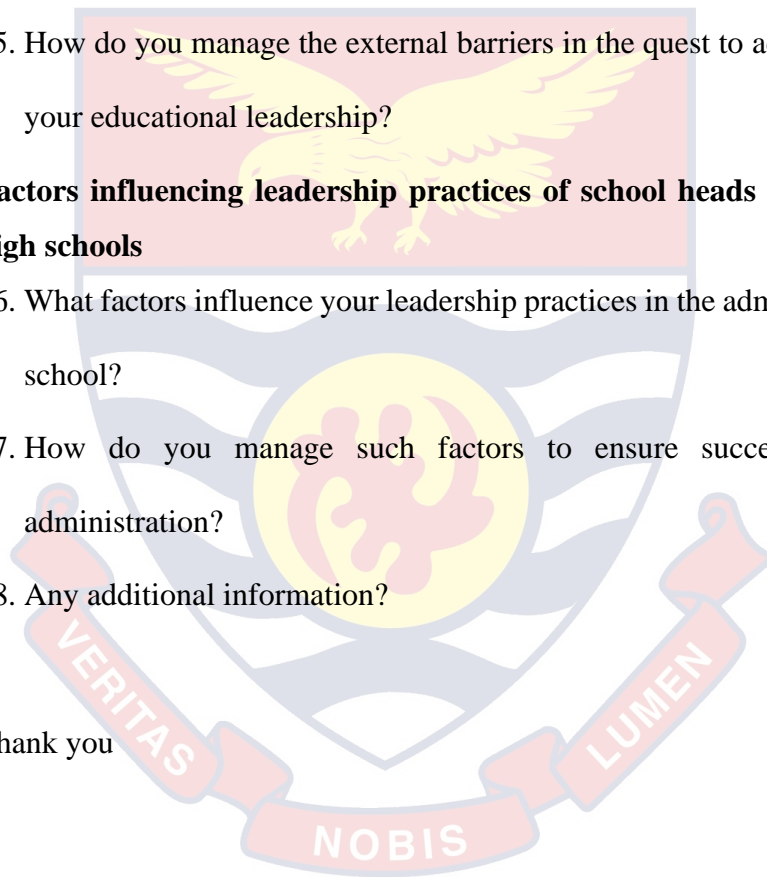
**Mode of overcoming barriers that impede success in educational leadership**

12. What internal barriers do you encounter in the quest to achieve success in your educational leadership?
13. What external barriers do you encounter in the quest to achieve success in your educational leadership?
14. How do you manage the internal barriers in the quest to achieve success in your educational leadership?
15. How do you manage the external barriers in the quest to achieve success in your educational leadership?

**Factors influencing leadership practices of school heads in public senior high schools**

16. What factors influence your leadership practices in the administration of the school?
17. How do you manage such factors to ensure successful leadership administration?
18. Any additional information?

Thank you



## Appendix B: Introductory Letter

