

Corporate Governance as a Tool for Effective School Management in Senior High Schools in Ghana

Justice Ray Achoanya Ayam

Catholic University College of Ghana, Fiapre, Bono Region

*Corresponding authors' email address: ajrayam@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examined the state of corporate governance (CG) in senior high schools (SHSs). A qualitative research design was adopted to review policy documents, academic literature, and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from four senior SHSs across the Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Northern Regions. Participants included headmasters, assistant headmasters, officials from the Ghana Education Service, and the Public Services Commission. Purposeful sampling guided case selection. The findings revealed significant deficiencies such as outdated CG regulations, ambiguous board oversight roles, weak disclosure practices, and limited stakeholder engagement. Recommended interventions included strengthening regulatory frameworks, promoting participatory governance, and implementing capacity-building initiatives. These measures are aimed at enhancing governance efficiency, financial transparency, and institutional accountability, contribute to the broader conversation on governance reform in Ghana's education sector, and underscore the importance of sound governance in achieving sustainable school management and institutional excellence.

Keywords: Corporate governance practice; senior high/technical schools; board of governors; school management; senior high schools; Ghana

Introduction

Corporate governance (CG) is a fundamental framework comprising rules, practices, and processes that guide accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct within organizations, including educational institutions (Mrabure & Abhulimhen-Iyoha, 2020; Areneke, Khlif, Kimani & Soobaroyen, 2022). In the context of Ghanaian Senior High Schools (SHSs), effective CG is essential for

achieving educational objectives, ensuring accountability, and promoting transparency among administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders (Amadi, Abali & Igoni, 2022; Ramírez & Tejada, 2018). Despite its recognized importance, governance structures in SHSs continue to face significant challenges, particularly in financial oversight, board capacity, and stakeholder engagement.

A notable issue is inadequate financial oversight. Many SHSs lack comprehensive financial auditing procedures, leading to inefficiencies and misallocation of resources. This gap in financial governance contributes to resource mismanagement, often due to weak oversight mechanisms and insufficient internal controls. Such financial governance deficits have been repeatedly highlighted, emphasizing the need for more transparent and accountable financial practices to ensure the effective utilization of funds (Auditor General's Report, 2021).

Another significant challenge lies in the limited training of board members on CG principles. Board members in many SHSs are often not adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge regarding financial transparency and accountability, which hinders their capacity to provide effective oversight. This governance shortfall creates dissatisfaction and mistrust among stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and the wider community. The lack of professional development programmes aimed at building the capacity of board members further exacerbates this issue, underlining the need for targeted interventions to improve governance competence (Shibuya, 2022).

Additionally, ambiguities in board roles and ethical governance remain prevalent. In many SHSs, governance frameworks have not kept pace with evolving educational needs and regulatory changes, leading to confusion about board members' responsibilities. This has resulted in conflicts of interest, ethical lapses, and the persistence of favour-based practices within decision-making processes. The out-dated governance structures in some institutions impede the adoption of modern ethical governance practices, further emphasizing the necessity for reform to provide clear guidelines on board roles and ethical responsibilities (Sambu, Minja & Chiroma, 2021).

Despite the growing acknowledgment of the significance of CG in educational institutions, there is limited empirical research specifically focused on its application in SHSs in Ghana. Most studies centre on corporate sectors, leaving a gap in understanding the unique

challenges and opportunities CG presents within the educational sector. This study aims to address this gap by examining how CG principles can be applied to strengthen governance structures in SHSs, ultimately enhancing school performance and building stakeholder trust.

The broader objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of CG in promoting effective school management in SHSs in Ghana. To this end, the study will address the following key research questions: What are the current CG practices in Ghanaian SHSs, and how do they compare with global best practices? What structural and operational challenges impede effective CG in SHSs? How can stakeholder participation and human resource development contribute to improved governance in SHSs? What impact do core CG principles such as transparency and accountability have on SHS management and performance?

This article is structured to follow a logical progression. After establishing the research context and objectives, the literature review explores SHSs' governance frameworks, legal regimes, challenges, and opportunities. The methodology section outlines a mixed-method approach, incorporating interviews and financial report analysis. The findings provide empirical insights into CG as a tool for effective school management, concluding with recommendations for policymakers and education leaders on enhancing governance systems in SHSs.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to provide policy recommendations for improving school management and CG practices in Ghanaian SHSs. The specific objectives are to:

1. Assess existing CG practices in Ghanaian SHSs and suggest strategies for alignment with global best practices.
2. Identify key structural and operational challenges that impede effective CG implementation in SHSs.
3. Explore the role of stakeholder engagement and human resource development in strengthening governance and enhancing educational outcomes, focusing on inclusivity and capacity building.
4. Evaluate the impact of CG principles, including transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct, on overall school management and performance.

The Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to emphasize the importance of effective school management and CG practices within Ghanaian educational institutions, aimed at improving educational quality and promoting sustainable development. The findings of this study will provide actionable insights for policymakers and school administrators by identifying governance strategies that enhance accountability, transparency, and ethical conduct within educational institutions. These strategies can guide the formulation of policies aimed at improving school management, financial oversight, and stakeholder engagement. The study's emphasis on risk management and efficient resource utilization will enable administrators to optimize operations, attract qualified teachers, and foster stronger community ties. Additionally, the findings offer replicable governance models that can be adapted across other African educational systems, fostering sustainable development in similar contexts.

Significance of the Study

This study highlights the critical role of strong CG in enhancing school management and educational outcomes in Ghanaian SHSs. Evidence from the Ghana Ministry of Education and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) supports the link between governance reforms and improved academic performance, efficient resource allocation, and accountability systems. Strong governance fosters long-term benefits, such as better financial oversight, transparency, and ethical leadership, which are fundamental to attracting skilled teachers and enhancing student performance. The findings offer practical strategies for policymakers and administrators, with the potential to drive sustainable improvements in SHS management and educational development across Ghana.

Literature Review

Key Concepts and Principles of Corporate Governance

In the context of Senior High School (SHS) management, corporate governance (CG) is crucial for fostering accountability, transparency, and ethical practices among stakeholders. As Addink (2019) highlights, accountability involves the obligation of school administrators to key stakeholders, such as students, parents, teachers, and the broader community (Brown et al., 2020). In Ghana, Manu,

Zhang, Oduro, Krampah-Nkoom, Mensah, Anaba and Isaac (2020) and Addo (2019) have also underscored the importance of accountability in school leadership, noting its role in enhancing trust and legitimacy in SHS governance. Transparent decision-making processes and effective resource management are essential for safeguarding stakeholder interests (FoEh et al., 2022). As Acquah (2017) argues, transparency in financial management enhances stakeholders' ability to assess school performance and fosters institutional trust.

Ethical accountability further strengthens governance by aligning decisions with integrity and fairness, ensuring that SHS management acts in the best interests of stakeholders (Liu & Yin, 2023; Grigoropoulos, 2019). Fairness and responsibility, as emphasized by Tang and Higgins (2022), guarantee equitable treatment of stakeholders, leading to more effective and sustainable school outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks of CG offer crucial insights for improving SHS governance outcomes, such as accountability and educational performance. Agency theory emphasizes the need for effective oversight to ensure school administrators act in the institution's best interests (Boon, 2018). Stewardship theory underscores the commitment of school leaders to advancing educational goals in Ghana, as demonstrated in Kwaah and Nishimuko (2023). Stakeholder theory promotes inclusive decision-making, ensuring that all stakeholders' concerns are addressed (Blackmore et al., 2022), while institutional theory advocates for the integration of societal norms and innovative practices (Harun, 2021). Finally, contingency theory suggests that governance strategies should be context-specific, adapting to the unique needs of each SHS (Mulandi, 2022).

Governance Framework for SHSs and Basic Schools

The governance framework for SHSs and Basic Schools in Ghana, as outlined in Figure 1, highlights the hierarchical and interconnected roles of key bodies such as the Ghana Education Service (GES) Council, SHS Governing Boards, SHS and Basic Schools Management, and Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs) Education Oversight Committees. Each entity ensures compliance with legal standards while promoting educational

excellence. However, ambiguities in governance roles, particularly between SHS Governing Boards and SHS Management, often lead to inefficiencies (Quist, 1999). For instance, while the boards provide strategic oversight, the execution of these strategies is often hindered by unclear responsibilities. As emphasised in the *Corporate Governance Manual* (Public Services Commission, 2023) and the *Constitution of the Board of Governors for Senior Secondary Schools* (Ministry of Education, 1998), institutional clarity is vital for coherent governance. Yet, the 1998 Constitution reveals critical weaknesses: it lacks explicit provisions on role delineation, conflict resolution, and performance expectations. It also fails to address the evolving governance needs of decentralised educational systems and does not stipulate competency requirements for board members, resulting in uneven institutional capacity. Practical solutions for resolving these ambiguities include implementing governance charters that clearly delineate the roles and expectations of each body, ensuring a seamless transition from strategy to execution (Salifu, 2022). Furthermore, establishing regular training programmes for board members and management would foster better understanding and cooperation, enhancing accountability (Amakyi, 2022). Localized support from the MMDAs, as intermediaries, could also ensure that strategic directives align with local needs, thereby reducing governance conflicts (Yamoah, 2023).

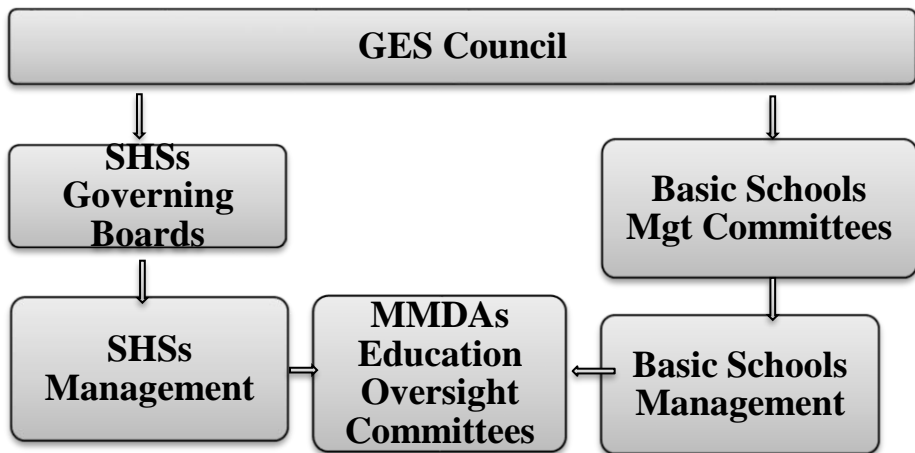


Figure 1: Schools Governance Conceptual Structure

Source: Author’s Analysis

The Legal Regime of Education in Ghana

The legal regime governing education in Ghana is framed by key statutes such as the Education Act of 1961 (Act 87), which establishes the GES under the Ministry of Education. This framework ensures oversight of public and private educational institutions (Yamoah, 2023). The GES, guided by the GES Amendment Act of 2008 (Act 788), plays a central role in overseeing governance structures in SHSs and Basic Schools. School Governing Boards are mandated to collaborate with management teams to enforce education policies (Ayeni & Bamire, 2022), while MMDAs enhance local governance through Education Oversight Committees (Ampofo, Opoku, & Opoku-Manu, 2022). Despite these provisions, the Pre-Tertiary Education Act of 2020 (Act 1049) and the GES Amendment Act reveal overlapping roles, particularly between Schools Governing Boards (SGBs) and regional and district directorates (Solomon, 2020). This overlap creates ambiguities in mandates, reducing the effectiveness of governance practices. To address this, clearer delineation of responsibilities is needed between the GES, SGBs, and MMDAs. Strengthening the legal framework by incorporating explicit guidelines on role distribution and enforcement can enhance accountability and improve governance outcomes in Ghana's educational sector.

The State of Senior High/Technical Education in Ghana

The landscape of senior high and technical education in Ghana has undergone substantial transformation, driven by policies aimed at expanding access and institutional accountability. Following the implementation of the Free Senior High School (FSHS) policy in 2017, enrolment surged, with public Senior High Schools (SHSs) accounting for the majority of enrolments, rising from 1.25 million in 2017 to over 1.52 million in 2021 (Takyi, Azerigyik & Amponsah, 2019). Public Senior High Technical Schools (SHTSs), which blend general academic and applied technical training, also recorded steady growth, yet remain underrepresented in resource allocation frameworks. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions continue to reflect limited enrolment, growing modestly from approximately 106,000 in 2017 to 131,000 in 2021. This segment—constituting just 6% of total secondary enrolment, suffers from persistent public perception challenges and systemic underinvestment (Chea, 2021). Private SHSs and SHTSs, while contributing to enrolment expansion, remain modest in scale and face governance gaps

in oversight and quality control. These enrolment trends illuminate the urgent need for a differentiated and responsive corporate governance (CG) framework. Such a model must prioritise equitable resource distribution, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and robust performance monitoring to ensure that both academic and technical education sectors advance national goals of inclusive, skills-driven development (Ampofo, Amoah & Pephrah, 2020; Mwinkaar & Ako, 2020).

Table 1 gives the enrolment trends from 2017 to 2021.

Table 1: SHS, SHTS, TVET Enrolment

Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Public Senior High Schools	1,254,583	1,321,439	1,387,452	1,457,891	1,521,210	6,942,575
Senior High Technical Schools	231,905	244,671	258,304	273,189	287,848	1,295,917
Technical and Vocational Services Schools	105,842	112,014	118,401	125,109	131,160	592,526
Private Senior High Schools	72,367	78,874	85,647	92,703	99,982	429,573
Private Senior High Technical Schools	9,845	10,712	11,672	12,751	13,951	58,931
Total	1,676,559	1,769,728	1,863,495	1,963,663	2,056,172	9,329,617

Source: Author's own analysis with data from the GMoE. (2017 to 2021).

Challenges and Opportunities of CG in SHSs in Ghana

The governance challenges facing SHSs in Ghana can be addressed through a structured application of CG principles. First,

enhancing stakeholder understanding of CG principles through targeted training programmes for school leaders and board members is essential (Thompson, Alleyne & Charles-Soverall, 2019). Second, improving resource allocation and providing opportunities for professional development will equip leaders with the skills needed for effective governance (García & Weiss, 2019). Third, fostering inclusive stakeholder engagement—by involving students, parents, and communities, will promote transparency and accountability in decision-making (Akrong, 2022). Fourth, establishing robust financial controls and strengthening funding mechanisms can address financial mismanagement and ensure accountability (Kultsum & Wang, 2021; Dwangu & Mahlangu 2021). Lastly, promoting gender equality and diversity in leadership roles will create a more inclusive governance environment, enhancing overall governance performance (Bayer & Wilcox, 2019).

Synthesis and Gaps in the Literature Review

While existing empirical research on CG in Ghanaian SHSs provides valuable insights (Appiah, 2020; Aryeh-Adjei, 2021; Chen & Smith, 2019), there is a notable deficiency in studies that explicitly link CG practices to educational outcomes. Leadership's role in enhancing transparency and stakeholder participation has been discussed (Sari et al., 2018; Dampson & Afful-Broni, 2018), yet the literature often neglects to connect these governance aspects directly to improvements in academic performance and resource efficiency. Community engagement is similarly acknowledged as vital for effective governance (Agbeme & Baiden, 2021; Boadu, 2022), but its impact on student success remains underexplored. Moreover, while financial management practices such as budgeting and auditing are recognized for strengthening accountability (Tetteh et al., 2021; Ngigi & Tanui, 2019), critical inefficiencies persist in procurement and resource allocation, which require more detailed examination.

Case studies from countries with similar educational contexts, such as Kenya and Nigeria, show that effective CG, particularly in financial oversight and stakeholder engagement, directly influences school performance and resource utilization (Aboagye & Ahmed, 2019; Manu et al., 2020). These findings underscore the imperative for comparative studies that critically examine how CG practices influence the effectiveness of school management within Ghanaian Senior High

Schools. Such inquiry would directly advance the study's broader objective of assessing the extent to which CG mechanisms promote accountable, inclusive, and performance-driven management systems across SHSs in Ghana

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative multimethod research design incorporating systematic literature review, document analysis, and semi structured interviews. Four public SHSs were purposively sampled across three regions: Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Northern, to reflect geographic, administrative, and socio-economic diversity. The literature review identified prevailing CG themes, while official policy documents contextualized governance frameworks. Empirical data were gathered from school heads, board members, and education officers through interviews, ensuring triangulation and credibility. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of governance practices, challenges, and strategies, offering transferable insights into school management across varied Ghanaian SHS contexts.

Sampling and Selecting Interview Respondents

Four public SHSs were purposively selected from three administrative regions: Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Northern. Selection was informed by documented variation in CG performance. Schools were classified as exhibiting strong, evolving, or weak governance frameworks based on triangulated indicators, including audit evaluations, compliance with GES directives, and stakeholder performance appraisals. This stratified sampling enabled a comparative analysis of governance efficacy across distinct institutional and socio-political environments. Strict anonymization protocols were employed to preserve institutional and respondent confidentiality.

Key Respondents: Seven governance practitioners were interviewed in September 2024. The sample comprised four school heads and assistant heads involved in governance execution and administrative compliance, two schedule officers serving as institutional oversight agents, and one governing board chair responsible for strategic leadership and stakeholder engagement. Participants were selected for their central roles in school governance. Each interview lasted 45 to 60 minutes, was audio recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. NVivo 11 facilitated systematic coding and thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke’s (2022) six-phase framework, ensuring analytic rigour and enhancing the credibility of cross-case insights into governance practices in Ghanaian SHSs.

Data Collection

Document Reviews: A thorough document review was conducted, analysing key governance-related documents such as policies, meeting minutes, financial reports, and audit findings. The review provided valuable context and served as a means of cross-validating data obtained through interviews. The literature review incorporated systematic searches of academic databases including JSTOR, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and relevant Ghanaian educational websites. The review process followed a strict protocol, applying specific keywords and selection criteria to identify high-quality, relevant, and recent sources. The following documents were reviewed:

Table 2: Key Desk Review Documents

Document Title	Source of Data	Nature of Data	Link/Access Information
Senior High School Annual Reports 2022	Ghana Ministry of Education (GMoE)	Official school reports	Available through GMoE publications
Ghana SHS Annual Digests 2020	Ghana Ministry of Education (GMoE)	Annual digest reports	Available through GMoE publications
Ghana Education Sector Report 2022	Ghana Ministry of Education (GMoE)	Sector-wide report	Available through GMoE publications
Educational Policies and Frameworks for SHSs	Government and educational policy documents	Policy and regulatory frameworks	Access through government and educational policy archives
Reports from World Bank	World Bank	Governance and educational reports	Available on the World Bank website

Reports from UNESCO Institute for Statistics	UNESCO Institute for Statistics	Statistical reports and data	Available on the UNESCO website
Articles and Papers on CG Practices in SHSs	Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, SAGE, Springer, JSTOR	Scholarly articles and papers	Access through respective academic databases
Governance Policies and Meeting Minutes	Case study schools' internal documents	Internal governance documents	Available from each case study school
Financial Reports and Audit Findings	Case study schools' internal documents	Financial documents and audit findings	Available from each case study school
Observational Data from School Meetings	Observational data	Field notes and observations	Not applicable (field observations)

Source: Author's Analysis

Semi-Structured Interviews: The research utilized semi-structured interviews with key respondents to gather qualitative data on their experiences and perspectives regarding CG practices in SHSs. The interviews addressed various aspects of governance, including:

- Application of CG principles,
- Impact on decision-making,
- Challenges encountered, and
- Recommended strategies for improvement.

The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling respondents to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring that core themes were consistently addressed across interviews.

Thematic Analysis

This study employed Braun and Clarke's (2022) six-phase thematic analysis to examine governance practices in Ghanaian SHSs, focusing on structural gaps and improvement strategies. Expert interviews and document reviews were analysed using NVivo 11, enabling systematic coding and theme identification. The analysis uncovered consistent patterns in governance structures, stakeholder engagement, and accountability, offering critical insights into the strengths and limitations of current school governance frameworks.

Validity and Reliability

Ensuring the validity and reliability of research findings was a central concern throughout the study. The study employed the following strategies to enhance the credibility of the research:

Triangulation: Multiple data sources, including interviews, document reviews, and observational data, were cross-referenced to validate findings. This triangulation process ensured that the research captured a holistic view of governance practices and mitigated the limitations associated with any single data source.

Data Consistency: Cross-validation of information from diverse respondents and data types helped ensure the consistency and reliability of the findings, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness of the research.

Ethical Considerations

The study follows stringent ethical protocols to safeguard the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. Informed consent is obtained from each respondent before data collection, ensuring they are fully informed about the study's objectives and their rights throughout the process. Institutional consent is also secured from the participating SHSs to ensure full adherence to ethical standards. Sensitive data, including financial and operational information, is anonymized to protect the identities of the participating institutions. All data is securely stored, with access restricted to authorized personnel, thereby preventing any unauthorized disclosure.

Results and Discussion

Results

Semi-structured Interview Results

Respondents Demographics

The respondents' diverse educational backgrounds, professional experiences, and governance roles provide a rich perspective on CG in Ghana's SHSs. Their expertise, ranging from education to business administration, shapes their views on governance challenges and opportunities. This diversity enhances the study, offering insights into decision-making, policy enforcement, and strategic planning. By capturing both practical and strategic dimensions, the participants' collective experience contributes to a comprehensive understanding of

governance dynamics in SHSs, particularly regarding transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership.

Table 3: Demographic Profile and Professional Background of Interview Participants

Participant Code	Position	School/Institution	Gender	Years of Work Experience	Years in Current Role	Educational Qualification
P1	Headmaster	SHS A	Male	25 years	5 years	Master's in Education
P2	Assistant Headmaster	SHS A	Female	18 years	3 years	Bachelor's in Education
P3	Headmaster	SHS B	Male	30 years	7 years	Master's in Educational Leadership
P4	Assistant Headmaster	SHS B	Female	15 years	4 years	Bachelor's in Education
P5	Governing Council Chair	SHS A	Male	28 years	8 years	Doctorate in Business Administration
P6	Schedule Officer	Ghana Education Service	Male	20 years	10 years	Master's in Public Administration
P7	Schedule Officer	Public Services Commission	Female	22 years	6 years	Master's in Human Resource Management

Source: Author's own analysis.

Interview Results Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: SHSs CG Practices in Ghana

Corporate governance practices are deeply embedded in the management of Ghanaian SHSs, centring on transparency, accountability, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. At *Institution A*, CG policies are operationalized through open communication channels, frequent financial reporting, and inclusive decision-making processes. These efforts are complemented by clearly outlined procurement standards, ensuring transparency in resource allocation. *Institution B* emphasizes transparent decision-making through regular staff meetings and stakeholder forums, coupled with a structured system to monitor policy effectiveness and drive continuous improvement. At *Institution C*, leadership focuses on enforcing robust governance practices, featuring stringent oversight of financial policies, routine audits, and a

culture rooted in accountability. The Ministry of Education's CG policy mandates the formation of School Management Committees and Boards of Governors, detailing procurement standards, financial controls, and human resource management protocols. Furthermore, the Public Services Commission conducts periodic audits and reviews to ensure compliance. *Institution D* highlights strong leadership through its Governing Council Chair, who enforces transparency and accountability via frequent council meetings and rigorous governance policy enforcement at all levels.

Theme 2: Challenges in SHS CG Practices in Ghana

Resistance to change is a significant barrier to effective CG in Ghanaian SHSs. This resistance often stems from entrenched traditional management systems and a reluctance to adopt new governance frameworks. At *Institution A*, staffs are hesitant to fully embrace CG principles, largely due to inadequate training and limited familiarity with modern governance practices. This reluctance slows decision-making processes and diminishes overall efficiency. *Institution B* faces similar resistance, as staff struggle with adapting to new transparency and accountability measures, fearing that increased scrutiny could expose vulnerabilities. Moreover, balancing confidentiality with transparency in sensitive matters further complicates governance efforts. At *Institution C*, the resistance is compounded by conflicts between traditional hierarchies and modern governance standards, resulting in bureaucratic slowdowns. The Ministry and Public Services Commission both note that varying levels of resource availability and uneven capacity across schools exacerbate these challenges, making governance reforms difficult to implement consistently.

Theme 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building in SHS Governance

Corporate governance practices have markedly improved decision-making in SHSs through active stakeholder engagement. For instance, at *Institution A*, structured consultations with the SMC accounted for the improved student performance of 11% due to more inclusive and data-driven decisions. Similarly, *Institution B*'s collaborative approach to stakeholder input has led to decisions that better align with the school's strategic goals, fostering balanced governance. *Institution C* has implemented a consultative leadership model, ensuring

participatory decision-making consistent with CG policies. The Public Services Commission's CG guidelines sought to strengthen the decision-making structures in SHSs, promoting transparency and accountability through the active involvement of SMCs and Boards of Governors. At Institution D, the Governing Council Chair confirms that CG principles have led to more transparent, ethically sound decisions, especially in resource allocation and staffing.

Theme 4: Strategies for Effective School Management and Potential Outcome

At Institution A, staffs undergo continuous professional development, while digital tools are integrated into management processes, securing resources and fostering a culture of transparency and improvement. Institution B has implemented regular governance training programmes and adopted digital solutions to enhance decision-making, while encouraging open dialogue to mitigate resistance to change. Institution C prioritizes governance enhancements through professional development and uses digital tools to support inclusive discussions among staff. The Ministry of Education aims to expand these strategies by improving monitoring systems, allocating more resources to underfunded schools, and cultivating governance advancements. The Public Services Commission advocates for standardized governance practices and digital reporting, while Institution D's Governing Council Chair emphasizes leadership capacity-building and consistent reviews of governance practices. These strategies collectively underscore the need for continuous improvement in governance, technology adoption, and leadership to address management challenges in Ghana's SHSs effectively.

Interview Analysis of Corporate Governance Practices in SHSs

Table 4 offers a concise comparative analysis of corporate governance practices across four Ghanaian Senior High Schools (SHSs), highlighting institutional diversity in implementation and maturity. Institution A exhibits proactive governance through transparency and digital oversight. Institution B focuses on structured monitoring but struggles with transparency adaptation. Institution C reflects strong accountability, though hindered by traditional hierarchies. Institution D demonstrates effective enforcement led by an active council, despite resource limitations. These findings emphasize the critical role of

leadership, stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity in shaping governance performance across SHSs.

Table 4: Corporate Governance Practices across SHS Institutions – Interview Insights

Theme	Institution A	Institution B	Institution C	Institution D
Governance Practices	Transparent financial reporting, inclusive decision-making, clear procurement policies	Regular stakeholder forums, structured policy monitoring	Robust oversight, routine audits, accountability culture	Active governing council leadership, rigorous enforcement
CG Challenges	Staff resistance due to limited training	Adjustment difficulties with new transparency measures	Conflict between traditional and modern CG frameworks	Resource constraints affecting implementation
Stakeholder Engagement	SMC consultations improved academic performance by 11%	Collaborative planning aligned with strategic objectives	Participatory leadership with inclusive decision-making	Ethical decisions enhanced transparency
Management Strategies	On-going CPD, digital integration for transparency	Governance training, digital tools for accountability	Inclusive dialogues, staff capacity building	Leadership development, governance reviews

Source: Author’s Analysis

Document Analysis

Theme 1: SHSs' CG Practices in Ghana

The study reveals that Corporate Governance (CG) in Ghanaian Senior High Schools (SHSs) is largely shaped by institutional policies such as the *Education Act of 1961 (Act 87)* and the *Public Procurement Act of 2003 (Act 663)*, both of which provide frameworks for transparency, accountability, and financial management. Additionally, the *Auditor General's Annual Reports* have substantiated claims of governance weaknesses, specifically regarding financial mismanagement and lack of stakeholder engagement. For example, the 2021 Auditor General’s Report on Education Institutions revealed that numerous SHSs, such as

Wesley Grammar and Accra Academy, had inadequate financial audits, which led to misallocated resources and weakened public trust.

Despite existing policies, critical weaknesses persist in governance structures, including insufficient board accountability and poor financial oversight. These weaknesses present risks such as resource mismanagement, which has been documented. To mitigate these governance lapses, the research advocates for best practices such as reinforcing board oversight, deepening stakeholder engagement, and implementing regular audits. These measures, coupled with stronger policy enforcement, would significantly improve the educational outcomes and financial resilience of SHSs in Ghana.

Theme 2: Challenges in SHS CG Practices in Ghana

The study's findings reveal significant challenges in the implementation of effective CG within SHSs, despite several revisions to Ghana's Education Act. A primary issue identified is the out-dated nature of governance structures, particularly the Constitution of the Board of Governors, which remains insufficiently aligned with contemporary educational needs. The study highlights key challenges such as the lack of clarity surrounding board functions, weak oversight mechanisms, unstructured stakeholder engagement, and inadequate accountability frameworks. These deficiencies contribute to inefficiencies, conflicts, and reputational damage, all of which negatively affect school performance.

The findings further emphasize the necessity for a comprehensive review of the existing governance framework to address these weaknesses. This includes clarifying the qualifications and roles of board members, strengthening their oversight responsibilities, and ensuring that stakeholder engagement is both structured and effective. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of implementing robust conflict-of-interest management processes to safeguard the integrity of decision-making within the governance structures.

Improving accountability and enhancing stakeholder engagement are identified as critical factors for fostering better educational outcomes. The research also advocates for the introduction of comprehensive training programmes aimed at equipping board members with the necessary governance skills and knowledge. Strong conflict-of-interest management protocols are deemed essential in maintaining ethical decision-making and protecting the integrity of the governance system.

Theme 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building in SHS Governance

The findings assert that effective CG in SHSs, marked by accountability, stakeholder involvement, and strict policy compliance, is crucial for ensuring educational excellence. The Board of Governors, as the central oversight body, plays a pivotal role in formulating policies, making strategic decisions, and ensuring institutional alignment with governance principles. Strengthening board supervision, increasing stakeholder participation, and refining accountability mechanisms are critical strategies identified for enhancing governance practices.

The study further emphasizes the importance of regular monitoring of school administration by the board, with a focus on enforcing policies and evaluating school performance in areas such as operational efficiency and financial management. Incorporating diverse stakeholders—parents, teachers, and community members—into decision-making processes is shown to lead to more effective governance outcomes. Financial transparency, supported by strong internal control systems and regular audits, is highlighted as a vital factor in promoting accountability and ensuring the efficient use of resources.

Additionally, the findings stress the importance of stakeholder engagement in ensuring that a wide range of perspectives is integrated into decision-making processes. Techniques such as participatory decision-making and clear communication channels are necessary to foster inclusivity and transparency within governance structures. Clear and consistent policy communication, coupled with rigorous monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, ensures compliance with national educational standards, thereby improving overall governance outcomes and contributing to the academic success of SHSs.

Theme 4: Strategies for Effective School Management and Potential Outcome

Sub-Theme 4.1: Practical Strategies to Enhance Management of SHSs in Ghana

Effective management of Senior High Schools (SHSs) in Ghana requires the implementation of strategies that uphold governance

integrity and adhere to best practices. Essential strategies include establishing clear governance policies that define roles and responsibilities and ensure transparent decision-making processes. Communicating these policies effectively to stakeholders promotes transparency and accountability within the institution. Strengthening financial oversight is crucial. This involves implementing robust budgeting, reporting, internal controls, risk management protocols, and regular audits. Such measures ensure compliance, prudent resource use, and sustainability of the governance structure, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and overall institutional performance. Active stakeholder engagement is another key aspect. Regular forums, meetings, and feedback mechanisms should be established to involve parents, students, teachers, and community members in decision-making processes. This inclusivity supports a comprehensive approach to governance and strengthens strategic decision-making. Investing in leadership development is vital. Programmes should focus on enhancing governance skills through workshops, mentoring, and performance evaluations. This fosters a culture of continuous improvement and drives school performance. Building a positive school culture that emphasizes ethical conduct and professionalism is essential. Governance policies should enforce high standards of behaviour to create an environment conducive to academic excellence.

Sub-Theme 4.2: Potential Benefits and Outcomes of Effective SHSs Governance Practices

Effective corporate governance (CG) practices in SHSs lead to numerous benefits. A robust culture of accountability aligns school operations with institutional goals, optimizing resource utilization and improving financial management. This ensures adequate infrastructure and resources for teaching and learning. Enhanced stakeholder engagement fosters inclusivity and addresses diverse needs, strengthening relationships and promoting a sense of shared responsibility. This inclusivity builds trust and cooperation, essential for achieving the school's educational mission. Adherence to ethical conduct contributes to a positive school environment, discouraging negative practices such as favouritism and corruption. This ethical foundation enhances the institution's credibility and reputation. Moreover, effective governance practices contribute to improved

educational outcomes. SHSs with strong governance, leadership, and financial management are better positioned to excel academically. Strategic planning, continuous improvement, and accountability ensure that schools adapt to evolving needs and implement reforms that enhance the learning experience.

Documented Governance Insights in SHS Institutions

Table 5 synthesizes governance themes from policy documents and audit reports, highlighting foundational frameworks, implementation challenges, and strategic imperatives. It shows that although SHS governance is grounded in key legislation like the Education Act (1961) and Public Procurement Act (2003), institutional performance varies significantly. Irregular audits, out-dated structures, and limited stakeholder coordination undermine accountability in many schools. Conversely, schools with formalized stakeholder engagement and leadership development strategies demonstrate stronger resource management and institutional credibility.

Table 5: Governance Themes from Document Review

Theme	Policy Basis/Findings	Institutional Observations
SHS CG Frameworks	Grounded in Education Act (1961) & Public Procurement Act (2003)	Auditor-General reports cite irregular audits in schools like Wesley Grammar
Key Challenges	Out-dated governance structures, unclear board roles, weak oversight	Lack of role clarity and stakeholder confusion undermines accountability
Stakeholder Engagement	Emphasizes Board of Governors' role in oversight and strategy	Effective policies seen where broad stakeholder input is formalized
Strategic Management	Advocates leadership development, conflict-of-interest controls, and regular audits	Institutions with strong CG report better resource use and reputational standing

Source: Author's Analysis

Summary of Results

This study reveals significant insights into how governance reforms can enhance educational outcomes in Ghanaian SHSs. The findings, derived from document analysis and semi-structured interviews, are organized around four major themes, addressing each research question (RQ) with specific, actionable strategies.

Theme 1: SHSs' CG Practices in Ghana

RQ1: *What are the current CG practices in Ghanaian SHSs, and how do they compare with best practices?*

The analysis shows that CG practices in SHSs are guided by national policy instruments, such as the Education Act and Public Procurement Act, emphasizing transparency, financial integrity, and stakeholder accountability. However, institutional variations reveal inconsistent enforcement and limited alignment with international CG standards. Interviews confirmed that while some schools operationalize inclusive decision-making and audit compliance, others lack board engagement and transparency. Strengthening board oversight, formalizing financial controls, and enhancing participatory models are recommended to align local governance practices with global benchmarks.

Theme 2: Challenges in SHS CG Practices in Ghana

RQ2: *What structural and operational challenges impede effective CG in SHSs?*

Despite reforms, governance implementation is hindered by out-dated board constitutions, ambiguous role definitions, and capacity constraints. These issues, noted in both policy documents and interviews, result in weak oversight, decision-making inefficiencies, and stakeholder disengagement. Addressing these gaps requires clarifying governance mandates, institutionalizing conflict-of-interest protocols, and introducing capacity-building initiatives for board members.

Theme 3: Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building in SHS Governance

RQ3: *How can stakeholder participation and human resource development contribute to more effective governance in SHSs?*

The study reveals that meaningful stakeholder participation is vital for effective SHS governance. Moving beyond token consultation, active

involvement from parents, students, teachers, and the community ensures diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making processes, fostering inclusivity and transparency. This participatory approach leads to more informed and balanced decisions that align with institutional objectives. Regular performance evaluations, combined with policy enforcement, strengthen governance by holding school leaders accountable. Capacity building is equally crucial; leadership training and governance skills development for school administrators and staff drive continuous improvement, ultimately enhancing SHS operational efficiency. Human resource development fosters competent leaders capable of steering schools towards better governance outcomes.

Theme 4: Strategies for Effective School Management and Potential Outcomes

RQ4: *What is the impact of core CG principles like transparency and accountability on the management and performance of SHSs?*

Stakeholder participation is critical to effective governance. Inclusive engagement of parents, staff, and community actors enhances decision legitimacy. Data show that institutions with structured stakeholder involvement report stronger alignment with educational goals and improved student outcomes. Leadership training and governance capacity development are pivotal to sustaining these gains.

Discussion

This study critically evaluated CG practices within Ghanaian SHSs, benchmarked against global best practices as articulated by Appiah (2020). CG in educational institutions is essential for fostering transparency, accountability, inclusive stakeholder participation, financial discipline, and strategic planning. Despite the acknowledged significance of these principles, the study uncovered substantial deficiencies in SHS governance frameworks, notably in financial transparency, board oversight, stakeholder engagement, and parental and community involvement. These governance gaps mirror the concerns raised by Kultsum and Wang (2021), highlighting risks of resource mismanagement, ethical lapses, and diminished institutional credibility and performance.

Weak board oversight emerged as a key contributor to financial mismanagement and suboptimal resource allocation, undermining public confidence, consistent with prior findings on governance

shortcomings in education (Kultsum & Wang, 2021). In response, recommendations by Agbeme and Baiden (2021) and Aryeh-Adjei (2021) emphasize the imperative to strengthen stakeholder engagement, enhance board competency through targeted training, institutionalize routine financial audits, and deepen parental and community participation in governance processes.

Effective inclusivity necessitates strategic interventions: first, broadening governing board representation to encompass students, teaching and non-teaching staff, with gender balance and specialized subcommittees (FoEh, Permatasari, & Sinaga, 2022); second, establishing structured stakeholder forums such as parent assemblies, student parliaments, and teacher advisory groups to ensure responsive governance (Ramírez & Tejada, 2018), supplemented by digital platforms to enhance transparency (Chen & Smith, 2019); third, transparent dissemination of financial and governance reports in accessible formats; and finally, leadership development programmes fostering participatory and ethical governance to institutionalize inclusivity (Mrabure & Abhulimhen-Iyoha, 2020).

Strengthening SHS governance demands a comprehensive approach integrating transparency, accountability, ethical leadership, and professionalism, as underscored by Dampson & Afful-Broni (2018) and Dwangu and Mahlangu (2021), to ensure sustainable educational excellence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study establishes that CG shortcomings, ranging from structural inefficiencies to weak accountability—pervade Ghana’s Senior High School (SHS) landscape, albeit with nuanced manifestations across public, technical, and private institutions. Public SHSs often suffer from bureaucratic inertia and insufficient board oversight, while technical schools are hindered by resource constraints and inadequate policy adaptation. Private SHSs, although more agile, frequently lack structured regulatory supervision. These disparities threaten financial transparency, institutional performance, and equitable access, underscoring the urgent need for tailored governance reform.

Enhancing CG Practices in SHSs (RQ1): Capacity-building interventions should prioritize public and technical schools where governance maturity remains low. Establishing board member training programmes in finance, ethics, and regulatory compliance is critical.

Technical institutions particularly require funding partnerships with NGOs and donor agencies to overcome resource limitations. Regular, publicly disclosed audits should be institutionalized, although private schools may resist such transparency without regulatory incentives or enforcement.

Improving the Regulatory, Legal, and Policy Framework (RQ2): Reforming the Pre-Tertiary Education Act (Act 1049) must account for institutional diversity. Governance statutes should be revised to clarify board roles and qualifications, especially in public schools with entrenched traditional structures. Strategic policy advocacy and phased implementation can mitigate institutional resistance and foster alignment with global CG benchmarks.

Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and Capacity Building (RQ3): Engagement mechanisms must reflect local context. In rural technical schools, low digital penetration requires mobile-based platforms for community involvement. Expanding programmes like T-TEL can equip administrators with governance competencies, especially in under-resourced institutions. Leadership development and participatory governance must be embedded within school culture.

Strategies for Effective School Management (RQ4): Institution-specific governance diagnostics should guide regular performance reviews. Public SHSs require targeted professional development to address monitoring shortfalls, while technical schools would benefit from structured evaluations to enhance operational integrity. Ethical leadership, sustained through transparent reporting and stakeholder feedback loops, will be pivotal to long-term institutional resilience.

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