

INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME ON HEADTEACHERS' PERFORMANCE IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of Leadership for Learning (LfL) programme on headteachers' performance, focusing on the views of teachers and headteachers in the various public basic schools in the Central Region of Ghana. The design adopted for the study was ex post facto design. The sample size for the study was 393 made up of 24 headteachers, 192 teachers and 177 JHS 1, eight and nine pupils from the 24 public basic schools selected randomly. Twelve headteachers, 95 teachers and 87 pupils belong to schools whose headteachers participated in the LfL project, while the other 12 headteachers, 97 teachers and 90 pupils belong to schools whose headteachers did not participate in the LfL project. The census method was used to capture all the headteachers and teachers in the 24 selected schools, while the pupils were selected randomly. Questionnaire was used to elicit data from respondents. Data for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicate that, the LfL programme has influenced both headteachers' and teachers' work performance, and also pupils' academic performance significantly. It is, therefore, recommended to the headteachers that they should request management to ensure that the training programme is expanded to capture more headteachers and circuit supervisors.

Key Words: Leadership for learning, pupils' academic performance, training, teachers, Work performance.

Introduction

Education is universally considered the most effective means through which individuals learn to write, read, do complex calculations, gain knowledge, and acquire virtues. As White (1987) noted, virtues such as prudence, courage, temperance, benevolence, and other moral virtues, lucidity, independence of mind, wisdom, humour, and vitality are the hallmarks of the educated person. The importance of formal education to a country like Ghana cannot be overemphasised. Education is the corner stone of every country's development. The type of provision made for formal education in a nation determines the calibre of its human resources.

The quality of education in Ghana has been a matter of concern to the people of Ghana (Ghana News Agency, 2011). The performance of pupils and students in public basic and Senior High Schools has been a matter of serious concern to the government of Ghana, the Ministry of Education and the Ghanaian public who look to an effective education as the child's first step towards getting a good job and eventual success in life (Bediako, 2012). Most important is the education at the early stages of the child's life, basic and secondary education that lay the foundation upon which the subsequent educational levels build and shape the learner's life.

The Government of Ghana has put in place measures to increase access to education, and also ensure good quality education in Ghana. These measures include tuition-free education at the basic level and heavily subsidised education at the secondary and tertiary levels. Additionally, the government has introduced capitation grant at the basic school level, school feeding programme in some basic schools, provision of classroom blocks, provision of text books and other teaching and learning materials, best teacher award scheme, distance learning programme for teachers, study leave with pay to Science and Mathematics teachers, biennial workshop for Mathematics and Science teachers at the basic level among others (National Development Planning Commission, 2009).

However, the higher academic standard expected in Ghanaian public schools is still far from being achieved (Ghana News Agency, 2011). The Ghana News Agency noted that the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Basic Education Certificate Examination and West African Senior School Certificate Examination results indicated falling academic performance as many candidates failed to secure passes to their next

stage of education. Bediako (2012), supporting this claim, asserts that authorities of education in Ghana, especially in public education, have not addressed adequately the quality aspect of education. Bediako also notes that increased enrolment often went hand-in-hand with decrease in quality.

There are a number of factors that account for the decline in the quality of education and the subsequent mass failure in Ghanaian public schools. According to Bediako (2012), most headteachers who are supervisors of learning and instruction in Ghanaian public basic schools are not up to their task, hence the mass failure at the pre-tertiary levels. These events have led highly placed government officials to cast some blame on training institutions, such as the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), at University of Cape Coast (UCC). This is because such institutions are charged with the training of educational administrators for educational institutions in Ghana (Bonney, 2011).

This suggests that less performance, on the part of headteachers can lead to pupils' poor academic performance significantly. Therefore, school leadership, which is mostly exercised at school level, plays an important role in student academic performance. This view is shared by Hallinger and Heck (2010) who state that school leadership is a critical element of school activity which has direct influence on the performance of both teachers and students. The leadership for Learning (LfL) training project helps in addressing leadership challenges in schools, especially basic schools (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). This belief was primarily the reason behind the introduction of Leadership for Learning (LfL) project in 2009 at UCC (IEPA, 2011).

The question that must be answered, therefore, is whether the LfL project, implemented by the IEPA in Ghana, is really having the desired positive impact on the performance of beneficiary headteachers. The beneficiary headteachers are expected to apply principles of LfL to effectively manage human resources (teachers and pupils), instructional time, finance, material resources (books, furniture, buildings), and to promote professional development at school level to help achieve performance objectives of their schools. It appeared there had not been any follow-up studies after the initial implementation of the LfL project to empirically examine the situation on the ground in this respect. As a result, the author was motivated to

carry out a study in the Central Region of Ghana to examine the influence of LfL programme on the performance of beneficiary headteachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of training provided under the LfL project on headteachers' performance, focusing on public basic school headteachers from the Central Region who participated in the LfL training workshops.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the purpose of the study, the following three hypotheses were formulated in order to tackle the main purpose of the study. The hypotheses to be tested are as follow:

H10: LfL programme does not have any statistically significant effect on teachers' perceived work performance.

H11: LfL programme has a statistically significant effect on teachers' perceived work performance.

H20: LfL programme does not have any significant effect on pupils' academic performance.

H21: LfL programme has a statistically significant effect on pupils' academic performance.

H30: LfL programme has no direct influence on headteachers' perceived performance in the schools.

H31: LfL programme has a direct influence on headteachers' perceived performance in the schools.

Significance of the Study

The findings and recommendations of this study will be useful to all stakeholders of the LfL project, Ghana. This is because the findings will serve as feedback to the implementers of the project. The findings of the study may also enable the leadership of the Ghana Education Service (GES), the IEPA and the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ghana to be aware of the extent of impact of the LfL project on the performance of beneficiary headteachers in the Central Region and the performance of their schools. It is also hoped that the recommendations of the study will help the leadership of the GES and the MoE, Ghana to formulate policies and also develop strategies that could sustain the application of the LfL principles in Ghana.

Principles of Leadership for Learning

The practice of LfL is governed by five fundamental principles (Townsend & MacBeath, 2011) and these principles are: a focus on learning, conditions for learning, dialogue, shared leadership, and a shared accountability. A focus on learning demonstrates headteachers' commitment to making learning the top priority by ensuring that all activities in the school, including co-curricular activities, are geared towards promotion of learning for every member of the school. Conditions for learning principle examine headteachers' commitment in ensuring that teachers take into account the needs, interests and ability of learners in the design and use of teaching and learning materials as well as determining appropriate style of presentation and teaching methodology. Dialogue principle involves creating an atmosphere in which the goals, the aims, the mission and the vision of the school are discussed or made known to all the stakeholders of the school, including the community, in order to create an atmosphere of trust and belongingness among the parties within the school.

Shared leadership principle involves the sharing of leadership in which school structures and procedures support participation in developing the school as a learning community where the headteacher can delegate certain tasks to other staff to perform. Shared accountability principle ensures that all members in the school (teachers, students and headteachers) as well as those outside the school (PTA, SMC, DEOC) are guided to develop a sense of collective responsibility towards meeting public accountability demands. It allows members of the school to have a better experience concerning the school they are working in.

Conceptual Framework

Generally, educational administration is a complex phenomenon which requires active involvement of all stakeholders in the activities and programmes of the schools if goals and performance objectives are to be achieved (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). As indicated earlier, the values, the attitudes, behaviours and practices of the headteacher have direct influence on the performance of both teachers and students. Educational leadership is a unique phenomenon which requires specialised form of training in human skill, technical skill and conceptual skill. This form of training helps in improving the work performance of the personnel in the educational sector. The LfL

training project implemented by the IEPA for headteachers of basic schools within the GES is of special importance in this regard. This is because, through the training workshops, administrators of education in Ghana are trained and equipped with appropriate skills and competencies required for 21st century educational leadership. It is believed that the training has improved teachers, headteachers and pupils' performance directly or indirectly. The conceptual model was, therefore, designed to depict the link between the principles of the programme and headteachers' performance as presented in Figure 1.

The dependent variable is headteachers performance, while the independent variables are the five principles of LfL programme, which are focused on learning, conditions for learning, dialogue, shared leadership and shared accountability. Effort in transferring learning is treated as intervening variable and it is believed to ignite the potency of the independent variables on the dependent variable. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 1.

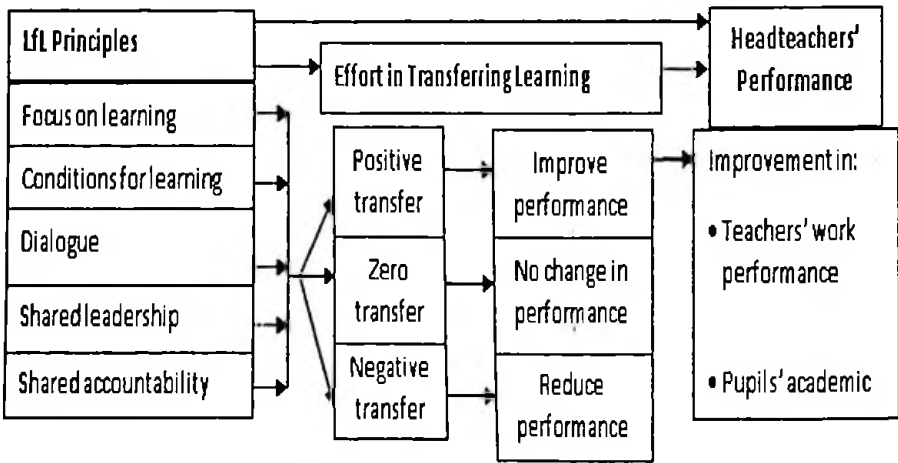


Figure 1: Effect of Leadership for Learning Principles on Headteachers' Performance

Source: Adapted from IEPA, 2011

The general argument is that the principles of LfL, when used by headteachers as expected, will influence their performance. Headteachers are perceived to be performing when their work translate into teachers' work performance and pupils' academic performance. However, headteachers' performance is assumed to be more potent and strong when the headteachers who have been exposed

to the LfL principles are able to exhibit some effort in transferring what they have learned to the work place, which is the school. In other words, if the headteachers are able to transfer what they have imbibed or learned to the school positively, then the performance in the school is likely to improve significantly based on the five principles learned. Again, the performance of the headteachers in the school as a result of their knowledge regarding the five principles will lead to an improved performance of teachers in the school and also improvement in pupils' academic performance.

Research Methods

The design used for the study was the ex post facto design. Ex post facto research is a method of teasing out possible antecedents of events (LfL training programme) that have happened and cannot, therefore, be controlled, engineered or manipulated by the investigator (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The population consisted of all headteachers and teachers in public basic schools in the Central Region of Ghana. As at 2012, there were 947 public basic schools in the region (MoE, 2014). Also, as at the end of 2011/2012 academic year, there were 3487 trained-teachers and 135,228 pupils at the various public basic schools in the region (Education Management Information System [EMIS], 2012).

The sample size for the study was 393 made up of 24 headteachers, 192 teachers and 177 basic seven, eight and nine pupils from the 24 public basic schools selected randomly. Twelve of the headteachers, 95 of the teachers and 87 basic seven, eight and nine pupils belong to schools that the headteachers participated in the LfL project while the other 12 headteachers, 97 teachers and 90 basic seven, eight and nine pupils belong to schools that the headteachers did not participate in the LfL project. The census method was used to capture all the headteachers and teachers in the 24 selected schools while the pupils were selected using the lottery method of simple random sampling procedure. The sample distribution is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample for the Study

Category of Respondent	Schools that Participated in LfL Programme	Schools that did not Participated in LfL Programme	Total
Headteachers	12	12	24
Teachers	95	97	192
Pupils	87	90	177
Total	194	199	393

Two set of questionnaires were the data collection instrument used in collecting the primary data. The questionnaire for teachers was made up of four sections while that of the headteachers was made up of three. Section A of both questionnaires dealt with the demographic information of respondents. Again, Section B of both questionnaires contains 26 statements on the five LfL principles. Sections C and D of teachers' questionnaire was used to elicit data on headteachers' effort in transferring learning to their workplace and their performance as a result of LfL training interventions. Statements on headteachers' effort in transferring learning were based on the number of hours headteachers spend in implementing the principles and their adherence to the principles. Section C of the headteachers' questionnaire elicited data on teachers' work performance.

Headteachers' performance was measured using multiple items that were formulated based on dimensions such as punctuality, regularity, participation in school activities, assessment of teachers lesson notes, monitoring of teaching and learning activities in the school and assessment of pupils' exercise and academic work. Also, teachers' work performance was measured using multiple items based on dimensions such as punctuality, regularity, participation in school activities, lesson note preparation, and assessment of pupils exercise and academic work. With the exception of Section A, responses to all the items were measured using five-point unilinear scale such that one (1) represents the least agreement to the issues while five (5) represents the strongest agreement to the issues.

The items in each section with regard to Sections B, C and D were pooled together using the mean score of the responses since they were measured numerically using unilinear scale. The pooled items for each specific dimension and variable produced an average score which was used to represent the said variable in order to analyse the

data using inferential statistics. These procedures were largely adapted because the distribution was normal.

With regard to the secondary data, basic seven, eight and nine pupils' end of first term examination scores for Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science and Social Studies were obtained from the various schools selected. The examination scores of the pupils were scored 100%. This was used to determine pupils' academic performance using the average scores of the first term examination scores in the core subjects. These scores were converted into five-point scale to be consistent with the five-point unilinear scale used to measure the responses of both teachers and headteachers in order to have the same scale of measurement. The scales were 1: 0-20, 2: 21-40, 3: 41-60, 4: 61-80, and 5: 81-100. Using the Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Version 18.0, the independent sample t-test and multiple regression analysis were used to analyse the data in order to test the research hypotheses since the distribution was normal.

Results and Discussion

The first specific objective of the study was to examine the effect of LfL programme on teachers' perceived work performance and pupils' academic performance, focusing on the views of both teachers and headteachers. Two hypotheses were formulated to deal with this objective.

H10: LfL programme does not have any statistically significant effect on teachers' perceived work performance.

H20: LfL programme does not have any significant effect on pupils' academic performance.

Two groups of respondents were considered. That is, those who are in schools that the headteacher participated in the LfL training activity (Group A) and those who are in the schools that the headteachers did not participate in the training activity (Group B). Since the two groups were homogeneous, the independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the views of the two groups in order to examine the effect of LfL programme on teachers' perceived work performance and pupils' academic performance. The results are presented in Table 2. The measurements of the variables have been explained under the subsection "research methods".

Table 2: Effect of LfL Programme on Teachers' Work Performance and Pupils' Academic Performance

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	p-value	η^2
Teachers' work performance	Group A	12	4.271	0.57	2.822**	0.000	0.261
	Group B	12	4.023	0.51			
Pupils' academic performance	Group A	87	55.324	0.55	3.896**	0.000	0.408
	Group B	90	47.515	0.59			

Source: Field Data, 2013. ** $p < 0.01$ Where $\eta^2 =$ Eta Square

The results in Table 2 indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in headteachers' view on their teachers' work performance with regard to schools with headteachers who participated in the LfL training activity (Mean = 4.271, Std. Dev. = 0.571) and schools with headteachers who did not participate in the training activity (Mean = 4.023, Std. Dev. = 0.513), [$t = 2.822$, $df = 22$, $p < 0.01$]. The magnitude of the difference in the means with regard to headteachers' view on their teachers' work performance is high ($\eta^2 = 0.261$), meaning that 26.1% of the variances in headteachers' view of their teachers' work performance in the schools is explained by their headteachers' participation in the LfL training activity.

In relation to pupils' academic performance, Table 2 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of pupils whose headteachers participated in the LfL training activity (Mean = 55.324, Std. Dev. = 0.552) and those whose headteachers did not participate in the training activity (Mean = 47.515, Std. Dev. = 0.591), [$t = 3.896$, $df = 175$, $p < 0.01$]. The magnitude of the difference between the two group of schools with regard to pupils' average scores in Mathematics, English Language, Integrated Science and Social Studies was also high ($\eta^2 = 0.408$), meaning there was a 40.8% of the variance in pupils academic performance that was explained by their headteachers' participation in the LfL training activity. The pupils whose headteachers participated in the LfL training performed significantly better than those whose headteachers did not participate in the training programme. The study, therefore, rejects the first and second hypotheses since LfL programme has a

statistically significant effect on teachers' perceived work performance and pupils' academic performance.

In all, the findings show that the LfL training activity has contributed significantly in improving teachers' work performance and pupils' academic performance. The findings are congruent with that of the IEPA (2011) which asserted that the adherence of LfL principles by headteachers has enhanced the ability of teachers in the school to take initiative, without any fears, even in the absence of the headteacher. This approach invariably harnesses the leadership potentials of all the members of the school.

The study further examined the influence of LfL programme on headteachers' perceived work performance. As indicated earlier, teachers' work performance was assessed by headteachers while that of headteachers was assessed by teachers using the already mentioned indicators. The hypothesis formulated is as follows and the results are presented in Table 3.

H30: LfL programme has no direct influence on headteachers' perceived performance in the schools.

Table 3: Influence of LfL Programme on Headteachers' Perceived Performance

Variables	Model I Beta (β)	Sig.	Model II Beta (β)	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tol.	VIF
Shared leadership	0.176 (0.028)*	0.021	0.135 (0.029)**	0.000	0.878	1.139
A focus on learning	0.362 (0.031)**	0.000	0.231 (0.025)**	0.000	0.913	1.096
A learning dialogue	0.162 (0.027)	0.073	0.177 (0.028)**	0.000	0.821	1.219
Shared sense of accountability	0.257 (0.031)**	0.004	0.221 (0.039)**	0.000	0.703	1.422
Conditions for learning	0.065 (0.024)	0.089	0.171 (0.026)*	0.034	0.698	1.432
Effort in transferring			0.321 (.06)**		0.836	1.196
Constant	1.194		0.915			
R	0.709		0.859			
R Square	0.555		0.774			
Adjusted R Square	0.546		0.759			

Source: Field Data, 2013. **p<0.01 *p<0.05 (N = 107)
(Standard errors are in parentheses)

Dependent Variable = Headteachers' Perceived Performance in the School

Where Tol. = Tolerance, VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

In the first model, the five principles of LfL were entered as independent variables with headteachers' performance in the school operating as dependent variable. The results as shown in Table 3 indicate that the standardised beta co-efficient for conditions for learning and learning dialogue were not statistically significant. However, focus on learning ($\beta = 0.362$, $p < 0.01$), shared sense of accountability ($\beta = 0.257$, $p < 0.01$), and shared leadership ($\beta = 0.176$, $p < 0.05$) were statistically significant with regard to their contributions to headteachers' performance. The unique proportional contribution of the LfL principles to headteachers' performance was 0.556, with an adjusted R² of 0.526. This means that the LfL training activity is able to predict or explain only 55.6% of the variance in headteachers' performance in the school.

In the second model, headteachers' effort in transferring learning to the school as a variable was introduced into the model and all the independent variables became statistically significant. The resultant shrinkage, increments and significance in the beta co-efficient in the second model means that the LfL principles do not directly influence headteachers' performance in the school strongly. They do so only when the headteachers are able to transfer what they have been taught in the training activity to the school. However, it is important to observe that the unique proportional contribution of LfL training activity and headteachers' effort in transferring learning to the school was 0.774 with an adjusted R² of 0.749. This means that the LfL training activity and headteachers effort in transferring learning were able to predict or explain 77.4% of the variance in headteachers' performance in the school. It, therefore, means that besides these main variables identified, other variables that are in the model have a chance of predicting about 22.6% of headteachers' performance in the school.

The significant increase with regard to the unique proportional contribution of the independent variables and the mediating variable on headteachers' performance in the school mean that when headteachers are able to transfer what they have been taught in the LfL training project, the work performance of teachers increases and also the predictability of the LfL principles becomes more potent on

pupils' academic performance in the school. The finding suggests that when headteachers are exposed to the LfL principles and they are able to transfer what they have learnt positively, they will be able to improve in their work performance in the school which will in turn increase their teachers work performance and pupils' academic performance. Therefore, the current study rejects the hypothesis that the LfL training programme has a direct influence on headteachers' performance in the schools, since the influence is indirect through headteachers' effort in transferring learning. The findings support the view that training and development in school management organised for headteachers help them to maximise their performance at school level which is likely to lead to teachers' performance and students' academic performance (Robinson et al., 2009).

Conclusions

The LfL training programme has ended up impacting positively on headteachers, teachers and pupils' performance. This impact has manifested in diverse ways in the schools whose heads were involved. The findings show that these headteachers ensure that there is continuous teaching and learning activities in their respective schools. They monitor the activities closely by collaborating with teachers and students. This demonstrates the commitment of the various headteachers in making learning the top priority in the school. To these headteachers, the school is accountable to various stakeholders and that all members in the school as well as those outside the school must help to develop a sense of collective responsibility towards meeting public accountability demands. In all, it can be concluded that the LfL training project has contributed significantly in improving headteachers' performance. Also, the effort exerted by headteachers to create conditions favourable to learning has helped in improving their performance significantly.

Limitations of the Study

The study assumed that the selected respondents had adequate knowledge and comprehension of the issues, concepts and what is expected of them to answer the questions in the survey precisely and honestly, yet this was not checked. Another limitation is that the variables considered in this study may not be static; a cross-sectional study would not capture the possible dynamic quality of these

relationships. A longitudinal approach is thus warranted. Only one term examination scores were used in measuring pupils' academic performance which may not adequately measure general performance. It would have been better to use average scores of three terms. In addition, the findings of the study may not be anticipated for the future since issues related to LfL project, teachers' work performance and pupils' academic performance keep changing with time.

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