Curriculum and Instructional Leadership Practices in Pre-tertiary Schools: Reflections of Female Heads in the Central Region of Ghana

Marie Afua Baah Bakah, Ph.D.
Institute for Educational Planning and Administration.
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana
mbakah@ucc.edu.gh, marieafua@gmail.com

Joyce Eku Wilson-Tagoe
Unityecovillage
Kobina Ansa, Ghana
stickyvibes4jwt@gmail.com

WLE 2019 Conference, Nottingham, UK_7th to 12 July
Curriculum design in pre-tertiary schools in Ghana

The Ministry of Education (MOE)

Ghana Education Service (GES)

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA)

• Deductive approach to curriculum design.
Dilemma

- Teachers' participation in curriculum design is extremely limited
- Criteria for selection of teachers to design the curriculum is not known
- WAEC plays very little role in curriculum design though they set examinations for GES
Leadership of the pre-tertiary schools to implement the school curriculum (which is highly politicized) are female dominated. Out of 26 head teachers in the Efia-Tanokrom District, 24 are women (Nyantakyiwa, 2012).

This originates from the notion that teaching (especially at the basic level) is an occupation suitable for women.

Despite the challenges of women in leadership there have been steady progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) in pre-tertiary education leadership (GES, 2012).

However, curriculum and instructional leadership behaviours that allow female school heads to lead successful pre-tertiary schools is of interest in this study.
The Central Region of Ghana is a hub of some of the best Senior High Schools.
The intention of this study is to identify the female school leaders’ approaches to

a) curriculum decision-making
b) instructional leadership and management
c) leading to have successful schools and to
d) find the emerging challenges in these endeavours
Curriculum leadership is a significant driver in improving academic achievement. The curriculum leader is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices; it is his/her knowledge of instructional strategies, current research, and application of student achievement data that gives shape to instructional programming (Copland & Knapp, 2005).
Defining the School Mission
- Frames the School’s Goals
- Communicates the School’s Goals

Managing the Instructional Program
- Coordinates the Curriculum
- Supervises & Evaluates Instruction
- Monitors Student Progress

Developing the School Learning Climate
- Protects Instructional Time
- Provides Incentives for Teachers
- Provides Incentives for Learning
- Promotes Professional Development
- Maintains High Visibility

**Figure 1.** Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) conceptual framework (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985)
- A semi-structured interview guide
  In-depth interview
- Data collected from 8 school heads (4 Basic and 4 SHS)
  Recorded, member-checked and transcribed
  Atlas.ti 8.1
  Intercoder Reliability – Cohen’s Kappa 7.5
“Our goal ... as our motto ‘we are either the first or with the best’ goes I would say we are doing that. We are achieving excellence in the primary school here. Why am I saying this? The patronage – in and around Cape Coast everybody wants to bring his/her child to this school. It is a problem for us; we have limited vacancies and for a single Primary school to be over 1500 that should tell you that really people see what we do here. We are not only the first, we are the best”
“I want to say we have 6 streams so when you take Class 1 there are 6 classes of Class 1 so from 1 through to 6 we have 36 classes. I am alone as a Head with one assistant. However, for the various levels we have coordinators, we appoint coordinators who coordinate the levels. We don’t just leave everything to them but we have actually empowered them to also do some supervisory work and report to management. Every fortnightly Wednesday we meet and discuss issues in their constituencies and then if we also have some information for them, we send through them to their teachers. The teachers in each stream make time to meet and discuss issues concerning them and then pass some towards to administration. However, the Assistant head also does supervisory work and report to me. I sometimes sit in some of the classes. I go round the school and as I pass by I also observe and where I feel there are things that we need to take some action on or change we do. So, supervision here is not at just one level”
“In the first place if you really want people to work, you have to empower them... So, we actually get the best and groom them. We run a lot of in-service training for our teachers. We run a lot of in-service training. At subject level, general ones so...”
“In fact I try to encourage them to have further studies either through the mainstream or the Sandwich program but one person can go at a time. Last 2 years one Eleanor went, she graduated and she’s back. She did it in 2 years another is also there she will finish in June then another lady will follow. Some have taken on the sandwich so in the holidays they will go so I encourage the women to give of their best.”
Expressions......

Female school leadership behaviours that allow them to have successful schools
- High visibility

“ I do management by walking around; Yes, every day I go to one department or the other. I go round the school and the students even tell me ‘Madam for other teachers we don’t see them but you we see you all the time, you, walkabout.’ I go to the dormitories, to the classrooms, I go to the offices, accounts, I go to the stores, the kitchen before I eventually end up in my office. I am very, very visible.”
Expressions......

EMERGING CHALLENGES OF THE FEMALE SCHOOL LEADER IN MANAGING CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP AND INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
- TOO FEW PRE-TRAINING SERVICE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS
- LACK OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR ALL ON THE PART OF G.E.S.
- STAFF TOO KEEN ON MONETARY MOTIVATION

“The major challenge for me is the fact that teachers want money for everything they do. Every extra work they do they expect you to give them some kind of reward and I keep telling them that when the students do well that is reward enough. I think I believe in intrinsic reward...We should go the extra mile to ensure that our students do well. For me, I am happy when I see my students doing well. I do not expect any reward. I believe that is a major challenge. And then the lack of in-service training by the GES. For me it is not enough, they can do better. Individual schools try to do it why not them?”
Conclusions

• Though successful, female leaders have realized that they need to undergo further training to improve their curriculum leadership skills

• They believe when women get out of their comfort zones they make great leaders

• Affirmative action law will further improve female numbers and input in managing schools effectively