

AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS
TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF
FEMALE HEADS OF BASIC SCHOOLS IN THE NKORANZA SOUTH
MUNICIPALITY



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Education and Communication Sciences submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies, Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and
Entrepreneurial Development, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree**

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, MARCELLINE MWINWELLE, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISORS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development.

NAME: DR. SAMUEL ADU GYAMFI

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:

DEDICATION

To my husband, John Balosam and my children, Awedaga and Adaliwe.



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ABSTRACT

The study employed a phenomenological design to explore the subjective lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality. The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality. Four female heads of basic schools were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. The interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The results of the study in relation to the first research question indicated that the participants' lived experiences mainly centred on the skills they garnered, their experiences with the communities where their schools are situated, their mixed experiences with staff and students and how they balanced their family roles as women and mothers in relation to their positions as headmistresses. The participants used various coping strategies such as exercising their emotional intelligence, showcasing their practical capabilities, uniting with their trouble makers and reacting harshly to some male staff members who kept disturbing them. The coping strategies employed were beneficial in the administration of their duties as headmistresses. It is recommended that special pre-service training and orientation programmes should be organised for female heads of basic schools to enlighten them on how to perform their duties effectively in male-dominated societies such as the African society.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

This chapter presents an overview of the study. It provides a brief background, followed by a statement of the problem that warrants this investigation. It also presents the research questions, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations and delimitation of the study. It finally describes the organization of the study. This study examines the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality. It seeks to explore lived experiences and coping strategies employed by female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality in Ghana.

1.2 Background to the Study

Leadership is very important in the achievement of institutional goals. Leadership becomes a necessity when a group of people with common goals come together to achieve a common objective (Mankoe, 2007). This implies that leaders cannot lead themselves, but must have subordinates comprising of two or more people who have a common objective towards the collective good of the group. Leadership is therefore, the ability to influence members of a group or individuals to work towards attaining the collective objectives. Mensah and Mensah (2015) posit that “the leader tries so hard to convince or persuade followers by taking them through the need to attain the vision (p. 37)”. The absence of leadership in a group may therefore create challenges which may serve as obstacles to achieving institutional or group goals. The collective goal of the group serves as the driving force that cements the relationship between leaders and members of their group. Leadership is therefore, the preserve of both males and females depending on the qualities possessed by the individual.

From antiquity, women have been identified with domestic life while professional work is considered as a preserve of their male counterparts. This presents the labour force as a 'man's world' and as such dominated by males. Although women dominate the population of the world, they are not very visible when it comes to leadership roles. This notwithstanding, the 21st century has seen women make giant strides in occupying various leadership positions. Various reasons have therefore accounted for the gradual participation of women in the world of work. Gold (2003) asserts that the entrance of women into the labour force increased significantly after World War II as a result of the need to earn income to support their families. Subsequently, after the active and relevant roles played by few women in the midst of their male counterparts, it has been found out that the role of women in the development of every nation is highly crucial (Wirth, 1997). This opened the floodgates for women to join males in the world of work. Way back before World War II in the Ghanaian leadership space, women such as Yaa Asantewaa took up a historic leadership role that influenced society greatly. This therefore, presents the discourse about women in leadership partly as an old age development.

Adu-Oppong, Aikins, and Darko (2017) postulate that 'The history of women in management positions can best be described as a struggle for survival and identity coupled with the need and desire to protect and support the family' (p. 10). Boateng (2018) adds that throughout history, women who seek to pursue professional careers face hostility, ridicule, and other forms of social sanctions often rooted in patriarchy. Just as in other professions, the participation of women in the administration of educational institutions in Ghana is quite low and not without challenges. This is confirmed by Segkulu and Gyimah (2016) who aver that few women work and occupy leadership positions within the educational space in Ghana in institutions like the basic

schools, senior high schools, colleges of education, and universities. Unlike the basic school to the university level, the nursery and primary levels have dominantly female teachers but with only a few of them being heads.

This notwithstanding, many challenges plague women who try to occupy leadership positions in the world of work generally and in educational institutions specifically. Javadi, Vega, Etienne, Wandira, Doyle, and Nishtar (2016) proffer that using their voices, abilities, or capabilities against prevailing prejudices in society, women leaders worldwide continue to advocate for their rights and make efforts to ensure important influence. Adu-Oppong, Akins and Darko (2017) posit that some of the reasons for a low representation of women in educational leadership positions include organizational structural barriers, inaccessibility to informal networks, competing responsibilities at work and in the home; mythical perceptions of the role of women and the internalised perceptions of 'accepted female roles' which minimizes the assertive efforts on the part of women. These reasons and others have therefore, hindered a lot of women from holding educational leadership positions right from the nursery to the university level.

With particular reference to the Nkoranza South Municipality in the Bono East Region of Ghana, the issue of women in leadership positions is a reflection of the national situation as the number of women in educational leadership positions is woefully low. For example, as at 2020 there were only thirty-five (35) female Heads out of two hundred and ten (210) Heads of basic schools in the municipality. The few number of women heading basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality present such heads of schools as a special group among female teachers who need to be studied in order to identify their experiences and how they are coping with the varied challenges that plague them in their leadership positions.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Research on women and leadership in education (Gold, 2003; Oplatka, 2006; Mthembu, 2013; Segkulu & Gyimah, 2016; Adu-Oppong et al, 2017; Craig, 2017; Oyeniran & Anchomese, 2018) is replete yet women face a plethora of challenges in accessing and manning these leadership positions in educational institutions. Despite the low representation of women in leadership positions, it is established that women seem to be good managers and effective leaders (Eagly, 2007; Birnia, 2012; Muzvidziwa, 2014). Despite numerous initiatives to empower women to hold leadership positions, these do not reflect the actual situation in the Ghanaian context. In particular, the statistics of the educational settings give an example of the underrepresentation of females who still face challenges in leadership positions. The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in primary schools raises concern of equity, equality and social justice in basic education as is the case in many other sectors. Even the few fortunate women who occupy leadership positions in educational institutions face opposition from their male counterparts (Mthembu, 2013).

There is therefore, the need for research to be carried out to help women cope in educational leadership positions and also help other women who have the ambition of holding educational leadership positions in the future. Notwithstanding this need, there are limited studies on lived experiences of women playing leadership roles in the educational institutions juxtaposed with their male counterparts (Oplatka, 2006; Mthembu, 2013). Consequently, the need for the reality of the women headmistresses' lived experiences require more exploration and this study examines this subject in detail. This study therefore, seeks to fill a vital lacuna in literature on women in educational leadership positions by seeking to examine the lived experiences and

coping strategies employed by female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality in Ghana.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the lived experiences of women heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study will seek to explore

1. the experiences of female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality.
2. the coping strategies employed by female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality to manage challenges in their leadership careers.
3. the impact of these coping strategies on female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What are the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality?
2. What coping strategies are employed by female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality in the administration of their schools?
3. How do the coping strategies impact female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality in addressing their challenges?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study has brought to bear the importance of the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools. The findings of this study are beneficial to the gender desk of the Ghana Education Service as the various participants share their experiences on how they have learnt to cope in their schools as women leaders. This study has shed light on female heads of basic schools and on the need to explore, diagnose and address specific needs of these heads during their training programmes rather than rushing them through the process of going to head basic schools straightaway.

In addition, findings of the study will contribute to knowledge immensely, especially to existing knowledge on literature and will enhance further research on this seldom explored area in research literature on female educational leadership and will add up to the few scholarly materials available on lived experiences of female heads of educational institutions.

Again, this research employed the phenomenological approach with the idea that it would reveal another method of understanding the lived experiences and coping strategies, notwithstanding the efforts by government and the Ghana Education Service and would assist policy makers in reviewing the related policies.

Furthermore, understanding the leadership practices through the experiences of female heads of basic schools will assist other aspiring headmistresses in understanding the daunting tasks heads of basic schools encounter from the feminine perspective. It will help women who are already in leadership positions to adopt potent coping strategies to help them overcome challenges faced in male dominated circles of work which will contribute to the improvement of schools.

Moreover, this study will add to knowledge on the effectiveness of the theoretical underpinning in relation to the synergistic leadership theory. The study has confirmed that the synergistic leadership theory can be useful in the analysis of studies that have to do with women in leadership positions.

Last but not least, the recommendations from this research will serve as a basis for other researchers to conduct studies on women in leadership positions in other organisations that may not have received any research attention.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study is delimited to the use of interviews as the only data collection technique used. For the interview, four women who are heads of basic schools served as the sample for the study. The phenomenological findings are therefore restricted to the experiences of the individuals employed in the study who are women heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality in 2021. Hence, the ability to generalize the findings of this study to other female heads of basic schools in other areas is narrow because the findings of this study may differ in other contexts.

In terms of theoretical framework, the study employed the synergistic leadership theory as a framework to examine the lived experiences of four female basic school headmistresses in order to identify their specific experiences and the coping strategies they employed. To ensure that the responses of the participants concerning their lived experiences are honest in the phenomenological interviews, the researcher will ensure that anonymity and confidentiality are maintained.

1.9 Limitations for the Study

One limitation of the study was that some respondents felt reluctant in granting the interviews as they thought they would be exposing the confidential issues about their work. Interviews were the only instrument for data collection. This means that some vital information could have been left out in the data collected. These could affect the generalizability of the findings of the study. The researcher solely collected the data and analysed it. This could result in research bias causing distorted results and wrong conclusions.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

The study is strategically organized in five chapters. Chapter one presents a general introduction to the study made up of the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives, research questions and justification and rationale for the study, limitations assumptions and delimitation. Chapter two covers the review of literature and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study and a review of related studies. Chapter three deals with the methods and procedures employed in collecting and analysing the data. Chapter four conducts an analysis of the data collected. Chapter five presents a summary of findings of the study, implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Phenomenological studies seek to create an interpretive understanding of participants' lived experience (van Manen, 2015). This chapter therefore, contains a literature review which is intended to ground the study with relevant literature and empirical research on lived experiences of female school leadership. The understanding of the phenomena under discussion is not isolated to one example in one study but is influenced by previous studies hence the need for review of a wide range of literature on the topic.

The role of women in educational leadership has engaged the attention of many writers and researchers. In this regard, this study looked at literature related to studies on the role and the experiences of women in leadership positions in general and in educational leadership in particular. In the literature review, the theoretical framework for the study which is the synergistic leadership theory (SLT) is discussed. After the theoretical framework for the study is discussed, the literature review continues to look at research on the societal perceptions of gender differences in leadership style and ability. The review will further explore the experiences of women in educational leadership positions. It will also look at the history of basic education in Ghana, the role of the heads of basic schools in Ghana and the challenges faced by headteachers of basic schools in Ghana and ends with a chapter summary.

2.1.1 The Synergistic Leadership Theory (SLT)

The synergistic leadership theory (SLT) underpinned the present study. It was developed by Irby, Brown, Duffy and Trautman (2002) as a response to traditional

leadership theories that were not gender responsive and excluded the female voice and perspective. Theories in leadership and management have been challenged for failure to include the female presence and voice in theory development (Brown & Irby, 1994; Shakeshaft and Nowell, 1984). Leadership theories over the years have attempted to analyse effective leadership practices at a time when few women were in leadership. Surprisingly, the area of leadership has been male dominated evidenced by the fact that leadership has been practised and studied by males, and leadership theories were generated by males. As a result, most theoretical paradigms on leadership therefore, reflected only the masculine experience and are largely androcentric, yielding theories that reflect a masculine dominance. These theories were used to define effective leadership for over 150 years. This influenced Rost (1991) to critique the mainstream leadership literature for its continuous perpetuation of masculine conceptions of leadership. These masculine conceptions affect the experiences of female leaders because they portray female leaders as an anomaly (Chin, 2011). This omission of the female voice leads to contradictory portrayals that create unique obstacles to females' leadership opportunities, their leadership experiences, and the willingness of their subordinates to view them as effective leaders (Chin, 2011). These same leadership theories did not only exclude female voices but also other minority groups in leadership. Thus, such theories are not socially just. The absence of gender-sensitive leadership theories may be due to the fact that leadership was traditionally construed as a field for men. The synergistic leadership theory is a gender-inclusive theory which captures the attributes, experiences, and abilities inherent in both male and female leaders (Trautman, 2000). Rather than promoting a paradigm shift from masculine to feminine, integrative models such as the synergistic leadership theory frames an androgynous style of leadership utilizing a blend of stereotypically masculine and feminine traits.

The objective of integrative models is not to reject the masculine in favor of the feminine; rather, the goal is to acknowledge and incorporate the essential roles of both (Reynolds, 2011). The use of the synergistic leadership theory (hence SLT) in this study is very relevant because the study explores the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools and coping strategies they employ in their leadership career, it was appropriate to use the SLT to closely examine these leadership behaviors. There exist five special aspects of the Synergistic Leadership Theory that make it unique. These include the fact that female leaders were included in its development. It admits that female leaders may be impacted by external forces, organizational structures, or values, attitudes, and beliefs. It promotes the idea that female leadership behaviors may interact with the factors of the SLT in ways unlike the leadership behaviors of males. It also indicates that leaders at various positions or levels may be impacted by the factors in different ways. Finally, it construes all the four factors in theory to be interactive (Holtkamp, 2001). Irby, Brown, Duffy and Trautman (2002) aver that the SLT is relational and interactive in nature and observes the ways in which four factors interacted with one another through a tetrahedral model. These four factors are leadership behavior, organizational structure, external forces, and attitudes, beliefs, and values.

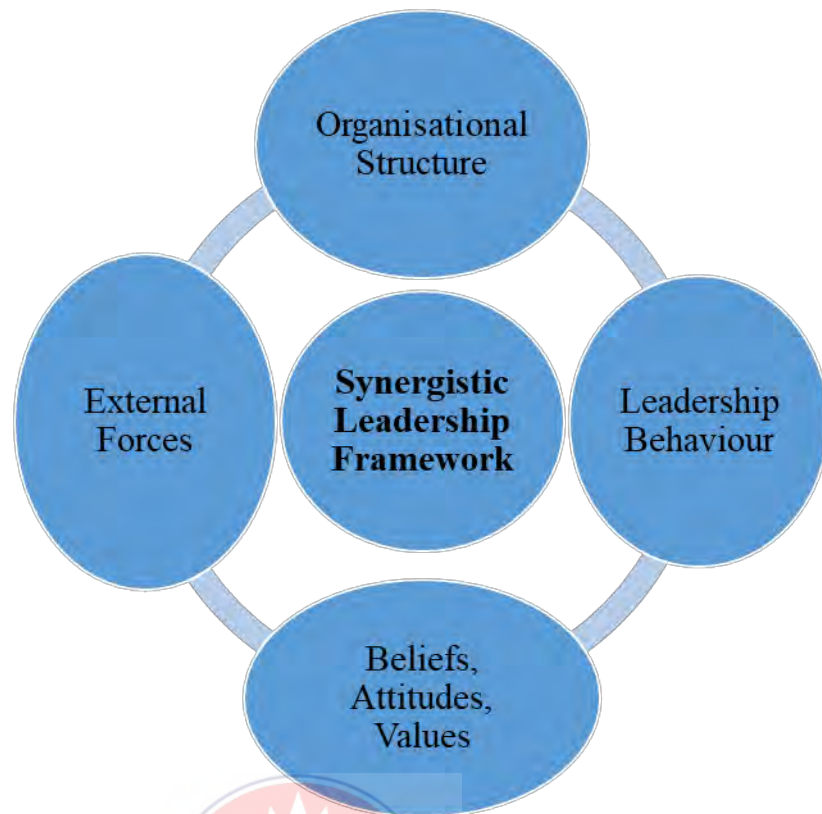


Figure 2.1: The Synergistic Leadership Framework Irby, Brown, Duffy and Trautman (2002)

2.1.1.1 Organizational Structure

Organizational structure refers to features of organizations and how they operate. The organizational structure may have variations from rigid bureaucratic models on one end of the continuum on leadership models to a less formal and liberal model on the other end of the continuum. Brown and Irby (2003) posit that SLT depicts organizational structures as ranging from open, feminist organizations to tightly bureaucratic ones. Lunenburg and Ornstein (1996) aver that bureaucratic organizations include division of labor, rules, hierarchy of authority, impersonality, and competent feminist organizations are characterized by practices such as participative decision making, systems of rotating leadership, promotion of community and cooperation, and power sharing. The bureaucratic organization is therefore well-structured with many

protocols whose observance may create some form of rigidity in the organisation. In contrast to the bureaucratic model where employees are expected to leave their personal problems at home, under feminist organisation, personal problems are often shared (Morgen, 1994). Studies of feminist organizations are minimal in the popular leadership and management literature (Ferguson, 1994; Feree & Martin, 1995). Literature on feminist organizations has relatively received minimal attention in mainstream leadership theories (Irby, Brown, & Trautman, 1999). Most organizational theories that employ the contingency approach to organizational structure have made room for some aspects of female leadership behaviors. The Synergistic Leadership Theory therefore shifts attention to the feminist organization by making it a major component of its tenets.

2.1.1.2 External Forces

The second factor of the Synergistic Leadership Theory that was considered through this study was external forces that exist in an organizational contexts or communities. External forces are those influencers and supporters outside the control of the organization or the leader that relates with the organization and the leader with the aim of advancing the cause of the organisation. Bolman and Deal (1997) proffered that there may be uncontrollable forces outside the organization that affect the system itself and cause dissatisfaction for various groups within the system. External forces of educational institutions may often include outside forces such as stakeholders and other individuals or groups of individuals who are either directly or indirectly involved in the institution's administration. These individuals who form part of the external forces may include parents, community members, and business owners. Irby, Brown, Duffy, and Trautman (2002) indicate that other external forces can be political systems, governmental regulations, and demographics of the school community. Leaders may

not be able to change or influence these external forces in their community but awareness or knowledge of these forces can benefit the heads of educational institutions when deciding which leadership behaviors are most appropriate for their school community.

2.1.1.3 Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

The third factor in the synergistic leadership theory (SLT) is attitudes, beliefs, and values. Individuals or groups would either adhere or not adhere to specific attitudes, beliefs, or values at certain points in time. The attitudes, beliefs, and values of a leader play a cardinal role in the effectiveness of the leader in an organisation. Wolff & Ball (1999) posit that personal, community, and organizational perceptions and decisions are influenced by beliefs, attitudes, and values. Daresh (2001) noted that an educational leaders' beliefs could change as they acquired new knowledge, but their attitudes and values tended to remain constant for extended periods of time. The change in beliefs for a long time could also influence a partial or total change in attitudes and values. Personal, community and organizational perceptions are influenced by attitudes, beliefs, and values. To be effective, leaders must demonstrate self-awareness of their own belief system, attitudes and values and not look down on the contributions of others. Daresh (2001) pointed out the leaders must develop their capacity to examine their own values before they can appropriately examine the values of those with whom they work with. There is therefore a nexus among the attitudes, values, and beliefs with the leader, others, and the organization as a whole.

2.1.1.4 Leadership Behavior

Finally, the fourth factor in the synergistic leadership theory (SLT) is leadership behaviour. According to Irby, Brown, Duffy and Trautman (2002), the behaviors demonstrated by leaders can fall on a continuum from “autocratic to nurturer” (p. 314).

These behaviours are dependent on the experiences of that individual. Some leaders may be construed as caring and nurturing, while other leaders may be seen as weak. Leadership behaviors are made up of both behaviors that are commonly associated with males, and those that are commonly associated with females. For instance, some leadership behaviors may be traditionally associated with male leaders such as independence, control, self-assertion, separation, and competition while female leaders may be tagged with qualities such as interdependence, cooperation, receptivity, merging, acceptance, being aware of patterns, wholes, and context (Irby et al., 2002). This spells out gender as one the cardinal factors that has influence on leadership direction and style. A feminist leader may strongly seek to resolve inequities concerning gender, race, class, sexuality, and economic status. Some leadership behaviour put forth by the SLT include but are not limited to, leaders lead by example, they demonstrate ability to juggle, they are dependable, they communicate their vision, they act as change agents, they share power, they build consensus, they have high expectations of self and others, they combine social talk with administrative talk, and are efficient. Irby et al. (2002) establish that the SLT instead of endorsing particular leadership behaviors as indicators of success or failure posits that leaders may adapt their behaviors in order to align the factors.

2.2 Review of Related Studies

The review of related studies center on literature on the societal perceptions of gender differences in leadership style and ability, the experiences of women in leadership positions, women in educational leadership positions, coping strategies of women in educational leadership positions. It will also look at the history of basic education in Ghana and the functions of the heads of basic schools in Ghana.

2.2.1 Societal Perceptions of Gender Differences in Leadership Style and Ability

Gender has an influence on leadership in many respects. Notwithstanding, there is an unending debate as to whether men or women lead in different ways. Eagly (2001) posits that the major effect of gender on leadership is that women are presumed to be less competent and less worthy to hold leadership positions. The society influences the behavior and norms in relation to relationships between people from opposite sex or workmates, to people. The gender structures, relations, and social roles influence people's activities and approaches to handle challenges as well as leadership responsibilities. Leadership decisions and gender have a significant nexus that should be examined to facilitate successful relationships and activities in organizations. It is quite difficult if not impossible to evaluate exactly the extent to which gender affects how people lead. The undeniable fact that men and women vary in their relationships, perception, communication, self-efficacy, attitude towards success and morale is enough evidence of the differences in leadership. Gender therefore has a direct influence on how people relate to each other and how they manage relationships in the work environment as well. This perception may be grounded in traditional gender roles in the society, in the family, and in paid employment where men are deemed as better and regarded over their female counterparts. Contrary to this notion, Eagly et al. (2000) proffer that women in managerial positions adopt the participative and democratic styles of leadership and act more as transformational leaders than men, who adopted a more transactional style of leadership. They further admit that female managers are prone to greater stress on communication, affiliation, and cooperation than men. The patriarchal notion about leadership influences leaders to adapt to public expectations. But it must be recognized that leadership style depends on a number of factors, where gender is just one of such factors. Emerging research is indicative of the fact that women

lead with a collective approach and intuitively notice which employees need more support and show more understanding to complex situations. Kupczyk (2009) adds that it has been found that women are more relationship oriented when compared to men, who are task oriented. In accordance with organizational behavior theories, men and women who occupy the same leadership role would behave similarly (Kanter, 1977). Andersen and Hansson (2011) aver that the only difference between male and female leadership is seen in the decision-making process, while differences in other areas such as task orientation, motivation, and leadership styles are not significant enough to cause any gender differences. According to the 2009 McKinsey Report, women's leadership style differs from that of men on the premise that women are more people-based and can be described as interested in role modelling. And that they give clear expectations and rewards. In a similar study, Folkman (2012) found out that women are more competent when taking initiatives and self-developing themselves. The lower numbers or underrepresentation of women in leadership cannot be attributed to low confidence or inability of women to lead but is largely due to the stereotypical perceptions that women cannot be effective leaders. It is therefore important for a change in the overall perception about women in leadership and treating both genders equally before the world of leadership can achieve a balanced effective gender leadership.

2.2.2 Experiences of Women in Educational Leadership Positions

Due to the abundance of personnel with educational leadership qualifications, there is a high competition among personnel seeking to occupy such offices especially among genders. With the surge in advocacy for gender equity in all facets of life, educational leadership is changing rapidly into a complicated field because cultures are becoming dominantly pluralistic and gender sensitive. Despite the advocacy for gender equity, there is a gap in the unproportionate representation of men and women in

leadership positions in the corporate field as well as in the field of educational leadership. The educational system is a reflection of society thereby making some societal perceptions creep into the very fabric of educational practices. Educational leadership in institutions reflect the general patriarchal nature of the African society and the Ghanaian thought patterns as the dynamics and norms that take place in such institutions are instrumental for comprehending the circumstances that keep women from gaining equality with men in the leadership levels. This is corroborated by (Reynolds, 2011, p. 3) who posits that “As microcosms of society, postsecondary institutions reflect, resist, and contribute to shaping norms of the larger culture in which they are situated”.

Women in recent times are making progress because access to education has been a primary feature of the equity talked about (Reynolds, 2011). Despite varied initiatives adopted to empower women, the promotion of women to upper positions or decision-making levels does not reflect the actual situation in the Ghanaian social and political context. In particular, the statistics of leadership in educational sector give an example of the underrepresentation of females who still face challenges in leadership positions. For example, as at 2020, there were only thirty-five (35) female heads out of two-hundred and ten (210) heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality where the present study was carried out. The few number of women heading basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality is enough to put forth the need for experiences of women in educational leadership positions to be studied since they are a special group. Undoubtedly, this underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in primary schools raises concern of equity, equality and social justice in basic education as is the case in many other sectors. Yet, women seem to be good managers and effective leaders as inferred from the existing literature (Eagly, 2007; Birnia, 2012;

Muzvidziwa, 2014). Studies have shown that women do not just lead differently but uniquely. Some of the related studies on experiences of female educational leaders are reviewed below.

To begin with, Mansfield, Welton, Lee & Young (2010) examined the lived experiences of female educational leadership doctoral students. Their study sought to investigate the challenges facing, and the opportunities available to, female graduate students in educational leadership departments. The study used qualitative methods to explore the constructs of educational leadership preparation and mentorship of female graduate students. It was underpinned by the feminist theory. Questionnaire and a collaborative focus group discussion were used to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of female graduate students in educational leadership departments. Some themes emerged from the data. These included constraints within the organizational culture, personal and familial sacrifice, struggles with identity, questioning self, and experiences with mentoring. The study concluded that university leadership preparation programmes play a cardinal role in supporting female graduate students and their career goals.

In addition, Gilbert (2012) studied the perceptions of eleven female principals in remote rural areas in Australia about leadership gathered from their pre- and post-first year experience. Five out of the eleven participants discovered that their ideas of primary concern had changed. Prior to the first years' experience, the principals identified essential leadership skills as good communication, equitable treatment, time management, flexibility, and familiarity with school documents and education initiatives. At the end of the year, one of the main discoveries was the need for confidence as an essential leadership skill which was stressed by all eleven participants. Participants voiced regret about time spent on administrative paperwork and been taken

away from students and teaching. The participants expressed appreciation for the reflection opportunity that the interviews provided.

Also, Pirtle (2012) conducted a PhD study on the lived experiences of principals who use literacy as an intentional school improvement effort. Her study examined the lived experiences of successful principals of high-performing-poverty-stricken schools, who used literacy development as an intentional school improvement focus while simultaneously improving other measures of school success. The study employed an interpretative phenomenological analytical approach to elicit and analyse the principals' leadership and individual experiences as they implemented structures and supports to empower their teachers and struggling learners. The findings of the study indicate that principals, particularly those serving in underserved communities, can focus on high quality literacy instruction and be successful in the accountability system. The study recommended that districts should consider creating professional learning groups to build the capacity of female school leaders who work, or choose to work, in schools in underserved communities.

Moreover, a study by Mthembu (2013) explored the lived experiences of a selected group of women principals in Umgungundlovu District in South Africa. A qualitative phenomenological study was used to generate data guided by two research questions. The data was collected from three women school principals in the Umgungundlovu District and they were interviewed in their natural settings i.e. their schools. In understanding the lived experiences of these women primary school principals of the Umgungundlovu District, six themes emerged from the data. These themes were: first experiences as initially challenging; work and home conflicting demands; networking as a way of dealing with challenges; the need for spirituality as a way of coping with these challenges; mothering and collaboration as a way of leading.

The findings of the study revealed that women principals encounter many challenges as they begin their careers as principals as a consequence of resistance from the staff, as well as in their efforts to balance their home and work lives. Some of the coping strategies identified in the study were that women had to network to make sure they have a support system; collaborate with both staff and learners as well as assisted in meeting the requirements of their positions.

More also, Segkulu and Gyimah (2016) employed a descriptive survey to assess the factors affecting the gender disparity in educational leadership within the Tamale Metropolis. The study sought to specifically examine if factors such as low educational qualification, traditional beliefs and cultural practices served as barriers to women leadership in educational institutions within the Metropolis. A sample size of 250, comprising 200 teachers and 50 administrators from selected Basic, Senior High Schools and Colleges of Education were involved in the study which used questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The study revealed that there were more males than females in the teaching profession in the Metropolis. The male teachers also had better professional and academic qualifications than their female counterparts. Thus, more males qualified for appointment into leadership positions than their female counterparts. The study further revealed that the situation is compounded by the cultural and traditional milieu of the people that relegates women into subservient positions in society. The study therefore recommends vigorous educational campaign through workshops, seminars and symposia for teachers, educational administrators and the general public to emphasize the importance of higher education for women as well as the important roles women could play in national development.

Furthermore, in study by Craig (2017) who studied the lived experiences of female high school principals in remote rural school districts of a Southwestern State

in South Africa, she employed the hermeneutic phenomenology research approach to increase the knowledge base concerning leadership experiences of female high school principals. Her study sought to explore the perceptions of four female high school principals about their own lived experiences as leaders in remote rural school districts. She used phenomenological interviews to obtain descriptive data about experiences pertaining to their education leadership role. Five (5) significant themes emerged from the analysis of the data generated from the participants' interviews about their lived experiences. The first theme was on transitioning to the principal position with subthemes bordering on district/rural background and encouragement/support. The second theme was on complexities inherent to the role of principals. The third theme had to do with incidents in the experience of principals. The fourth theme was on the relationships relevant to the experience with subthemes of student, faculty, and community and the last theme touched on family-like climate. The study recommended that strengthening of rural school leadership effectiveness will not only benefit the teachers and students of these schools but the entire rural communities.

Last but not least, in a study conducted by Oyeniran and Anchomese (2018) on leadership experiences of Ivorian women primary school principals, the authors employed a qualitative approach to gather data through in-depth semi-structural interviews using five female principals in Ivorian elementary schools as participants. The findings of their study revealed that female headteachers “have a direct influence on teachers’ commitment and indirect influence on students’ learning process as well, on those who especially have learning difficulties. It also revealed that “these females create an environment and academic support that gives attention to children, as the learning conditions are similar to that of their actual life at home” (Oyeniran & Anchomese, 2018, 149). The findings of their study corroborated findings of earlier

studies (Brinia, 2012) which hold the view that women leaders own some abilities, such as being caring, attentive, patient. Their study recommended that educational practitioners, policy makers and stakeholders should pay more attention to women primary school principals for empowering them to display their know-how, expertise and talent useful for the students' learning process.

2.2.3 Basic Education in Ghana

Basic Education is a level of education that seeks to help the learners acquire basic literacy in English Language and good knowledge in Mathematics to further enhance their abilities and talents through additional education and skills training. The year 1987 marked the beginning of new series of reforms influenced by the military coup of Jerry Rawlings in 1981. The PNDC government gathered enough funds from numerous international organizations to carry out massive changes in the educational system. The 1987 Education Act was directed towards transmogrifying the 1974 Dozbo committee measures put into practice. Through this, a national literacy campaign was launched, pre-tertiary education was reduced from 17 to 12 years and vocational education appeared in Junior High School. Education was made compulsory from 6 to 14. Most of the measures in the 1974 Dozbo committee's report could not be implemented as planned. The return to constitutional rule in 1992, saw a revamp in the quest to enhance the educational sector. The local government Act of 1993 made provision for the decentralization in education administration, moving power to the district assemblies. The Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) provided an action plan for the period 1996-2005, focusing on bridging the gender gap in primary-school, improving teaching materials and teacher's living condition. According to the Ghana Education Service (2014), universal basic education shall be 11 years, made up of 2 years of kindergarten, 6 years of primary school and 3 years of

junior high school (JHS). Basic education ends at the final year of JHS where students sit the Basic Education Certificate Examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). To manage and run basic schools, a provision was made for each basic school to have a headteacher who directly supervises the operation of the school and reports appropriately to the powers that be.

2.2.4 Duties of Headteachers of Public Basic Schools in Ghana

Leaders serve as the pivot of organisations and the educational sector is no exception. The relevance of educational leaders and headteachers to be precise cannot be overlooked. The success or the failures of schools in achieving their goals largely is dependent on headteachers. According to Devis et al. (2005), ‘school heads play vital and multifaceted roles for teachers and vibrant learning environments for children, but existing on the best ways to develop these effective leaders is insufficient’ (p. 1). As every employer would, the Ghana Education Service who is the employer of headteachers at the basic schools has outlined certain roles or duties to guide them in the successful administration of their schools. Esia-Donkoh (2014) in his study discusses some major roles. These include planning, effective school-community relationship, staff and pupil personnel services, curriculum and instructional development, improvement and appraisal and financial administration/management and record keeping.

2.2.4.1 Planning

Planning involves development of strategies and procedures for effective realization of objectives of an organisation. Planning may also be construed as a blue print for action to eschew wastage of money and other resources both in the short-term and long-term. The things that are considered when planning include objectives and goals, control of resources, direction, and the methods of achieving the overall

objectives of the organisation. Esia-Donkoh (2014) avers that failing to plan or postponing planning is dangerous because it results in ineffectiveness, undirected action and waste of resources. This is best presented in the saying “he who fails to plan, plans to fail”. All basic schools in Ghana are obliged to put together and implement a School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) to enable public basic schools identify priority areas in order to improve their performance. This has been in place since the introduction of the Capitation Grant (CG) in 2005. Headteachers are expected to familiarize with format and structure of SPIP, and the specific component of the structure of SPIP (setting objectives, targets, tasks, activities, time-frame, responsibilities and indicators of success). In terms of planning, Esia-Donkoh (2014) proffers that it is the role of headteachers to identify materials and resources needed, people responsible for facilitating the implementation of SPIP, indicate the names of people who may be assigned responsibilities for tasks and activities, set realistic time-frame including start and finish dates, and identify specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound indicators. Headteachers are to consult with school-community stakeholders to determine the appropriate date for preparation of the SPIP, encourage all stakeholders to show interest and participate in planning SPIP, organize consultative meeting of stakeholders to identify issues, prioritise the issues or problems that need attention, identify specific actions to address the problems, identify resources needed to address the problems, and assign responsibilities for various actions to be implemented. Headteachers are supposed to have good relations with stakeholders so that they can consult with them and the school community to come out with the feasible date for preparation of the SPIP. They also encourage all stakeholders to show interest and participate in planning SPIP, organize consultative meeting of stakeholders to identify issues, prioritise the issues or problems that need attention, identify specific

actions to address the problems, identify resources needed to address the problems, and assign responsibilities for various actions to be implemented. Planning is therefore one of the cardinal functions of headteachers.

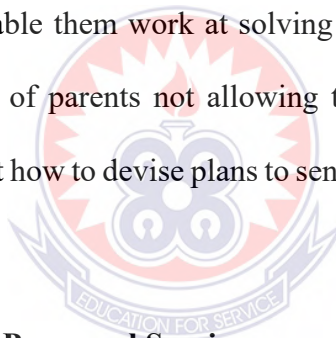
2.2.4.2 Effective School-Community Relationship

Institutions are built on relationships and schools are no exception. Every school is located in a community and must therefore have rapport with the community. The educational system is a socially friendly organization that thrives on effective internal and external relationships. With the social openness of the school as an institution, the headteacher needs to know the community, in which the school is situated and take active part in the development of the community as well as encouraging staff members to do same. By establishing rapport with the community, it will encourage the community to take active part in the activities of the school such as open days, speech and prize-giving days, exhibitions, and games and the school to also take part in community activities such as clean-up campaigns, festivals and tree planting exercise. This symbiotic relationship between the school and the community will further help foster a good relationship between the headteacher and reference groups such as the School Management Committee (SMC); Parent Teacher Association (PTA); chiefs, elders and Unit Committee; Metropolitan/Municipal/District Education Oversight Committee (MMDEOC); Religious Bodies; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); Association of Past Pupils. A mutual rapport among headteachers, reference groups and community members ensure the smooth running of the school.

The school head is also to find out the occupational practices, values, aspirations and norms of the community to enable the school formulate policies, goals and strategies for the education of the students. This will make the education of the students to be functional since it will suit the desires and aspirations of the community members.

The challenges of the community must be known by the headteacher and which will help the school equip students with the skills that will make them become responsible members of the community (Atta, Agyenim-Boateng & Baafi-Frimpong, 2000).

The community is an important aspect of the school environment because the school gets most of its teaching and learning materials from the community. To make the community beneficial to the school, the headteacher needs to know the community very well so they can direct teachers as to what they can do to obtain appropriate teaching and learning materials for effective teaching and learning. The headteachers must develop rapport with parents of children since they themselves are secondary parents of the students. In so doing, they would know the challenges faced by children at home and that will enable them work at solving these problems. For instance, the headteachers' knowledge of parents not allowing their girls to attend school would inform headteachers about how to devise plans to sensitise parents about the importance of girlchild education.



2.2.4.3 Staff and Pupil Personnel Services

The educational leader is expected to attract, select, motivate, supervise, develop and maintain teaching and nonteaching staff and ensure that pupils are adequately motivated and given the opportunity to learn. The headteacher's ability to identify the needs of their school goes a long way to help them identify specific type of staff needed to meet such needs. In this regard, they are obligated to make sure new staff members are adequately qualified and oriented into the school and abreast with the general way of doing things in the school. Conditions in the school must be conducive to enhance the comfortability of staff to enable them work progressively and enjoy their work. The headteacher must make sure that all resources needed for work are available as well as engage staff in the decision-making process. To achieve this,

varied communication channels must be activated and effectively used to help resolve challenges, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the staff, evaluate their performance through observation and daily supervision, and appraise their effectiveness for promotion. This will enable headteachers write confidential and unbiased reports on the staff based on their performance. They must organize regular, relevant and effective in-service training and seminars, and encourage staff to join and attend subject association workshops to enhance the quality of staff. Such in-service training programmes will be in the sharing of ideas, self-help and co-operation among teachers to find solutions to their own teaching challenges, and the learning problems of the pupils they teach.

Regarding pupil personnel services, Ojo and Olaniyan (2008) posit that headteachers must ensure that these involve the selection, orientation, placement, as well as guidance and counselling of students constitute an essential aspect of their educational administration. They must ensure that the welfare of learners is upheld. They must motivate and give pupils ample opportunity to learn. They must make sure that guidance co-ordinators are well resourced enough to attend to the varied challenges pupils face in their academic and social life. Headteachers must organize orientation programmes on school rules and regulations, discipline, moral and civic issues, adequate interpersonal relations, selection of subjects, and career guidance for new pupils and make sure that the school environment is friendly, physically safe, emotionally secure and physically enabling for academic and extra-curricular activities. Esia-Donkoh (2014) proffers that headteachers must institute “measures to avoid physical assault (caning, hitting, fighting etc.), verbal (insults, shouts, intimidation etc.), and sexual abuses (harassment, aggression, defilement, rape, coercion etc.), and encourage victims of such atrocities to report to the appropriate authorities for redress.”

(p. 57). Anything that has to do with the welfare of learners must be of concern to the headteacher.

2.2.4.4 Curriculum and Instructional Development, Improvement and Appraisal

There is a plethora of duties of headteachers which range from the planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of all activities that take place in the school. The curriculum is one important aspect of the headteacher's duties. Ojo & Olaniyan (2008) aver that the curriculum is not a record of what has happened but a plan of what is to happen. The school curriculum refers to all the learning experiences and opportunities designed for the students in the school. The curriculum is usually designed to meet dynamic needs of the society. Hence, the need to change it from time to time to meet this demand. A curriculum that is considered adequate and effective may be outdated tomorrow. Headteachers owe it a duty of noticing, understanding and making good judgement about the needs of the society and make sure that these needs are factored into the curriculum development. To enhance teaching and learning, the headteacher ensures that time tables and textbooks are in readiness for use, and that other learning materials such as manila cards, pieces of chalk, dusters, notebooks for lesson plans, forecasts and record of work are supplied or purchased where necessary. They have to encourage teachers to partake in meetings of subject associations such as English Teachers' Association of Ghana, Mathematics Association of Ghana, and Geography Teachers' Association of Ghana. Since the ultimate goal of educational leadership is to improve learning and learning opportunities, headteachers must work towards achieving this.

2.2.4.5 Financial Administration/Management and Record Keeping

Money plays an important role in the administration of every institution and the school is no exception. Due to trust issues, it is not everyone in the school who has

access to money. For the important role money plays, the headteacher is mandated by the Ghana Education Service as the spending officer at the basic school level. The headteacher has to provide and disburse funds for the attainment of educational goals. In order to expend funds judiciously, budget making is important because it helps in accounting for what funds are to be used, are being used and are to be used. The budget is a planning and a control tool that presents a financial statement about the revenue and expenditure of the school. It serves as a great panacea to impulsive and unplanned expenditure. A headteacher who fails to account for money spent can even be dismissed and this makes the budget an important document which can save the headteacher from financial trouble. Since its introduction in 2005, the capitation grant (CG) has served as the main source of funding for public basic schools to help actualize the governments mission for free education for all Ghanaian children in the public basic schools. Aside the capitation grant, other sources of income include but are not limited to PTA dues and other individual donations. Monies from the capitation grant earmarked for activities in their Schools Performance Improvement Plans (SPIP) such as stationery, sanitation maintenance, correspondence, teaching and learning materials, and materials for minor repairs and work, sports equipment, tools for agriculture and work on the school compound, and tools for Creative Art and Basic Design and Technology (BDT) lessons.

Record keeping is an important role of the headteacher. Records are the only legally approved evidence of activities that have been carried out. Financial records form a cardinal part of record keeping. Without records, educational authorities and other stakeholders may question the integrity of the school leader. Ojo & Olaniyan (2008) posit that ‘a school administrator who fails to keep desirable records may only perform like a rambler who is purposeless and blind to the real essence of this job’ (p.

176). Records are not just to be kept but managed as well. Record management refers to the application of systematic and scientific control of recorded information needed for the operation of the school. Ojo & Olaniyan (2008) proffer that the purpose of record management is to establish the best practices regarding the retrieval and exploitation of data to improve the efficiency of the record making and record keeping processes. A headteacher is said to have adequately managed records when they co-ordinate and protect the school's records in order to simplify intra-organisational communication challenges. Every headteacher must take record keeping and management seriously to make sure that all major and relevant activities in the school are properly documented and recorded.

2.2.5 Challenges Faced by Headteachers in the Performance of their Duties

There is a plethora of challenges that obstruct headteachers from functioning effectively as required by the demands of their office. In a study conducted by Esia-Donkoh (2014), it was identified that the key challenge bedeviling the functions of headteachers has to do with inadequacy and delay in the payment of capitation grant. Institutions are run with funds and lack of funds therefore poses tethering challenges. Without funds, it becomes difficult for headteachers to buy the necessary items needed for school activities for the academic year. The situation also compels some headteachers of public basic schools to charge some other fees to support their activities which defeats the purpose of free basic education. The capitation grant may also be used for sports and cultural activities, hygiene and sanitation facilities, furniture and fittings, infrastructural works, and teaching and learning materials. With this cardinal role of the capitation grant, its absence would actually cause the administration of the school to come to an abrupt halt.

Another challenge faced by headteachers of basic schools has to do with poor infrastructure. Generally, the poor state of facilities within the educational sector cannot be overlooked when discussing the major challenges confronting all levels of education in Ghana. Notwithstanding, the problem of poor infrastructure is dominant at the basic school level where a lot of basic amenities to enhance learning are non-existent or inadequate. Most basic schools are marked with dilapidated buildings which are sometimes used as classrooms in certain communities (Hulme, 2006). Instead of serving as a medium to acquiring knowledge; these classroom buildings on the contrary serve as death traps which scare pupils and the teachers away from school. Some parents out of fear for the safety of their children may prefer to keep their wards at home rather than send them to school. Aside buildings, the absence or inadequacy of other facilities such as laboratories, teaching and learning materials, vehicles and other facilities may also hinder the effectiveness of headteachers at the basic school in Ghana.

Power struggle with other staff members is one of the tethering challenges bedeviling the effectiveness of headteachers. It may so happen that other staff may have more years of experience or a higher academic qualification than the headteacher (Elmore, 2000). Such staff most often than not, try to oppose decisions and instructions from the head because they feel they are higher than the head. Some of these power struggles may stifle the functionality and effectiveness of headteacher to the detriment of the progress of their schools. Some of these power struggles may even cause staff to fabricate issues against headteachers just to bring them down. This issue of power struggle is mostly evident in schools where the headteacher is a female. Attom (2010) recognizes the presence of power struggle between female headteachers in Ghana. Most male staff due to their patriarchal perception about leadership may rise against these female headteachers simply because they are women. Another form of power struggle

has to do with power dynamics and role conflict that exist between Headteachers and SMC members. From the data gathered from the interview, the power dynamics are sometimes collusive. Sometimes, members of SMC in schools, especially those in rural areas, are not well educated and as such do not have the technical knowledge on financial administration may tend to oppose decisions from the headteacher ignorantly.

When general record keeping especially financial record keeping is poor, it casts a snare on the integrity of headteachers because they are not able to account for money that has been used which draws the conclusion that they have spent the money. Headteachers are expected to be able to produce information about their schools at the click of the bottom (Hulme, 2006). Records such as the biodata of their staff and students, school property, academic performance records, the history of the school, school budget and other financial reports must be at the disposal of headteachers. They should be able to produce these and other records upon request. Due to lack of digital means of storing of data, most schools lose their data to fire, theft and other accidental occurrences. Financial record keeping is one of the issues that stagnates the work of headteachers (Derryberry, Crowson, & Lomax, 2004). This especially applies to newly posted headteachers who arrive at their post to find out that there is no financial record on the past administration's activities. Poor records keeping therefore makes auditing of accounts difficult which goes a long way to stifle the progress of the school.

Moreover, professional teacher quality is also a challenge faced by headteachers in the discharge of their duties. Oduro (2003) posits that teachers are at the heart of the administration of every school. The performance of schools is basically measured by the performance of its students. For students to perform well, the professional quality of teachers both in their academic knowledge and behaviour must be of quality. For instance, if the mathematics teacher is not good enough at the subject, it will be difficult

if not impossible for students to pass the subject. Some teachers struggle to speak good English which leaves a lot of people in awe as to how such teachers teach their learners using the English language as a medium of instruction. When students fail too, it presents the school as a poor academic performing school. No matter how effective the headteachers are, they would still be bound to fail if their teachers are not good enough to churn out good grades. Some good teachers may choose to be relaxed just to denigrate the name of the school and the reputation of the headteacher. Some schools may also have teachers who do not hold the minimum academic qualification to teach. The Ghana Education Service in 2007 found out that a number of teachers were employed based on forged certificates at the basic level and one can only envisage the harm these teachers have caused to pupils who are supposed to be the future of this country (Zame, et al., 2008). Currently, the minimum requirement to teach at the basic level is a diploma and gradually moving to a first degree. This notwithstanding, one will still find Teacher's Certificate "A" holders teaching in some basic schools in Ghana.

Furthermore, some headteachers may be challenged in the performance of their duties due to lack of adequate orientation and training they receive as headteachers. Some headteachers who were assistant headteachers may be appointed to the office as headteachers without any rigorous training and orientation with the perception that since they have acted as assistant heads before, they should automatically be able to function as headteachers. Some headteachers may also be newly appointed to the office without any rigorous training This may be a false perception because these are two distinct positions with their attending roles. Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins (2008) establish that the work of head teachers is second only to the effects of classroom teachers on instruction and learning. A headteacher who therefore lacks the required

orientation and training to occupy the office, will fail to adequately mentor and guide their teachers. These inadequacies in the preparation of the head teachers may cause them to lack the managerial muscle to run their schools effectively. This may hinder the function of headteachers as instructional leaders and managers, capable of providing professional development for the teachers. The Ghana Education Service appears to be aware of the inadequacies of the training that has been given to the head teachers, which has rendered them incapable of addressing their responsibilities as instructional leaders (Zame, et al., 2008).

2.3 Chapter Summary

The reviewed related literature has brought to light relevant literature that has to do with lived experiences of female educational leaders. It reviewed the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The literature review also looked at research on the societal perceptions of gender differences in leadership style and ability and the experiences of women in educational leadership positions. It further looked at the history of basic education in Ghana, the role of the heads of basic schools in Ghana and the challenges faced by headteachers of basic schools in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this section, I have outlined the methods that were employed in carrying out this study. This includes the research design, the sample size and techniques, the research population, the research procedure, the data collection method and how it was analysed.

3.2 Philosophical Assumption/Paradigm

Guba and Lincoln (1994) define a paradigm as a basic set of beliefs or worldview that guides research action or an investigation. Similarly, Denzin & Lincoln (2000), define paradigms as human constructions, which deal with first principles which indicate where the researcher is coming from so as to construct meaning embedded in data. I approached this study from the Interpretivist/constructivist perspective. How this was done in the study is explained below:

3.2.1 The Interpretivist Paradigm/Constructivist Paradigm: epistemology and ontology

I approached this study from the Interpretivist/constructivist point of view because I wanted to know the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the municipality. This idea is supported by Guba & Lincoln (1989) who reported that the central endeavour of the Interpretivist paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. The use of this approach made it easier and allowed the participants of this study to speak for themselves without limiting them to choose from few available options provided by the researcher. Every result discussed in the next

chapter was therefore interpreted from the meaning, the perception and understanding each participant constructed from their experiences as female heads of basic schools.

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) stated that, in the constructivist paradigm, every effort is made to try to understand the viewpoint of the subject being observed, rather than the viewpoint of the observer. In this study, I placed emphasis on understanding the participants and their interpretation of the world around them. Also, I allowed the participants to express their subjective views on the issue under discussion. This was done because the key tenet of the Interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This is why sometimes this paradigm has been called the Constructivist paradigm. This paradigm assumes a subjectivist epistemology, and relativist ontology. These elements and how I used them for this study are explained below:

For this research, I and my subjects were engaged in interactive processes as I intermingled, dialogued, questioned, listened to, read, wrote and recorded the participants to generate research data. This helped me to make meaning of participant's data using their own thoughts through interactions. This is supported by Punch as cited in Kivunja & Kuyini (2017) who reported on the constructivist paradigm that, there is the understanding that the researcher will construct knowledge socially as a result of his or her personal experiences of the real life within the natural settings investigated. This conforms to the epistemology of the constructivist approach. In research, epistemology is used to describe how we come to know something; how we know the truth or reality; or as Cooksey & McDonald (as cited in Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) put it, what counts as knowledge within the world. Thus, Reality is individually constructed; there are as many realities as individuals.

3.3 Research Design

According to Yin (2003), a research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions. That is, a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where 'here' may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and 'there' is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Research design is a logical model of proof that allows the researcher to draw inferences concerning causal relations among the variables under investigation (Baah, 2019). The research design also defines the domain of generalizability, that is, whether the interpretations obtained can be generalized to a larger population or to different situations.

I used a phenomenological design for this study. Phenomenological design is appropriate for the study because it provides an in-depth view on lived experiences of female heads in basic schools. (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research is a systematic, observation-based method designed to answer questions about individuals in a specific, social setting. Qualitative researchers study participants in the natural environment in order to interpret phenomena based on the meanings people ascribe to certain events (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Creswell, 2007).

I chose a qualitative approach for this study because it was the most appropriate method to answer my research questions. I was interested in lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality, the coping strategies employed by female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality to manage challenges in their leadership careers and the impacts of these coping strategies on female heads of basic school in Nkoranza South Municipality. I could only determine detailed answers, first-hand experiences of the female heads of basic schools and their subjective views to these questions through qualitative research methods.

In this study, I employed the qualitative phenomenological design. The purpose of a phenomenological design is to understand the issue or topic from the everyday knowledge and perceptions of specific respondent subgroups (Henry, Casserly, Coady, & Marshall, 2008). In this design, researchers have initial knowledge about the topic and are interested in developing a more in depth understanding or in clarifying potentially conflicting or equivocal information from previous data. It is not primarily concerned with explaining the causes of things but attempts instead, to describe how things are experienced first-hand of the everyday world by those involved (Henry et al, 2008).

The participants have “lived experience” for a particular event (Patton, 2002, p. 104 as cited in Gauweiler, 2005). Their first-hand knowledge provides the data. In order to understand the experience, I gained entry to the place where the event occurs. I immersed myself into the setting in order to conduct interviews, and focus group discussions. I then transcribed my interviews, confirmed it with the participants, generated themes and discussed it to learn how participants make sense of their experience.

The Nkoranza South Municipality was selected for this research because the heads of basic schools there are dominantly males which makes their few female counterparts a special group to study. This is evident in the wide range of disparity in the figures (175 males heads against 35 female heads of basic schools). The phenomenological design therefore, explored the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the municipality.

3.4 Study Area

Nkoranza South Municipal District is one of the eleven districts in Bono East Region of Ghana. Originally it was part of the then-larger Nkoranza District on 10th March 1989, until the northern part of the district was split off to create Nkoranza North District on 1 November 2007 (effectively 29th February 2008); thus the remaining part has been renamed as Nkoranza South District, which was later elevated to municipal district assembly status on 28th June 2012 to become Nkoranza South Municipal District. The municipality is located in the southern part of Bono East Region and has Nkoranza as its capital town. The Municipality shares boundaries with Nkoranza North District to the north, Techiman Municipal to the west, Offinso North and Ejura Sekyeredumase Municipal (all in Ashanti Region) to the south and south-east. With land size of 1,100km², it has about 126 settlements traditionally headed by one paramount chief. The population of the Municipality according to 2021 population and housing census stands at 114,642 with 57,112 male and 57,530 female (2021 Population Census of Ghana).

The occupational background of the residents is mainly farming. Most of the women engage in marketing activities. The majority of men work as commercial farmers with an insignificant percentage of the population working as office employees. The major religions practiced by the residents of the municipality are Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion. Christianity is the dominant religious practice as it is prevalent in almost all the sub-areas. The denominations dominant in the municipality are Catholics, Anglicans, Wesleyans, Seventh-day Adventists, Pentecostals, Presbyterians and others.

3.5 Target and Accessible Population

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), the population is a group to which results of the study are intended to apply. That is, the population to which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusion. The Nkoranza South Municipality has 210 basic schools and by implication 210 heads of these basic schools as of 2020 and this served as the target population for this study. Within this population, 35 of the heads of basic schools are women and 175 are males. The wide disparity in the numbers presents female heads of basic schools in the municipality as a special group that needs to be studied. The 35 female heads of basic schools served as my accessible population.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample can be defined as a group of relatively smaller number of people selected from a population for investigation purpose (Creswell, 2007). All the sampling techniques employed are purposive in nature. In purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

The sample size for this study was 4 participants. I used purposive sampling to select the participants. They were made up of four (4) female heads of basic schools in the municipality who had served for over seven years as headmistresses. This sampling technique helped me to focus on the key informants, who are particularly knowledgeable of the issues under investigation.

These participants served the purpose of this study as they share their experiences as heads of basic schools in the municipality. The following purposive sampling methods were used during the data collection:

Homogenous Sampling: This is where the researcher purposefully samples individuals or sites based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics (Creswell, 2012). He further says that a researcher might select certain sites or people because they possess a similar trait or characteristic.

I used this method of sampling because all the participants were female heads of basic schools. Also, all of them were within a common locality, thus the Nkoranza South Municipality. Lastly, all the heads selected for the study were those with not less than seven years of experience as heads of basic schools in the municipality.

Self-Recruitment Sampling: This is a type of purposive sampling where the members of the sample self-select themselves for being part of the study. I announced the purpose of the study to all 19 of the female heads who had over seven years of experience in the position, and those willing to participate in the study were allowed. Since the participants voluntarily opted to be part of the study, they readily cooperated and shared their experiences.

3.7 Methods of Generating Data

I employed the focus group discussions and interview guide. A qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers (Creswell, 2012). The researcher then transcribes and types the data into a computer file for analysis. For the purpose of this, I used semi structured interview to gather information from the participants. The questions that were asked in the interview were open ended in nature. Two main forms of methods of collecting data that I employed in this study are:

Focus Group Discussion: A focus group discussion is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six (Creswell, 2012). According to Creswell (2012), Focus groups are advantageous when the interaction among interviewees will likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative with each other. This focus group comprised of four participants who were heads of basic schools in the municipality with over seven years' experience as heads.

Interview Guide: The one-on-one interview is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time (Creswell, 2012). Four interviews were conducted for this study. The four participants were made up of four heads of basic schools in the municipality with over seven years' experience as heads. These participants were chosen from the Focus Group Discussion due to their unique experience, knowledge and skills they exhibited with regards to the subject under discussion. Each participant was interviewed separately. This was also done to avoid any form of interferences from their other participants when sharing personal experiences. The instruments used for data collection are labelled as appendices A, B, C, D, E and F.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In research context, ethics is concerned with the moral concepts and principles that underpin socially recognized professional as well as legal obligations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison as cited in Ntim, 2014). An ethical consideration in this study refers to protecting the rights of the respondents as well as maintaining scientific integrity.

To ensure the ethics of this study, the consent of respondents was sought before the interviews were audiotaped. Most importantly, confidentiality and anonymity were also ensured by me. Due to this, interviewees did not use their original names during the interviews. Also, respondents were not coerced to participate in this study but could have opted out at any time. Finally, the transcribed interviews were sent to the participants and they confirmed it as the exact information they provided during the interview, and gave the permission to be used for this study. This is indicated as Appendix H.

3.9 Data Trustworthiness

Guba (1981) suggests that in research conducted within the Interpretivist paradigm, the positivist criteria of internal and external validity, and reliability should be replaced with four criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity. These criteria are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. These four criteria proposed by Guba and Lincoln who said that “internal validity should be replaced by that of credibility, external validity by transferability, reliability by dependability and objectivity by confirmability” (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) are discussed below:

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility establishes whether or not the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants’ original views (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To ensure that the information I had was credible, the first thing I did was to involve myself in the participants’ world. This helped me to gain an insight into the context of the study, and it helped to minimize the distortions of information that might arise because I generated the data myself from the field.

To add to it, before the analysis and the interpretation of the data, I sent back all the transcripts of the audio recordings to the respective informants for them to read through, authenticate and confirm that information they gave to me for the purpose of this research have not been altered. After going through the transcripts of the audio recordings, the participants were made to sign a confirmation agreement form indicated as Appendix F. This way of ensuring credibility in qualitative study is supported by Guba (1981) when he purported that the member-checks strategy involves establishing structural corroboration or coherence. That is, testing all the data to ensure that there is no internal conflict or inconsistencies, and establishing referential adequacy.

Lastly, I ensured the credibility of this study by working hand-in-hand with my supervisor. During the research process, I sought support from my supervisor and other professionals who willingly provided scholarly guidance. The feedback from these people helped me to improve the quality of this study.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts with other respondents – it is the interpretive equivalent of generalizability (Bitsch, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Bitsch (2005), the “researcher facilitates the transferability judgment by a potential user through ‘thick description’ and purposeful sampling” (p. 85). This means that when the researcher provides a detailed description of the enquiry and participants are selected purposively, it facilitates transferability of the inquiry.

I used purposive sampling to help me get my informants/participants. This sampling technique helped me to focus on key informants, who are particularly knowledgeable of the issues under investigation. Thus, to ensure the transferability of

this study, I purposively selected heads of basic schools in the municipality with over 7 years experience as heads. These participants served the purpose of this study as they shared their experiences.

Also, thick description of this research including all the research processes, from data collection, context of the study to production of the final report was clearly elucidated. This description helps other researchers to replicate the study with similar conditions in other settings.

3.9.3 Dependability

According to Bitsch (2005), dependability refers to “the stability of findings over time” (p. 86). Dependability involves participants evaluating the findings and the interpretation and recommendations of the study to make sure that they are all supported by the data received from the informants of the study (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

To ensure the dependability of this research, I employed the Code-Recode Strategy and the peer examination strategy. According to Anney (2014), the code-recode strategy involves the researcher coding the same data twice, giving one- or two-weeks’ gestation period between each coding. The results from the two coding are compared to see if the results are the same or different (Chilisa & Preece, as cited in Anney, 2014). I also discussed the research process and findings with some academics who are knowledgeable in qualitative research. All these were done to ensure that the findings of this study can stand the test of time.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is “concerned with establishing that data and interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer’s imagination, but are clearly derived from the data” (Tobin & Begley, 2004, p. 392). Studies suggest that confirmability of

qualitative inquiry is achieved through an audit trail, and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An audit trail involves an examination of the inquiry process and product to validate the data, whereby a researcher accounts for all the research decisions and activities to show how the data were collected, recorded and analysed (Anney, 2014). For the purpose of establishing the confirmability of this study, the following documents were kept for cross-checking the inquiry process: raw data, one-on-one interviews, and focus group discussion that were recorded and collected from the field. Thus, I used different sources of data (interviews, and focus group discussions) to enhance the quality of the data generated for this research.

3.10 Data Collection Procedure

The purpose of the study was unveiled to all members. Those who volunteered to participate formed the sample for this study. All volunteers were heads of basic schools in the municipality with over 15 years experience as heads.

I organised focus group discussions (indicated as appendix G II) with these participants who volunteered to participate in the study. Also, one-on-one interview (indicated as appendix G) was conducted with the participants for the study. It was done to avoid any form of interferences from others when sharing personal experiences. These interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

3.11 Data Analysis

The data gathered from the individual interviews, and the focus group discussions were presented case by case, and common themes were identified and highlighted. This allowed the researcher to categorize the information from the participants on their

experiences as heads of basic schools. The verbatim translations of the recordings formed an essential part of the data analysis as I tried to incorporate all meanings and nuances of the subject.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality. This chapter presents steps taken for the data analysis as well as the findings analysed from the interviews. Four interviews were conducted and one focus group discussion was also held. The first part presents the participants career backgrounds. To understand the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality, the participants provided descriptions of their experiences, including success, and information on the obstacles they have faced, and how they managed to overcome those obstacles. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix D and G). It was analysed and presented in line with the research questions as discussed in chapter one. The four interviews comprised of four female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality and the focus group discussion was made up of the same participants (four female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality). The data from the participants were read several times and dominant ideas and vital information were identified and assigned labels as the major themes for data analysis.

4.1 Demographics of Participants of the Study

This section gives the background information of the participants for the study. The data gathered on the background of participants included their ages, marital status, educational qualification, years of teaching experience, years of teaching experience before promotion to the position of headmistress, years of experience as headmistress. The women were sampled from four basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality and pseudonyms have been used in order to maintain confidentiality. Table 4 below presents the profile of the career backgrounds of participants.

Table 4.1. Demographics of Participants of the Study

| Headmistress | Age | Marital Status | Educational Qualification | Years of teaching Experience | Years of teaching before promotion as headmistress | Years of experience as headmistress |
|--------------|-----|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Ama | 50 | Widowed | Degree | 25 | 17 | 8 |
| Akua | 51 | Married | Degree | 24 | 10 | 14 |
| Esi | 45 | Single | Masters | 20 | 8 | 12 |
| Abena | 53 | Divorced | Degree | 27 | 15 | 12 |

In exploring the phenomenological analysis of the interview data and the description of participants' lived experiences, the researcher recorded and transcribed data from the participants. The researcher painstakingly read through the transcribed data in order to cluster it into various themes or meaning units. Verbatim quotes from the transcribed interviews will be used to provide textual evidence to support the analysis of data. The analysis of data will be presented in line with the research questions underpinning the study. These research questions are

1. What are the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza municipality?
2. What coping strategies are employed by female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza municipality in the administration of their schools?
3. How do the coping strategies impact female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza municipality in addressing their challenges?

4.2 Research Question 1: What are the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza municipality?

The following themes were identified from the data gathered on the lived experiences of female heads of basic school in Nkoranza municipality. Similar ideas and important information from the various participants are assigned a common label and new ideas are assigned new labels. The themes are family-work balance experience, experiences with staff and students, experience with the community and the skills they have gained. The labels used for the themes are boldened.

The participants of the study expressed their lived experiences in relation to how they balanced their family roles as women and mothers with their positions as headmistresses. The participants understood their work as headmistresses is totally distinct from their family roles. They spoke about how their roles as mothers, wives and women and how it generally played a role in their experiences as headmistresses. During the interviews, the participants had this to say on the theme above.

It has not been a good experience for me. I was posted to this school as headmistress right after the death of my husband. So, I was already depressed and that worsened the already bad situation,... **[Participant 1]**

Participant 4 also reported:

It has been a roller-coaster experience. The promotion came with joy but it was at the same time that I was having issues in my marriage which eventually led to the divorce. The effect of the divorced affected me psychologically in my former school hence, I asked for transfer to come here which is a neutral ground for me... **[Participant 4]**.

Additionally, participant 2 stated:

Oh yes, eerrr, so much experience. Bitter-sweet, (pauses)... yah, in my seventeen years' experience as a headmistress in general and my eight-year experience as a headmistress of this school, I have had a great deal of experience. I have had to perform my roles as a wife as well as a mother at home at the same time perform my roles as a headmistress. It has not been easy combining both... Motherhood is a complete profession on its own and adding it to the demands of my office as

headmistress makes it a daunting task. But in all, I am managing since every Ghanaian is a manager hahaha! [**Participant 2**].

The above experiences shared by participants indicate that family roles of women cannot be divorced from their roles as headmistresses. From the response, it is realised that married women may find themselves in a particular stage or marriage i.e. married, divorced or widowed and each of these stages comes with their own challenges which affect the role of women in positions and basic school headmistresses to be precise. On the death of a spouse, **Participant 1** recounts how the death of her husband affected her and complicated the situation by adding to the other challenges she was already facing as a headmistress. **Participant 4** also recounted how her experience of divorce affected her psychological state which eventually caused her to leave her former school in order to forget about the experience. **Participant 2** recounts her experience of playing her roles as a wife and mother as well as a headmistress. She makes a profound and intriguing statement that “Motherhood is a complete profession on its own and adding it to the demands of my office as headmistress makes it a daunting task”. It was not surprising that participant 3 had no experience to share on balancing family life with work life because she is single. Notwithstanding, she may also have her own challenges which she failed to mention. These experiences of the participants therefore establish that the experiences female heads of basic school go through are complex ranging from death of spouses, to the effect of divorce and motherly roles. This challenge of balancing the home with its challenges with work by women in positions has been an agelong discussion. Dex and Joshi (1999) note that many women around the world have been successful in their careers but many are confronted with choosing between a challenging and promising career and the demands of home life. These challenges even stand the chance of pushing some women out of

their positions in order to enable them have time with their families. This is confirmed by Byron (2005) who posits that among the factors responsible for women's exit, are the long and inflexible work schedules, which makes it difficult to perform traditional female roles at home. This is an important issue which provides dynamics of the work-family balance which will provide the knowledge base for global organizations to design culturally appropriate family-friendly initiatives to assist employed women in sub-Saharan African (Aryee, 2005) and Ghana specifically to balance work and family roles.

The second thematic classification of the lived experiences of the participants was based on *their experiences with staff and students*. The creation of this theme is hinged on the fact that headmistresses cannot function effectively without a certain level of cooperation from staff and students. Most of their experiences were based on their relationship with staff especially the male staff. During the interviews, the participants had this to say on the theme of experiences with staff.

I faced fierce opposition from some of the male teachers in the school. Most of the male teachers still believe that a woman's place is in the kitchen. So, they tend to look down on me, rubbishing my decisions. At one meeting, it took the intervention of the District Director of Education who was in the meeting to salvage the situation. It has been a bad experience for me and sometimes, I regret taking up this position.
[Participant 1]

Similarly, participant 4 also reported:

The experience here has not been bad. I have worked well and have good relationships with my staff and students as well. The only part of my experience which is disturbing has to do with how some male try to challenge me sometimes. I do feel if I were a male, perhaps, that challenge would have been non-existent. If not for that, it would have an entirely pleasurable experience. **[Participant 4]**.

Additionally, participant 2 stated:

In my work as a headmistress, I have faced fierce opposition from my teachers and collaboration sometimes too. I had the experience of

individuals coming into my office without following protocol just to insult me. I have also been intimidated by other staff members. Some even threaten to attack me spiritually. But in all these, I have sailed through. I have also enjoyed some good times as a headmistress. Teachers collaborating with me, praising me and students also coming to thank me after their completion of school. In all, I will say it has been a rollercoaster experience. **[Participant 2]**.

Additionally, participant 3 stated:

The least said the better. You know our culture does not support women in leadership positions. And secondly, our culture measures the worth of a woman based on marriage and childbirth. I happen not to have all these. So, the attitude of my male staff towards me is just very bad. Some of my male staff are married with kids and most of the time, they create the impression that I don't qualify to lead the school just because I am not a family woman. In all, I have tried my best to be patient and do my work diligently. Some even say that I have enough time to work because I am not a family woman. So, it has not been easy. **[Participant 3]**.

The above experiences shared by participants indicate that headmistresses go through mixed experiences regarding their relationship with staff and students. From the responses, it is realised that out of the mixed experiences headmistresses go through, the common experience among them has to do with how their male staff relate with them. All four participants indicated that they faced opposition from the male staff who gave them tough times just because they are women. This goes to confirm Attom's (2010) assertion that there is the presence of power struggle between female headteachers and their staff in Ghana. Most male staff due to their patriarchal perception about leadership may rise against these female headteachers simply because they are women. Nzeli (2013) further indicates that there are prevalent staff prejudices against female leaders. This establishes that female leaders are at risk of receiving less professional respect from their staff than male leaders and staff with traditional gender role and attitudes are prone to have comparatively little professional respect for female leaders. Aside the sore experiences of the participants regarding their relationship with some male staff, participants 2 shared some positive experiences she had with her staff

and students in her school. She recounts how her staff collaborate with her and students coming to thank her after their completion of school. This indicates that despite the challenges faced by headmistresses, there are some other good experiences for those who still put up their best despite the challenges they go through. One main factor that accounts for this bias toward women leaders is that “our culture does not support women in leadership positions” as stated by participant three. This makes the problem very serious because it is deep-seated in the African culture.

The last but one thematic classification of the lived experiences of the participants was based on *their experiences with the communities where their schools are situated*. Schools do not exist in isolation but rather situated within communities. In a way, the school becomes part of the community since it helps train children for that community. In this regard, the relationship between the head of the school and the community takes a cardinal place in the experiences of heads of schools. During the interviews, the participants had this to say on the theme of experiences with the community.

I am very collaborative in my leadership style, in fact ... my staff and students have been telling me. My teachers mostly contrast my style of leadership with that of the headmaster who left before I came. They tell me that I am very accommodating to staff, students and the community at large. **[Participant 1]**

Similarly, participant 4 also reported:

I am very collaborative in all that I do. I try to factor in the concerns of my staff, students and the community in all that I do. Sometimes, I go to the chief to discuss with him the challenges facing the community and how the school can support and the challenges facing the school too and how the community can support. **[Participant 4].**

Additionally, participant 2 stated:

When I was newly posted here as the headmistress, I went to introduce myself to the chief of the town. The chief expressed some shock over my occupancy of the position because he felt it is a preserve for men. I felt very bad about that. To overcome this challenge, I told myself that I would work very hard for the community to measure my worth not

based on my gender but based on my competence. When the chief himself realised my capabilities, he began to give me the needed recognition. Showcasing my capabilities as a woman has helped me to overcome the tag of incompetence that has been placed on women. This has even reflected in the enrolment of girls in the school as compared to the previous years. Because most fathers want their daughters to be like me. **[Participant 2]**.

Also, participant 3 stated:

The last time, a parent came to plead with the school to appeal for financial support to pay the son's medical bills, I gladly led that and at the end, the money was realised. The people in the community also like me because of my good works in the school. **[Participant 3]**.

The above experiences shared by participants indicate that headmistresses have varied relationships and experiences regarding the relationship between their schools and the community. From the responses, it is realised that some of the participants had special relationships with the community while others had normal or causal relationship with the community. Participant 1 just said it in passing that she had a good relationship with the community but failed to provide evidence. This shows that the relationship between her and the community is likely to be normal or casual one. All four participants indicated that they faced opposition from the male staff who gave them tough times just because they are women. Unlike participant 1, participants 2, 3 and 4 detailed some occurrences that reflect the close relationship they have with the community within which their schools are situated. Participant 2 and 4 indicated that they sometimes go to have discussions with the chief regarding the progress of the school and community. Abreh (2017) avers that local communities started most of the basic schools by providing lands for the construction of the schools and teacher accommodation but over time, the government took over most of the operations of the schools. Having discussions with the chief of the community is in the right direction since he is the custodian of the land on which the school is built. Participant 2 further

indicated that the chief came to appreciate her abilities as women due to her hard work and innovations. This she said reflected in the increase in the enrolment of females in the school. Participant 3 also details how people in the community have always applauded her to the extent that she was called by a community member when the roof of her school got ripped off. This indicates that a good relationship between schools and communities go a long way to help in the progress of schools. The management and operations of public schools are therefore in the hands of the Ministry of Education (MOE) through the support of Ghana Education Services (GES), School Management Committees (SMC), Parents Teachers Associations (PTA), local community, and other stakeholders (Aryeh-Adjei, 2021). Sharma (2008) further asserts that when there is positive relationship between the school and the community, communities can provide resources such as volunteer support, free labor, and financial support for the schools. Community support in the administration of schools therefore helps in the holistic progress of schools.

Finally, thematic classification of the lived experiences of the participants is based on **the skills garnered by the participants in their duties as headmistresses**. Mostly, skills are developed out of experience on the job though some skills may be inborn. During the focus group discussion, the participants had this to say about the skills they have acquired.

My experience in this office has enhanced my lobbying skills. When I had right proposals to the MCE for support to build a toilet for my school, I was a bit scared initially because that was my first time doing such as thing. But after my first attempt, I realised I had that skill of lobbying. When I finally met the MCE in person and he asked why I felt I needed the project more than other schools, I sounded very convincing. After that meeting, I made sure to follow up with phone calls my school finally won the support among a lot of schools. Now, as a headmistress, when I need external funding for school projects, I know where to go and how to go about it. Lobbying skill is a skill every leader must acquire. **[Participant 1]**

Similarly, participant 4 also reported:

I have enhanced my skill of public speaking. I was a bit reserved and not a good public speaker but this position has boosted my confidence and now I speak well even when I am given impromptu invites to speak. I address my staff and students on daily basis, I talk at workshops, in church and other programmes. I am therefore a better speaker now than before. **[Participant 4].**

Additionally, participant 2 stated:

The main skill I have gained from my experience as a headmistress is record keeping. My record keeping was very bad but this position has helped me better my recording keeping. My office is currently well arranged and I know where to find every document. I have a file for each staff so when their documents are needed at the education office in their absence, I sometimes submit on their behalf. Just last, my staff were asked to submit copies of their certificates at the district office. One of my female staff who had given birth and had to join the husband at Tamale was not around but because I had her file with all her documents, I just submitted it on her behalf. I try to keep everyone's documents very confidential. **[Participant 2].**

Also, participant 3 stated:

I have gained so many skills over the years as a female head of a basic school. But the main skill is the ability dialogue in solving problems. Hitherto my promotion to the office of headmistress, I used to be biased whenever I was involved in solving an issue but know I have learnt to be neutral and look at the issues as they are without attaching any personal instincts to my judgements. I have come to believe that whenever there is a problem, no faction is 100% right though one may be more at fault than the other. **[Participant 3].**

The responses above were gathered from the focus group discussion. These responses reflect the diverse skills acquired by the participants in relation to their duties as headmistresses. From the responses, **participant 1** says she acquired the skill of lobbying. Esia-Donkoh (2014) proffers that it is the role of headteachers to identify materials and resources needed, people responsible for facilitating various ideas and appeal to them to get that done. This indicates that lobbying skills are necessary for the implementation of plans. Without lobbying skills, the head of a school will find it difficult to get work done by their subordinates and more difficult to get people in

higher positions support their schools. This significantly adds up to the experiences of participant 1 as a headmistress. **Participant 2** said she acquired the skill of record keeping. Record keeping is one of the key duties of a school head. When general record keeping especially financial record keeping is poor, it casts a snare on the integrity of headteachers because they are unable to account for money that has been used which draws the conclusion that they have spent such monies. Hulme (2006) says that headteachers are expected to be able to produce information about their schools at the click of the bottom. Records such as the biodata of their staff and students, school property, academic performance records, the history of the school, school budget and other financial reports must be at the disposal of headteachers. They should be able to produce these and other records upon request. **Participant 3** said she learnt the skill of dialogue in solving problems. Problems are bound to happen in the school as an institution which operates based on human relationships. When problems arise, it is the headteacher who is looked up to for solutions. With the acquisition of this skill in problem-solving through dialogue, participant 3 will be able to address conflicts easily when they arise in her school. To achieve this, varied communication channels must be activated and effectively used to help resolve challenges, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the staff, evaluate their performance through observation and daily supervision, and appraise their effectiveness for promotion. Without this skill, it will create severed relationships between headteachers and their staff which automatically will affect the progress of schools. **Participant 4** said that she acquired the skill of public speaking. Communication lies in the heart of every successful relationship. It is every information that need to be written. Most often than not, information is delivered by speaking and without the skill of public speaking, the information contained in the spoken address may be misconstrued or unclear. In a school community made of

teachers and students, public speaking by headteachers is required to pass on information. The analysis of the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality indicate that their experiences are mixed with challenges and achievements. These mixed experiences reflect the fact that female heads of basic schools may be successful or unsuccessful based on their individual abilities to surmount various problems that may in their course of duty.

4.3 Research Question 2: What coping strategies are employed by female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza municipality in the administration of their schools?

The presence of challenges calls for steps or strategies to address such challenges. Some challenges emerged in the detailing of the lived experiences of female head of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality. This section of the study seeks to find out the strategies employed by the participants to deal with the challenges faced in the administration of their schools. The coping strategies in the responses of the participant are thematised in order to detail the specific strategies employed. The individual participants employed varied copying strategies. When the participants were probed on the coping strategies that they used in performing their duties as female heads of basic schools, the following experiences were shared:

Exercising their emotional intelligence. According to the participants, one main strategy they employed in managing the discrimination from other males is managing their emotions in order not to react to such situations. A participant stated:

My greatest challenge has to do with how some of my male staff try to downplay my powers as the head of the school. Sometimes, they virtually insult me in the face and you know as a leader, I need to be emotionally intelligent. **[Participant 4]**

The third factor in the synergistic leadership theory is attitudes, beliefs, and values. These attitudes, beliefs, or values influence the coping. These

attitudes, beliefs, and values influence the coping strategies employed by leaders. Participant 4 believes that being quiet and non-reactive is a good coping strategy for her. This corroborates Daresh's (2001) assertion that leaders must develop their capacity to examine their own values before they can appropriately deal with situations. A different female leader may have used a different strategy but participant 4 chose this strategy which was influenced by her values and beliefs. The use of emotional intelligence as a coping strategy confirms Andrews' (2017) finding that there are a few gender-specific patterns that emerge through testing emotional intelligence, specifically that women typically score higher than men in empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships, while men typically score higher in areas of self-confidence and assertiveness.

Also, **showcasing practical capabilities** was one of the coping strategies adopted by headmistresses to help them perform their duties effectively. A participant stated:

I went to introduce myself to the chief of the town. The chief expressed some shock over my occupancy of the position because he felt it is a preserve for men. I felt very bad about that. To overcome this challenge, I told myself that I would work very hard for the community to measure my worth not based on my gender but based on my competence. **[Participant 2].**

Similarly, participant 3 also confirmed the above assertion when he stated that:

The only way to rise above this challenge is to show my worth as a woman. Doing things that men could not do helps me cope with this challenge. I remember, the first day that the borehole was constructed, some people referred to me as Yaa Asantewaa just because I did what the former headmaster could not do. **[Participant 3].**

The use of the coping strategy of showcasing practical capabilities falls under the organizational structure tier of the synergistic leadership theory. For a leader to showcase their practical capabilities, they must have strong knowledge about their organisational structure in order to gain success in key aspects of the organisation that

will catch people's attention. Participant 3 therefore indicated that she led in the construction of a borehole which had been the dream of the school for ages. Since the borehole is a key need of the people, its construction attracted attention thereby touting the headmistress as one who is capable. Hulme (2006) proffers that poor infrastructure is one of the main challenges faced by basic schools. Being able to make progress in terms of infrastructure therefore projects one as an effective school head. The showcase of these capabilities presents the participants in a positive light which according to her helped reduce the level of discrimination she used to face. She added that "some people referred to me as Yaa Asantewaa just because I did what the former headmaster could not do". In the Ghanaian context, Yaa Asantewaa is seen as the epitome of a brave and capable woman. Being compared to Yaa Asantewaa is therefore an elevation made possible by the physical display of her capabilities as the head of her school.

Uniting with trouble makers: This strategy according to some of the participant 1 played an instrumental role in coping with the challenges she faced as a female head of her school. Participant 1 reported:

In order to overcome this challenge, I have decided to draw close to those who give me headache the most. Sometimes I ask their views in taking decisions. Now, they feel I regard them in my administration, they hardly give me problems. I think it is working for me. [Participant 1]

The use of this coping strategy of uniting with trouble makers mirrors the patriarchal belief of the African that a woman must submit to the man. Participant 1 therefore decides to adopt a strategy that would not brand her as a vociferous African woman. A plethora of studies have shown that women leaders effectively lead their organizations; and the characteristics of female leadership are recognized as a positive factor for school performance and transformation (Harris, 2003; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Kythreotis, Pashiardis, & Kyriakides, 2010). Other

studies also have shown that the women head of schools would perform better than their colleagues' men (Fortier, 2008; Martin, 2015). This may be achieved by women because of their ability to relate positively with their staff and even with those who give them troubles.

Reacting to situations: Contrary to the coping strategy of uniting with trouble makers, participant 3 believes that reacting in equal measure to biased treatments from her male staff is one of her coping strategies. Participant 3 had this to say.

I have been discriminated against severally because of my gender and marital status. I remember, when I first came to the school and most of the teachers realised, I wasn't married, they begun disturbing me. You know what I am talking right? Some male teachers boldly walked into my office to propose love to me. But after I reacted harshly towards the first two, it has now ceased. [Participant 3].

From the response above, the participant reports that one of her coping strategies is her harsh reaction towards some of her male staff who come to her office to disturb her. She further states that after this harsh response to the first two males who came to disturb her in her office, the incident has ceased. Perhaps, the choice of this strategy may be hinged on the fact the incident occurred in the participant's office in the absence of other people which therefore makes the embarrassment limited only to those male staff. This strongly contrasts an earlier participant who says she exercises emotional intelligence in coping with her challenges. This confirms that the participants of the study use diverse coping strategies to deal with their challenges.

4.4 Research Question 3: How do the coping strategies impact female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza municipality in addressing their challenges?

After facing various challenges, the participants devised coping strategies to help them manage their challenges. The impact of each of the coping strategies as presented under research question three will be assessed. From the accounts of the participants,

showcasing their practical capabilities has helped them to cope with the challenges they face as female heads of basic schools. When I probed further on how this has impacted the delivery of their duties, a participant stated:

When I was newly posted here as the headmistress, I went to introduce myself to the chief of the town. The chief expressed some shock over my occupancy of the position because he felt it is a preserve for men. I felt very bad about that. To overcome this challenge, I told myself that I would work very hard for the community to measure my worth not based on my gender but based on my competence. *When the chief himself realised my capabilities, he began to give me the needed recognition. Showcasing my capabilities as a woman has helped me to overcome the tag of incompetence that has been placed on women.* This has even reflected in the enrolment of girls in the school as compared to the previous years. Because most fathers want their daughters to be like me [Participant 2]

Similarly, participant 3 also confirmed the above assertion when she stated that:

The only way to rise above this challenge is to show my worth as a woman. Doing things that men could not do helps me cope with this challenge. I remember, the first day that the borehole was constructed, some people referred to me as Yaa Asantewaa just because I did what the former headmaster could not do. So, I got to realise that if I continue to do more, it will minimise the level of gender discrimination I face. [Participant 3]

These participants believe that there is a certain tag of incompetence that had been placed on women which makes their work as headmistresses difficult. They have further indicated that the best way they have dealt with that tag of incompetence was for them to show their capabilities as women. And they did, they achieved some results. Participant 2 recounts the practical impact of this coping strategy when she said that “When the chief himself realised my capabilities, he began to give me the needed recognition.”. The chief been a leader of a community that is biased towards female leaders definitely will have doubts about the capabilities of the female. But the chief’s biasedness was cleared by the physical evidence exhibited by the participant. She further adds that this coping strategy helped her to win the admiration of the men in the

community who ended up enrolling their girl-child in school to help their daughters become like her. Participant 3 also indicated that she was able to largely overcome the discrimination against her as a women leader after she helped construct a borehole which was the main challenge of the school. According to her account, this act made her win the accolade “Yaa Asantewaa” Craig (2017, P. 104) avers that “Maintaining a positive affiliation with the community is important to the cooperative spirit needed for both the community and the school to flourish.” This finding corroborates the accounts of the participants above regarding the impact of the showcasing of their capabilities as women. Because the community was a beneficiary of their achievement, the recognition given them transcended the borders of the school into the community which was indicated by the recognition of the chief and the community folks.

Another coping strategy that had positive impact on the work of the participants is **Uniting with trouble makers**. According to them, opening up and involving their staff especially those who give them hard times is a good coping strategy that has helped to minimise the rate at which those staff members oppose them. Participant 1 had this to say

In order to overcome this challenge, I have decided to draw close to those who give me headache the most. Sometimes I ask their views in taking decisions. Now, they feel I regard them in my administration, they hardly give me problems. I think it is working for me. [Participant 1]

Similarly, participant 3 also confirmed the above assertion when she stated that:

In order to overcome this challenge, I have decided to draw close to those who give me headache the most. Sometimes I ask their views in taking decisions. Now, they feel I regard them in my administration, they hardly give me problems. I think it is working for me. [Participant 1]

The synergistic leadership theory makes provision for leadership behaviour that are associated with both men and women. Participant 1 and 2 report that they unite and

collaborate with their male staff who give them hard times in their work as headmistresses. This corroborates the postulation that female leaders may be tagged with qualities such as interdependence, cooperation, receptivity, merging, acceptance, being aware of patterns, wholes, and context (Irby et al., 2002). The behavioural attitude of corporation that is associated with women is what the participants utilise as a coping strategy to mitigate their challenge of gender discrimination. They report that the strategy has been worthwhile since it helped minimize the challenge of gender discrimination.

Last but not least, reacting to situations was one of the coping strategies that had positive impact on the challenges faced by the participants. Participant 3 had this to say

I remember, when I first came to the school and most of the teachers realised, I wasn't married, they begun disturbing me. You know what I am talking right? Some male teachers boldly walked into my office to propose love to me. But after I reacted harshly towards the first two, it has now ceased. [Participant 3].

The coping strategy of reacting harshly to situations is in congruence with the findings of Irby et al. (2002) which says that female leaders may be tagged with qualities such as interdependence, cooperation, receptivity, merging, acceptance, being aware of patterns. Reacting harshly may be tagged with men but from participant three's response above, she exhibited same as a woman. She further confirms that it served as a deterrent to the men who looked down on her which subsequently stopped that occurrence. This indicates that on extreme cases, some female heads of basic schools may display some leadership behaviors tagged with men.

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza Municipality. The research was qualitative in nature

as the researcher sought to describe and present the participants' live experience of the phenomena. These experiences were then categorised into themes that came up through the data collection and were presented by case description. The results of the study indicated that female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza Municipality faced a plethora of challenges as part of their lived experiences. They further adopted some coping strategies to overcome these challenges. They also attested to the practical impacts of the strategies employed.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza Municipality. This chapter presents a summary to the study, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from the findings of the study. Further research areas have also been suggested.

5.1 Summary

The study examined the lived experiences of women heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality who have provided the researcher with descriptions of their work lives including their coping strategies as they encounter the obstacles that they confront in these positions. The impact of the coping strategies was also examined. The study was driven by three research questions and these were: what are the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality? What coping strategies are employed by female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality in the administration of their schools? And how do the coping strategies impact female heads of basic schools in Nkoranza South Municipality in addressing their challenges? A qualitative research design using the phenomenological approach was employed for the study. A sample size of four female heads was used for the study.

The main findings of the study were aligned with the research questions. This was done to guide and give direction to the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Firstly, the participants in the study expressed their lived experiences in relation to how they balanced their family roles as women and mothers with their positions as headmistresses. Again, participants also shared their mixed experiences in relation to their staff and students. Moreover, the participants reported their lived experiences in relation to the communities where their schools are situated. Finally, the participants shared their lived experiences regarding the skills they garnered while in office as headmistresses.

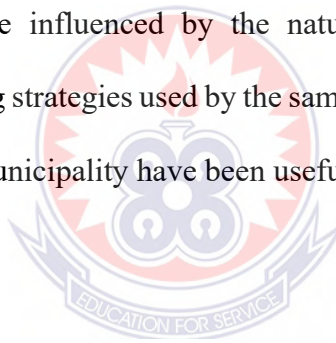
The duties of female heads of basic schools is one which is without challenges. To nip these challenges in the bud, the participants recounted the coping strategies they adopted in order to manage the challenges.

Firstly, the participants for this study reported that they exercised their emotional intelligence as a coping strategy. The couples reported that they managed their emotions in order to ensure peace during situations that caused exchanges between them and their staff. Secondly, the participants indicated that they were discriminated against because they are women. To limit this discrimination, they did their best to showcase their practical capabilities to prove themselves worthy just like their male counterparts. Last but not least, the participants stated that they employed the coping strategy of uniting with trouble makers in order to mitigate the oppositions from their trouble makers. Lastly, just one participant stated she managed to silence some male staff members who kept disturbing her by reacting to them harshly.

Results of the study showed that all participants had challenges as part of their lived experiences. They reported that they employed coping strategies such as exercising emotional intelligence, showcasing their practical capabilities, uniting with

trouble makers and harsh reactions to some male staff who worried them were some useful coping strategies that enhanced their administrative work as headmistresses. Two out of the four participants reported that they used emotional intelligence as a coping strategy which helped them to manage difficult situations they faced. Also, two participants reported that they tried to showcase their practical abilities as headmistresses which minimized the amount of gender discrimination they faced. Only one participant employed the harsh reactions towards male staff who gave her difficult times in her work.

The results meant that female heads of basic school use diverse coping strategies to match up with the challenges they faced in their administrative work. The coping strategies employed were influenced by the nature of the challenges hence, the diversity. Thus, the coping strategies used by the sampled female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality have been useful to their administrative work.



5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn. The study revealed that participants generally were not given any training as headmistresses prior to their occupancy of the position. This brought to light the varied coping strategies used by participants in their problem solving. Perhaps, some coping strategies such as harsh reaction would not have been used if the said participant were given rigorous orientation and training about the position.

The study revealed that the office of the head of basic schools is a male-dominated area hence, the plethora of gender-based discriminations faced by female heads of basic schools. Female heads of basic schools therefore need to psyche their

minds against challenges that are generated by various forms of gender discriminations. This will help them manage these challenges in emotionally intelligent ways.

The study also revealed that female heads of basic schools use varied coping strategies to manage the challenges they face. This therefore indicates that role of the female head of basic schools is not just limited to controlling and supporting the school but extends to the acknowledgement of the difficulties and devising ways of mitigating or solving these challenges.

5.3 Implications of the Study

Among the plethora of challenges that clouded the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipal, challenges that are socio-cultural and organizational in nature dominated in the experiences. These challenges have to do with stereotyped perceptions that negatively affect the smooth operation of headmistresses. This calls for varied supports to help women survive in this male-dominated platform.

The capacity of female teachers must be developed to help them rise to the position of heads of schools to help break the huge disparity in the few numbers of females in educational leadership positions juxtaposed with the large number of men in the area.

The gender desk of the Ghana Education Service must be in close sync with female heads of basic schools in order to grant them some support in overcoming the varied gender-discriminated forms of challenges they face.

5.4 Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Female heads of basic schools in various districts and municipals should form associations where they can always meet to discuss their challenges and the way forward.
2. There is the need to hold pre-service training and orientation programmes for female heads of basic schools to enlighten them on how to perform their duties effectively in a male-dominated society such as the African society.
3. The government, private sector and NGOs must support to improve the infrastructure of basic schools to help reduce the challenges of headteachers in general and female heads of basic schools in particular.
4. There must be a robust counselling unit at the Ghana Education Service purposely established for female heads of basic schools to help counsel them when they are depressed and fatigued by the demands of their roles as wives vis a vis their administrative roles as headmistresses.
5. Experienced and retired women heads of basic schools should be funded to form groups where they can give guidance and mentorship to novice and aspiring women heads of basic schools.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Based on the challenges faced by female heads of basic schools, a study on lived experiences of female assistant heads of basic schools would explore how they are groomed to take up the positions as substantive heads of basic schools. This will help identify some gaps in the grooming process to help improve them even before they occupy the main office.

2. The findings of the study revealed one new coping strategy used by female heads of basic schools which has to do with speaking harshly to male teachers who disturb them. More research studies on this coping strategy will add significant insights to the existing literature on female heads of basic schools.
3. The findings of the study were limited to female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipal. Similar research could be carried out in other contexts in terms of geographical location or level of education to present a wider picture of the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools.



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APPENDICES

B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT (AAMUSTED)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP- KUMASI

Statement concerning participation in a Research Project.

Research Topic: A phenomenological study of the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality

I have read the information on the proposed study and heard the aims and objectives of the proposed study. I was provided the opportunity to ask questions and was given adequate time to rethink the issue. The aim and objectives of the study are sufficiently clear to me. I have not been pressurized to participate in any way.

I understand that participation in this Study is completely voluntary and that I may withdraw from it at any time and without supplying reasons.

I know that this Study has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies, Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development (AAMUSTED). I am fully aware that the results of this Study will be used for scientific/academic purposes. I agree to this, provided my privacy is guaranteed.

I hereby give consent to participate in this Study.

Name of participant..... Signature of participant.....Date.....

Name of Researcher: Marcelline Mwinwelle

Signature of researcher.....

**AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT (AAMUSTED)**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP- KUMASI

C

INCLUSION CRITERIA/SCREENING QUESTIONS

This study is on the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality. Your presence here is an indication that you are a head of a basic school in Nkoranza South Municipality.

Kindly respond to the following questions to help determine your eligibility to participate in this study. Thank You.

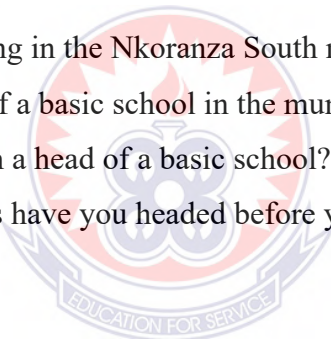
Please tick where appropriate.

Are you currently residing in the Nkoranza South municipality? Yes No

Are you a female head of a basic school in the municipality? Yes No

How long have you been a head of a basic school?

How many basic schools have you headed before your present school?.....



D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FEMALE HEADS

1. Briefly tell me some information about yourself personally and professionally.
2. Please, what is your marital status? Do you have any children? What degrees do you hold?
3. What teaching experience do you have?
4. How long have you been working at this school? And how long have you been holding your position?
5. How would you describe your experience immediately after obtaining the headmistress position?
6. In the discharge of your leadership position, how do you relate to your teachers and the students?
7. Do you consider yourself as one who operates under authoritarian or collaborative leadership style?
8. Tell me, how do you balance your family and professional obligations?
9. Tell me about the greatest achievement you have accomplished as a headmistress.
10. What is the biggest challenge you have ever faced in order to be successful in your job? How did you rise above it?
11. It is said that leadership is more suitable for men. What is your point of view regarding this perception?
12. What is your advice for newly appointed female heads of basic schools in your municipality and elsewhere?

H

CONFIRMATION AGREEMENT SHEET

I have fully read and understood the transcription and the interpretation of the interview conducted on a phenomenological study of the lived experiences of female heads of basic schools in the Nkoranza South Municipality.

I wish to state that I agree that the story is mine and I have given my full approval for the researcher to use for his project. I do not have any doubt about its credibility for use.

.....

.....

Name of Participant

Signature

