



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF EARLY CHILDDOOD HEADTEACHERS
AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
PRACTICES IN EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY**



**A thesis in the Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Applied
Behavioural Sciences in Education, Submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Early Childhood Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

MARCH, 2025

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Helena Arthur Hughes, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

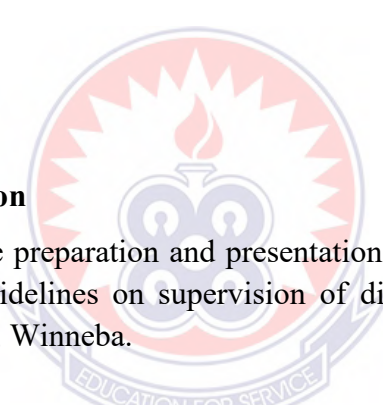
Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Supervisor's Name: Prof. Hinnieh Kusi (Ph.D.)

Signature:

Date:



DEDICATION

To my husband, Mr. Markku Hihnala and my mother, Elizabeth Prah.



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I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor Hinnah Kusi, under whose direction and guidance this work has been a reality, I would like to express my gratitude for his inspiration, which immeasurably contributed to the success of this work in spite of all his busy schedules. God richly bless you.

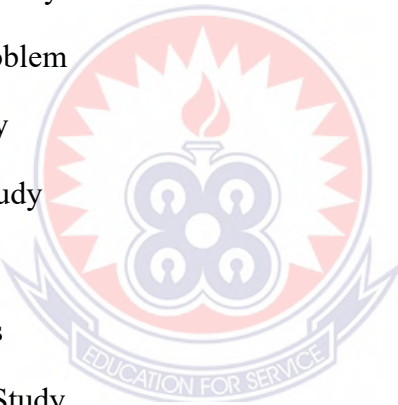
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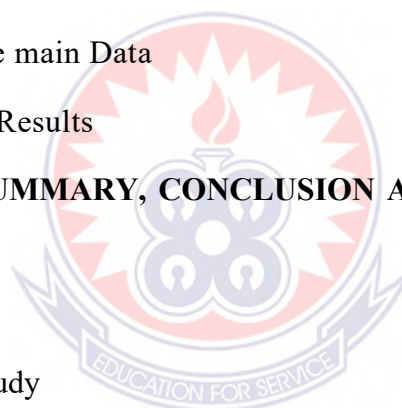
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the leadership practices of early childhood headteachers and the relationships they have with teachers' professional practices in Effutu Municipality. Specifically, it examined the relationship between transformational leadership, characterized by the Five I's (idealised influence attributes and behaviour, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration), and teachers' assessment, teaching and learning, and managing the learning environment. Four research objectives were formulated to guide the study. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The study targeted 26 headteachers and 169 teachers in the 26 public early childhood schools. Census sampling technique was used to get all the 26 head teachers and 169 teachers. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect the required information from the headteachers and teachers. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics involving the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and independent Sample t-test with the aid of SPSS version 26. The study found that, teachers in Effutu generally exhibit high levels and strong adherence of professional behaviour, furthermore, the study revealed that there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between transformational leadership of the headteachers and teachers' professional practices. Finally, the study revealed that, females scored higher compared to males in their transformational leadership practices. Based on the findings, it is recommended that, while transformational leadership positively influences teachers' professional practices, there is a need for greater emphasis on personalized mentorship and classroom management strategies. Also, early childhood headteachers should continue motivating, inspiring, and mentoring teachers to enhance professional growth and improve teaching effectiveness. The study also recommended that, the Effutu education directorates should organise specialised management and leadership training course for those aspiring to become head teachers and also, current serving heads should undertake courses on the modern rudiments of transformational leadership practice.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Education plays a vital role in shaping the future of any nation, and early childhood education is particularly important in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development. (UNESCO, 2021; Heckman, 2011; OECD, 2017). Schools are institutions designed to provide learning spaces and learning environment for teaching of students under the direction of teachers (UNESCO, 2020). Leadership in education plays a vital role in shaping teaching quality and improving learner outcomes. In early childhood education (ECE), the role of the headteacher extends beyond administration to supporting teachers, modelling professionalism, and fostering a positive environment for both teaching and learning. Globally, educational reforms have increasingly recognized the need for strong, supportive leadership practices that move beyond supervision to genuine teacher development.

Effective educational administration is essential for the smooth functioning and success of schools. At the heart of this administration are headteachers, whose leadership play a crucial role in shaping the teaching and learning environment (Kwao et al., 2025; Yeng & Carrington, 2024). Headteachers' leadership practices have been linked to teachers' instructional performance and professional growth (Ampofo et al., 2019). Headteachers lead and manage all aspects of the school with an aim of improving the standards and performance of learners. In Ghana, where educational resources can be scarce and unevenly distributed, the role of the headteacher becomes even more crucial as they are often required to do more with less (Osei, 2006; Ampah-Mensah, 2019; UNICEF Ghana, 2021). The adaptability and innovation in leadership approach can therefore be a determinant factor in the success of schools, particularly in rural or

underprivileged areas. Like all other institutions, the success of any school is dependent on its leadership and commitment of all its stakeholders. It is generally accepted that good education relies on access to quality educational resources such as quality staff, working environment, good equipment, and good leadership. The interplay between these resources and leadership quality is what ultimately defines the educational outcomes of schools across the country.

Among various leadership practices, transformational leadership has been widely acknowledged for its ability to foster growth, inspire commitment, and improve teaching practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Oduro, 2004). Transformational leaders do not merely manage; they influence, mentor, and empower others to reach their full potential. In schools, such leaders play an essential role in shaping a supportive and professional culture where teachers are motivated, innovative, and continuously developing.

Early childhood education is a unique stage that demands strong instructional support, collaborative teamwork, and the professional growth of teachers. However, in many settings, especially in developing countries like Ghana, the focus of school leadership often leans heavily toward administration and submission, with little emphasis on mentorship, coaching, and teacher empowerment. This leadership gap becomes particularly concerning when it affects the professional practices of teachers such as lesson delivery, instructional planning, classroom management, and ongoing professional development.

In Ghana, leadership training for headteachers has traditionally prioritized administrative competence over instructional leadership (Donkor, 2013; Oduro, 2007; Ampah-Mensah, 2019). Yet, the expectations for headteachers have evolved, requiring

them not only to supervise but to guide and mentor teachers, promote collaboration, and model best practices. These expectations align closely with the principles of transformational leadership. It is commonly acknowledged that educational administration is critical to achieving the intended effect in a school setting. With this crucial notion, it becomes evident that the quality of management is a decisive element if schools are to provide the greatest possible results. Bush (2020) points out that the 'development of a highly-skilled workforce is a requirement, which leads to well trained and committed teachers with the support of 'highly effective principals' (p.1). It demonstrates the need for a collaborative educational environment fostered by effective leadership traits. In this context, understanding the leadership practices of early childhood head teachers and their relationship with teachers' professional practices is of critical importance.

Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring and motivating staff towards achieving a collective vision, has been particularly noted for its positive impact on teacher motivation and student engagement. Studies have observed that when headteachers employ a transformational style, schools often report higher teacher satisfaction and improved student performance (Bush and Glover, 2014; Leithwood and Sun, 2012). Conversely, more authoritarian styles, which are sometimes prevalent in less resourced areas, can have the opposite effect, potentially hindering initiative and creativity among staff. Democratic leadership styles, characterized by participative decision-making processes, have been shown to foster a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility among teachers, leading to more innovative practices and a supportive learning environment.

The choice of leadership practice can, therefore, be pivotal, particularly in regions facing educational challenges. Effective leadership not only addresses immediate educational needs but also sets a long-term strategic direction that can significantly affect a school's ability to meet its objectives under varying circumstances.

Previous research on leadership styles, such as transformational, authoritative, democratic, and affiliative leadership, has demonstrated that different approaches can have varied effects on organizational outcomes, including school culture, teacher performance, and student achievement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Moreover, studies have shown that effective leadership is a critical factor in driving school improvement and student outcomes (Hitt & Tucker, 2016). Among the above, transformational leadership stands out for its ability to positively influence teachers' commitment, motivation, and instructional improvement (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Unlike other, leadership styles that focus solely on tasks or authority, transformational leadership involves inspiring staff with a clear vision, encouraging innovative teaching methods, supporting teachers' individual professional needs, serving as a strong role model, and setting high expectations for teaching quality. These practical behaviours foster a professional culture in which teachers feel valued, trusted, and empowered to grow conditions that are vital in early childhood settings. A preliminary study in the Effutu Municipality by Saratu (2022) investigated school improvement practices among basic school heads. The study revealed that most headteachers primarily engaged in routine supervision, inclusion efforts, and administrative tasks. However, it did not examine or emphasize these transformational practices such as mentoring teachers individually, motivating them with a shared vision, or promoting creative instructional practices. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how leadership

can be more responsive and supportive in the early childhood education sector in Effutu.

In addition, the Ghana National Teacher Standards (NTS, 2020) call for school leaders to go beyond management and instead guide, mentor, and support teachers through ongoing professional growth. Specifically, the standards expect leaders to model professionalism, foster collaboration, promote innovation, and create positive teaching environments all of which reflect the practical dimensions of transformational leadership. Furthermore, early childhood education in Ghana is a female-dominated field, especially in the Effutu Municipality where most headteachers and teachers are women (Ministry of Education, 2018). This demographic trend presents a unique opportunity to explore whether gender (sex) influences the way leadership is practised in schools. Understanding how male and female headteachers differ in these practical, transformational behaviours can offer new insights into how leadership development programs should be structured and supported.

In view of these factors, the study is justified for three main reasons, that is, the lack of research on transformative leadership behaviours in early childhood schools in Effutu, the alignment between transformational leadership behaviours and national education policy goals and the predominance of female leaders in early childhood education, which supports a meaningful exploration of gender differences in leadership practice.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Headteachers in early childhood education settings are expected to lead in ways that enhance teaching quality, foster teacher development, and create supportive learning environments. However, in many Ghanaian basic and early childhood schools, including those within the Effutu Municipality, headteachers often focus predominantly

on administrative duties and supervision, with limited emphasis on inspirational, supportive, and innovative leadership approaches that promote teacher growth (Kusi and Antwi, 2025; Saratu, 2022; Saagyum Dare et al, 2025). In other words, headteachers are spending most of their time doing office work like writing reports, handling budgets, organizing school records, attending meetings, or checking school supplies, instead of helping teachers improve how they teach or supporting what happens in the classroom. This raises concerns about the extent to which transformational leadership an approach known for motivating and empowering teachers is being applied in early childhood schools.

Although transformational leadership has been widely researched in international education contexts, very few empirical studies in Ghana have examined its use in early childhood education. Research shows that, transformational leaders in schools can significantly enhance teachers' job satisfaction, instructional quality, and student achievement (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006). According to Rafiq-uz-Zaman et al, (2025), many African schools are still led using traditional or authoritarian leadership models that do not foster innovation, collaboration, or teacher empowerment. As a result, the professional practices of teachers, such as lesson planning, use of effective pedagogy, assessment practices, and collaboration, often fall below expected standards. In Ghana, transformational leadership for headteachers especially at the basic and early childhood education levels is not named directly in most policy documents.

However, the principles and expectations of transformational leadership are embedded in several national education policy frameworks. These frameworks outline leadership roles that emphasize visionary leadership, teacher support, professional development, collaboration, and school improvement which are all hallmarks of transformational

leadership. The Ministry of Education and the National Teaching Council have repeatedly emphasized the importance of teacher professionalism and leadership development in improving learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2024; National Teaching Council, 2022). Particularly, there is a lack of research on how transformational leadership practices of headteachers relate to the professional practices of teachers, such as lesson planning, instructional delivery, classroom management, and collaboration.

The situation in Effutu is no different; a recent study by Saratu (2022) showed that most headteachers in the municipality prioritize supervision and managerial tasks, but provided little insight into how their leadership practices influence teacher professionalism. Similarly, Dwamena et al. (2024) observed that although teachers in Effutu demonstrate knowledge of authentic assessment techniques, they seldom apply assessment data to inform instruction largely due to limited leadership guidance and professional support. Aside the findings above, there is insufficient empirical evidence on how headteachers' transformational leadership practices influence the professional conduct of early childhood teachers in the Effutu Municipality. The lack of such data makes it difficult for policymakers and school administrators to understand which leadership approaches best support teacher growth and classroom effectiveness.

Zooming in on the Effutu Municipality, the problem becomes more tangible. Despite policies promoting instructional leadership and teacher collaboration, recent studies suggest that many headteachers in the municipality still struggle to implement effective professional learning communities (PLCs) due to time constraints, limited reflective space, and insufficient knowledge of transformational leadership principles (Kusi & Antwi, 2025). Furthermore, in recent years, the Effutu Municipality has witnessed

commendable efforts by government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and educational stakeholders to improve the quality of early childhood education. Initiatives such as the provision of teaching and learning resources, ICT infrastructure, teacher recognition schemes, and professional development workshops from Ghana Education Service, NGOs and the Member of Parliament for Effutu, Hon. Alexander Afenyo-Markin are indicative of a policy environment aimed at strengthening teacher effectiveness and learner outcomes (University of Education, Winneba & Sabre Education, 2022; Ghana News Agency, 2024; Graphic Online, 2024; MyJoyOnline, 2024).

However, studies indicate that many headteachers lack the leadership capacity to influence teaching quality meaningfully. Apau (2021) also identified poor collaboration as a central concern among teachers in the municipality and highlighting the absence of professional support systems that transformational leadership seeks to establish. Recent news reports have highlighted the growing concern for the quality of early childhood education in Ghana, emphasizing the urgent need for effective leadership to address inequalities in access to education, curriculum implementation, and teacher training (Osei-Ampofo, 2020). Research in basic schools across the country suggests a weak link between school leadership practice and the actual teaching practices of early childhood educators (Piyaman et al, 2017).

In particular, transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation, has not been fully explored or measured in terms of its impact on teachers' professional development and instructional behaviour in the classroom. Moreover, Ghana's education system is experiencing increasing calls for gender equity and inclusivity in leadership. Despite this, there is still insufficient data

on whether male and female headteachers practise leadership differently especially transformational leadership, which involves behaviours such as inspiring vision, supporting individual teachers' growth, and encouraging innovation (Dzamesi & Adofo, 2022; UNESCO, 2023; Northouse, 2019). Given that early childhood education in Effutu is largely led by female headteachers, it becomes important to explore whether sex (male or female) influences how transformational leadership is enacted in these schools (Khadka, 2024).

Moreover, the absence of such data creates a gap in both academic research and policy planning. Without understanding how leadership practices affect teachers and whether those practices vary by sex, it becomes difficult to design effective training programs or leadership frameworks tailored to early childhood education in Ghana. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the relationship between headteachers' transformational leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in early childhood schools in the Effutu Municipality, with a focus on the influence of sex on the headteachers' leadership behaviours.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine which dimensions of transformational leadership are adopted by public early childhood headteachers in Effutu Municipality and the relationship this practice has with teachers' professional practices.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. determine which dimensions of transformational leadership practice are adopted by headteachers in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality.

2. analyze the nature of teacher professional practices in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality.
3. access the relationship between headteachers leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality.
4. determine the extent to which sex differentiates the leadership practices among headteachers in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What dimensions of transformational leadership practice are adopted by early childhood headteachers in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality?
2. What is the nature of teacher professional practices in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality?
3. What is the relationship between leadership practices of headteachers and teachers' professional practices in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality?
4. To what extent does sex differentiate the leadership practices among headteachers in public early childhood settings in Effutu Municipality?

1.6 Research hypothesis

- **H₀₁**: There is no statistically significant relationship between headteachers' transformational leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in Effutu Municipality.

- **H₁1:** There is a statistically significant relationship between headteachers' transformational leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in Effutu Municipality.
- **H₀2:** There is no statistically significant difference in transformational leadership practices between male and female headteachers in Effutu Municipality.
- **H₁2:** There is a statistically significant difference in transformational leadership practices between male and female headteachers in Effutu Municipality.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study extends beyond the immediate community of Effutu Municipal by offering insights that could transform early childhood education practices nationally and internationally. This study aims to address a gap in the literature by investigating the leadership practices of early childhood headteachers in Effutu Municipality and examining their relationship with teachers' professional practices. The outcomes of this study would have practical implications for designing more effective educational leadership programs and can serve as a model for other regions within Ghana and similar contexts globally.

In addition, by gaining a better understanding of these relationships, we hope to inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders about the most effective leadership practices for promoting a positive learning environment and enhancing the quality of early childhood education in Ghana. This research would also contribute to the broader literature on educational leadership and its impact on school outcomes.

Also, by examining the leadership practices of preschool head teachers in Ghana, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on effective leadership practices in early childhood education. The insights derived from this study would not only enrich the global discourse on educational leadership but also offer practical strategies that can be adapted and implemented in other developing countries facing similar educational challenges.

By highlighting the specific leadership practices that are most effective in improving early childhood education in Ghana, this research could serve as a benchmark for other nations in the sub-Saharan region and beyond, promoting a more informed approach to educational leadership development. These insights would help to frame educational reforms that are both contextually relevant and strategically effective, ensuring that early childhood education systems are not only supportive but also adaptive to the needs of young learners and their communities. The findings from this research would have important implications for educational policy and practice in Ghana.

Additionally, this research would provide valuable insights for early childhood education professionals seeking to improve their leadership skills and create more effective learning environments for their students. One of the most important roles of instruction is to focus on children 's experience and training by creating different activities which are vital to make the children productive citizens, while the role of functional leadership of heads requires the monitoring of teachers and the provision of feedback.

Furthermore, the results could serve as a blueprint for developing leadership training programs that specifically address needs of early childhood head teachers and teachers. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the

leadership practices of public early childhood head teachers in Ghana and their effects on school teachers professional practices. By establishing a clear link between leadership practices and educational outcomes, this research could influence broader educational strategies and support the creation of more effective and adaptable educational systems.

Again, this research would contribute to the following areas, thus, informing policy decisions and educational reforms, the findings from this study can help policymakers and educational stakeholders in Ghana make evidence-based decisions to improve early childhood education quality. This could lead to the development of specific policy guidelines that prioritize leadership development as a key area for educational improvement. By identifying the most effective leadership practices, policymakers can design targeted interventions, develop guidelines, and promote leadership development programs that support early childhood headteachers in enhancing their leadership practices. Also, it would enhance professional development. The results of this research can inform the design and implementation of professional development programs for early childhood head teachers in Effutu Municipal or Ghana as a whole.

Moreover, the study's findings can help head teachers and school administrators create a more supportive and positive school culture that encourages teacher collaboration, motivation, and professional growth. A strong school culture is crucial for promoting effective teaching practices and, ultimately, enhancing student learning outcomes. Moreover, this study seeks to improve teacher performance thus, by understanding the relationship between the leadership practices of headteachers and teacher 's professional practices, headteachers can adopt practices that promote a conducive

environment for professional development, leading to increased teacher effectiveness and, consequently, better student outcomes.

Similarly, this study would contribute to the existing literature on educational leadership by examining the relationship between leadership styles and school outcomes in the context of Ghana's early childhood education sector. It would add valuable insights into how effective leadership can shape teaching and learning, particularly in a developing country context. In conclusion, this study will not only fill a gap in the existing literature on educational leadership in the context of early childhood education in Ghana but would also provide valuable knowledge and recommendations that can inform future research, policy, development, and professional practice in the field.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The delimitation of this research was defined by the following parameters. By content, the study was carried out to examine leadership practices of early childhood headteachers and their relationship with teachers' professional practices. The focus was specifically on how transformational leadership practice can be optimized and its relationship with teachers' professional practices to overcome local challenges and improve on education.

Geographically, the study was confined to only public early childhood educational institutions within the Effutu Municipality in the Central Region. This geographic focus allowed for a detailed exploration of local leadership dynamics and their

The Participants of the study involved headteachers and teachers working in early childhood education within the Effutu municipality. By concentrating on these groups,

the researcher aimed to gather detailed insights from those directly involved in and affected by leadership practices (Yin, 2017).

The leadership practices investigation primarily examined transformational leadership practice. This selection is based on the prevalence of these styles in educational leadership literature and their distinct impact on teacher practices (Northouse, 2019) and the professional practices study considered the aspects of teachers' professional practices, including, teaching and learning, assessment and classroom environment. These areas are critical for understanding how leadership influences day-to-day teaching activities and long-term professional growth (Fullan, 2001).

1.9 Definitions of Key Terms

Early childhood education: Early childhood education is a kind of education which is generally given to the period of a child's life from birth to around eight years old.

Headteacher: Headteacher is the principal or head of a school, particularly in primary and junior high schools. The head teacher is responsible for the overall management and administration of the school. Their roles and responsibilities encompass a wide range of tasks that ensure the smooth operation of the school and the achievement of educational goals.

Teacher: A teacher is a professional who is responsible for educating students, typically in a school setting. Teachers play a vital role in facilitating learning, fostering intellectual and social development, and preparing students for future endeavors.

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study is structured into five chapters, each addressing different aspect of the research. Chapter one provides an introduction of the study, presenting the background

to the study, the problem statement, research objectives, questions and the significance of the study. This chapter also outlines the delimitations and provides definition of key terms used in the study.

Chapter two presents a review of related literature, focusing on leadership practices of early childhood headteachers and their relationship with teachers' professional practices. The chapter discusses key concept and theories, including the transformational leadership theory, which serves as the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter three outlined the research methodology employed in the study. It details the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques used. It also describes the data collection methods, with focus on the questionnaire as the primary instrument and explains the procedures for data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected. The chapter includes a presentation of the results from the questionnaire, followed by an in-depth analysis and interpretation of these results in relation to the research questions. The relationship between headteachers leadership practices and teachers' professional practices is investigated and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Five concludes the study by summarizing the study, discussing the implications of the results, and offering recommendations for practice and further research. This chapter also provides a conclusion that summarizes the main contributions of the study to the field of early childhood education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the review of related literature relating to the variables under study is presented. The review is organized under three thematic areas. The first part discusses the theoretical framework of the study which will be followed by the empirical review of previous studies on the variables contained in the study. The final part of the review relates to the conceptual framework of the study which discusses the link between the variables of the study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study is guided by two key frameworks: the Transformational Leadership Theory and the Ghana National Teacher Standards (GNTS, 2020). These frameworks provide both a theoretical and policy-based foundation for understanding how leadership practices influence teachers' professional practices in early childhood education. Transformational leadership principles appeared originally in the work of Weber (1923/1963), a German Sociologist, on charismatic leadership (Ergeneli et al, 2007). However, Barnett et al. (2004) accounted that it was Downtown (1973) who introduced the term 'transformational leadership'. Bryman (2016) states that by the early 1980s, there was a general sense of pessimism about leadership theory and research, and a vast output of leadership research have yielded little that could be clung to with any certainty. However, out of this pessimism emerged a number of alternative approaches which shared some common features. The transformational and transactional leadership theories were further developed by Burns (1978), Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio (1995). This part of literature review chronicles the development of transactional-transformational leadership practices.

The concept of transformational leadership, introduced by Downton (1973), and was later developed by Burns (1978) in the context of political and social leadership. Burns described transformational leadership as a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of raising one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Building upon Burns' work, Bass (1985) expanded the theory and identified four key components of transformational leadership, which became the foundation of the Full Range Leadership Model developed by Bass and Avolio (1994). Burns was a leadership expert and biographer and proposed that it was only through the strength of the vision and personality that team members could be encouraged to follow.

After agreeing to follow, members then are inspired to change their expectations, perceptions, and are invited to a higher level of morality and motivation. A few years later, Bass (1990) added even more to the concept. This is known as “Bass’s Transformational Leadership Theory”. Bass added ways to measure and rank the success of transformational leadership as well as the idea of leaders expressing authentic and focused energy to inspire the other team members to become more like them. Bass felt that measuring the impact inspires more authentic community. He also explained the psychological mechanisms that are the basis of the theory. According to Bass, the followers of a leader must feel not only trust and admiration, but also loyalty and respect. These emotions create an environment where the followers are willing to work harder than they originally thought they were capable. This is because transformational leaders offer followers something beyond self-gain, an inspirational mission and self-identity.

Even though it dates to the 70’s, Bass’s model looks much more like transformational leadership today. The basis of the transformational leadership style never changes, only

the environment in which it must be applied. Therefore, it can apply in every industry, especially team-focused work environments. Transformational leadership theory, developed by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985), describes leaders who inspire and motivate followers to exceed their own self-interests for the good of the organization. This leadership style is characterized by the ability to bring about significant change by engaging and transforming followers' beliefs, values, and goals (Northouse, 2019). This practice is characterized by leaders who inspire and motivate their followers to exceed their own self-interests for the good of the organization.

Transformational leaders are known for their ability to bring about significant change by focusing on vision, communication, and creating an environment of intellectual stimulation. The transformational leadership that is needed today, has the potential to inspire subordinates to do their best, develop their skills so as to deliver those subordinates to advanced intellectual levels. The transformational leader is able to urge his followers to achieve more than the expected. Chege (2018) views transformational leadership as the leadership that goes beyond incentives for performance, to develop and encourage workers intellectually and creatively, as well as to transform their own concerns into an essential part of the organization's mission. Kirkan (2011) noted that transformational leadership is a leadership pattern used by leaders to change the current situation by identifying those who follow the organization's problems through inspiration, persuasion, and excitement to achieve a high level of clear vision for the purpose of recognizing common goals.

According to Gyensare et al. (2016), transformational leadership in Ghanaian organizations has been linked to higher levels of employee engagement and performance. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve

higher levels of performance by fostering a sense of purpose, promoting innovation, and providing support (Bass, 1985). In educational settings, especially within early childhood education, this leadership style is particularly effective due to its focus on developmental and transformative practices that benefit both teachers and students

2.2 Four Components of Transformational Leadership

Bass (1985) identified four components of transformational leadership, also known as the four I's, namely, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation. However, idealized influence has been further distinguished into two distinct aspects, thus, idealized influence behavior and idealized influence attributes. Each of these five components is valuable to the leadership style and helps to transform its followers into better and more productive people. When these factors are combined, they help transformational leaders radically change the course of their following.

One of the concepts of transformational leadership is Idealized Influence which has two distinct' concepts, idealized influence behavior, this refers to the actions and ethical behaviors of the leader that set an example for followers. Leaders demonstrate strong moral principles, a commitment to organizational goals, and a high sense of purpose (Argyropoulou, 2025). This component emphasizes how a leader's visible conduct fosters trust and respect among followers. The second one is idealized influence attribute; this relates to the personal characteristics or traits of the leader that make them a role model. Leaders with strong idealized influence attributes are perceived as confident, trustworthy, and charismatic (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Unlike idealised influence behaviour, which focuses on behaviour, idealised influence attribute emphasizes the leader's perceived qualities that inspire admiration and loyalty. By

distinguishing between behavioural and personal attribute-based idealized influence, researchers can better understand how transformational leaders inspire and gain the trust of their followers in different ways.

Furthermore, leaders act as role models, earning the trust and respect of their followers. Transformational leaders lead by example, showing strong morals, honesty, and a clear commitment to their goals. They build trust and respect among their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006), which is particularly impactful in educational environments where trust fosters a positive learning atmosphere. Idealized influence describes leaders who have charisma, are curious, and deliver messages with simplicity and tact. These leaders are exemplary role models and are readily trusted and respected by all members of the team (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Charisma is one of the essential pieces of this characteristic. Charisma is essential because it is how leaders can rally their followers around a shared vision. Charisma is most often expressed by their ability to listen actively to each team member and focus on the present moment. Charismatic leaders give praise to individual members of the team with each success, and they are the first to take responsibility when things go wrong. They also provide constructive feedback to each individual team member. Intended influence is also represented through their curiosity. Curiosity, not intelligence, is the driving force behind the success of these leaders. It is their job to find innovative solutions to problems and create new and dynamic paths for a team to follow. Displays of charisma make others want to be more like that person, and as a role model, members will strive to mimic this leader (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Secondly, Inspirational Motivation is another aspect of transformational leadership, with this concept, leaders articulate a clear and appealing vision, inspiring and

motivating followers to achieve more than they thought possible (Avolio and Yammarino, 2013). Inspirational leaders stimulate and motivate their followers by communicating a clear and compelling vision, setting high expectations, and expressing confidence in their followers' abilities to achieve goals (Bass, 1985). This component is crucial in schools where the collective vision can drive educational success. Inspirational motivation refers to leaders who energize and inspire others by committing to a clear vision. They boost team morale and promote unity by encouraging a shared sense of purpose and belonging.

To do this, there must be easiness in communication, this means their communication style must be best suited to the needs of the team. Leaders speak clearly and concisely to easily articulate their vision to the members. This provides structure and order so that members can execute tasks without confusion (Northouse, 2019). Leaders clearly outline future plans and set expectations before any task begins. They communicate with confidence and authority to earn the respect and trust of their team. Additionally, they maintain a positive and energetic attitude, inspiring others through their enthusiasm. As visionaries, transformational leaders focus on long-term goals and anticipate potential challenges that could hinder progress. They are attentive to minor issues that could grow into larger problems and have the intuition to identify what drives their team and advances their objectives. Through these actions, they build followers' trust and strengthen their leadership credibility.

Another concept of transformational leadership is Intellectual Stimulation, Leaders encourage creativity and innovation by challenging assumptions and fostering a culture of critical thinking (Alarifi, 2014). Transformational leaders encourage followers to think critically, challenge assumptions, and explore new ideas and approaches to

problem-solving (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In schools, this encourages innovative teaching methods and curriculum design. Intellectual stimulation describes leaders who encourage their members to think outside the box and be innovative. Stimulating followers promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills in order to improve the group or organization as a whole (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This approach questions conventional group thinking and motivates the team to exceed their own expectations. Promoting innovation means involving all team members in decision-making, which helps them feel valued and connected to the overall success of the organization.

What matters most is that leaders avoid criticizing their team members' ideas or opinions. Shutting down suggestions too quickly can lead to feelings of mistrust and emotional harm. Instead, leaders should guide their followers in reshaping how they approach problem-solving and encourage fresh, creative strategies to reach team objectives. Ultimately, transformational leaders understand that there are multiple paths to achieving success and that innovation doesn't follow a single formula. To lead in this way, one must embrace risk-taking, foster creativity and curiosity, and remain open to contributions from every team member.

Finally, Individualized Consideration is the fourth concept of transformational leadership. Leaders provide personalized support and mentorship, addressing the individual needs of each follower (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders provide personalized support and encouragement to their followers, recognizing each individual's unique needs, strengths, and potential for growth (Bass, 1985). This is essential in education where tailored approaches to student learning can enhance educational outcomes.

Individual consideration is the degree to which a leader attends to each follower's personal needs. Transformational leadership encourages members by focusing on the way each person effects the overall goal. This means recognizing and valuing the motivations, desires, and needs of individual members. Upon recognizing the motivation behind the drive of the individual, leaders then provide opportunities for customized training (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This approach helps team members develop and thrive in a supportive environment where they feel safe. Successfully engaging individuals depends on emotional intelligence, which involves demonstrating sincere compassion, understanding others' needs, and supporting their continuous personal development. When leaders are aware of their followers' emotions, they can interact with them more effectively. Leaders with emotional intelligence build strong, trust-based relationships by forming meaningful connections. They also take on the role of a mentor or coach, actively listening to their team members' concerns with openness and empathy.

2.2.1 Influence of transformational leadership on organizational outcomes

Transformational leadership has been linked to a range of positive organizational outcomes. Research indicates that transformational leaders are more effective in promoting employee motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Furthermore, transformational leadership has been associated with improved team performance and innovation (Alarifi, 2014), as well as successful organizational change and adaptation (Herold et al., 2008). In educational settings, transformational leadership has been shown to positively influence teacher performance, collaboration, and instructional practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Studies have also demonstrated a positive relationship between transformational leadership, student achievement, and school improvement (Boberg, & Bourgeois, 2016). In business contexts,

transformational leadership has been linked to enhanced corporate culture, employee engagement (Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004), and improved organizational performance and financial outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

2.2.2 Relevance of Transformational Leadership to Early Childhood Education

In the context of early childhood education, transformational leadership is particularly relevant because it aligns with the developmental and collaborative nature of teaching young children. Headteachers who adopt a transformational leadership practice can create a positive and supportive environment that fosters professional growth among teachers (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). By promoting a shared vision and encouraging continuous learning, transformational leaders can enhance the overall quality of education (Barnett & McCormick, 2004). Furthermore, in the context of education, transformational leadership has been associated with higher levels of teacher commitment, motivation, and job satisfaction (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This correlation is critical in regions like the Effutu Municipality, where challenges such as resource constraints and teacher retention are prevalent. As a result, teachers are more likely to engage in collaborative practices, improve their instructional strategies, and produce better student outcomes (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers by establishing a clear vision, fostering a supportive environment, and encouraging professional growth. This approach is essential for instilling a lifelong love of learning in young students and for encouraging teachers to continuously develop their professional skills. This leadership style has been linked to positive outcomes in early childhood education, such as increased teacher job satisfaction and student development (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Additionally, transformational leadership promotes a culture of reflection and continuous improvement, which is vital in the dynamic field of education. Transformational

leadership is widely recognized today as one of the most impactful and effective leadership approaches in contemporary organizations. As a practice that inspires and motivates followers to achieve their full potential, transformational leadership is particularly relevant in today's rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world.

2.2.3 Strengths of Transformational Leadership Practice

Leadership theorists like Geijsel et al. (2009) suggest that transformational leadership is the prototype of leadership that subordinates have in mind when they describe their ideal leader. Research has shown that transformational leadership reflects the most ideal leadership for effective output results (Avolio, 2007). According to Taylor (2009), transformational leaders prioritize building strong teams, fostering empowerment, and nurturing individuals' potential to achieve long-term objectives. Similarly, Thyer (2003) highlights that transformational leaders cultivate collaborative learning environments, boost team morale, take responsibility, manage conflicts constructively, embrace change proactively, encourage open communication, and promote empowerment. Scholars like Adebayo (2004) claim that transformational leaders institute a vision that will move the organization toward the future and an authentic caring environment and procure employee support. Transformational leadership is becoming increasingly popular as it challenges the traditional autocratic and one-sided leadership approach that has long been imposed on employees (Mubashir, & Siddiqui, 2024).

Consistent with the above observation, heads would limit performance of teachers beyond agreed upon standards if they (heads) fail to apply transformational leadership practice. This practice of leadership can possibly turn employees into leaders and leaders into change agents (Abdul Wahab et al, 2014). Silvestri (2007) further suggests

that leaders using the transformational practice of leadership not only affected their employees, but it spilled over into the community as well. This is accomplished by having motivated officers that relate better to the community they serve. Transformational leadership behaviors have a determining role for schools to adapt to changing environmental conditions, follow up scientific and technological developments and increase the educational quality (Adair, 2007). This practice of leadership is dynamic and operates within the exigencies of the time.

2.2.4 Critiques and Limitations of Transformational Leadership

Despite the numerous benefits associated with transformational leadership, some critiques and limitations have been identified. One potential concern is the potential for manipulation and unethical behavior by transformational leaders (Line et al, 2017). Additionally, critics argue that the theory overemphasizes the charismatic aspects of leadership and overlooks the importance of task-oriented behaviors (Yukl, 1999). Moreover, transformational leadership may not be equally effective in all contexts and situations, with some studies suggesting that other leadership styles may be more suitable under certain conditions (Zaccaro, 2001). Nevertheless, transformational leadership remains an important and widely studied leadership style, offering valuable insights into the dynamics of leadership and followership, as well as the potential to drive positive change in organizations.

In conclusion, Transformational leadership is a strong and impactful approach that can energize and encourage individuals to achieve their best, foster innovation, and promote positive organizational outcomes. Grounded in the work of scholars such as Downton, Burns, and Bass, the theory of transformational leadership has evolved to encompass four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual

stimulation, and individualized consideration. While the effectiveness of transformational leadership may vary depending on context and situational factors, it has a profound impact on employee motivation, team performance, and overall organizational success which is well documented in the literature. Despite some critiques and limitations, transformational leadership remains a relevant and valuable leadership style for the 21st-century workplace. As organizations continue to navigate an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, transformational leaders who can inspire and mobilize their followers to achieve shared goals and overcome challenges will be critical to ensuring success and sustainability.

2.3 Teachers' Professional Practices

The Ghana National Teacher Standards (GNTS) were introduced in 2020 by the National Teaching Council to provide a national benchmark for teacher professionalism. The standards are organized around three interrelated domains which are professional values and attitudes, professional knowledge and professional practice. The GNTS emphasize learner-centered pedagogy, ethical conduct, inclusivity, continuous professional development, and reflective teaching. The framework also highlights the responsibility of school leaders to model and uphold these standards, creating supportive environments where professional practices can thrive. In particular, the Professional Practice domain aligns with many of the competencies promoted by transformational leadership such as innovation, collaboration, mentorship, and high expectations. The GNTS therefore serves as a contextual framework for evaluating teacher practices within the early childhood education system (Zuilkowski et al, 2023).

The performance indicators selected to measure teachers' professional practices focus on core dimensions of effective teaching, including instructional strategies, classroom

management, and assessment practices. Contemporary research identifies these dimensions as central to high-quality instruction, positive classroom climates, and improved learner outcomes, particularly in early childhood and basic education contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; OECD, 2021; Schleicher, 2020). Accordingly, these indicators were adopted as key constructs for the development of the questionnaire on teachers' professional practices, reflecting essential pedagogical and managerial tasks required for effective classroom functioning.

These professional practices are critical for all teachers, including headteachers, employed by the Ghana Education Service, where teaching is positioned as a public service profession anchored in ethical responsibility and accountability. Recent policy frameworks emphasise that teachers occupy positions of public trust, given their sustained influence on children's cognitive, social, and moral development (Ghana Education Service, 2022; National Teaching Council, 2020). As such, teachers are expected to apply professional judgement responsibly and consistently to promote inclusive, safe, and effective learning environments.

Recent empirical studies further affirm that teachers' knowledge, instructional decisions, and classroom practices play a decisive role in shaping the quality of learners' educational experiences. Effective use of evidence-based instructional strategies, purposeful classroom organisation, and formative assessment practices has been shown to enhance learner engagement, learning progression, and educational equity (Hattie, 2023; Muijs et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2022). These professional practices therefore constitute a critical foundation for effective teaching and learning and provide a valid basis for assessing teachers' performance and professional competence in contemporary classroom contexts.

2.3.1 Classroom Management

According to DeWitt and Whitman (2016), “teaching is a complicated task and the working conditions of teachers have a direct effect on teachers’ ability to educate students appropriately” (p. 25). This implies that the environment within schools not only affects teaching quality but may also influence the future development of a country. For teachers to perform effectively, they must feel comfortable and supported in their workspaces particularly in their classrooms. Furthermore, the relationships between teachers and their headteachers, as well as those between teachers and learners, play a critical role in shaping the educational experience. Classroom management is another essential component of professional teaching practice.

Effective classroom management involves creating a safe and orderly environment that fosters learning and minimizes disruptions (Marzano et al, 2003). This includes establishing clear expectations, consistent routines, and positive relationships with students (Evertson & Emmer, 2017). The ability of teachers to organize classroom and manage the behavior of their children depends on classroom management. Many headteachers recognize that teachers differ in how much control they apply in their classrooms. Teachers vary in how they establish classroom environments; while some prefer structured and disciplined settings, others aim to create a more relaxed, engaging space where learners feel safe to be creative and take risks (Kyriacou, 2009). Despite these differences, the ability to maintain both a positive learning atmosphere and effective discipline is widely seen as a key indicator of teaching effectiveness.

To manage the learning environment, effective teachers deliver varied and appropriately challenging lessons, demonstrating clear understanding of instructional goals (Pollard et al., 2014). They also engage in small-scale action research to

continuously improve their practice, choosing specific areas each term, such as the use of open-ended questioning, strategies for including visually impaired learners, or promoting gender-responsive practices (UNESCO, 2015).

Creating a safe, supportive classroom is essential. Teachers demonstrate warmth, fairness, and encouragement especially for girls in traditionally underrepresented subjects like mathematics and science (UNICEF, 2019). Whether working with small or large groups, effective teachers maintain respectful yet firm classroom management. This may involve adjusting seating to ensure gender balance and equal opportunity to participate (UNESCO, 2015).

Teachers also manage limited resources creatively to ensure all students particularly girls can access materials. Peer teaching, student monitors, and shared resources like textbooks and manipulatives are used to enhance learning (Tomlinson, 2014).

Inclusivity remains a key focus. Teachers pay attention to all students, particularly girls and those with special educational needs, using differentiated strategies suitable for mixed-ability, multilingual, and multi-age classrooms. They tailor groupings and activities based on learners' interests, language backgrounds, or academic levels (Tomlinson, 2014). Code-switching, visual aids, and bilingual resources are used to make content more accessible (UNESCO, 2015).

Collaborative learning is encouraged through purposeful group tasks that foster communication and critical thinking. Teachers observe, support, and strategically guide group work while ensuring leadership roles are shared equally between genders (Vygotsky, 1978).

Instruction is made more effective through the creative use of teaching aids such as drawings, analogies, ICT tools, and everyday materials to help learners grasp new concepts in diverse ways (Pollard et al., 2014). Locally available materials are often repurposed to produce hands-on resources, ensuring every student can participate (UNICEF, 2019).

Assessment is continuous and varied. Teachers integrate both formal and informal assessment methods, including learner responses, creative work, homework, and quizzes. They closely monitor progress paying attention to gender disparities and use this data to adjust lesson plans (Tomlinson, 2014). In early childhood and primary settings, qualitative assessment methods are often preferred to gain a richer understanding of each child's development (UNESCO, 2015).

2.5.2 Teaching and Learning

Effective instructional strategies are at the heart of a teacher's professional practice. These strategies include planning and delivering lessons that are engaging, inclusive, and differentiated to meet the diverse needs of students (Tomlinson, 2001). Teachers employ a range of teaching methods, such as direct instruction, collaborative learning, and inquiry-based learning, to facilitate deep understanding and critical thinking (Hattie, 2009). As Wiggins and McTighe (2000) noted, "Even if both the experienced person and novice prepare a lesson plan for the instruction they undertake, new teachers spend much more time planning instruction than veteran teachers do, often staying up late at night to plan the next day's lesson" (p. 57). Effective lesson planning requires teachers to consider key questions such as: Who are their learners? What ideas and concepts should students understand? And under what conditions will instruction take place?

Effective teaching requires thorough planning, as it serves as the foundation for delivering quality instruction and achieving learning objectives. Teachers' planning involves designing lesson plans, setting clear learning goals, selecting appropriate instructional strategies, and preparing assessment tools. Planning allows teachers to align their lessons with curriculum standards and adapt them to the diverse needs of students, promoting engagement and understanding. Additionally, well-structured planning fosters consistency, time management, and confidence during instruction. It also enables teachers to anticipate potential challenges and prepare interventions to address them effectively (Frey, Hattie, & Fisher, 2018).

2.2.2 Assessment and Feedback

Teachers use a variety of assessment methods to monitor student progress and inform instruction. Formative assessments, such as quizzes and observations, provide ongoing feedback that helps teachers adjust their teaching to meet students' needs (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Summative assessments, such as exams and projects, evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional period. Providing timely and constructive feedback is essential for student growth and development (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Effective assessment practices promote student engagement and self-reflection, encouraging learners to take ownership of their progress. Moreover, teachers can use assessment data to identify areas where students struggle, enabling targeted interventions and personalized support (Brookhart, 2017).

Assessment in young children plays a pivotal role in understanding and supporting young learners' developmental progress and learning needs. It involves observing, documenting, and analysing children's behaviour, skills, and interactions to make informed decisions about teaching and learning. Effective assessment practices in

young learners are often holistic, focusing on cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development (McKown, 2017).

Teachers embark on the following methods to effectively assess learners' education, especially in the early childhood settings. Observational assessment, teachers use structured and unstructured observations to monitor children's interactions, play, and problem-solving skills in natural settings, this approach captures authentic insights into children's abilities and interests. Another way is developmental checklists. Checklists aligned with developmental milestones help teachers track progress in areas such as language, motor skills, and social behavior. Similarly, Portfolio Assessment is used by compiling children's work samples, photographs, and teacher observations over time, providing a comprehensive picture of their development. Standardized Assessments is used less frequently in early childhood, some standardized tools assess specific developmental areas like language and literacy. These are typically used alongside other forms of assessment for a balanced approach.

Correspondingly, teachers are cautioned to assess learners while considering developmentally appropriateness. Assessments must align with young children's developmental stages, avoiding methods that require skills beyond their capacity. Culturally and Linguistically Responsive: Tools and practices should respect and incorporate children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds to ensure accuracy and fairness (Wortham & Hardin, 2015). Informative for Teaching: Assessment data should directly inform instructional strategies, enabling teachers to adapt their practices to meet children's needs. Ongoing and Integrative: Assessment in early childhood should be a continuous process integrated into daily activities rather than a one-time event.

In conclusion, the integration of Transformational Leadership Theory and the GNTS provides a comprehensive lens through which to examine the relationship between headteachers' leadership practice and teachers' professional practices. While the Transformational Leadership Theory offers a universal understanding of leadership influence, the GNTS contextualizes these practices within Ghana's education system and policy environment. Together, these frameworks justify the study's focus on how leadership, especially when viewed through a transformational lens, can have relationship with professional behaviours, values, and competencies expected of teachers in early childhood settings.

2.4 Empirical Review

Leadership practices in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are critical in shaping the quality of educational experiences for young learners and the professional practices of teachers. Effective leadership fosters a positive school value, supports teacher development, and promotes the achievement of educational goals. This is particularly significant in Early Childhood Education, where the foundation for lifelong learning is established. Empirical evidence highlights the profound impact of leadership practices on teachers' motivation, instructional effectiveness, and job satisfaction.

Transformational leadership, which emphasizes shared vision, individual support, and inspiration, has been shown to positively impact teacher morale and job fulfilment. For example, Adjei (2022) found that transformational leadership among Ghanaian public basic school headteachers was significantly associated with teachers' job satisfaction, indicating its effectiveness in fostering a supportive work environment. Leadership practices that encourage collaboration and shared decision-making create a culture of mutual learning Adjei (2022).

Adjei (2022) explored the leadership styles of headteachers and job satisfaction as perceived by Ghanaian public basic school teachers. It found that headteachers predominantly used a transformational leadership style, and teachers generally had a moderate level of job satisfaction. The transformational leadership practice of headteachers correlated significantly with teachers' job satisfaction, suggesting its effectiveness in the Ghanaian basic school context. (Adjei, 2022) The study investigated the relationship between headteachers' leadership styles and job satisfaction among public basic school teachers in Kwabre East Municipal, Ghana. The findings revealed that headteachers predominantly employed a transformational leadership style, and teachers generally experienced a moderate level of job satisfaction. Moreover, there was a significant positive correlation between the transformational leadership style of headteachers and teachers' job satisfaction. The study concluded that the leadership style of headteachers influences the job satisfaction levels of teachers in public basic schools within the municipality. It was recommended that headteachers receive training on effectively implementing transformational leadership in their daily administrative duties.

Similarly, Gakpoh et al. (2024) revealed that headteachers in the Volta Region of Ghana, who practiced collaborative leadership styles enhanced teamwork among teachers, leading to better teaching outcomes and increased job satisfaction. This study investigated the leadership styles of basic school headteachers in the Volta Region and their effects on teachers' job satisfaction. Findings indicated that headteachers predominantly adopted transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles at moderate levels. Notably, transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles were significant positive predictors of teachers' job satisfaction.

A Case Study by Gakpoh et al. (2024) examined the leadership styles of basic school headteachers and their impact on teachers' job satisfaction. The purpose of the study was to explore the leadership styles adopted by headteachers and assess their effects on teachers' job satisfaction. The study employed a descriptive research design, involving 191 headteachers and 328 teachers selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Mohrman-Cooke-Mohrman Job Satisfaction Scale (MCMJSS). According to these researchers' findings, Headteachers exhibited moderate levels of transformational ($M = 7.68$, $SD = 0.83$), transactional ($M = 7.51$, $SD = 1.15$), and laissez-faire ($M = 6.94$, $SD = 1.89$) leadership styles. A significant portion of headteachers (71.9%) reported very low job satisfaction, whereas a majority of teachers (52.8%) reported very high job satisfaction. Transformational ($\beta = .47$, $p < .001$) and laissez-faire ($\beta = .19$, $p = .002$) leadership styles were significant positive predictors of job satisfaction.

Leaders who prioritize professional development empower teachers with skills and knowledge to innovate in their instructional practices. According to Nyarne et al. (2024), transformational leadership styles among principals in Ghanaian Colleges of Education significantly improved staff motivation and encouraged the adoption of innovative teaching approaches. This research examined the leadership styles of principals and their effects on staff job satisfaction in Colleges of Education in Ghana. It revealed that the majority of principals exhibited transformational leadership styles, which had a significant positive influence on staff job satisfaction. The study recommended training for principals on transformational leadership to enhance their effectiveness.

Supportive leadership fosters a positive work environment, reducing teacher attrition. In a study by Appah Bonney (2015), democratic leadership styles were preferred by teachers in Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, as they promoted inclusivity and a sense of belonging, contributing to lower turnover rates. This research focused on the leadership styles of senior high school administrators in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis and their effect on academic performance. The study concluded that any leadership approach could enhance academic achievement, with democratic leadership being preferred by most students, teachers, and headteachers. It emphasized that leadership styles influence interactions between headteachers, teachers, and students, ultimately affecting academic outcomes. From the above researchers, the following were the gaps identified, Limited studies focusing specifically on early childhood education leadership in Ghana. A need for more research on how specific factors (e.g., gender, academic qualifications) influence leadership styles in early childhood settings and there has been limited investigation into how the leadership styles of headteachers directly affect teachers' teaching practices and the learning outcomes of young children in early childhood education.

2.5 Concept of Leadership

Leadership has long been a multifaceted concept and remains a critical element in organizational settings. This complexity is particularly evident in educational settings where the role of leadership extends beyond traditional administrative functions to include influencing the educational and developmental outcomes of students. Different scholars have defined leadership in various ways, resulting in numerous interpretations of the concept. One widely accepted definition is offered by Robbins et al, (1998), who stated that leadership is “the ability to influence others towards the achievement of goals that contribute to a worthwhile purpose” (p. 396). This definition captures the core

essence of leadership and reflects a common understanding among experts that leadership involves guiding and empowering others to work toward achieving organizational objectives. This is particularly significant, as organizational goals represent the fundamental reason for an organization's existence.

The evolving concept of leadership aligns closely with Fullan's (2000) view, who described modern leadership as one where "each and every educator strives to be an effective change agent" (p. 13). This perspective underscores the critical role of leadership in the success of educational institutions. Similarly, Mulford, Silins, and Leithwood (2004) emphasize that "leadership we know makes all the difference in success or failure of organizations" (p. ii). Truskie (2002) reinforces this idea by asserting that "there is a direct link between leadership, organizational culture and performance" (p. 1). Likewise, Silins and Mulford (2002) highlight the central role of leadership in schools, stating that "leadership has been shown to influence what happens in the core business of the school's teaching and learning" (p. 443).

Fligstein and Freeland (1995) broaden this perspective by noting that effective leaders must also engage with external networks, suggesting that the ability of organizational leaders to solve internal resource problems is a function of their abilities, knowledge and links with the outside world. This emphasizes the need for leadership that can manage both internal dynamics and external relationships to foster organizational development and learning, particularly in early childhood education contexts (Kivunja & Power, 2006).

Bass (2004) defines leadership as a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. He further explains that leadership is not limited to strategic

operations but also includes nurturing the personal and professional growth of team members, using qualities such as values, ethics, character, and skills.

McSwain (2010) presents leadership as a “capacity,” suggesting that it involves listening and observing, initiating dialogue across decision-making levels, establishing transparent processes, and clearly articulating values and vision—without imposing them on others. Yukl (2004) describes leadership as “the process of influence on the subordinate, in which the subordinate is inspired to achieve the target, the group maintains cooperation, and the established mission is accomplished, with support from external groups obtained” (p. xx). In a similar vein, McGregor (2009) emphasizes a relational approach to leadership, explaining that leaders focus on what they can contribute to their people rather than what they can extract from them, thereby fostering stronger relationships and boosting productivity within the organization.

In essence, leadership is a process through which individuals set a direction, influence others to follow it, and apply the necessary skills and insights to drive results and development.

2.5.1 Leadership practices of school head teachers

In Ghana, educational challenges such as resource constraints, large class sizes, and limited access to professional development hinder effective teaching in ECE. Addressing these challenges requires contextually relevant and responsive leadership. Cultural Sensitivity in leadership must reflect Ghana’s socio-cultural context, where respect for authority and community-oriented approaches are valued. Leaders who integrate these cultural dimensions foster trust and collaboration among staff (Adjei, 2022). Concentration on Early Childhood Education Leadership in Ghana often struggles with limited funding and infrastructure. Effective leadership, as highlighted

by Gakpoh et al. (2024), can advocate for better resource allocation and policy changes to support ECE programs. Improving teacher practices through leadership, headteachers can influence teachers' practices by modelling effective teaching, mentoring, and facilitating training opportunities.

Nyarne et al. (2024) emphasized that professional development facilitated by transformational leaders enhances instructional quality, particularly in resource-constrained contexts. Addressing Educational Inequities, Leadership that prioritizes equity can reduce disparities in education. By promoting inclusive practices, headteachers can ensure all children benefit from quality early childhood education, regardless of their socioeconomic background (Adjei, 2022). Research findings highlight that transformational and collaborative leadership styles significantly contribute to boosting teacher motivation, improving instructional quality, and increasing overall job satisfaction. A deeper examination of leadership practices within the Ghanaian context is essential for overcoming educational challenges, ensuring equity, and fostering sustainable improvements in ECE.

Focusing specifically on early childhood education leadership in Ghana, a need for more research of how factors like gender, academic qualification influence leadership practices in early childhood settings and insufficient exploration of the direct impact of headteachers leadership practices on teacher's professional practices and outcomes in early childhood education. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the success of any organization, including educational institutions. In the field of education, leadership not only impacts administrative efficiency but also significantly affects educational quality and learners' engagement. Research has increasingly focused on school leadership and

its importance in driving school improvement, enhancing student achievement, and creating a positive school culture (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Various leadership practices have been identified; each having differing impacts on school outcomes. This section will examine leadership practices of school headteachers, with particular emphasis on transformational leadership's five components, and their relationship on teacher's professional practices. According to Bush (2005), school leadership significantly impacts educational outcomes by shaping teacher motivation, capacity, and the overall school climate. Headteachers are encouraged to adopt an inclusive leadership approach that actively involves staff members as part of a collaborative team. This team should be intentionally engaged in shaping the school's vision, culture, and environment. As Mutula (2006) notes, it is the responsibility of the headteacher to create opportunities for such participation, as teachers also play a role in shaping the leadership style adopted. Through effective leadership, headteachers can enhance teacher job satisfaction and guide staff toward achieving shared goals.

Leadership has long been recognized as a central theme in organizational behavior research, tracing back to the time of Greek philosophers (McShane & Glinow, 2004). Interest in leadership began to grow significantly in the 1920s when early survey-based studies found that positive perceptions of supervision were linked to greater employee job satisfaction (Bass, 1990). During the 1950s and 1960s, a number of investigations focused on how leadership behavior could be used by managers to boost employee satisfaction (Northouse, 2004), reinforcing the critical role of leadership in influencing job satisfaction levels (Bass, 1990). Additionally, Yousef (2000) highlighted a positive correlation between leadership behavior and employee satisfaction, emphasizing the

need for managers to implement effective leadership strategies. Leadership practices not only impact job satisfaction but also influence employee performance, turnover intentions, and stress levels (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005), thereby playing a vital role in the overall success of an organization (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

2.5.2 Meaning of leadership practices

There are different ways or practices in which leaders adopt to approach their employees. Some leaders use rewards such as education and independence to motivate employees while others use penalties (Maritz, 2005). Some leaders adopt a controlling and authoritarian approach, seeing themselves as above others. They believe that the best way to achieve results is by using punitive measures such as job termination, unpaid leave, or publicly reprimanding employees. They think instilling fear enhances their authority. This suggests that leaders employ different styles in how they manage and execute tasks.

Reza (2019) defined leadership practice as the method and approach used to provide direction, execute plans, and inspire individuals. Similarly, Posner (2015) viewed leadership practice as the means through which leadership duties are fulfilled. The concept assumes that employees are more likely to perform effectively under managers who adopt specific leadership practices compared to those who use other methods. According to Schedlitzki and Edwards, (2021), leadership practices can be categorized into two main approaches: consideration and structure. Under the consideration approach, leaders focus on addressing the personal and emotional needs of their staff, fostering teamwork, assisting with problems, and offering emotional support. In contrast, the structural approach involves leaders emphasizing productivity by keeping employees consistently engaged and pushing for results. Research in leadership and

management indicates that a principal's leadership style can significantly influence the organizational commitment of their subordinates. Studies by Bass (1985), Hersey and Blanchard (1977), and Stogdill (1963) found positive correlations between various leadership practices and factors such as employee attitudes, motivation, and performance all of which contribute to organizational commitment.

2.5.3 Types of Leadership Practices

Authoritative Leadership

Authoritative leaders provide clear expectations, set goals, and closely monitor their followers' performance (Lewin et al., 1939). This leadership practice is especially prevalent in educational settings, where the clarity and structure it provides can significantly contribute to an organized learning environment. While this leadership practice can lead to an organized and well-structured learning environment, it may limit teacher autonomy and hinder creativity (Chen & Silverthorne, 2005).

However, when implemented with a focus on nurturing and support, authoritative leadership can also enhance teacher motivation and job satisfaction, leading to better educational outcomes. Consequently, teacher performance may be negatively affected due to reduced motivation, job satisfaction, and willingness to innovate (Yukl, 2012). To mitigate these potential downsides, it is essential for authoritative leaders in educational settings to balance firm guidance with opportunities for creative expression

and professional growth. Implementing regular feedback sessions and collaborative goal-setting can enhance motivation and innovation among teachers.

Authoritative leaders provide clear expectations and guidance while maintaining a supportive and nurturing environment. This practice has been shown to create a positive atmosphere in early childhood education settings, fostering teacher commitment and student achievement (Gestsdottir et al., 2014). In practice, this involves not only setting clear academic standards but also supporting teachers through resources and professional development opportunities that enhance their instructional capabilities and student interactions. Authoritative leadership, also referred to as authoritative parenting style in some contexts, is a leadership style that combines high levels of both responsiveness and demandingness. This dual approach ensures that while leaders maintain high standards, they also respond flexibly to the needs of their followers, adapting leadership behaviors to foster a conducive learning and working environment. Authoritative leaders provide clear expectations, guidance, and support while maintaining a nurturing and respectful environment for their followers. This approach is particularly effective in educational settings where the emotional and academic needs of students are intertwined. By fostering a respectful and nurturing environment, authoritative leaders can significantly enhance student confidence and academic engagement.

In organizational settings, authoritative leadership has been linked to increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and overall performance (Goleman et al, 2002). By providing clear expectations and demonstrating confidence in their followers' ability to meet these expectations, authoritative leaders foster a sense of self-efficacy and motivation among their followers.

Furthermore, research conducted by Avolio et al (1999) demonstrated that authoritative leadership can also influence organizational innovation and adaptability. By fostering a culture of open communication and collaborative problem-solving, authoritative leaders create an environment in which followers feel empowered to take risks, experiment, and contribute to the development and implementation of new ideas and strategies.

In summary, authoritative leadership is an approach that emphasizes the provision of clear direction, guidance, and expectations while maintaining a supportive and responsive relationship with followers. By fostering a sense of purpose, motivation, and autonomy, authoritative leaders can promote a range of positive outcomes for both their followers and the organization as a whole.

2.5.4 Democratic Leadership

Democratic leaders emphasize collaboration, open communication, and shared decision-making (Lewin et al., 1939). This style is particularly beneficial in educational environments, where it can foster a community-oriented atmosphere that encourages active involvement from both teachers and students. This leadership style can positively impact teacher performance by fostering a sense of empowerment, ownership, and engagement (Gastil, 1994). Teachers in democratic settings are often more invested in the school's vision, contributing innovative ideas and solutions that enhance educational practices and student learning outcomes. Teachers in democratic environments are more likely to be committed to the school's mission and goals, actively participate in decision-making processes, and be open to innovative teaching practices (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). This involvement not only enhances their professional development but also boosts their satisfaction and retention. Democratic leaders

involve their followers in decision-making processes, encouraging collaboration and shared responsibility. This inclusive approach can significantly impact early childhood education, leading to heightened teacher engagement and increased parent satisfaction, which are crucial for fostering a supportive educational ecosystem (Muijs et al., 2004). Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, emphasizes collaboration, open communication, and shared decision-making among team members. This leadership style values the input and feedback of every team member, making it an effective approach for fostering a sense of agency and belonging among staff and students alike (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).

Lewin et al. (1939) conducted a seminal study on leadership styles and their effects on group behavior, identifying democratic leadership as one of the three primary styles. This study underscored the importance of involving members in the decision-making process as a means to increase engagement and satisfaction within the group. The democratic approach was shown to not only enhance group cohesion but also to improve the overall decision-making quality, as members felt more responsible and valued. According to their research, democratic leaders encourage participation, delegate authority, and foster an environment of cooperation and mutual respect. Such an environment is crucial in educational settings where the collaborative nature of teaching and learning thrives on open communication and shared responsibility. Democratic leadership thus becomes a powerful tool in education, promoting a culture where teachers and students collectively work towards common educational goals and innovations. This style is characterized by leaders who provide guidance and structure while also allowing followers the autonomy to take responsibility for their tasks and contribute to decision-making processes.

A study by Gastil (1994) found that democratic leadership positively influences group decision quality and satisfaction, as well as member commitment and perceived leader effectiveness. This finding is particularly relevant to educational leaders who are tasked with not only managing schools but also inspiring a shared vision for educational excellence among all stakeholders. Furthermore, democratic leadership has been linked to increased employee job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and enhanced organizational commitment (Kim, 2002). In the context of education, these benefits translate into a more stable teaching staff and a more committed school community, which are essential for maintaining continuity and quality in educational programs.

In educational settings, democratic leadership has been shown to promote a positive learning environment, higher levels of student engagement, and improved academic achievement (Magwa & Mohangi, 2022). By involving teachers and students in the governance of the school, democratic leaders foster a sense of ownership and agency that is conducive to innovative teaching and learning practices. By involving students in decision-making processes and fostering a sense of autonomy and responsibility, democratic leaders contribute to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Silins & Mulford, 2002).

2.5.5 Delegative or Laissez-Faire Leadership

Delegative leadership involves minimal guidance from the leader, placing the responsibility for decision-making entirely on group members. Although this approach can work well when the group consists of highly skilled experts, it frequently results in unclear roles and decreased motivation. Generally, this style of leadership is only used for delegation purposes to have a smoothly running school (Northouse, 2018). A school leader may adopt this approach when overwhelmed with responsibilities and unable to

address certain tasks or issues personally. Studies have indicated that children under delegative, or laissez-faire, leadership tend to be the least productive compared to those under other leadership styles (Rafiq-uz-Zaman et al, 2025). These children often rely more heavily on the leader, exhibit minimal cooperation, and struggle to work independently.

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by a leader's minimal involvement in the daily activities of subordinates, allowing them to operate with significant autonomy and little supervision. According to Afful-Broni (2004), this approach is often marked by a lack of strict rules or clearly defined policies, creating an environment where anything is permissible. In such situations, leaders grant full freedom to team members, stepping in only when absolutely necessary. This style is sometimes seen when a leader has been appointed out of favouritism and avoids making decisions for fear of offending others. In other cases, leaders may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of their role and, fearing the consequences of taking action, choose instead to remain passive ironically creating greater risks through inaction. Under this leadership style, individual decisions are made without collective input, and the leader's primary function is reduced to providing resources when requested (Afful-Broni, 2004).

Laissez-faire leadership often results in uncertainty, inconsistency, and at times, a lack of concern from both the leader and staff. This approach is marked by minimal supervision and a lack of accountability. The leader appears to relinquish authority altogether, rather than intentionally delegating it, thereby allowing everyone involved to act as they see fit. In fact, it may be argued that this leadership style functions without a clear leader at all. Leaders under this style rarely provide specific goals or direction,

and tasks are assigned ambiguously, leaving individuals to choose their own methods to complete the work (Afful-Broni, 2004).

One recognised advantage of laissez-faire leadership is its suitability in contexts where subordinates are highly skilled, experienced, and capable of working independently. In such settings, leaders may allow professionals significant autonomy, trusting them to manage their responsibilities effectively without constant supervision (Northouse, 2021; Yukl, 2020). For example, in a well-established school with experienced teachers, a head teacher may not need to monitor attendance or instructional practices on a daily basis, as professional norms and self-regulation guide staff performance.

However, this leadership approach requires caution. Even in higher education institutions, where academic expertise is generally high, leadership oversight remains structured and hierarchical. Vice-chancellors typically delegate responsibilities through deans, directors, and heads of department while retaining ultimate accountability and exercising oversight when necessary (Bush, 2020; Bolden et al., 2023). This suggests that complete non-involvement may undermine coordination and accountability, even in highly professionalised environments.

When laissez-faire leadership is sustained over a prolonged period, particularly in contexts where subordinates lack sufficient experience, it may lead to organisational disorder and declining performance. Research indicates that insufficient leadership presence can result in role ambiguity, weak coordination, and reduced staff motivation (Iqbal et al., 2021; Skogstad et al., 2022). Leaders who initially disengage may later struggle to reassert authority or correct emerging problems, having failed to provide early guidance and supervision.

Furthermore, the absence of active leadership may create a vacuum that enables junior staff to assume informal or unauthorised leadership roles, potentially disrupting

institutional hierarchy and accountability structures. Such conditions can erode respect for formal leadership and weaken organisational effectiveness, even among those initially granted autonomy (Yukl, 2020; Northouse, 2021). Consequently, while laissez-faire leadership may be effective under specific conditions, its uncritical or prolonged application poses significant risks to organisational stability and performance.

2.5.6 Affiliative Leadership

Affiliative leadership focuses on building strong interpersonal relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting a harmonious work environment (Goleman, 2000). In educational settings, this approach proves instrumental during periods of significant change or stress, such as during curriculum transitions or after institutional restructuring, where maintaining a supportive community is essential for continuity and morale. This leadership style can enhance teachers' sense of connectedness, emotional well-being, and job satisfaction (Goleman et al, 2002). Affiliative leaders excel in creating an environment where teachers feel valued and recognized, which is crucial for encouraging innovative teaching practices and deeper commitment to school initiatives.

While affiliative leadership significantly bolsters the emotional foundation of an educational institution, it's crucial to balance this with strategies that also drive performance and accountability. Without the balance, there is a risk of complacency where innovation may be embraced in concept but not executed in practice. Effective affiliative leadership in schools can lead to improved conflict resolution and collaboration. By nurturing trust and open communication, affiliative leaders enhance the school's ability to function as a cohesive unit, addressing challenges collectively and efficiently.

However, it is important to recognize that while affiliative leadership strongly supports emotional health, it should be complemented with other leadership styles to ensure academic rigor and instructional effectiveness are also maintained (Dulebohn et al., 2012). For instance, combining this style with transformational leadership could balance emotional support with strong vision and innovation, enhancing both teacher and student engagement and outcomes. In practice, affiliative leaders prioritize emotional health during team meetings, professional development sessions, and in the formulation of policies that affect the school community. They ensure that decisions are made with a strong consideration of teacher and student well-being, which promotes a supportive educational environment.

Affiliative leadership is a style that prioritizes building strong interpersonal relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting a harmonious work environment within a group or organization (Goleman, 2000). This approach is particularly effective in resolving conflicts and improving low morale or high stress, which are common in educational institutions undergoing changes or facing challenging circumstances.

Affiliative leaders are particularly effective in situations where a team or organization is experiencing conflict, low morale, or high levels of stress, as their focus on emotional well-being can help to rebuild trust, enhance collaboration, and improve overall satisfaction (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). In educational leadership, this might involve mediating conflicts among staff or between staff and students, promoting a culture of understanding and respect, and actively working to address the root causes of stress within the school environment. By addressing the emotional needs of their followers, affiliative leaders can foster a positive work culture and promote resilience

in the face of challenges. Research has shown that affiliative leadership can contribute to increased job satisfaction, employee engagement, and team cohesion (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). These outcomes are critical in educational contexts, where high levels of job satisfaction and engagement are linked to reduced teacher turnover and improved student outcomes.

In summary, affiliative leadership is a style that emphasizes the importance of building strong interpersonal relationships, fostering a sense of belonging, and promoting a harmonious work environment. This approach can contribute to increased job satisfaction, employee engagement, and team cohesion, particularly in situations where emotional support and empathy are needed to navigate challenges and conflicts. However, it is essential to recognize the need to balance affiliative leadership with other complementary styles to ensure the diverse needs of followers and the organization are met.

2.5.7 Charismatic leadership

Charismatic leadership is widely regarded as one of the most effective trait-based leadership styles. Leaders who exhibit charisma possess a compelling vision and a dynamic personality that inspires and energizes their followers to pursue that vision. This style is often associated with high levels of motivation, creativity, and innovation, making it a highly valued approach to leadership. Charismatic leaders typically foster an environment where followers are eager to support and align with them, making it appear as an ideal leadership scenario. However, a major drawback of this style lies in its dependency on the leader's personal influence. If the leader departs, the organization may struggle with direction and purpose, sometimes for an extended period, due to the absence of developed successors. This is because charismatic leaders often suppress

competing strong personalities, resulting in enthusiastic followers but a lack of future leadership potential. Charismatic leaders are known for their charm, empathy, and efforts to meet the needs of their followers, creating a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where people feel heard and involved in decision-making (Michael & Germano, 2007). Charismatic leaders foster a welcoming and supportive environment by actively listening to their followers and ensuring they feel included in the decision-making process. Notable figures often cited as examples of charismatic leadership include Winston Churchill, Bill Clinton, Mother Teresa, and Adolf Hitler (Michael & Germano, 2007).

2.5.8 Servant leadership

Servant leadership emphasizes the leader's role as a caretaker who prioritizes the needs of their team members. This style is rooted in African communal values, where leaders are seen as stewards of their communities. Agyemang and Ofei (2013) discuss how servant leadership is prevalent in many West African cultures and is associated with high levels of employee satisfaction and loyalty.

2.6 Factors Influencing the Use of the Various Leadership Practices

Leadership theories and practices are shaped by both **internal and external influences**, often described as individual (personal) and contextual (situational) factors. Leadership behaviour is not uniform, as leaders differ in their experiences, dispositions, and interpretations of leadership roles; consequently, no two leaders exhibit identical leadership styles (Northouse, 2021; Yukl, 2020). While some leadership tendencies originate from inherent personal characteristics, others are shaped by organisational culture, societal expectations, and situational demands. As contexts evolve, leaders are often required to adapt their leadership approaches to respond effectively to changing

organisational structures, cultural dynamics, and policy environments (Bolden et al., 2023; Bush, 2020).

Understanding the factors that influence leadership styles is therefore essential for both emerging and practising leaders. These factors not only affect leadership effectiveness but also shape how leaders motivate teams, make decisions, and manage relationships within organisations (Northouse, 2021). Key influences commonly identified in the literature include personality traits, educational background, organisational structure, age, professional experience, and broader socio-cultural contexts (Yukl, 2020; Tourish, 2020). Examining these factors provides insight into why leaders adopt particular styles and how leadership practices vary across settings.

Among these influences, **personality traits** play a significant role in shaping leadership behaviour. Leadership practices often reflect a leader's dominant personality characteristics, such as assertiveness, openness, or introversion (Judge et al., 2020). For example, leaders with assertive and expressive traits may prefer direct communication, open dialogue, and face-to-face engagement with team members. In contrast, more introverted leaders may lead through modelling behaviour, reflection, and written communication, and may feel more comfortable providing guidance in one-on-one interactions rather than in large group settings (Northouse, 2021; Yukl, 2020). These differences highlight how individual characteristics interact with situational demands to shape leadership style and practice.

Personality traits refer to stable and enduring patterns in how individuals think, feel, and behave across different situations (McCrae & Costa, 2003). These traits form the core of a person's personality and influence how they interact with the world around them. Personality traits are often categorized using models such as the Five-Factor

Model (also known as the Big Five), which includes dimensions like openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Babcock et al, 2020).

Among these five-factor model, extraversion and transformational leadership is characterized by high levels of sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm, is often linked to transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are known for their ability to inspire and motivate followers through a shared vision and strong interpersonal relationships. Extraverted leaders naturally excel in this style because they are comfortable engaging with others, expressing enthusiasm, and driving group dynamics (Judge & Bono, 2000). Their ability to energize and communicate effectively helps them to build strong, cohesive teams and foster a positive organizational culture.

The second factor among the five-factor model is conscientiousness and transactional leadership, which involves being organized, dependable, and disciplined, it is often associated with transactional leadership. Transactional leaders focus on establishing clear structures, rules, and rewards to manage their teams. Conscientious leaders are well-suited to this style because they excel at setting goals, monitoring progress, and ensuring that tasks are completed accurately and on time (Judge et al., 2002). Their attention to detail and commitment to maintaining order make them effective in environments that require consistency and adherence to established procedures.

Thirdly, openness to experience and innovative leadership, with this, Leaders with high levels of openness to experience are more likely to adopt innovative and transformational leadership styles. Openness is associated with creativity, curiosity, and a willingness to explore new ideas. Leaders who score high in this trait are often more willing to challenge the status quo, encourage experimentation, and embrace change

within their organizations (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Their ability to think outside the box and foster an environment of continuous learning makes them effective in leading organizations through periods of change and innovation.

The fourth factor is agreeableness and participative leadership. This includes traits such as kindness, empathy, and cooperativeness, is linked to participative or democratic leadership styles. Leaders with high levels of agreeableness are more inclined to involve others in decision-making processes, listen to their team's input, and prioritize harmonious relationships within the group (Judge et al., 2002). This style is particularly effective in environments where collaboration and teamwork are essential, as it fosters a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Finally, the fifth factor is neuroticism and leadership challenges. Neuroticism, is characterized by emotional instability, anxiety, and a tendency to experience negative emotions, is generally considered detrimental to effective leadership. Leaders who score high in neuroticism may struggle with managing stress, making decisions under pressure, and maintaining positive relationships with their teams (Judge et al., 2009). This trait can lead to leadership styles that are inconsistent, overly cautious, or reactive, which can undermine a leader's ability to inspire confidence and maintain a stable work environment. According to McCrae and Costa (1997), personality traits are relatively stable over time and can predict a wide range of behaviors, including leadership styles and effectiveness. These traits are considered fundamental building blocks of personality, influencing everything from interpersonal relationships to career success (Judge et al., 2002).

Another element that affects leadership practice is the organizational structure, which serves as the framework or backbone of the workplace, shaping how roles,

responsibilities, and communication are organized and carried out (Bolman & Deal, 2003). More decentralized structures might support distributed leadership, where leadership responsibilities are shared among staff members (Spillane, 2006). Organizational structure plays a crucial role in coordinating daily tasks and minimizing unnecessary discussions about routine matters. However, when overly rigid or bureaucratic, it can hinder flexibility and innovation. Structural perspectives often emphasize formal, technical, and procedural approaches to problem-solving (Hoy & Miskel, 2007). For instance, elements such as school timetables and administrative policies can influence the leadership styles adopted by school leaders. Formal structures often shape informal practices and relationships, which are closely tied to the organization's culture (McEvily et al, 2014). In schools, these informal practices might include established routines for collaboration, division of responsibilities, and time management in teaching and learning. Over time, such structures may become habitual rather than serving as tools for enhancing purpose and effectiveness. Moreover, the structure and operations of an organization often determine the leadership style leaders are expected to use. In some workplaces, collaboration and employee input are highly valued, encouraging participatory leadership. In contrast, other settings may require a top-down, authoritative style, where leaders dictate and discourage deviation or innovation.

Furthermore, school culture and climate are another factor that influences the practice of leadership. School culture shapes teachers' views of reality, teaching and the purpose of schooling. Rather than viewing culture as the essence of an organization, it is often more practical to understand culture as something the organization possesses. This perspective highlights that organizational culture is dynamic, continuously evolving over time (Miller, 2006). Culture is typically expressed through symbols and gives the

organization a sense of identity (Hoy & Miskel, 2007). In schools, culture adds meaning to behaviors that might otherwise appear insignificant. It can either facilitate or hinder the implementation of leadership ideas and initiatives. Specifically, school culture plays a crucial role in shaping the leadership styles adopted by headteachers. The shared values, norms, beliefs, and everyday practices within a school can either support or conflict with a headteacher's leadership approach, often requiring them to adjust their style to fit the cultural environment.

The existing culture and climate of a school can impact how leadership is exercised. A positive, open school culture may encourage a more participative leadership style, while a more hierarchical culture might reinforce authoritative leadership (Schein, 2010). For example, in a school with a culture that highly values collaboration and teacher autonomy, a headteacher may adopt a more distributed or participative leadership style. This approach would be more effective in such an environment, where teachers expect to have a voice in decision-making processes (Spillane, 2006). In conclusion, School culture is a powerful force that shapes the leadership styles of headteachers. Whether through alignment with shared values, response to cultural expectations, adaptation to existing practices, or managing historical influences, the culture within a school significantly influences how head teachers lead.

Understanding this dynamic is crucial for head teachers to effectively guide their schools, as successful leadership often requires an approach that respects and builds upon the established cultural context. School Size and Resources can also influence leaders to choose certain leadership practice. The size of the school and the availability of resources can also affect leadership styles. Larger schools with more resources might

allow for more delegation and distributed leadership, while smaller schools might necessitate a more hands-on approach (Leithwood et al., 2002).

Moreover, experience is also a factor that influences leadership practices. Experienced leaders might be more confident and flexible in their approach, whereas less experienced leaders may rely on more structured, transactional leadership styles (Robinson et al., 2008). According to Northouse (2019), leaders who have accumulated significant experience tend to develop more adaptive leadership style, as they can draw on past situations to inform their decisions in new contexts. A leader's experience, both in leadership roles and within a specific organization, can significantly influence their leadership style. Individuals who are new to leadership may prefer to adhere strictly to established rules and procedures to minimize errors. In contrast, seasoned leaders often feel more confident in interpreting and applying rules based on their judgment. Additionally, leaders with long-standing ties to an organization are typically more familiar with its unique culture and operations, enabling them to make decisions with greater ease and confidence than someone who is new to the environment. Also, Yukle (2013) suggests that, experiences enable leaders to develop better problem-solving skills and emotional intelligence, which are key components of effective leadership. For instance, a leader who has faced numerous challenges in team management might become more transformational in their approach, focusing on inspiring and motivating their team, as they understand the importance of morale and motivation from their past experiences (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Similarly, a leader with experience in diverse environments may develop a more inclusive leadership style, appreciating the value of different perspectives and the need for collaboration (Eagly & Chin, 2010). In conclusion, experiences do not only shape

the leadership style by informing the leader's approach to decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations, but it also helps in the continual adaptation and refinement of their style to suit different situations and teams.

Not to mention, age is also a factor that influences leadership practice. Age is a chronological measure of order of how long an individual has lived. In the context of leadership, age can influence a leader's decision or approach to management due to longevity in experience, maturity and changes in generational perception. Research suggests that, age impacts leadership style by affecting the leaders' accumulated experiences which at the end, influences their decision making and interaction with team members. (Northouse, 2019; Sims, 2002). For instance, Northouse (2019) suggests that younger leaders may adopt more innovative and participative styles due to their openness to new ideas and learning experiences. Conversely, older leaders might draw on their extensive experience to favor more structured and directive leadership approaches, valuing efficiency and stability (Sims, 2002).

Consequently, concerning influence of experience and maturity, younger leaders are often at an earlier stage in their careers, and their leadership practice may reflect a learning and experimentation phase. They may be more open to adopting participative or transformational leadership styles, which emphasize collaboration, innovation, and motivating team members (Northouse, 2019). This openness to new ideas and flexibility can be advantageous in dynamic and fast-paced environments where adaptability is key. In contrast, older leaders tend to draw on a wealth of experience, which can lead them to adopt a more directive or transactional leadership style. These leaders may focus on efficiency, structure, and stability, preferring to rely on proven methods and practices (Bass, 1990). Their extensive experience allows them to

anticipate challenges and make informed decisions, often prioritizing long-term organizational goals over short-term experimentation. About perception of authority and respect, age can also influence how a leader is perceived by their team. In many cultures, such as in Ghana, older leaders may command more respect and authority due to their age, which can reinforce a more hierarchical or authoritative leadership style. This perception can affect how leaders communicate with their teams and how they delegate tasks and responsibilities (Sims, 2002).

Furthermore, generational differences can also impact leadership style. Leaders from different generations may have varying values, work ethics, and communication preferences. For instance, leaders from older generations might prioritize loyalty, discipline, and formal communication, while younger leaders might emphasize flexibility, work-life balance, and informal, digital communication methods (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). This is as a result of the technological change in time and the global digitization. In terms of adaptation over time, as leaders age, they may also adapt their leadership style in response to changing organizational environments and personal growth. A leader who started with a more autocratic style in their younger years might shift to a more participative or coaching style as they gain confidence and learn the value of empowering their team members (Avolio & Gibbons, 1988). This evolution reflects not just the accumulation of experience, but also a deeper understanding of what motivates and engages employees over time.

Additionally, Educational Background and Training is a factor that contributes to the choice of leadership practices. The level of education and professional development a headteacher has received can influence their leadership approach. Training programs that emphasize collaborative and participatory techniques may lead to more democratic

leadership styles (Leithwood et al., 2004). Besides the above, stakeholders' expectations of a school, including parents, teachers, learners, school boards, and the local community, can significantly influence a head teacher's leadership practices. These stakeholders often have varied and sometimes conflicting demands that require the head teacher to adapt their approach to meet the diverse needs effectively.

For instance, parents and the local community may expect a head teacher to ensure high academic standards and a safe, nurturing environment. In response, the head teacher might adopt a transformational leadership style to inspire and motivate staff towards achieving these goals, while also fostering a collaborative school culture that aligns with the community's values (Leithwood, 2021). Teachers, as internal stakeholders, may expect support for professional development and autonomy in their teaching practices. To meet these expectations, a head teacher might lean towards a distributed leadership practice, which involves sharing leadership responsibilities and empowering teachers to take initiative in their areas of expertise (Harris & Jones, 2019). This approach can help build trust and promote a sense of ownership among staff, which is crucial for maintaining morale and commitment. On the other hand, school boards often focus on accountability, performance metrics, and adherence to policies. In such contexts, a headteacher might need to adopt a transactional leadership style to ensure that the school meets these expectations through clear structures, rules, and performance-based incentives (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2019). This practice can help maintain order and ensure that the school's operations align with the broader educational goals set by the board. Students, as primary stakeholders, might express their expectations through their need for a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Aside the above, external factors such as educational policies, government regulations, and societal changes can influence leadership styles. Leaders may need to adopt practices that align with policy requirements or societal expectations (Bush, 2011). A head teacher may respond by adopting a servant leadership practice, emphasizing empathy, active listening, and addressing learners' individual needs to create a conducive learning environment (Greenleaf, 2020). Also, leaders often adapt their approach to meet the needs and expectations of these stakeholders (Fullan, 2001). The size of the school and the availability of resources can also affect leadership styles. Larger schools with more resources might allow for more delegation and distributed leadership, while smaller schools might necessitate a more hands-on approach (Leithwood et al., 2002).

In conclusion, the expectations of various stakeholders can strongly influence a headteacher's leadership style, compelling them to adapt their approach to meet the specific demands of parents, teachers, students, and school boards. By understanding and responding to these expectations, headteachers can more effectively lead their schools towards achieving shared goals. Understanding the factors that influence the use of various leadership styles helps in identifying the most effective approaches for different contexts. Leaders must consider these factors to adapt their leadership style to best support teaching and learning outcomes.

2.6.1 The Role of School Leaders in developing teachers' professional practice

School leaders play a crucial role in developing teachers' professional practices, which directly impacts student learning outcomes and overall school effectiveness. Effective leadership is essential in fostering an environment where continuous professional growth is encouraged and supported.

Transformational leadership is one approach that has been shown to significantly influence teachers' professional development. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their staff by creating a shared vision, providing individualized support, and encouraging professional collaboration (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). This leadership practice fosters a positive school culture where teachers feel valued and are more willing to engage in innovative teaching practices (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Instructional leadership is another critical approach where school leaders focus on the core business of teaching and learning. According to Robinson et al, (2008), instructional leaders prioritize curriculum development, teacher learning, and data-informed decision-making. They engage in activities such as classroom observations, providing constructive feedback, and organizing professional development sessions tailored to teachers' needs. This direct involvement in instructional practices helps improve teachers' pedagogical skills and effectiveness.

Moreover, distributed leadership, where leadership responsibilities are shared among various members of the school community, has been found to contribute to teacher development. Harris (2004) suggested that when leadership is distributed, teachers are more likely to take on leadership roles themselves, which can lead to increased professional growth and a greater sense of ownership over school improvement initiatives.

Effective school leaders also cultivate a culture of professional learning communities (PLCs) within their schools. PLCs involve groups of teachers working collaboratively to reflect on and improve their teaching practices. According to Stoll et al, 2006), successful PLCs are characterized by shared values and vision, collective responsibility for student learning, reflective professional inquiry, and collaboration. School leaders

play a pivotal role in establishing and sustaining these communities by providing the necessary time, resources, and support.

In summary, school leaders significantly impact the professional development of teachers through transformational and instructional leadership, distributed leadership practices, and fostering professional learning communities. These leadership approaches create an environment where teachers are supported, motivated, and equipped to enhance their professional practices and, consequently, student achievement.

2.7 Assessing the Impact of Gender on Leadership Practices in Early Childhood Settings

The inclusion of sex as an independent variable in this study is both contextually and academically justified, as early childhood education within Effutu Municipality is predominantly led by female headteachers (Yelkperri & Numale, 2009). This warrants a gender-focused examination of how transformational leadership is enacted in these settings. Also, preliminary observations and data from the research setting indicate that the majority of headteachers in early childhood centres are female. In Ghana, females predominantly fill pre-primary teaching roles. According to World Bank data, 83.7 % of teachers in pre-primary education were female as of 2019, The non-profit Sabre Education reports an even higher figure that, about 84.9 % of kindergarten teachers are women, furthermore, In the Effutu Municipality, where the research is grounded, studies on Professional Learning Communities implementation show a dominance of female headteachers emphasizing the female-cantered nature of early childhood education in Ghana. This gender imbalance raises important questions about whether

sex plays a role in how transformational leadership practice is adopted and applied in practice.

Theoretically and empirically, Research literature, such as Eagly & Carli (2003), indicates that men and women may display differences in their adoption of leadership behaviours, potentially due to socialisation and role expectations. A study comparing male and female headteachers found no significant differences in instructional leadership (Abonyi et al., 2024), suggesting the need for deeper exploration using transformational leadership dimensions. In a female-dominated context, the presence of male headteachers is less common making their leadership practice particularly worthy of study to assess inclusivity and adaptability in leadership development.

By examining sex as, a factor, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how gender dynamics influence leadership in the early years, particularly within a setting that is traditionally female-dominated. The findings may inform leadership development programmes, encourage gender-responsive leadership policies, and enhance the overall quality of early childhood education delivery.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves as a structural guide that the researcher believes best represents the natural development of the phenomenon under investigation (Camp, 2001). It connects relevant concepts, theoretical foundations, and empirical findings to support and organize the researcher's understanding of the topic (Peshkin, 1993). Essentially, it outlines the researcher's perspective on how the research problem will be examined and provides a coherent lens through which the issue is analyzed (Liehr & Smith, 1999). From a statistical standpoint, the conceptual framework illustrates the relationships among key variables in the study. It is systematically organized to visually

represent how the central ideas relate to each other (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). Moreover, it highlights the specific steps the researcher plans to undertake during the investigation (Dixon et al, 2001). This framework also enables the clear identification and definition of the study's core concepts (Luse et al, 2012).

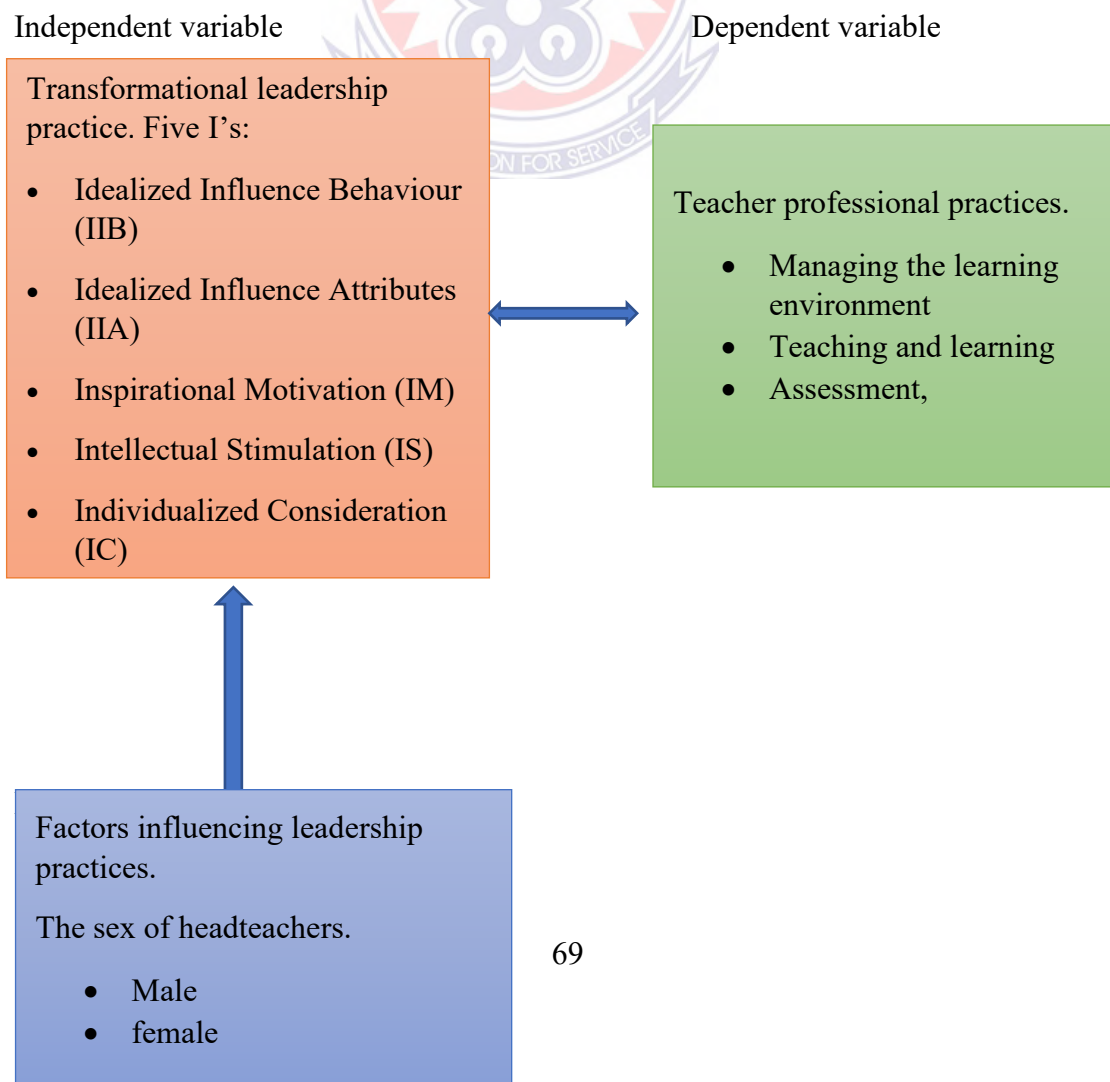
Miles and Huberman (1994) opined that conceptual framework can be 'graphical or in a narrative form showing the key variables or constructs to be studied and the presumed relationships between them. It is the researcher's explanation of how the research problem would be explored.

The conceptual framework presents an integrated way of looking at a problem under study (Liehr & Smith, 1999). In other words, the conceptual framework describes the relationship between the main concepts of a study. The conceptual framework guiding this research is constructed with the understanding that leadership styles significantly shape the behaviors, attitudes, and practices of teachers within educational settings (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). In Ghana, several policy frameworks guide school leadership, many of which align with the principles of transformational leadership. The Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2018–2030 recognizes the role of headteachers as key agents in promoting quality education through visionary and inclusive leadership (Ministry of Education, 2018). It emphasizes leadership for learning, teacher development, and innovation—core dimensions of transformational leadership.

Similarly, the National Teachers' Standards (NTS) outlines expectations for headteachers to lead by example, support teachers, foster collaboration, and promote reflective practices (National Teaching Council, 2017). These align closely with transformational leadership traits such as inspirational motivation, idealized influence,

and individualized consideration. The Pre-Tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) Policy (2020) further calls on headteachers to act as instructional leaders who guide, mentor, and stimulate teachers professionally. The emphasis on building school-based professional learning communities (PLCs) and facilitating INSET programs reflects transformational ideals of intellectual stimulation and continuous growth (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Additionally, the School Performance Improvement Planning (SPIP) Guidelines promote collective visioning, data-driven planning, and stakeholder involvement, providing a structure for transformational leaders to empower and inspire their staff (Ghana Education Service, n.d.). The framework below suggests a dynamic and interconnected relationship between variables, highlighting the importance of understanding the factors that shape leadership in early childhood education settings.



This study examined the relationship between headteachers' leadership practices and teachers' professional practices, with a specific focus on how (male and female) influence leadership practices. The conceptual framework presents the connections between these variables, demonstrating how transformational leadership practices impact various aspects of teachers' professional practices.

The sex of the headteacher (male or female) is introduced as an independence factor that may influence leadership behaviors. Research suggests that male and female leaders may differ in their leadership approaches due to social expectations, personality traits, and leadership tendencies. For instance, studies indicate that female leaders are often more collaborative and supportive, while male leaders may be more authoritative and directive (Eagly & Carli, 2007). By including sex as a variable, this study aims to determine whether gender differences affect the way transformational leadership is practiced in early childhood education settings.

The independent variable in this study is Transformational Leadership, which is known for its ability to motivate, inspire, and develop teachers. This leadership practice is categorized into five key components, known as the Five I's: The first is Idealized Influence Behavior (IIB) which refers to the actions and ethical standards of the headteacher that earn the respect and trust of teachers. Leaders who exhibit IIB serve as role models and demonstrate strong moral integrity. The second is Idealized Influence Attributes (IIA) which relates to personal traits such as confidence, charisma, and vision that make the headteacher admired by teachers. IIA emphasizes how teachers perceive their leader rather than what the leader does.

Next is Inspirational Motivation (IM), this involves the ability of the headteacher to articulate a compelling vision and instill enthusiasm in teachers. A transformational

leader with strong IM encourages teachers to see beyond daily challenges and strive for long-term goals. Followed by Intellectual Stimulation (IS), this component refers to how headteachers challenge teachers to think critically and creatively in solving problems. Leaders who apply IS encourage innovation in teaching methods, reflective thinking, and continuous professional growth. Lastly, Individualized Consideration (IC), this highlights the personalized support and mentorship a headteacher provides to teachers. By recognizing the unique strengths and weaknesses of each teacher, headteachers can offer targeted professional development and emotional support.

The dependent variable in this study is teachers' professional practice, which is examined through three key areas. Managing the Learning Environment, transformational leadership is expected to help teachers create a well-structured, engaging, and safe classroom environment. Effective leadership encourages teachers to adopt positive classroom management strategies that enhance student learning. Assessment Practices, headteachers who practice transformational leadership can influence teachers to apply innovative and learner-centered assessment strategies. This includes using both formative (continuous assessment) and summative (final exams) approaches to track student progress effectively. And then also, teaching and learning earning, this involves lesson delivery, instructional methods, and engagement strategies used by teachers. When headteachers provide intellectual stimulation and individualized support, teachers are more likely to improve their teaching techniques and adopt modern, learner-friendly strategies.

The framework suggests that transformational leadership directly has relationship with teachers' professional practices by enhancing their motivation, critical thinking, and classroom performance. However, the sex of the headteacher may influence how

transformational leadership is enacted and, consequently, its effect on teachers' professional practices. By examining these relationships, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the role of headteacher leadership in improving teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Furthermore, understanding how male and female headteachers differ in their leadership approaches can help in designing professional development programs tailored to enhance leadership effectiveness in early childhood education.

2.9 Summary of Literature Review

The literature on leadership practices highlights transformational leadership as a key factor having some relationships with teachers' professional practices. Transformational leadership, characterized by Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration, has been shown to enhance teacher motivation, instructional quality, and student outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Studies indicate that gender may influence how headteachers apply leadership practices, with male leaders often exhibiting directive approaches and female leaders emphasizing collaboration and mentorship (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Additionally, transformational leadership significantly improves classroom management, assessment strategies, and teaching effectiveness (Hallinger, 2011). The review suggests that strong leadership fosters a positive school environment, leading to better teacher performance and student success.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for the study, focused on examining the relationship between the leadership practice of early childhood head teachers and teachers' professional practices. This section discussed the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instrument validity and reliability, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques. In line with the research questions, this study employed a quantitative research approach.

3.1 Research Paradigm

In the realm of educational research, particularly when investigating the relationship between head teachers' leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in early childhood settings, selecting an appropriate research paradigm is crucial. The positivist paradigm, with its emphasis on objectivity, quantification, and empirical analysis, provides a robust framework for this study (Creswell, 2014). Here are the key reasons for choosing the positivist paradigm.

The positivist paradigm aligns with the study's need to objectively measure and analyze the variables associated with leadership practices and their relationship with professional practices. According to Creswell (2014), positivism is grounded in the belief that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective

viewpoint, without interfering with the phenomena being studied. This approach is essential for quantifying leadership practices through structured surveys or instruments and subsequently analyzing their relationships with teachers' practices which helps ensure that the research findings are unbiased and based on observable phenomena (Cohen et al, 2018).

One of the primary objectives of this research was to establish generalizable findings that can be applied across various early childhood education settings. Positivist research relies on empirical evidence gathered through rigorous data collection and statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016). By adopting this paradigm, the study ensures that the findings are based on systematic and replicable procedures, thereby enhancing the reliability and generalizability of the results.

The positivist paradigm is particularly suitable for examining causal relationships, which is a central aim of this research. Understanding the relationship between leadership practices and teachers' professional practices necessitates identifying and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships. As noted by Cohen et al, (2018), positivist research seeks to identify patterns and predict outcomes, providing a clear understanding of how specific leadership behaviors impact teaching practices in early childhood education. This can be particularly useful in understanding the influence of specific variables on others, such as leadership styles on teachers' professional practices (Robson, 2011).

Positivist research is characterized by its structured and systematic approach to inquiry, which is essential for studying complex phenomena like leadership and professional practices. This approach involves developing hypotheses, conducting controlled observations, and using statistical tools to test these hypotheses (Neuman, 2014). Such

a methodology ensures that the research process is transparent, replicable, and free from bias, thereby providing credible and valid results.

The objectives of this research were to identify the predominant leadership practices of early childhood headteachers and to quantify the relationship these practices have with teachers' professional practices. The positivist paradigm supports these objectives by enabling the researcher to collect quantifiable data through surveys and questionnaire, and to analyse this data using statistical techniques (Punch, 2013). This paradigm ensures that the research questions are addressed in a precise and objective manner. Aside the above reasons for the choice of the paradigm, it has some limitations that influence the study. Looking at the contextual Limitations, positivism often overlooks the context in which data is collected, potentially leading to a loss of nuanced understanding of the research setting (Creswell, 2014). In the context of studying leadership practices and their influence on professional practices, this can be mitigated by designing the questionnaire to include context-specific questions that capture the unique aspects of early childhood education environments. Furthermore, the positivist approach often involves a degree of detachment between the researcher and the participants, which might affect the authenticity of the responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This can be addressed by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality in the survey, encouraging more honest and candid responses from participants.

In summary, while positivism offers a robust framework for conducting quantitative research, it is essential to be aware of its limitations and employ strategies to mitigate them. This ensures that the research on the leadership styles of early childhood headteachers and their influence on teachers' professional practices remains rigorous and comprehensive. The positivist paradigm offers a rigorous and systematic approach

to studying the leadership practices of early childhood headteachers and their impact on teachers' professional practices. By enabling objective measurement, empirical validation, and the identification of causal relationships, this paradigm ensures that the research findings are reliable, generalizable, and meaningful.

The structured nature of positivist research aligns perfectly with the study's objectives, making it the most suitable choice for this investigation. The study adopted positivist paradigm which emphasizes objective measurement and quantification of variables. In the context of leadership practices, this approach allowed for the systematic collection and analysis of data on different leadership behaviors and their impacts, providing concrete and replicable findings (Cohen et al, 2011).

The Positivism supports the formulation and testing of hypotheses. By using this paradigm, researchers can establish specific hypotheses about the relationship between leadership practices and various outcomes in early childhood education, such as teachers professional practices, teacher satisfaction, student performance, and school climate, and test these hypotheses through empirical methods (Bryman, 2016) hence, this approach was used to investigate the relationship between public early childhood headteachers leadership practices and teachers professional practices in Effutu Municipality. The positivist approach often involves large-scale surveys and statistical analysis, which can enhance the generalizability of the findings. This is particularly useful for providing evidence-based recommendations that can be applied broadly within the Effutu Municipality and potentially in other similar contexts (Johnson & Christensen, 2019).

Positivist research seeks to identify causal relationships between variables. Understanding how different leadership practices influence specific outcomes in early

childhood education can help in developing targeted interventions and policies (Neuman, 2014). Positivist research is characterized by its emphasis on scientific rigor and the use of standardized instruments and procedures. This helped to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, which is crucial for making informed decisions in educational leadership (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted a positivist research paradigm, which emphasizes the importance of empirical observation and measurement in the pursuit of knowledge (Ali, 2024). Positivism seeks to establish causal relationships and patterns through the collection of quantifiable data and statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016). The positivist paradigm has a limitation of overemphasis on quantification thus often prioritizing quantitative data and may overlook the depth and complexity of human experiences that qualitative data can capture. Positivist research designs are often rigid, making it challenging to adapt to new insights or emerging trends during the research process. Also, it often reduces complex human behaviors to measurable variables, which can overlook the richness of individual experiences.

3.2 Research Approach

This study employed a quantitative research approach, focusing on the collection and analysis of numerical data (Ahmad et al, 2019). Quantitative research enables the researcher to establish relationships and trends, test hypotheses, and make generalizations about the population under investigation (Bryman, 2016). By using a quantitative approach, the study aimed to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between leadership practices of early childhood head teachers and teacher's professional practices. This approach is instrumental in isolating specific factors that influence educational outcomes, facilitating a deeper understanding of how different leadership practices directly affect the dynamics of early childhood settings.

The use of quantitative data allows for greater generalization and the ability to identify leadership practices used by early childhood head teachers within the Effutu Municipality. A quantitative approach is appropriate for testing specific hypotheses about the relationship between headteachers transformational leadership practice and teachers' professional practices. The use of statistical tests determines whether the proposed relationships are significant or not, providing empirical evidence to support the research conclusions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Below are the reasons that informed the choice of this approach.

According to research, quantitative research provides objective and measurable data, ensuring that the study's findings are reliable and replicable (Creswell, 2014). This study sought to determine the relationship between early childhood headteachers' transformational leadership practice and teachers' professional practices, numerical data was essential for accuracy and generalization. The use of structured questionnaires enabled data collection from a large sample, improving external validity.

In addition, quantitative approach ensured statistical analysis of relationships. The study focused on identifying patterns, correlations, and statistical relationships between leadership practices and teacher professional practices. A quantitative approach allowed for the use of statistical techniques such as correlation, and descriptive analysis to measure the strength and significance of these relationships.

Moreover, the use of quantitative research approach eliminated subjectivity, unlike qualitative methods, which rely on opinions, perceptions, and subjective experiences, a quantitative approach relied on numerical data and statistical evidence.

In Conclusion, Given the need for objective, reliable, and statistically valid results, a quantitative research approach was the most appropriate approach for this study. It enabled a clear measurement of the relationship between five transformational concepts of leadership and teachers' professional practices, enhanced generalizability, and ensured that findings are data-driven rather than subjective.

3.3 Research Design

Research design has been described in various ways by different social scientists, but most definitions highlight the importance of systematically collecting data for analysis and interpretation, while ensuring efficiency and practicality in the overall research process. Creswell (2015) opined that a research design is primarily concerned with the conceptual structure within which a study is conducted. In other words, the research design sets the procedure on the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyze the data, and how these will help to answer the research questions. Research design, refers to the overall strategy and procedures a researcher chooses to investigate specific questions or hypotheses. It outlines how data will be collected and analyzed to address the research problem. As Gupta and Ssushil (1993) explains, a research design serves as a structured plan that guides the process of making observations and gathering data, offering both an empirical and logical foundation for drawing valid conclusions and developing new knowledge.

There are three possible forms of research design: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Robson, 2002). The basis of classification is based on the purpose of the research. For instance, the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a 'picture' of a situation, person or event, or to show how things are related to each other (Lelissa, 2018).

This study employed descriptive survey design with a co-current data collection approach. Descriptive survey design is used to detail the characteristics of variables within a given context. According to Best and Khan (2009), this approach focused on understanding existing conditions, current relationships, prevailing opinions, ongoing processes, observable effects, or emerging trends. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) further endorse the use of descriptive survey design in educational research, arguing that it is one of the most effective methods for collecting data about large populations that cannot be studied in their entirety through direct observation. The rationale for the use of the descriptive survey design is to allow researchers embark on the collection of data from a large sample population and generate findings that are representative of the whole population at a lower cost (Saunders et al., 2012). Burns and Grove (2011) also note that the descriptive survey affords researchers to collect numeric data so as to examine relationships between variables. It provides the scope of coverage within short span of time.

3.4 Target Population of the Study

A research population consists of all individuals or elements that satisfy the specific criteria set for inclusion in a study (Burns & Grove, 2011). The population is the entire group of people the researcher wishes to obtain knowledge from, and to whom the findings of a study are generalized. It comprises all the units on which the findings of a given research are generalized and applied. In other words, population is a set of all the units of study that possess variable characteristics. In other words, a population refers to the group on which results of research can be applied or to which the research findings can be generalized.

In view of the above facts, the population consisted of all the people or events that are of interest to the researcher. The target population covered all public early childhood headteachers and public early childhood teachers in the Effutu Municipality. This provided a total of an accessible population of 195 participants. One of the characteristics of these public early childhood schools was that all of them were attached to a public primary school and had one head teacher who was in charge of both the early childhood and the primary school. This population was selected because it represented a diverse range of schools and leadership styles, providing a rich context for understanding the impact of head teachers' leadership on teachers' professional practices (Adu-Yeboah & Adinkrah-Appiah, 2020). By focusing on this specific population, the study aimed to generate valuable knowledge and insights that can inform policy and practice in early childhood education in Ghana.

3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample refers to a subset of a population that accurately reflects the characteristics of the whole, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about the entire population without examining every member (Taherdoost, 2016). A sample refers to a portion of a population selected for the study and from whom information needed for the study is obtained (Awoniyi, Aderanti & Tayo, 2011). It is also a smaller group selected from the population that is intended to represent the population as a whole. The sample should be chosen carefully to ensure that it accurately reflects the characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2014).

Moreover, a sample is a subsection of the population chosen to represent the population in a study. The sample is therefore composed of carefully selected units or elements (from a given population) that a researcher actually studies and relies on to make

generalizations or inferences about the population. A sample is a subset of individuals or units selected from a larger population, which researchers study to make inferences about the entire population. The goal of using a sample is to gather data that represents the broader population without the need to study every individual, which is often impractical due to time, cost, or logistical constraints (Creswell, 2014). Primarily, the sample is a representation of those elements of the population, which are selected to represent the entire population and participate in a study.

Sampling is the process of selecting a given number of subjects from a defined population as representative of that population such that any statements made about the sample should also be true of the population (Orodho, 2009). A number of researchers have highlighted the relevance of sampling in research. Respondents for this study were selected using census sampling, where data was collected from every member. Census technique involves studying every unit within the population, thus eliminating sampling error and providing comprehensive coverage of the research area (Creswell, 2014). Census sampling is particularly effective when the population is small and easily manageable, ensuring higher validity and eliminating sampling bias (Groves et al., 2009). Given that, the study is quantitative and about the relationship between leadership practices of headteachers and professional practices, using the entire population provided a rich, detailed understanding of the phenomena.

This design allowed the full spectrum of leadership practices and their relationship to the professional practices ensuring the findings are robust and representation of the entire group of head teachers and teachers. By including all head teachers and teachers in the target population, the study aimed to achieve a high level of accuracy and representation in understanding the leadership styles and their influence on professional

practices as per the guidelines of Creswell (2014), including the entire population can enhance the validity of the findings by reducing sampling error. The census sampling was carried out with all the three circuits in Winneba thus, Central, West and East. For instance, in the Central circuit, there were 9 head teachers and 65 schools representing 33% of the total population of 196. The same process was used entirely for every population.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instrument is a tool used by researchers to gather, measure, and analyze data from subjects or respondents. These instruments can take various forms, including questionnaires, interviews, surveys, tests, or observation checklists, depending on the nature of the research and the type of data required (Creswell, 2014). Authors further express the view that eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions or attitudes of some sample of individuals is made easy by the use of appropriate data collection instruments. Essentially, data collection instruments are the tools used to obtain information from participants in a research study. Purposely, data collection instruments are specifically designed to systematically collect data that will help answer the research questions or hypotheses. These instruments are crucial for ensuring that the data collected is consistent, reliable, and valid (Bryman, 2012). A good data collection instrument must be both valid and reliable. The design of the instrument, the clarity and the method of administration all contribute to these qualities (Creswell, 2014).

The study employed a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. A questionnaire is a commonly used method in which participants respond, either in writing or verbally, to a structured set of questions (Parahoo, 2006). Many researchers

advocate for the use of questionnaires, highlighting their reliability and practicality. Denzin and Lincoln (2012) argue that questionnaires are among the most widely used research instruments and are generally well understood by participants due to their simplicity and cost-effectiveness. Additionally, Canals (2017) notes that closed-ended questionnaires ease the burden on respondents by limiting the need to generate their own responses. Guided by Canals' observation, the questionnaire for this study was organized into three main sections.

Section 'A' has multiple choices. It was administered to collect demographic data. These questions helped to capture a wide range of demographic information about public early childhood head teachers and teachers. This included their age, sex, academic qualification and how long they have been teachers or headteachers.

Section 'B' gathered data on the leadership practices of the public early childhood head teachers, these questions examined the different facets of respondents' leadership practices encompassing their approach to the five Is of transformational leadership. Respondents used the scale of 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree to indicate their level of agreement.

3.7 Pilot Testing of the Instrument

Pilot-testing of research instruments is a crucial step in the research process. Gerrish and Lacey (2006, p. 538) define it as "a preliminary study carried out before the full research to test out data collection instruments and other procedures." This process helps researchers detect and address potential issues that might occur during data collection, thereby improving the reliability of the study. According to Doody and Doody (2015), pilot-testing is essential as it allows researchers to assess how participants interpret survey questions before investing significant time and resources.

They emphasize that pilot testing not only identifies problematic areas but also minimizes measurement errors and respondent misunderstandings. Moreover, it ensures clarity of items and checks whether the sequence of questions influences participant responses (Doody & Doody, 2015). Also, pilot-testing is the administration of the data collection instrument with a small set of respondents from the population for the full-scale survey. If problems occur in the pilot-test, it is likely that similar problems will arise in full-scale administration. These highlight the need to pre-test a questionnaire before administering to participants because the practice eliminates ambiguities and errors in the data collected. The pilot-testing of the questionnaire was done in the Gomoa West District. The choice of this district was in view of the researcher's observation that the Gomoa West District exhibits characteristics closely related to those of the Effutu Municipality. A sample of thirty-four (34), thirty (30) early childhood teachers and four (4) head teachers, were selected from basic schools in the Gomoa West Schools for the pilot-testing exercise. The adequacy of the pre-testing sample size was based on Cooper and Schilder's (2011) suggestion that at least 10% of the sample is adequate in a pre-test.

3.8. Validity of the Instrument

Validity is the degree to which an instrument accurately measures what it purports to measure (Gay, 1992). Validity describes the accuracy with which an instrument measures the anticipated construct within a study (Noble & Smith, 2015). Validity is the extent to which research instruments measure what they are intended to measure (Oso & Onen, 2011). In other words, validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data accurately represents the phenomena under study. Validity includes several forms, including face validity and content validity (Taherdoost, 2016). According to Borg and Gall (1989), validity of an instrument is improved through

expert judgment. Therefore, the instrument was first scrutinized and approved by lecturers in the department of Early Childhood Education for their relevance, clarity and suitability to the study. The researcher's supervisor assisted to improve the instruments validity. Also, engaging colleagues on the Master of Philosophy program at the university to review the items and ensured face validity of the instruments. Comments relating to the length of items, the number of items and the general layout of the instruments were considered in refinement of the instrument.

Content validity refers to the extent to which the measuring instrument shows that it fairly and comprehensively covers the variables that it purports to measure (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). Taherdoost (2016) posit that content validity describes the degree to which items in an instrument reflect the construct the instrument intends to describe. In line with the assertion that experts evaluate the content validity of questionnaires (Polit & Beck, 2018), the instrument was submitted to the supervisor who checked that the questions mirrored the concepts being investigated and that the scope of the questions was suitable. The supervisor who is an expert in the field of study provided valuable assistance in the design of the questionnaire.

3.9 Reliability of Instrument

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the results produced by a research instrument over time. According to Braun et al, (2019), an instrument is considered reliable if it yields clear and consistent outcomes when applied repeatedly across different time periods. Again, reliability is the consistency of results if a study is replicated. According to Bryman and Bell (2012), the reliability of an instrument also focuses on elements such as stability, internal reliability and inter-observer consistency. The reliability of the questionnaire used in this study was addressed as internal

consistency of the items. The reliability of the research instrument was estimated using Cronbach's alpha reliability test as presented in George and Mallery's (2012) recommendation that a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient greater than or equal to 0.70 is acceptable. It is observed from the Table 3.10 that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each variable as the overall variables was greater than 0.70, hence it was concluded that the instrument is reliable.

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Idealised influence attribute	0.865
Idealised influence behaviour	0.862
Inspirational motivation	0.867
Intellectual stimulation	0.864
Individualised consideration	0.868
Managing the learning environment	0.887
Teaching and learning	0.896
Assessment	0.905
Teacher professional practices	0.891

Source: Fieldwork (2024)

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection involves systematically gathering and measuring information on relevant variables to allow the researcher to address specific research questions, test hypotheses, and assess outcomes (Kabir, 2016). Implicit in the view of Kabir is that data collection demands the use of research tools to collect data with a focus to provide answers to research questions. Before the fieldwork, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba to facilitate the process of data collection.

The introductory letter from the University was sent to the Ghana Education Service Effutu Municipal for approval, after it was granted, informed consent was obtained from all participants all the schools, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Copies of consent note along with the

questionnaires were sent to all participants physically in the various public schools. Head teacher and teacher participants were individually assured that responses will be treated with confidentiality, and that the participants would remain anonymous throughout. The questionnaires administered did not require participant's name or other form of identity description. The data collection lasted for one month, starting from 14th of February, 2025 to 17th March, 2025. The researcher personally collected the data from the teachers and head teachers. Some of the respondents answered the questionnaire and handed over immediately, others also returned theirs in days and weeks' time within the given date above. All completed questionnaires were collected and sealed in an envelope. By the end of March 17th, the researcher was out of the various schools visited.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis involves organizing, structuring, and interpreting large volumes of collected information to make it meaningful (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). It is also the process of gathering, modeling, and examining data to uncover insights that inform and support decision-making (Creswell, 2015). The data collected from the study was analysed systematically using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version to ensure accuracy and meaningful interpretation of results. The following steps outlined the procedures undertaken for data analysis.

The process began by a check on all the completed questionnaires with a view to discarding questionnaires that were not filled or were poorly answered. The first stage in the process of analysing the data collected was dedicated to the coding of questionnaires and entering it into the version 26 of the IBM Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS). During the procedure for the data analysis, the researcher

first conducted data exploration. Data exploration is a critical phase in data analysis that involves examining datasets to understand their structure, detect patterns, and identify potential issues such as missing or inconsistent values. This phase laid the foundation for subsequent data processing and modelling efforts and that included identifying the variables in columns, their types in numerical, categorical, and text, and the relationships between them. For example, summary statistics like mean, median, standard deviation, and percentiles can provide insights into numerical. Also, data exploration was checked in other to identify missing and outlier values, missing data can compromise the validity of analysis and may need imputation or removal.

Outliers, which are extreme values that differ significantly from the majority of the data, can skew results and should be carefully assessed (Gelman et al., 2013). In the case of this study, the researcher used the descriptive statistics particularly, frequency counts and percentages. During the exploration, the researcher realized some missing data in the filling on work experiences of the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were reviewed for accuracy and completeness before analysis. Any inconsistencies or missing responses were identified and addressed. To facilitate analysis, all responses were coded numerically. Categorical variables such as sex (Male = 1, Female = 2) and Likert-scale responses (Strongly Agree = 5, Strongly Disagree = 1) were assigned numerical values for statistical processing.

Given the quantitative nature of the study and the need to analyze data from a large number of participants (headteachers and teachers), descriptive statistics were the most appropriate choice. They provided a systematic way to summarize data, identify patterns, and draw meaningful conclusions. Descriptive statistics provide a clear and concise summary of the dataset. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2006),

descriptive statistics are essential for organizing and summarizing data in a way that is easily interpretable. They allow the researcher to observe patterns and trends within the data.

The mean (average) was used to determine the central tendency of responses, particularly for the Likert-scale items. The mean is a useful measure for understanding the overall trend of the data and is appropriate for continuous or ordinal data (Field, 2013). This helped in summarizing the general perceptions of teachers and headteachers regarding leadership practices and their relationships with professional practices.

Standard deviation tests were used to detect outliers, which were reviewed and handled appropriately. Standard deviation was utilized to measure the variability or dispersion of responses around the mean. A small standard deviation indicates that the responses are clustered closely around the mean, suggesting consistency in participants' views, while a larger standard deviation shows greater variability. According to Gravetter and Wallnau (2014), standard deviation is a critical measure for understanding how spread out the data is.

Frequencies and percentages were used to summarize categorical data, such as demographic information (example, gender, years of experience, and role-headteacher or teacher). As noted by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), frequencies and percentages provide an easy way to represent data in a way that is comprehensible to the audience. These measures helped highlight the distribution of responses and the demographic makeup of the respondent.

With the Inferential Statistics, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between headteachers' leadership practices and teachers' professional practices. Independent Samples t-test was performed to compare the differences in

leadership practices between male and female headteachers. The results obtained from these analyses provided insights into the relationship between transformational leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in early childhood education.



Table 3.1: Data Exploration

	N	
	Valid	Missing
Category of respondents	150	0
Sex	150	0
Age	150	0
Academic Qualification	150	0
Work Experience	149	1
I do things that make my teachers feel proud that I am the head teacher of the school.	150	0
I show a sense of great competence in my work in this school.	150	0
I instill a sense of pride in teachers of my school.	150	0
I make personal sacrifices for the benefit of my teachers in this school.	150	0
I do things that make me win my teachers' respect.	150	0
I talk about the importance of trusting each other.	150	0
I make my teachers assured that I can overcome obstacles.	150	0
I set an example of hard work for my teachers.	150	0
I talk positively about a better future for the school.	150	0
I encourage my teachers to attempt new ways of doing their work in the school.	150	0
I encourage my teachers to provide alternative solutions to problems in the school.	150	0
I encourage my teachers to question ideas and ways of doing things in the school.	150	0
I ask teachers for their ideas and suggestions when taking decisions.	150	0
I take care of my teachers' individual needs and concerns.	150	0
I encourage my teachers to develop themselves to the best of their abilities.	150	0
I spend time coaching, mentoring or counselling my teachers.	149	1
I help my teachers to develop their strengths above their weaknesses.	150	0
My teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student participation and critical thinking.	150	0

My teachers lesson clearly achieve the intended learning outcomes.	150	0
My teachers regularly engage in small-scale action research or reflective practices to improve my teaching.	147	3
My teachers ensure that their classrooms are safe and supportive space for all students.	150	0
My teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student participation and critical thinking.	150	0
My teachers pay special attention to all learners, particularly girls and students with Special Educational Needs, ensuring their progress.	150	0
My teachers produce and use a variety of teaching and learning resources, including ICT, to enhance learning in the classroom.	150	0
My teachers set meaningful tasks that encourage learner collaboration and lead to purposeful learning.	150	0
My teachers integrate a variety of assessment modes into their teaching to support learning.	150	0
My teachers listen to learners and provide constructive feedback to guide their progress.	150	0
My teachers keep meaningful records of every learner's progress and communicate this clearly to both parents and learners.	150	0
My teachers identify and remediate learners' difficulties or misconceptions, and refer those whose needs lie outside their competency.	150	0

Source: Field Data, (2024).

Data exploration is a primary phase in the data analysis process that involves examining and understanding the structure, characteristics, and patterns within a dataset. It helps analysts and researchers discover insights, detect irregularities, and prepare data for further analysis. In other words, it is the initial step in data analysis, where analysts use statistical techniques and data visualization tools to examine a data set. In SPSS missing data are identified by dot (.) using the find process. For instance, there were two outliers identified in the sex variable, male and female were coded as 1 and 2 respectively,

however, in the analysis 3 and 4 were seen, so these 3 and 4 are outliers and these were corrected.

Table 3.2: Outliers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex	Male	24	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Female	123	82.0	82.0	98.0
	3	2	1.3	1.3	99.3
	4	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Source: fieldwork (2024)

3.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the conduct of people which guides their standards of behavior as well as how they relate with each other (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2005). The central focus of research ethics has to do with giving due consideration regarding how to deal and relate with the human subjects that participate in the research process (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). This suggests that the ethical rights of a participant must be respected throughout the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) have emphasized the need for researchers to maintain anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent.

Anonymity occurs when even the researcher or audience cannot link a participant with the information for that person (Polit & Beck, 2018). It is concerned with concealing the identity or ethnic or cultural background of respondents, refraining from referring to them by their names or divulging any other sensitive information about a participant (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The nature and purpose of the study was made explicit to the respondents and the extent of their involvement. A respondent may be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot associate a particular response with a given

respondent. Anonymity can be ensured by omitting the names of the participants or identifying them by a code instead of by name (Akaranga & Makau, 2016). In order to guarantee anonymity, respondents were asked not to write their names on the questionnaire. Again, all completed questionnaires were coded without names of respondents. Additionally, the final report did not contain names of respondents.

Confidentiality is maintained when participants are protected in a study such that information provided is never publicly divulged (Polit & Beck, 2018). To ensure confidentiality, the respondents were assured that the data would solely be used for the stated purposes of the study. Consequently, the participants were assured that no information relative to them would be made public without their prior consent.

Informed consent means that participants have adequate information regarding the research, are capable of comprehending the information and have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent or decline participation in the research (Polit & Beck, 2018). The researcher obtained informed consent from the research participants by explaining in detail the nature and purpose of the study, and the importance of their participation. Informed consent was maintained when the participants were assured that participation in the study was voluntary and failure to participate or withdraw would not result in any penalties.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological procedure that was followed in the study. Issues relating to philosophical stance of the study, research approach, research design, population, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection and analysis as well as the ethical principles were discussed. It was stated that the positivist philosophy guided the study which afforded the researcher to adopt the quantitative approach. The

descriptive survey research design was employed. The target population covered all Early Childhood Head Teachers and Teachers in Effutu Municipality. The sample size involved 196 head teachers and teachers in Effutu Municipality. These participants were selected through the census sampling. Questionnaire was to collect data in the study after it was assessed for validity and reliability. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data with the aid of SPSS.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from headteachers and early childhood teachers. The chapter provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between public early childhood headteachers' leadership practices and teachers' professional practices, with a specific focus on transformational leadership and its influence on teaching effectiveness. The chapter entails the response rate and demographic information analysing the characteristics of participants, including sex distribution, experience, and academic qualifications. Descriptive analysis, summarizing key trends in leadership practices and teacher professional practices. Also, inferential statistics, that is examining statistical relationships between leadership practices and teacher professional performance, using correlation analyses was done.

Discussion of findings, Interpreting the results in relation to existing literature and theoretical frameworks was captured here, highlighting key implications. The results are presented in tables, charts, and statistical outputs, followed by discussions that compare the findings to previous studies. This chapter aims to answer the research questions and provide empirical evidence on the influence of headteachers' leadership practices on early childhood education.

4.1 Response Rate

From the data collected, out of the 196 questionnaires administered, 150 questionnaires were filled and returned. The table 4.1 and 4.2 represent the response rate.



Table 4.1: Head Teachers and Teachers' Distribution

Respondents	Target Population	Percentage	Sample size
Head Teachers	26	13.3	23
Teachers	169	86.6	127
Total	195		

Source: Field work, (2024).

Table 4.2: Response Rate

Category	Questionnaires administered	Questionnaires filled and returned	Percentage (%)
Head Teachers	26	23	88%
Teachers	169	127	75%
Total	195	150	77%

Source: Field work, (2024).

The table represented a 77% response rate, which is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. According to Bailey (2000) assertion, a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on this assertion; the response rate in this case of 77% is very good. According to Babbie (2007), a response rate of 50% is considered adequate for analysis and reporting, while a response rate of 60% is good, and 70% or higher is very good. Therefore, the 77% response rate achieved in this study is well within acceptable limits and can be considered reliable for drawing valid conclusions. Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) assert that a response rate of 70% or more is sufficient for most research studies, as it reduces the likelihood of non-response bias and increases the generalizability of findings. The high response rate in this study ensures the data collected is representative of the target population and enhances the reliability of the results. Additionally, Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014) emphasize that response rates above 70% are

desirable for surveys, particularly in educational research, as they indicate a strong level of engagement from participants and reduce sampling error.

Table 4.3 shows the profile of the respondents

Profile	Grouping	Frequency	Percent
Category of respondents	Teachers	127	84.7
	Headteachers	23	13.3
Sex	Male	24	16.0
	Female	126	84.0
Age	Less than 30 years	39	26.0
	30 – 39 years	60	40.0
	40 – 49 years	32	21.3
	50 and above	19	12.7
Academic Qualification	Diploma	41	27.3
	Bachelor’s Degree	88	58.7
	Masters	21	14.0
Work Experience	1 - 5 years	39	26.0
	6 - 10 years	52	34.7
	11 - 15 years	36	24.0
	16 - 20 years	23	15.3

Source: Field work, (2024).

The demographic profile of respondents provides important contextual information for interpreting the study’s findings. As presented in the table, the sample comprised 150 respondents, made up of teachers and headteachers from early childhood education settings. With respect to category of respondents, the majority were classroom teachers (127; 84.7%), while headteachers constituted a smaller proportion (23; 13.3%). This distribution is appropriate for the study, as classroom teachers are directly involved in daily instructional practices and learner engagement, while headteachers provide supervisory and administrative perspectives. The dominance of teachers ensures that findings largely reflect classroom-level realities, which aligns with the study’s focus on instructional practices and learning outcomes.

In terms of sex, the respondents were predominantly female (126; 84.0%), with male respondents accounting for only 24 (16.0%). This gender distribution reflects the broader pattern within early childhood education in Ghana, where the profession is largely female-dominated. The high proportion of female respondents enhances the representativeness of the sample and suggests that the findings are reflective of the typical gender composition of early childhood educators in the study context.

Analysis of age distribution shows that most respondents were within the economically active and professionally productive age range. Respondents aged 30–39 years formed the largest group (60; 40.0%), followed by those below 30 years (39; 26.0%) and 40–49 years (32; 21.3%). Only a smaller proportion were 50 years and above (19; 12.7%). This indicates that the majority of participants are relatively young to middle-aged professionals, suggesting a workforce that combines emerging educators with those who have accumulated moderate professional experience. Such an age composition is advantageous, as it captures perspectives from teachers who are likely to be adaptable to new pedagogical approaches while still benefiting from practical experience.

Regarding academic qualifications, most respondents held a Bachelor's degree (88; 58.7%), followed by those with a Diploma (41; 27.3%), while 21 respondents (14.0%) possessed a Master's degree. This distribution indicates that the majority of respondents meet the minimum professional qualification requirements for teaching at the early childhood level in Ghana. The presence of respondents with postgraduate qualifications further suggests that a segment of the sample possesses advanced pedagogical knowledge, which may influence instructional practices and leadership within schools. Finally, analysis of work experience reveals that respondents had varying levels of teaching experience. The largest group had 6–10 years of experience (52; 34.7%), followed by those with 1–5 years (39; 26.0%) and 11–15 years (36; 24.0%). A smaller

proportion had 16–20 years of experience (23; 15.3%). This indicates that most respondents have accumulated sufficient professional experience to provide informed insights into classroom practices, learner behaviour, and instructional challenges. The mix of early-career and experienced teachers enhances the depth of perspectives captured in the study.

Overall, the demographic profile suggests that the respondents are adequately qualified, professionally experienced, and representative of early childhood educators within the study context. This strengthens the credibility of the data and provides a solid foundation for interpreting subsequent findings related to instructional practices, pedagogical strategies, and learning outcomes.

4.2 Presentation of the main Data

Research Question 1: What are the leadership practices employed by the public early childhood head teachers in Effutu Municipality?

This section presents an analysis of the headteachers' leadership practices based on the five dimensions of Transformational Leadership. Table 4.4 summarizes the responses, highlighting the extent to which the headteachers exhibit transformational leadership traits in early childhood education settings.

Table 4.4: Leadership practiced by Early Childhood Headteachers

Leadership practices	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inspirational motivation	1	5	4.05	0.925
Intellectual stimulation	1	5	4.02	0.910
Idealised influence behaviour	1	5	3.92	0.986
Individualised consideration	1	5	3.86	1.001
Idealised influence attribute	1	5	3.83	0.978

Source: Field work, (2024).

In this study, the standard deviation was analyzed using the ± 3 standard deviations rule, a widely accepted benchmark for identifying extreme values in a normally distributed dataset (Field, 2013; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2014). According to the empirical rule, approximately 99.7% of data falls within three standard deviations of the mean, making any values beyond this range potential outliers or irregularities. This rule is commonly known as the Empirical Rule or the 68-95-99.7 Rule. It helps in understanding the spread and variability of data in a normal distribution, allowing for the identification of outliers and the assessment of probabilities related to different values within the dataset. This approach ensures data reliability and minimizes the influence of extreme values on the analysis. Montgomery (2017), in *Introduction to Statistical Quality Control*, applies the ± 3 standard deviations concept in quality control and hypothesis testing, emphasizing that data points beyond 3 standard deviations are typically unusual or outliers.

The analysis of headteachers' leadership practices, based on the Five I's of Transformational Leadership, reveals that Inspirational Motivation is the most predominantly used leadership dimension. This suggests that headteachers frequently articulate a clear vision, inspire teachers with enthusiasm, and encourage commitment towards achieving educational goals. Following Inspirational Motivation, the next most

commonly exhibited practice is Intellectual Stimulation, indicating that headteachers encourage teachers to think critically, explore innovative teaching methods, and continuously improve their professional skills. The third most frequently observed dimension is Idealized Influence (Behaviour), demonstrating that headteachers serve as role models through their actions and ethical leadership. This means they lead by example, fostering a sense of respect and trust among their staff.

Individualized Consideration ranks fourth, showing that while headteachers support teachers' individual growth and mentorship, this aspect of leadership is not as emphasized as the previous ones. This suggests the need for more personalized professional development opportunities for teachers. Lastly, Idealized Influence (Attributes) is the least used leadership dimension. This indicates that while some headteachers may possess charismatic leadership qualities, they may not always fully leverage their personal influence to shape the values and beliefs of their teachers.

To assess the consistency of these responses, the standard deviation was calculated. The results show that the standard deviation did not exceed 3, which suggests that there is a low level of variability in the participants' views regarding the dominance of transformational leadership. According to the empirical rule, a standard deviation within this range indicates that the majority of responses fall within 3 standard deviations of the mean, meaning that most of the respondents had similar perceptions of leadership practices.

This low variability indicates that transformational leadership is not only the most common practice but also the usual or expected leadership practices within this educational setting. The findings are consistent across the participant group, which includes both teachers and headteachers, further reinforcing the dominance of

transformational leadership in the Effutu Municipal educational context. The results suggest that while headteachers emphasize motivation and intellectual engagement, there is room for improvement in areas such as personalized teacher support and strengthening their personal influence as role models. These findings provide critical insights into how leadership practices can be enhanced to improve teacher professional practices and student outcomes.

Research Question 2: What is the nature of teacher professional practices in Effutu Municipality?

Table 4.5 presents an analysis of teachers' professional practices, focusing on three key areas: Assessment, Teaching and Learning, and Managing the Learning Environment. These aspects are essential in ensuring effective instruction and overall student success. Assessment examines how teachers evaluate student progress, provide feedback, and use assessment results to inform instructional decisions. Teaching and Learning focuses on the instructional strategies, engagement techniques, and pedagogical approaches used by teachers to facilitate learning. Managing the Learning Environment assesses how teachers create a conducive classroom atmosphere, maintain discipline, and ensure student engagement.

Table 4.5 summarizes the extent to which teachers effectively implement these practices, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement in early childhood education settings.

Table 4.5: The Nature of Teacher Professional Practices

Professional practices	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Assessment	3	5	4.30	0.574
Teaching and learning	3	5	4.28	0.569
Managing the learning environment	3	5	4.24	0.580

Source: Field work, (2024).

Table 4.5 indicate that Assessment was the most predominant professional practice among teachers, surpassing Teaching and Learning and Managing the Learning Environment. The ± 3 Standard Deviation Rule (also known as the Empirical Rule is applied. According to the Empirical Rule, in a normal distribution 68% of data falls within ± 1 standard deviation (σ) of the mean, 95% falls within $\pm 2\sigma$ and 99.7% falls within $\pm 3\sigma$. This rule helps to determine how significant a result is relative to the average performance. Since Assessment emerged as the most dominant professional practice, its values likely exceed the $+1\sigma$ or even $+2\sigma$ range, meaning that teachers demonstrated significantly higher consistency in assessment practices compared to the other two areas.

This statistical reasoning supports the conclusion that Assessment is not just slightly more common but significantly more emphasized, falling within a high percentile of observed professional behaviours. The high mean reflects a strong adherence to professional standards, indicating that the teachers in Effutu prioritize quality in their professional practices, this suggests strengths in areas such as assessment, teaching and learning, and effective management of learning environment. A standard deviation of 0.58 reflects low variability, meaning teachers' responses are relatively consistent. This consistency suggests shared influences, such as similar training programs, leadership

practices, or school policies. Transformational leaders persuade and motivate their staff to attain shared goals, creating a solid work environment. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2000), transformational leadership fosters a sense of shared purpose, which can result in uniform professional practices among teachers.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in Effutu Municipality?

The purpose of this research question was to examine the relationship between transformational leadership practices of the headteachers and the professional practices of the teachers. The Pearson correlation was used to analyse the data. The interpretation of the strength of the relationship was based on Kothari's (2005) suggestion that correlation coefficient less than 0.3 is weak; correlation coefficient of 0.3 but less than 0.5 is moderate; and correlation coefficient of 0.5 or greater is strong. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.6

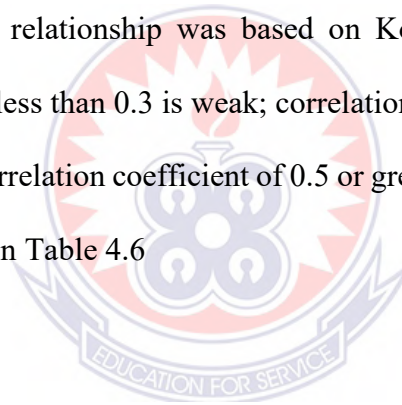


Table 4.6: Correlation Matrix between Headteachers' Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Professional Practices

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Transformational leadership	Pearson Correlation	1						
		Sig. (2-tailed)							
2.	Idealised influence attribute	Pearson Correlation	.934	1					
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000						
3.	Idealised influence behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.963	.887	1				
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000					
4.	Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.922	.814	.884	1			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000				
5.	Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.944	.843	.884	.868	1		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000			
6.	Individualised Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.908	.817	.839	.752	.824	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
7.	Teacher professional practices	Pearson Correlation	.740	.727	.726	.710	.714	.743	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.005	.005	.010	.008	.003	

n=150 Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed)

Source: Field work, (2024).

The results in Table 4.6 revealed that there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between transformational leadership of the headteachers and teachers' professional practices ($r=0.740$, $p < 0.05$, 2-tailed). Additionally, the researcher examined the relationship between the various transformational leadership indicators and professional practices of the teachers. For instance, the results showed that there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between idealised influence attribute and teachers' professional practices ($r=0.727$, $p < 0.05$, 2-

tailed). Also, there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between idealised influence behaviour and teachers' professional practices ($r=0.726$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed). Furthermore, the results showed that there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between inspirational motivation and teachers' professional practices ($r=0.710$, $p<0.10$, 2-tailed). There was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between idealised intellectual stimulation and teachers' professional practices ($r=0.714$, $p<0.08$, 2-tailed) there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between individualised consideration and teachers' professional practices ($r=0.743$, $p<0.03$, 2-tailed).

Research Question 4: To what extent does gender differentiate the leadership practices among headteachers in early childhood settings in Effutu Municipality?

The purpose of this research question was to examine the extent to which gender differentiate the leadership practices among head teachers in early childhood settings in Effutu Municipality. To analyse this research question, independent samples t-test was employed. The researcher examined the mean scores for both male and female head teachers as presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics on Transformational Leadership Practices

Leadership practices	Sex	Mean	Std. Deviation
Idealised influence attribute	Male	2.99	1.097
	Female	3.99	0.870
Idealised influence behaviour	Male	3.18	1.217
	Female	4.06	0.873
Inspirational motivation	Male	3.19	1.131
	Female	4.21	0.784
Intellectual stimulation	Male	3.36	0.909
	Female	4.14	0.858
Individualised Consideration	Male	3.32	1.138
	Female	3.96	0.944

Source: Field work, (2024).

From Table 4.7 the data show that females scored higher compared to males in their transformational leadership practices, suggesting that female headteachers are perceived as exhibiting more of transformational leadership styles than their male counterparts. To determine whether the differences were statistically significant, the independent samples t-test results are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Independent Samples T-test Results for Gender and Transformational Leadership Practices

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Idealised influence attribute	3.692	0.570	-4.962	148	0.000
Idealised influence behaviour	5.958	0.160	-4.220	148	0.000
Inspirational Motivation	5.081	0.260	-5.441	148	0.000
Intellectual Stimulation	1.502	0.222	-4.045	148	0.000
Individualised Consideration	0.729	0.395	-2.939	148	0.004

Source: Fieldwork Data (2024)

The researcher first examined the assumption of equality of variance using the Levene's test. The results revealed that the p-value of the Levene's test for each indicator of transformational leadership was greater than the alpha value of 0.05 used in this study, hence the researcher concluded that the assumption of equality of variance was fulfilled. This permitted the researcher to use the equal variances assumed row for the analysis rather than the equal variances not assumed row.

The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the practice of idealized influence attribute between the female ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.870$)

and male ($M=2.99$, $SD=1.097$) head teachers [$t(148)= -4.962$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed]. The results further showed that the female head teachers practiced idealized influence behaviour more than ($M=4.06$, $SD=0.873$) as compared to the male head teachers ($M=3.18$, $SD=1.217$); [$t(148)= -4.220$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed]. Furthermore, the results showed that female head teachers practiced inspirational motivation more than ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.784$) their male colleagues ($M=3.18$, $SD=1.131$); [$t(148)= -5.441$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed]. Likewise, the results indicated that the female teachers ranked higher in the practice of the intellectual stimulation ($M=4.14$, $SD=0.858$) than the male head teachers ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.909$); [$t(148)= -4.045$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed]. Finally, the results revealed that the female head teachers exhibited more individualized consideration ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.944$) than the male head teachers ($M=3.32$, $SD=1.138$); [$t(148)= -2.939$, $p<0.05$, 2-tailed].

4.4 Discussion of the Results

In examining the leadership practices of headteachers in early childhood education and the relationship they have on teachers' professional practices in Effutu Municipality, the study identified two prominent findings thus a widespread adoption of transformational leadership indicators and a notable representation of female headteachers among the respondents.

The majority of headteachers in the study exhibited comprehensive application of transformational leadership practices, including inspiring a shared vision, providing individualized support, idealized influence attribute, Idealized influence behavior and setting high intellectual stimulation. This aligns with findings from a study on transformational leadership in Ghanaian Colleges of Education, where Mensah, and Awuni (2015) which reported that principals generally demonstrated transformational

leadership traits, such leadership practices are associated with improved school functioning and quality education delivery through enhanced teacher commitment and motivation. Transformational leadership has been identified as a highly effective style in fostering positive outcomes in educational settings. The headteachers' consistent use of transformational leadership practices suggests their commitment to creating an environment that motivates and empowers teachers, ultimately benefiting the learners.

This analysis implies that the prevalent use of transformational leadership among headteachers highlights the importance of professional development programs that reinforce these practices. Training initiatives should focus on enhancing skills related to vision building, individualized support, and fostering innovation. Additionally, the observed gender distribution suggests a potential shift in the dynamics of educational leadership. Policymakers and educational stakeholders should investigate the underlying causes of this trend to promote equitable leadership opportunities and address any persisting gender disparities.

The study underscores the widespread adoption of transformational leadership practices among headteachers and a notable representation of female leaders in early childhood education within Ghana. These findings contribute to the understanding of leadership dynamics in the educational sector and provide a foundation for future research and policy development aimed at fostering effective and equitable leadership practices.

The high mean score obtained in this study suggests a strong adherence to professional standards among early childhood teachers in Effutu Municipal. This reflects their commitment to maintaining quality in their professional practices, which is essential for fostering positive educational outcomes. According to Owusu-Agyeman (2022), teachers' adherence to professional standards plays a crucial role in achieving effective

teaching and learning, as it ensures that their instructional practices meet established benchmarks of quality and professionalism. Moreover, this finding aligns with Mensah and Awuni's (2015) assertion that teachers who work under transformational leaders are more likely to exhibit a commitment to professional standards due to the supportive and motivating environment created by such leadership. Transformational leaders often set clear expectations and inspire their team members to exceed basic requirements, thereby fostering a culture of excellence in professional practice. The result also underscores the impact of continuous professional development (CPD) programs on teachers' ability to adhere to quality standards. Adamu (2020) noted that teachers who participate in CPD activities are better equipped to align their practices with current professional expectations, ultimately enhancing their ability to deliver high-quality education.

This strong adherence to professional standards among the teachers could also be influenced by the organizational culture and leadership style of the headteachers, which emphasize accountability and quality assurance. Research has shown that when leadership supports and reinforces the importance of professional standards, teachers are more likely to internalize these standards in their day-to-day practices (Owusu-Agyeman, 2022).

The finding implies the importance of promoting professional standards through targeted interventions such as CPD programs and leadership training for headteachers. Educational policymakers should prioritize initiatives that reinforce the adoption of professional standards to sustain the culture of quality among teachers.

The study also revealed a significant representation of female headteachers. This finding contrasts with earlier research indicating male dominance in headteacher

positions. For instance, a study assessing the contribution of female headteachers to academic performance in Northern Ghana found that only 16.8% of headteachers were female. The increased representation of female headteachers in this study may suggest progress toward gender equity in educational leadership appointments. However, it also underscores the need for continued efforts to promote gender balance in school leadership roles.

The study revealed a strong positive relationship between headteachers' transformational leadership practices and teachers' professional practices. This indicates that when headteachers effectively employ transformational leadership strategies such as inspiring a shared vision, providing individualized support, fostering collaboration, and encouraging innovation teachers are more likely to adhere to high professional standards and demonstrate commitment to their roles. According to Mensah and Awuni (2015), transformational leadership in educational settings enhances teacher motivation and promotes a culture of accountability and excellence.

This finding is consistent with the work of Owusu-Agyeman (2022), who found that transformational leadership not only improves teachers' performance but also influences their attitudes and behaviours, aligning them with the organization's goals. Headteachers who demonstrate empathy, provide constructive feedback, and support teachers' professional growth create an environment where teachers feel valued and are motivated to maintain high professional standards.

Furthermore, Adamu (2020) noted that in schools where transformational leadership is practiced, teachers are more likely to engage in collaborative practices, share best practices, and actively seek opportunities for continuous improvement. These behaviors

directly contribute to the enhancement of their professional practices, as they are driven by a shared vision and mutual commitment to quality education.

The strong relationship observed in this study can also be attributed to the emphasis on professional development fostered by transformational leaders. Transformational headteachers often prioritize the capacity-building of their teachers by encouraging participation in workshops, mentoring programs, and other professional learning activities. Such opportunities enable teachers to stay updated with best practices, which is critical for maintaining professional standards (Mensah & Awuni, 2015).

This implies that, the findings underscore the importance of transformational leadership in fostering teacher professionalism. Policymakers and educational stakeholders should consider incorporating transformational leadership training into leadership development programs for headteachers. Additionally, schools should prioritize creating a supportive environment that encourages the professional growth of teachers, driven by visionary and empathetic leadership.

The study found that female headteachers demonstrated a higher tendency to practice transformational leadership compared to their male counterparts. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that women in leadership roles often exhibit behaviors associated with transformational leadership, such as empathy, collaboration, and individualized support. According to Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), female leaders tend to adopt a transformational style more frequently because they are more likely to focus on nurturing relationships and fostering team cohesion.

This result is also consistent with the work of Adamu (2020), who highlighted that female headteachers in Northern Ghana were perceived as being more approachable,

supportive, and innovative in their leadership practices. These characteristics closely align with the core components of transformational leadership, which include inspiring a shared vision, providing individualized consideration, and encouraging professional development.

Owusu-Agyeman (2022) further supports this finding by arguing that transformational leadership traits are often linked to communal attributes, such as empathy and inclusiveness, which are more frequently associated with female leaders. In educational settings, these traits enable female headteachers to create supportive environments that enhance teacher motivation and professional growth, ultimately leading to improved school performance.

Additionally, the gendered differences in leadership practices may reflect broader societal expectations and cultural norms. In Ghana, female leaders may feel a greater need to demonstrate transformational behaviors to overcome traditional gender biases and prove their effectiveness as leaders. This aligns with the notion that female leaders often face higher performance expectations, prompting them to adopt leadership styles that emphasize collaboration and inclusivity (Eagly, 2007).

The findings highlight the need to recognize and leverage the strengths of female headteachers in educational leadership. Policymakers and educational stakeholders should encourage more women to take on leadership roles, given their strong transformational tendencies and positive impact on teacher performance and school outcomes. Furthermore, professional development programs for male headteachers could focus on fostering transformational leadership traits to balance leadership practices across genders.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, outlines the key findings, presents conclusions based on the results, and offers recommendations as well as suggestions for future research aimed at enhancing leadership practices in early childhood education.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between public early childhood headteachers leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in Effutu Municipality. Four questions were developed;

1. What dimensions of transformational leadership practice are adopted by early childhood headteachers in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality?
2. What is the nature of teacher professional practices in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality?
3. What is the relationship between leadership practices of headteachers and teachers' professional practices in public early childhood educational settings in Effutu Municipality?
4. What extent does sex differentiate the leadership practices among headteachers in public early childhood settings in Effutu Municipality?

This study employed a descriptive survey design. Data was gathered by use of questionnaires. The total sample size had 23 headteachers and 127 teachers giving a total of 150 respondents.

With varying educational levels, first degree being the majority, the majority of the respondents had been working for over 10 years in the schools studied. Female teacher and headteacher respondents outnumbered the male respondents, there was a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between transformational leadership of the headteachers and teachers' professional practices. The study revealed that headteachers are actually using all the indicators of transformational leadership practices. The study adopted the census technique to include all the teacher and head teacher in the Effutu Municipality. The study were analysed descriptively through frequency counts, means and standard deviations as well as inferential statistics using correlation and independent sample T-test.

5.2 Key Findings

The findings revealed that the headteachers demonstrated strong transformational leadership practices across four of the five dimensions and that there are no statistical significance relationship between transformational leadership of headteachers professional practices.

The findings show that although teaching, classroom management, and assessment were evident in teachers' practices, assessment was most dominant. This emphasis suggests an assessment-driven approach, where measuring learner progress outweighs innovative teaching methods and the creation of engaging learning environments.

The study revealed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between headteachers' transformational leadership practices and teachers' professional practices in the Effutu Municipality. Increased use of the Five I's was associated with improved assessment practices, more effective teaching and learning, and stronger classroom management among teachers.

The study revealed that, the presence of more female headteachers in early childhood education indicates strong female representation in leadership which influences leadership practices, and recognizing these differences can help tailor leadership development programs to enhance both male and female headteachers' effectiveness.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concludes that headteachers generally exhibit strong transformational leadership across most dimensions; however, these practices do not independently translate into statistically significant improvements in teachers' professional practices, suggesting the influence of additional contextual or organisational mediating factors.

The study concludes that teachers' professional practices are largely assessment-oriented, indicating a tendency to prioritise measuring learner progress over innovative instructional approaches and classroom environment management, which may limit the development of engaging, learner-centred teaching practices.

The study concludes that transformational leadership practices of headteachers significantly enhance teachers' professional practices, as higher application of the Five I's corresponds with improved teaching effectiveness, stronger classroom management, and more systematic assessment practices across schools.

The study concludes that female dominance in early childhood headship reflects strong gender representation in leadership, highlighting the need for leadership development programmes that recognise gender-related dynamics to strengthen leadership effectiveness among both male and female headteachers.

5.4 Recommendations

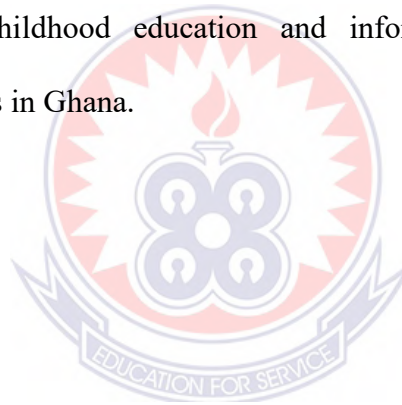
Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Given that transformational leadership did not independently predict teachers' professional practices, the Effutu Municipal Education Directorate should complement leadership training with school-level support systems, clear accountability structures, and instructional supervision mechanisms that translate leadership behaviours into improved classroom practices.
2. To address the dominance of assessment over teaching and classroom management, professional development programmes in the municipality should emphasise on a balanced instructional practice, integrating assessment with innovative teaching strategies and effective classroom environments that promote active, learner-centred engagement in early childhood classrooms.
3. In view of the significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' professional practices, headteachers in the Effutu Municipality should be supported to consistently apply the Five I's through targeted leadership coaching, mentoring, and continuous professional development initiatives to strengthen instructional quality and classroom effectiveness.
4. Considering the strong female representation in early childhood leadership, leadership development programmes should adopt gender-responsive approaches that recognise leadership strengths across genders while supporting male and female headteachers to enhance inclusive, effective leadership practices in early childhood education.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

Future studies should extend this research by examining leadership practices across multiple municipalities and regions in Ghana to enhance the generalisability of findings beyond the Effutu Municipality. Longitudinal studies are recommended to explore how leadership practices influence teachers' professional practices over time, rather than at

a single point. Further research could also investigate mediating and moderating variables, such as school culture, teacher motivation, instructional supervision, and resource availability, which may explain the inconsistent relationship between leadership practices and teacher performance. Qualitative case studies focusing on how headteachers enact transformational leadership in daily school routines would provide deeper contextual insights. Additionally, comparative studies between public and private early childhood centres could reveal structural differences in leadership effectiveness. Future research should also examine the impact of targeted leadership training programmes on headteachers' practices and subsequent teacher outcomes. Such studies would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics in early childhood education and inform evidence-based leadership development initiatives in Ghana.



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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire intends to collect information on transformational leadership behaviour and the influence it has on teachers' professional practices. The data collected will be used solely for the purpose of the study. Therefore, your objective responses to the questions will help in coming up with a good idea of the problem and possible recommendations to the issues raised in the study. All respondents are assured confidentiality of whatever information they provide.

Thank you.

SECTION A

Bio-Data

Please place a tick (✓) in the box or provide a short response as appropriate.

1. Sex: Male [] Female []

2. Age:

From 20 to less than 30 [] From 30 to less than 40 []

From 40 to less than 50 [] From 50 and above []

3. Academic Qualification:

Diploma [] Bachelor's Degree [] Masters []

4. How long have you been a teacher in this school?

1-5 years []

6-10 years []

11-15 years []

16-20 years []

SECTION B

On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = not at all, 2 = almost never, 3 = occasionally, 4 = most of the time, 5 = almost always), **rate how frequently you do the following in your school?**
(Please rate EVERY option according to the scale).

	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Teachers' perception about heads leadership activities					
1. My head teacher does things that make his/her teachers feel proud that he/she is the head teacher of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My head teacher shows a sense of great competence in his/her work in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My head teacher instils a sense of pride in teachers of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My head teacher makes personal sacrifices for the benefit of teachers in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My head teacher does things that make him/her win teachers' respect.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My head teacher talks about the importance of trusting each other.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My head teacher talks about the moral effects of decisions taken in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My head teacher talks about my most important values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. My head teacher expresses hope that goals will be achieved in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My head teacher makes his/her teachers assured that he/she can overcome obstacles.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My head teacher sets an example of hard work for his/her teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My head teacher talks positively about a better future for the school.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My head teacher encourages his/her teachers to attempt new ways of doing their work in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. My head teacher encourages his/her teachers to provide alternative solutions to problems in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
15. My head teacher encourages the teachers to question ideas and ways of doing things in the school.	1	2	3	4	5

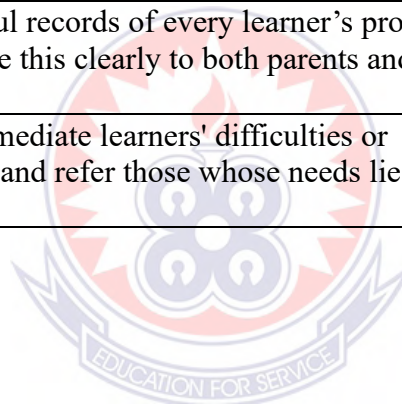
	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Teachers' perception about heads leadership activities					
16. My head teacher asks teachers for their ideas and suggestions when taking decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
17. My head teacher takes care of his/her teachers' individual needs and concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
18. My head teacher encourages his/her teachers to develop themselves to the best of their abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
19. My head teacher spends time coaching, mentoring or counselling his/her teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
20. My head teacher helps the teachers to develop their strengths above their weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5



SECTION C

	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Teachers' Professional Practices.					
1. I employ a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student participation and critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My lessons clearly achieve the intended learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I regularly engage in small-scale action research or reflective practices to improve my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I ensure that my classroom is a safe and supportive space for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I employ a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student participation and critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I pay special attention to all learners, particularly girls and students with Special Educational Needs, ensuring their progress.	1	2	3	4	5

	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Teachers' Professional Practices.					
7. I produce and use a variety of teaching and learning resources, including ICT, to enhance learning in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I set meaningful tasks that encourage learner collaboration and lead to purposeful learning.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I integrate a variety of assessment modes into my teaching to support learning.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I listen to learners and provide constructive feedback to guide their progress.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I keep meaningful records of every learner's progress and communicate this clearly to both parents and learners.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I identify and remediate learners' difficulties or misconceptions, and refer those whose needs lie outside my competency.	1	2	3	4	5



APPENDIX B

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire intends to collect information on transformational leadership behaviour and the influence it has on teachers' professional practices. The data collected will be used solely for the purpose of the study. Therefore, your objective responses to the questions will help in coming up with a good idea of the problem and possible recommendations to the issues raised in the study. All respondents are assured confidentiality of whatever information they provide.

Thank you.

SECTION A

Bio-Data

Please place a tick (✓) in the box or provide a short response as appropriate.

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Age: From 20 to less than 30 From 30 to less than 40
From 40 to less than 50 From 50 and above

3. Academic Qualification:

Diploma Bachelor's Degree Masters

4. How long have you been a head of this school?

1-5 years
6-10 years
11-15 years
16-20 years

SECTION B

	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
Heads leadership activities					
1. I do things that make my teachers feel proud that I am the head teacher of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I show a sense of great competence in my work in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I instil a sense of pride in teachers of my school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I make personal sacrifices for the benefit of my teachers in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I do things that make me win my teachers' respect.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I talk about the importance of trusting each other.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I talk about the moral effects of decisions taken in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I talk about my most important values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I express hope that, goals will be achieved in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I make my teachers assured that I can overcome obstacles.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I set an example of hard work for my teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I talk positively about a better future for the school.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I encourage my teachers to attempt new ways of doing their work in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I encourage my teachers to provide alternative solutions to problems in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I encourage my teachers to question ideas and ways of doing things in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I ask teachers for their ideas and suggestions when taking decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I take care of my teachers' individual needs and concerns.	1	2	3	4	5

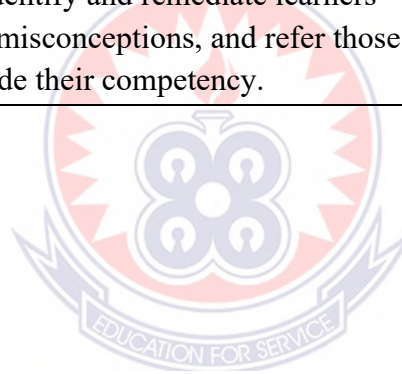
18. I encourage my teachers to develop themselves to the best of their abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I spend time coaching, mentoring or counselling my teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I help my teachers to develop their strengths above their weaknesses.	1	2	3	4	5

On a scale of 1 – 5 (1 = not at all, 2 = almost never, 3 = occasionally, 4 = most of the time, 5 = almost always), **rate how frequently you do the following in your school?**
(Please rate EVERY option according to the scale).

SECTION C

Head teachers' perception on teachers' Professional Practices.	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
1. My teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student participation and critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My teachers lesson clearly achieve the intended learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My teachers regularly engage in small-scale action research or reflective practices to improve my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My teachers ensure that their classrooms are safe and supportive space for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies that encourage student participation and critical thinking.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My teachers pay special attention to all learners, particularly girls and students with Special Educational Needs, ensuring their progress.	1	2	3	4	5
7. My teachers produce and use a variety of teaching and learning resources, including ICT, to enhance learning in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My teachers set meaningful tasks that encourage learner collaboration and lead to purposeful learning.	1	2	3	4	5

Head teachers' perception on teachers' Professional Practices.	Please CIRCLE a number to rate EVERY option				
	Not at all	Almost Never	Occasionally	Most of the Time	Almost Always
9. My teachers integrate a variety of assessment modes into their teaching to support learning.	1	2	3	4	5
10. My teachers listen to learners and provide constructive feedback to guide their progress.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My teachers keep meaningful records of every learner's progress and communicate this clearly to both parents and learners.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My teachers identify and remediate learners' difficulties or misconceptions, and refer those whose needs lie outside their competency.	1	2	3	4	5



APPENDIX C
LETTER FROM GES

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the number and
Date of this letter should be quoted



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE
POST OFFICE BOX 54.
WINNEBA
TEL: 03323 22075
Email: geseffutu@gmail.com

My Ref. NO: GES/CR/EMEOW/PILC.80/VOL.8/
Your Ref. No:

DATE: 19TH MARCH, 2025

**THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DEPT. OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION
WINNEBA**

✓ **THE HEADTEACHERS
CONCERNED SCHOOLS
WINNEBA**

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 12th February, 2025 seeking permission for a student to collect data in the municipality.

Permission has been granted to Ms. Helena Arthur Hughes, an M.Phil student at the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba to collect data from Public Basic Schools in the municipality.

Ms. Helena Arthur Hughes is writing her thesis on the topic: "*The Leadership Practices of Early Childhood Headteachers and the Relationships they have on Teachers Professional Practices in Effutu Municipality*".

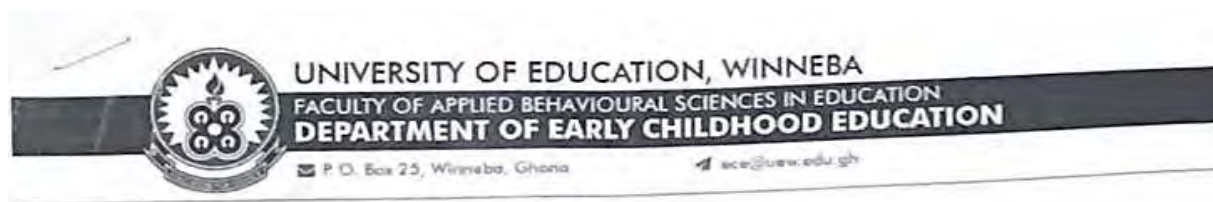
You are to ensure that the data collection would not disrupt teaching and learning in the schools.

Headteachers are to assist the student gather relevant data for her work while ensuring that she abides by the ethics of the teaching profession.

cc: All SISOs
Municipal Education Directorate
Winneba


DINAH ANDERSON (MS)
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
EFFUTU-WINNEBA
THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
EFFUTU-WINNEBA

APPENDIX D
LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



FABSE/DECE/I.I

12TH FEBRUARY, 2025

The Director
Ghana Education Service
P.O. Box 54
Winneba

Dear Sir/ Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I kindly write to introduce to you **Ms. Helena Arthur Hughes** with index number: **220020775** who is an M. Phil student at the Department of Early Childhood Education, University of Education, Winneba. She is in her final year and has to embark on her thesis on the topic: *"The Leadership Practices of Early Childhood Headteachers and the Relationships they have on Teachers Professional Practices in Effutu Municipal"*.

Ms. Helena Arthur Hughes is to collect data for her thesis, and I would be most grateful if she could be given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Subbey", is written over a circular stamp.

PROF. MICHAEL SUBBEY, (PhD.)
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

