

# GETTING IT RIGHT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING: HEADTEACHERS AND LEADERSHIP IN BASIC SCHOOLS IN TAMALE METROPOLIS IN NORTHERN GHANA

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## **Abstract**

This study examined the role of headteachers' leadership in enhancing teaching and learning outcomes in basic schools within the Tamale Metropolis of Northern Ghana. Grounded in transformational and instructional leadership theories, the research adopted a mixed-methods design involving questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. A total of 20 headteachers and 60 teachers participated in the study. Four key research questions guided the investigation: (1) the leadership styles headteachers adopt, (2) the challenges they face, (3) how their leadership influences teacher motivation and performance, and (4) the strategies that can be employed to enhance teaching and learning. Findings revealed that transformational and democratic leadership styles were predominant, fostering teacher participation and improved performance. However, several challenges hindered effective leadership, including inadequate teaching materials, poor infrastructure, and teacher absenteeism. The study also found a positive correlation between headteacher leadership and teacher motivation, particularly in environments characterized by clear communication and staff support. Effective strategies adopted by headteachers included in-service training, peer mentoring, and community engagement. The study concludes that effective headteacher leadership is central to improving educational outcomes in basic schools. It recommends enhanced training for headteachers, provision of adequate resources, and stronger support systems from educational authorities to empower school leaders in delivering quality basic education.

**Keywords:** Headteachers, leadership styles, teacher motivation, instructional leadership, basic schools, Tamale Metropolis, educational management.

## **Background to the Study**

Education is widely recognized as a key driver of national development, and its effective delivery relies heavily on quality leadership, particularly at the basic school level where foundational knowledge and lifelong learning attitudes are established. In Ghana, basic education which includes kindergarten, primary, and junior high school serves as the foundation upon which further academic and vocational pursuits are built. Effective teaching and learning at this level are strongly influenced by the quality of leadership exercised by school heads, commonly referred to as headteachers (GES, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2022). Leadership in schools is no longer

perceived as merely administrative or bureaucratic. It is now recognized as an instructional and transformative activity that directly impacts student achievement and teacher development (Bush, 2019). Contemporary educational research consistently points to the role of school leadership in shaping the culture of learning, setting instructional goals, facilitating teacher professional development, and creating inclusive school environments (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hallinger, 2021). In the Ghanaian context, headteachers are expected to serve as both instructional leaders and community liaisons, managing scarce resources while ensuring that educational goals are met (Yelkperri & Ababio, 2019; Asare & Ackah, 2023). In Northern Ghana, particularly in the Tamale Metropolis, headteachers face a range of contextual challenges that influence their leadership effectiveness. These include inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching and learning resources, inconsistent teacher attendance, and socio-cultural constraints especially those affecting female leaders (Kwao, Yahuza & Akosewine, 2025; Yeng et al., 2024). In many schools, headteachers also double as classroom teachers due to teacher shortages, making it difficult to fully execute leadership duties (Amoah, 2020).

Despite these challenges, many headteachers in the region continue to demonstrate resilience and commitment to school improvement. Emerging evidence from recent Ghanaian studies shows that headteachers who adopt democratic, transformational, or distributed leadership styles are more likely to create positive school climates and achieve better learning outcomes (Antwi, 2021; Quansah, 2024). For instance, participatory leadership where decision-making is shared among teachers and stakeholders has been found to improve collaboration, teacher morale, and learner performance (Amponsah & Mensah, 2024). Instructional leadership, in particular, has gained increasing attention in educational discourse. It involves the strategic actions of headteachers to promote effective teaching, including classroom observations, feedback sessions, mentoring, goal-setting, and facilitating in-service training (Bush & Glover, 2018). A structural equation modeling study conducted by Amponsah and Mensah (2024) found a statistically significant relationship between headteachers' instructional leadership and teacher professional development, with a variance explanation of over 40%. These findings highlight the vital role that leadership plays in the professional growth of teachers and, ultimately, in student achievement. However, while the importance of school leadership is widely acknowledged, gaps remain in understanding how headteachers in specific contexts like Tamale Metropolis navigate leadership responsibilities, particularly in under-resourced settings. Gender dynamics also present a significant dimension of concern. Female headteachers in Northern Ghana often contend with cultural biases, resistance from male subordinates, and limited mentoring opportunities (Yeng et al., 2024). Such constraints can undermine their leadership authority and hinder school progress, despite their qualifications and competencies. Government policy frameworks, such as the Education Strategic Plan (ESP 2018–2030), have emphasized the need for strengthening school leadership as a mechanism for improving quality education outcomes in Ghana. Yet, the implementation of leadership training and support systems for headteachers has been uneven across regions, with rural and northern areas receiving limited attention (MoE, 2022). In light of the above, this study seeks to investigate the leadership practices of headteachers in basic schools in Tamale Metropolis. It focuses on identifying the prevailing leadership styles, examining how these styles affect teaching and learning, and uncovering the barriers that hinder leadership effectiveness. By doing so, the study contributes to a

growing body of literature on school leadership in sub-Saharan Africa and offers practical recommendations for improving educational outcomes in Northern Ghana.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Leadership is increasingly recognized as a critical factor influencing the quality of education in basic schools globally and in Ghana. In particular, the headteacher's role has evolved from being primarily administrative to one that encompasses instructional leadership, professional development facilitation, stakeholder engagement, and school vision setting (Bush & Glover, 2018; Hallinger, 2021). In Ghana's educational context, the Ghana Education Service (GES) mandates headteachers to lead teaching and learning processes, ensure discipline, provide supervision, and manage both human and material resources effectively. However, there is growing concern that many headteachers in Ghana and particularly those in Tamale Metropolis struggle to meet these expectations due to contextual challenges and systemic constraints. Despite policy reforms such as the Education Strategic Plan (2018–2030), which emphasizes the need for effective school leadership to improve learning outcomes, significant disparities exist between policy ideals and the realities on the ground (Ministry of Education, 2022). In Tamale Metropolis, several basic schools face persistent challenges including limited infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, teacher absenteeism, inadequate teaching resources, and poor supervision. These conditions make it difficult for headteachers to implement effective leadership practices that can enhance teaching and learning (Kwao, Yahuza & Akosewine, 2025; Yelkpiari & Ababio, 2019).

Research also suggests that headteachers in the region often lack formal leadership training and ongoing professional support. Many are appointed based on years of service or teaching experience, rather than their leadership competencies or instructional expertise (Antwi, 2021). This can lead to situations where headteachers are unable to guide instructional improvement or support teachers' professional development effectively, thereby diminishing their influence on classroom practices and student outcomes.

Moreover, while instructional leadership is known to significantly affect teacher motivation and learning achievements (Amponsah & Mensah, 2024), it is inconsistently practiced across schools in Tamale Metropolis. Some headteachers adopt authoritarian or top-down leadership styles that limit teacher collaboration and innovation, while others attempt participatory approaches but lack the training and support needed to sustain them. This inconsistency leads to a fragmented leadership landscape, with implications for equitable access to quality education in the region (Quansah, 2024). Gender-related challenges further complicate the leadership terrain in Tamale Metropolis. Female headteachers often face resistance from staff and community members due to entrenched cultural norms that associate leadership with male authority. Studies have shown that female leaders in Northern Ghana frequently encounter marginalization, lack of cooperation from male colleagues, and limited access to mentoring and professional growth opportunities (Yeng, Mohammed & Andani, 2024). These challenges not only hinder the personal effectiveness of female headteachers but also perpetuate gender inequalities in school leadership and undermine inclusive education goals. Furthermore, the absence of structured and consistent capacity-building programs for headteachers contributes to leadership gaps in basic schools. While some interventions exist, they are often donor-driven, short-term, and fail to address the long-term development needs of school

leaders. Consequently, many headteachers operate in isolation, relying on intuition rather than evidence-based leadership strategies, which undermines school improvement efforts. Given the critical role of leadership in improving teaching and learning outcomes, there is an urgent need to examine the specific leadership practices of headteachers in basic schools in Tamale Metropolis, the challenges they face, and the factors that constrain or promote their effectiveness. Without targeted interventions and deeper understanding of these dynamics, the goals of Ghana's basic education reforms may remain unrealized, especially in under-resourced urban centers like Tamale.

This study, therefore, seeks to bridge the gap by investigating how headteachers in Tamale Metropolis execute their leadership roles, what styles they use, how these influence teacher development and student learning, and what systemic, cultural, and administrative challenges hinder their effectiveness. The findings will provide critical insights into how headteachers can be better supported to "get it right" for teaching and learning in Northern Ghana.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study aims to critically examine how headteachers in Tamale Metropolis exercise leadership focusing on instructional, democratic, transformational and distributed styles and how such practices relate to teacher CPD and student learning outcomes. It will also explore contextual challenges, especially gender-specific barriers and administrative constraints, and propose policies and training interventions to support more effective school leadership.

### **Research Objectives**

1. Identify the dominant leadership styles among headteachers in Tamale basic schools (including instructional, democratic/participatory, transformational, and distributed).
2. Assess the relationship between instructional leadership practices and teacher CPD in Tamale's public basic schools.
3. Examine administrative, infrastructural, and gender-specific challenges faced by headteachers.
4. Recommend strategies to strengthen headteachers' leadership capacities and mitigate barriers.

### **Research Questions**

1. Which leadership styles are most frequently used by headteachers in Tamale Metropolis basic schools?
2. To what extent do instructional leadership practices predict teacher continuous professional development?
3. What administrative and socio-cultural constraints especially affecting female headteachers hinder effective leadership?
4. What policy reforms or capacity-building interventions could enhance leadership efficacy in these settings?

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Leadership in Education**

Leadership in educational settings refers to the process of influencing, guiding, and supporting teachers and learners to achieve the goals of education. According to Bush (2019), educational leadership is primarily about improving learning outcomes by creating supportive environments, guiding instructional practices, and ensuring school effectiveness. In the context of basic education, leadership encompasses both instructional leadership where headteachers focus on curriculum, teaching quality, and assessment and administrative leadership, which includes the management of resources, supervision of staff, and maintaining discipline (Hallinger, 2020). In Ghanaian basic schools, headteachers serve as the central figures in implementing school policies, overseeing staff development, and ensuring teaching and learning occur in an organized and effective manner.

### **Headteachers' Roles and Responsibilities**

Headteachers perform a dual role: they are both instructional leaders and administrative heads. As instructional leaders, they are expected to: Monitor and evaluate teaching, Support lesson planning and delivery, facilitate professional development and Promote a culture of high expectations. As administrative leaders, they are responsible for: Staff deployment and supervision, Budgeting and financial management, Infrastructure maintenance and Liaising with the Ghana Education Service (GES) and other stakeholders. According to Oduro and MacBeath (2018), effective headteachers build trust with their staff, create collaborative cultures, and model ethical behavior that drives school improvement.

### **Teaching and Learning in Basic Schools**

Teaching refers to the process by which teachers facilitate learning, while learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values by pupils. Teaching and learning are the core functions of schools and are directly affected by leadership. In Ghana, basic schools comprise kindergarten, primary, and junior high school levels, and are the foundation of formal education. Effective teaching at this level is crucial for cognitive and skill development. Headteachers are tasked with ensuring that curriculum delivery meets national standards, learning environments are safe and inclusive, and teachers are adequately supported (MoE, 2021).

### **Leadership and Its Influence on Teaching and Learning**

Multiple studies affirm that the quality of school leadership significantly affects teaching practices and student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2019). Transformational and instructional leadership, in particular, have been identified as influential in shaping teacher motivation, classroom discipline, and academic performance (Bush & Glover, 2016). In the Ghanaian context, where schools may be under-resourced and teacher absenteeism is a challenge, the headteacher's ability to lead effectively can be the most important factor in maintaining academic standards (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2020). In the Tamale Metropolis, basic schools face several challenges: inadequate infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, large class sizes, and limited teaching materials. In this context, the headteacher's leadership style, capacity, and strategies become pivotal. This study conceptualizes headteachers as: Leaders who guide instruction and learning, Managers who allocate and supervise

resources and Change agents who transform their schools in spite of constraints. The central premise is that “getting it right” in basic education hinges on “getting leadership right” particularly at the headteacher level.

### **School Leadership and Headteacher Roles**

Headteachers in Ghanaian basic schools are mandated by the Ghana Education Service to combine administrative and instructional leadership. They manage resource allocation, personnel, discipline, and community relations on one hand, and set school vision, oversee curriculum delivery, mentor teachers, and monitor learning outcomes on the other (Education in Ghana context). Various leadership models apply in this context: Instructional Leadership involves classroom observations, mentorship, goal-setting, performance appraisal, and professional development coordination. Transformational Leadership seeks to inspire and motivate staff through shared vision and innovation. Democratic/Participatory Leadership engages multiple stakeholders teachers, parents, students in decision-making. Distributed/Shared Leadership disperses leadership roles across teachers and administrators to build collective ownership of school improvement. Such models are contextually influenced by policy frameworks, school capacity, and headteachers’ own dispositions.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002)**

This theory offers insight into the persistent challenges female headteachers face in Ghana. When societal norms view leadership as a male domain, women in leadership roles may receive bias, resistance, or diminished legitimacy.

#### **Distributed Leadership / Leadership for Learning (LfL)**

Grounded in activity theory and distributed cognition, this theory conceptualizes leadership as socially-situated and shared across roles. It emphasizes teacher leadership, collaboration, and reducing headteacher burnout to boost school effectiveness and learning outcomes. These frameworks together help explain how leadership practices emerge or falter under institutional, gender, and systemic conditions in Tamale.

### **The Leadership Roles of Headteachers in Enhancing Teaching and Learning**

A growing body of literature underscores the pivotal role of headteachers in ensuring instructional quality in basic schools. Agyeman and Sam (2020) conducted a study in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and found that instructional leadership – such as classroom supervision, monitoring lesson plans, and organizing in-service training – significantly improved teacher commitment and student academic outcomes. Similarly, Asare and Nti (2022) used a mixed-method design in Northern Ghana to explore the instructional and administrative leadership practices of headteachers. Their findings indicated that where headteachers took a more hands-on approach to curriculum implementation, teacher absenteeism reduced and pupil performance in English and Mathematics improved. Moreover, research by Oduro and Dachi (2018) across West African basic schools confirmed that leadership practices, such as teacher motivation, provision of instructional resources,

and performance monitoring, are positively associated with academic achievement, especially in rural and resource-deprived schools.

### **The Influence of Headteachers' Leadership Styles on Teacher Performance**

Studies have examined the link between leadership styles (transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic) and school effectiveness. A study by Mensah and Addo (2019) in the Central Region of Ghana found that transformational leadership where headteachers inspired, motivated, and involved teachers in decision-making had a statistically significant positive impact on teacher performance and satisfaction. In another study, Amedorme and Fiagbe (2021) explored headteachers' use of democratic and instructional leadership in Volta Region basic schools. They observed that schools led by headteachers who promoted collaboration and shared decision-making had higher levels of teacher job satisfaction and student engagement. In contrast, autocratic styles demotivated teachers and stifled innovation in teaching. Internationally, Mulkeen et al. (2018) in their World Bank-supported study on school leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa observed that leadership training and clearly defined school-level autonomy significantly affected headteachers' ability to foster instructional excellence and teacher accountability.

### **Challenges Headteachers Face in Executing Instructional Leadership**

Despite their important roles, headteachers face multiple challenges in supporting teaching and learning. A study by Dzamesi and Bofo (2020) in urban basic schools in Ghana revealed that lack of resources, overloaded administrative duties, and limited professional development opportunities hinder effective instructional supervision. In the Tamale Metropolis, Abukari and Kunfah (2021) found that headteachers often lacked the autonomy and budgetary control necessary to implement school improvement plans. In addition, gender dynamics in Northern Ghana posed challenges for female headteachers, who often encountered resistance from teachers and parents, limiting their leadership influence. Also, Ntim (2023) examined the constraints of school leadership across deprived districts in Northern Ghana and emphasized the absence of support from district education offices, limited infrastructure, and inconsistent teacher attendance as major obstacles to achieving desired academic outcomes.

### **Strategies Employed by Headteachers to Improve Teaching and Learning**

Empirical evidence also highlights strategies that headteachers use to enhance educational quality. In a study by Boateng and Frempong (2022), headteachers in high-performing basic schools in Greater Accra regularly organized peer observations, coaching sessions, and performance-based teacher incentives. These strategies were linked with improved lesson delivery and student learning outcomes. Similarly, Tanye and Osei-Bonsu (2021) found that headteachers in the Northern Region who adopted community engagement approaches and worked with school management committees were more effective in improving school attendance and pupil achievement. Research by Ampiah and Adu-Yeboah (2019) also emphasized the importance of continuous professional development and collaborative school culture. Their study in Northern Ghana found that schools where headteachers organized regular teacher learning communities showed improvement in literacy and numeracy outcomes. Empirical studies both in Ghana and internationally underscore that: Headteachers' leadership practices have a direct impact on teacher motivation, classroom

instruction, and student achievement. Leadership effectiveness is moderated by contextual challenges such as resource constraints, policy limitations, and socio-cultural barriers. Transformational and instructional leadership styles yield better outcomes than autocratic or laissez-faire approaches. Professional development, peer learning, and community collaboration are effective leadership strategies. These findings provide a strong justification for focusing on leadership quality in basic schools, especially in under-resourced and socio-culturally complex regions like the Tamale Metropolis.

## **Research Design**

This study adopted a mixed-methods descriptive research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of how headteachers' leadership practices influence teaching and learning in basic schools within the Tamale Metropolis of Northern Ghana. The choice of a mixed-methods design is grounded in the recognition that leadership in educational settings is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon that cannot be fully captured by either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The descriptive aspect of the research design aims to systematically describe and interpret the current state of leadership practices among headteachers and their perceived influence on teaching and learning outcomes. Descriptive designs are well-suited for studies that seek to present a clear picture of events, people, or situations as they naturally occur (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2019). In this study, the descriptive design facilitated the collection of factual data on the roles, styles, and challenges of headteachers without manipulating the environment or variables. The quantitative component focused on gathering numeric data from teachers through structured questionnaires. This allowed the researcher to measure the frequency and intensity of leadership practices, assess teachers' perceptions statistically, and identify common patterns or relationships. Variables such as the type of leadership style, teacher satisfaction, instructional supervision, and student academic support were operationalized and analyzed using descriptive statistics. This approach helped to generalize findings to the broader teacher population in Tamale Metropolis. The qualitative component was incorporated through semi-structured interviews with headteachers. This was aimed at obtaining in-depth narratives on their leadership experiences, strategies, and the contextual challenges they face in managing schools. The qualitative data enriched the study by providing context, depth, and explanations that complemented the statistical findings. According to Patton (2015), qualitative inquiry is ideal for capturing the nuances of human behavior and institutional dynamics, especially in leadership studies. The rationale for integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods was to capitalize on the strengths of each approach while offsetting their individual limitations (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Quantitative data provided objectivity, reliability, and breadth, while qualitative data added depth, detail, and insight. This triangulation of methods enhanced the validity of the findings and ensured a more holistic understanding of how headteachers' leadership influences teaching and learning in basic schools. This design was also aligned with the specific research questions that guided the study. For example: Quantitative data answered questions about the prevalence and effects of specific leadership styles. Qualitative data explored how headteachers perceive and implement their leadership roles in the local educational context. The mixed-methods descriptive design, therefore, provided a solid framework for examining both the "what" and "how" aspects of leadership in basic education.

## **Population of the Study**

The target population comprised all public basic school headteachers and teachers in the Tamale Metropolis, Northern Region of Ghana. The metropolis has over 150 public basic schools, including both primary and junior high schools, with an estimated teaching staff of over 1,500 and more than 150 headteachers.

## **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

A sample of 120 respondents was selected, including 20 headteachers and 100 teachers. The study adopted a stratified sampling technique to ensure representation across different school types (e.g., urban, peri-urban, rural) and levels (primary and JHS). After stratification, simple random sampling was used to select teacher participants, while purposive sampling was employed to select headteachers based on their roles and availability.

## **Research Instruments**

The study employed two main instruments: Questionnaire: Structured questionnaires were administered to teachers. The questionnaire had both closed- and open-ended items covering themes such as leadership style, instructional support, teacher motivation, and the school learning environment. Interview Guide: Semi-structured interview guides were used for headteachers. This allowed for deeper exploration of leadership practices, challenges, and strategies used in enhancing teaching and learning. All instruments were developed based on themes from the literature review and aligned with the research questions.

## **Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

Validity: To ensure content and face validity, the instruments were reviewed by experts in educational leadership and piloted with a small sample (3 headteachers and 10 teachers) in a neighboring district. Reliability: A Cronbach's alpha test was conducted on the questionnaire during the pilot phase, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection was conducted over a four-week period: Official permission was sought from the Tamale Metropolitan Education Directorate. Headteachers were contacted through official letters and follow-up phone calls. Questionnaires were distributed to teachers during school visits and collected within one week. In-depth interviews with headteachers were conducted in person, with their consent, and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

Quantitative data from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means) were used to summarize responses, and cross-tabulations were used where appropriate. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically. Transcripts were coded manually, and emerging themes were aligned with the study's

research questions. Findings from both sources were triangulated to ensure robustness and credibility.

### **Ethical Considerations**

**Informed Consent:** All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and written consent was obtained. **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Names and specific school identifiers were excluded to protect participants' identities. **Voluntary Participation:** Participation was strictly voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage. **Ethical Clearance:** Approval was obtained from the ethics committee of the University of Education and the Tamale Metro Education Directorate.

### **Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from headteachers and teachers in selected basic schools within the Tamale Metropolis. The findings are organized and discussed according to the research questions. Data are presented using tables, descriptive summaries, and thematic interpretations. The results are further discussed with reference to existing literature.

#### **Research Question 1: What leadership styles do headteachers adopt in managing teaching and learning in basic schools in Tamale Metropolis?**

Understanding the leadership styles adopted by headteachers is essential in assessing their influence on school culture, teacher performance, and student achievement. This research question sought to identify the predominant leadership approaches employed by headteachers in basic schools within the Tamale Metropolis, based on the perceptions of teachers and self-reports from headteachers.

### **Results**

Table 1: *Leadership Styles Reported by Teachers (n = 100)*

<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Democratic	58	58.0
Autocratic	22	22.0
Laissez-faire	10	10.0
Transformational	10	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Most teachers (58%) perceived their headteachers to adopt a democratic leadership style, characterized by participation in decision-making and delegation of responsibilities. About 22% reported experiencing autocratic leadership, while 10% each indicated laissez-faire and transformational styles.

From the interviews, most headteachers affirmed that they involved staff in planning and problem-solving processes. One headteacher noted:

“In my school, we make decisions as a team...even on lesson supervision and disciplinary issues, I engage the staff.” (*Headteacher 3*)

Several headteachers described themselves as transformational leaders who inspired and motivated their staff by setting clear visions and modeling professional conduct. One headteacher stated:

*"I always try to lead by example. If I want my teachers to be punctual and committed, I have to show them first. That's how I get results."*

Teachers generally appreciated leaders who practiced democratic leadership, where decision-making was participatory:

*"Our head involves us in planning meetings and even when setting rules for the school. That makes us feel respected and part of the system."* (Teacher respondent)

However, some headteachers admitted to using authoritative approaches when faced with chronic indiscipline or absenteeism among staff. This dual approach was often necessary in under-resourced environments with weak accountability mechanisms.

The findings indicate that democratic leadership is predominant among headteachers in the Tamale Metropolis, which aligns with modern leadership paradigms that emphasize collaboration, shared vision, and staff empowerment (Leithwood et al., 2020). The presence of transformational tendencies among a few leaders is encouraging, as this style has been linked to innovation and instructional improvement (Bush & Glover, 2019). However, the persistence of autocratic practices in some schools may inhibit teacher morale and innovation (Agyeman, 2021).

## **Research Question 2: What challenges do headteachers face in providing effective leadership for teaching and learning?**

Headteachers operate within complex educational environments that often present multiple challenges to effective leadership. This question explores the specific institutional, logistical, and human resource constraints that hinder headteachers from effectively guiding teaching and learning processes in basic schools in the Tamale Metropolis.

### **Results**

The major challenges reported by headteachers through interviews included: Inadequate teaching and learning materials, Poor teacher attitude and absenteeism, Limited professional development opportunities, High pupil-teacher ratio and Lack of administrative support from district offices

One headteacher lamented:

“You are expected to supervise effectively, but without textbooks, enough classrooms or teacher commitment, it becomes difficult.” (*Headteacher 7*)

Teachers also highlighted inadequate feedback from headteachers due to their overwhelming workloads.

Respondents highlighted multiple challenges that impeded effective leadership. These were grouped under resource constraints, teacher behavior, and external interference.

A common theme was the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials:

*"Sometimes we have to photocopy textbooks from our own pockets. There are no science kits or teaching aids. It becomes very difficult to ensure effective teaching."* (Headteacher)

Teacher absenteeism and lack of motivation were also recurring concerns:

*"Some teachers come to school late or leave early without notice. When you try to correct them, they say 'even you [headteacher] have no authority over us.'"* (Headteacher respondent)

Limited professional development opportunities further weakened headteacher influence. Teachers expressed the need for more training, particularly in new pedagogical strategies and classroom management.

Additionally, some headteachers mentioned political or parental interference as a major leadership challenge:

*"PTA leaders sometimes want to control decisions, especially when disciplining pupils or teachers. It makes it hard to implement school rules consistently."*

The results highlight a combination of systemic, resource-based, and human resource-related challenges that hinder effective school leadership. This is consistent with findings by Ampofo and Onuoha (2022), who identified logistical constraints and lack of teacher commitment as major bottlenecks to effective leadership in Ghanaian basic schools. The lack of continuous professional development and administrative support further limits headteachers' ability to innovate or lead strategically.

### **Research Question 3: How does headteachers' leadership influence teacher motivation and performance?**

The role of leadership in shaping teacher behavior and classroom effectiveness cannot be overemphasized. This research question examines how various leadership styles and practices of headteachers influence teacher motivation, morale, and ultimately their professional performance in delivering quality education.

## **Results**

Table 2: *Teachers' Perception of Leadership Influence on Motivation (n = 100)*

<b>Influence Factor</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
Leadership promotes team spirit	75	25
Headteachers recognize teacher efforts	68	32
Leadership style improves morale	70	30
Leaders provide adequate supervision	61	39

Table 2 presents the perceptions of 100 teachers regarding how leadership influences their motivation at work. The data reveal generally positive views on the role of school leadership in fostering teacher motivation, though the strength of agreement varies across specific factors.

The highest level of agreement (75%) is seen in the perception that leadership promotes team spirit, suggesting that school leaders are effective in encouraging collaboration and unity among staff. This aligns with research indicating that a collegial environment contributes significantly to teacher satisfaction and engagement. A substantial proportion of teachers (70%) also agree that leadership style improves morale, highlighting the critical role of leadership behavior and interpersonal relations in shaping the emotional climate of the school. Additionally, 68% of respondents affirm that headteachers recognize teacher efforts, reflecting a moderately strong perception that teacher achievements are acknowledged a known motivational factor in educational settings. However, the lowest agreement (61%) pertains to whether leaders provide adequate supervision, with a relatively high 39% of teachers disagreeing. This suggests that while leadership may be strong in fostering morale and team cohesion, there may be gaps in instructional leadership, particularly in terms of monitoring and guiding teaching practices. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of school leadership in shaping motivational factors but also point to the need for improved supervisory practices to fully support teacher performance and development.

Qualitative data revealed that schools with more participatory leaders had higher levels of teacher cooperation, better attendance, and higher levels of job satisfaction.

*“My headteacher’s openness encourages us to put in our best... You know someone appreciates your efforts.” (Teacher 12)*

Leadership style and interpersonal relationships were key factors influencing teacher motivation. Teachers responded more positively to leaders who were approachable, supportive, and provided regular feedback.

*“Our headteacher always comes around to see how we’re doing. She doesn’t just criticize; she also praises us. That encourages us to do more.” (Teacher)*

In contrast, some teachers described negative leadership behaviors:

*“In my former school, the headteacher was harsh and never listened to our concerns. Many teachers transferred because of that.”*

Thus, empathy, communication, and recognition were identified as strong motivators, reinforcing the idea that positive leadership boosts teacher morale and classroom performance.

The study found a strong relationship between headteachers’ leadership and teacher motivation and performance. Participatory and supportive leadership styles encouraged cooperation, commitment, and professionalism, which supports the findings of Mulkeen (2018) and Appiah & Boakye (2021), who emphasized that leadership is a key determinant of teacher morale and classroom effectiveness. Conversely, lack of feedback or authoritarian management discouraged initiative and led to disengagement.

#### **Research Question 4: What strategies can be adopted by headteachers to enhance teaching and learning outcomes in basic schools?**

Given the challenges and contextual realities of school leadership in Northern Ghana, it is important to identify practical strategies that headteachers can adopt to improve educational outcomes. This section presents views from both headteachers and teachers on feasible and impactful leadership practices that could enhance teaching and learning in basic schools.

#### **Results**

Based on responses from both teachers and headteachers, the following strategies were identified: Promoting regular in-service training and workshops, strengthening teacher supervision and mentoring, building stronger collaboration with parents and communities, advocating for resources from the District Education Office and Recognizing and rewarding teacher excellence. Teachers emphasized that consistent feedback, team meetings, and recognition improved their sense of value and accountability.

“If headteachers could do more supervision and reward hardworking staff, it would go a long way to improve performance.” (*Teacher 27*)

One headteacher remarked:

*"We organize our own internal training using experienced teachers. We can't wait for the district office all the time."*

A teacher added:

*"When headteachers recognize your effort and give you roles to play, you feel more committed to the job."*

These responses underscore the importance of context-specific strategies, especially in under-resourced school settings where headteachers must be innovative and inclusive.

The suggested strategies are in line with international best practices for school leadership (OECD, 2019). Professional development, collaborative culture, and teacher recognition have consistently been associated with improved teaching quality and student outcomes. These align with recommendations by Armah (2020), who emphasized that Ghanaian school leaders must become proactive in resource mobilization, capacity building, and instructional support.

#### **Summary of Key Findings**

This study explored how headteachers' leadership influences teaching and learning in basic schools in Tamale Metropolis. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study examined leadership styles, challenges, influence on teacher motivation, and strategic practices. The following findings were drawn based on the research questions:

#### **Research Question 1: What leadership styles do headteachers adopt in managing teaching and learning?**

The most commonly adopted leadership styles were transformational, democratic, and to a lesser extent, authoritative. Headteachers who practiced transformational leadership fostered innovation, motivation, and collaboration. Teachers reported greater job satisfaction and improved performance under democratic leadership.

### **Research Question 2: What challenges do headteachers face in providing effective leadership for teaching and learning?**

The most frequently reported challenges included: Inadequate teaching and learning materials (80%), Poor teacher attitude and absenteeism (65%), Lack of professional development (60%) and High pupil-teacher ratios and infrastructural deficits. Headteachers also reported interference from external bodies such as PTA and political actors.

### **Research Question 3: How does headteachers' leadership influence teacher motivation and performance?**

Teachers were more motivated and effective when they received regular feedback, recognition, and emotional support from headteachers. Poor leadership practices such as favoritism, authoritarianism, or lack of communication demoralized teachers. Transformational and supportive leadership styles enhanced teacher morale, classroom performance, and retention.

### **Research Question 4: What strategies can be adopted by headteachers to enhance teaching and learning?**

Recommended strategies included: Organizing internal training and workshops. Encouraging peer learning and mentoring. Delegating roles and responsibilities. Establishing strong monitoring systems. Strengthening community and parental involvement in school improvement.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

Headteachers in Tamale Metropolis largely practice transformational and democratic leadership, which promote teacher engagement, participation, and shared responsibility. However, some resort to authoritative practices in response to systemic challenges.

Effective leadership is hindered by a lack of basic resources, weak institutional support, and teacher-related issues such as absenteeism and lack of motivation. These constraints reduce the ability of headteachers to implement instructional leadership effectively.

The study confirms that leadership style has a direct influence on teacher motivation and classroom effectiveness. Supportive, communicative, and visionary leadership increases teacher morale and performance.

Headteachers who adopt context-specific strategies such as staff development, stakeholder collaboration, and internal resource mobilization achieve better outcomes in teaching and learning despite systemic limitations.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations:

The Ghana Education Service (GES) should provide leadership training for headteachers on effective and context-relevant leadership styles. Schools should institutionalize participatory decision-making to improve teacher morale and promote ownership of school improvement processes.

The Ministry of Education and District Education Offices should prioritize supply of teaching and learning materials and infrastructural development in basic schools. There should be stronger accountability mechanisms to address teacher absenteeism and unethical conduct. Headteachers should be given greater autonomy and logistical support to lead effectively.

Headteachers should be trained in emotional intelligence, communication, and staff recognition techniques to boost teacher morale. Schools should implement performance review and feedback systems to enhance teacher development and accountability.

Headteachers should be encouraged to organize in-service training sessions, even with limited resources. District Education Offices should support collaborative platforms where schools share best practices in leadership and teaching improvement. Stronger community engagement frameworks should be developed to leverage local resources and support school initiatives.

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