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PRINCIPAL PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: A LOOK AT KOMENDA

EDINA EGUAFO ABRIEM (KEEA) DISTRICT IN THE CENTRAL REGION

by

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A dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
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May 2021

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ABSTRACT

PRINCIPAL PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT IN GHANA: A LOOK AT KOMENDA

EDINA EGUAFO ABRIEM (KEEA) DISTRICT IN THE CENTRAL REGION

Eunice A. Turkson

Old Dominion University, 2021

Director: Dr. William Owings

There is no doubt that principals' roles are important in setting the direction for successful schools, however, current knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified and effective school leaders is sparse (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Mendels, 2012). As such, the recognition of the importance of school leaders in teaching and learning coupled with a growing shortage of high-quality leaders in American schools, increased the interest in leadership development as a major reform strategy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The investment of tremendous amount of time and resources on school leadership therefore help them to be successful on the job (Mendels, 2012). This mixed methods study is a look at principal leadership pipeline development in Komenda Edina Eguafu Abriem (KEEA) District in the Central Region of Ghana, West Africa, to understand how the school district develops its principal preparation program or pipeline for aspiring and current school leaders. A sample of 50 participants made up of district leaders, principals, assistant principals, and aspiring leaders from schools in the KEEA District were randomly selected to participate in the study. Data were generated through Survey Monkey Cloud and semi-structured interviews with 10% of the sample participants.

The two research questions associated with this study are: 1. Is there a principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District? 2. To what degree does the program align with research-based elements?

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This project is dedicated to my brothers and sisters and to my parents of blessed memory. My late father Mr. Ebenezer Yaw Turkson's love and passion for education and hard work motivated me even from my youthful years. Below is one of his numerous motivational quotes...

“The heights by which great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night” – *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Principal leadership pipeline development cannot be overemphasized for the development of national education systems. This is because education for any country is important for national development processes. However, national development processes are influenced by various factors. There is no doubt that, principals' roles are important in setting the direction for successful schools, however, current knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified and effective school leaders is sparse (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Mendels, 2012). As such, the recognition of the importance of school leaders in teaching and learning coupled with a growing shortage of high-quality leaders in American schools, increased the interest in leadership development as a major reform strategy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The investment of tremendous amount of time and resources on school leadership therefore help them to be successful on the job (Mendels, 2012).

Schools are overly complex and require that the academic, social, emotional, and even basic student needs be addressed. Additionally, school staff have varying views, needs, and diverse experiences that influence the general instructional implementation. Educational leaders, especially school principals or heads therefore must possess the skills to be able to balance all these factors while addressing the needs of their schools.

Statement of the Problem

Principals often come out of principal preparation programs ill-equipped to address all the complexities of their job (Davis, Gooden, & Bowers, 2017; Crow, Day, & Møller, 2017; Gurley, Anast-May, & Lee, 2015; Peel & Wallace, 1996; Greenfield, 1985; Cosner, Tozer, Zavitkovsky, & Whalen, 2015; Shaked, Schechter, & Michalsky, 2018; Young & Eddy-Spicer, 2019; Quin, Deris, Bischoff, & Johnson, 2015; Arikewuyo, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al.,

2007). The dynamic nature of the field of educational leadership makes the opportunities of designing, delivering, and researching educational leadership development particularly challenging. Areas that affect educational leadership may include “rapid and evolving knowledge on learning, teaching, and leading; the demands of society; the persistent demographic changes of schools; and the increasing complexity of the job of school leader” (Young & Eddy-Spicer, 2019, p. 8; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Furthermore, principals who do not have the skill set to be successful quickly get overwhelmed and often quit the job within few years of hire (Papa, 2007; Pounder & Crow, 2005). As such, “providing educational leaders with high-quality educational leadership preparation experiences that ensure their readiness for practice is an enduring challenge for the field regardless of national context” (Young & Eddy-Spicer, 2019, p. 8; Crow et al., 2017; Shaked, et al., 2018; Quin et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). To retain them on the job, it is therefore imperative that educational leaders are provided a solid foundation.

Research suggests that school leadership accounts for about 20% of a school’s impact on student achievement—second only to the impact of teachers (Searby, Browne-Ferrigno, & Wang, 2017; Crow et al., 2017; Gurley et al., 2015; Greenfield, 1985; Cosner et al., 2015; Quin et al., 2015; Young, Winn, & Reedy, 2017; Fuller, Hollingworth, & Liu, 2015; Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere, & Leu, 2007). School leadership is the major factor on school improvement that influence the quality of teaching and learning. As such, the idea of school principals being instructional leaders of a school has become an important topic in educational leadership literature over recent decades (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Federal and state accountability measures have therefore placed a lot of pressure on principals and their aspiring counterparts. The altered perspectives on instructional

leadership created the need for changes in performance evaluations for school leadership (Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010; Fusarelli, Fusarelli, & Drake, 2019). Principals as the instructional leaders, are responsible for student performance and can be one of the most influential factors in student achievement. For the continued improvement of student performance, therefore, the retention of skilled principals becomes an especially important issue, because principal turnover has a negative influence on overall student achievement. Determinants of principal turnover include principal characteristics, characteristics of the position, school and student characteristics, and policy (Rangel, 2018; Papa, 2007; Shulman & Sullivan, 2015).

Principal pipelines are one way to reduce principal turnover and to increase the applicant pool (Jacob et al., 2015; Crow et al., 2017; Gurley et al., 2015; Cosner et al., 2015). As the language of school leadership has changed, school districts have sought to match these changes with preparation, recruitment, support, and evaluation systems capable of strengthening school-based leadership and student achievement (Taylor, Goeke, Klein, Onore, & Geist, 2011; Pounder & Crow, 2005). School staff in leadership roles must now be equipped to identify, assess, and advance effective instruction and in the era of the common core state standards, leaders must be ready to lead broad-based instructional change and reform (Taylor et al., 2011; Smylie & Eckert, 2017; Kaplan & Owings, 2017; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2019). Some schools have developed uniform frameworks for what high-quality teaching and learning should look like, and they support such instruction with targeted professional development and carefully monitor implementation (Smylie & Eckert, 2017; Poekert, Alexandrou, & Shannon, 2016). While the quality of teaching influences levels of pupil motivation and achievement, it has also been demonstrated that the quality of leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching (Muijs & Harris, 2003;

Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Kaplan & Owings, 2017; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Leithwood, et al., 2019). Understanding the idea of developing school leaders as an instance of emergency will allow it to be treated with the appropriate appreciation of uncertainty, complexity, and unpredictability (Poekert et al., 2016).

Purpose of the Study

Leadership pipeline is important for the development of leaders on a broad scale. The creation of leadership pipeline has potential for a systematic and intentional development of leaders for a particular benefit. There is the need to establish passages that leaders must go through to be termed as fully developed (Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010). A pipeline provides clarity on how an organization builds its own leaders instead of hiring them from other places. A leadership pipeline for education is a picture of how leaders can be developed and what their next steps in the pipeline is. The absence of a pipeline can be misleading as it becomes unclear for employees' next steps. A pipeline determines the succession in all roles because leaders will be developing at all levels (Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010). In a case of an open position for instance, it becomes easier for a smooth succession as there will be others ready to move to that position. A Leadership pipeline therefore helps with being proactive for the future. A leadership pipeline has the potential of helping to build set skills in potential leaders (Papa, 2007; Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010).

This study looked at the principal leadership pipeline development in KEEA District in the Central Region of Ghana, to develop perspectives on principal preparation programs or pipelines in the school district. The study has significance for the field of international education. It will enhance an adequate understanding and appreciation of how education is developed and promoted within a set of different contexts. It will provide policymakers with the

adequate knowledge required for putting in place effective processes and practices for leadership in the development of education.

In this paper, I have synthesized existing literature on educational leadership and leadership pipeline otherwise known as leadership succession, to provide a principal pipeline framework which will produce, support, and retain qualified principals. I then provided an overview of the education system in Ghana and did an analysis of the principal leadership pipeline or program in the KEEA District in the Central Region of Ghana. Finally, I discussed the implications for principal leadership pipeline development towards a general global educational improvement and then drew some conclusions.

Research Questions

The two research questions associated with this study are: 1. Is there a principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District? 2. To what degree does the program align with research-based elements?

CHAPTER 2: SYNTHESIS OF CORE KNOWLEDGE

Leadership Pipeline-Focus and Why

Educational leadership is a complex system that requires a select set of skills to navigate. Entering the position without the skills and tools necessary to complete the job often leads to frequent turnover (Papa, 2007). In the era of accountability in the educational system, it is not easy to find, develop and retain qualified educational leaders. The constant leadership turnover is costly and impacts general student achievement. It is therefore imperative that actions are taken to address this problem and improve the educational leadership pool of candidates. The change will take a community effort involving universities, school districts, schools, teachers, parents, and students (Pounder & Crow, 2005). Making changes in the ever-complex educational systems is not always easy, but the transformation is important for our current practices to provide quality and equitable education for all.

The development of principal pipelines is one way to increase the pool of qualified candidates, offer some solution to longstanding problems and reduce principal turnover (Jacob et al., 2015). Accountability and expectations have changed, requiring principals to be instructional leaders rather than managers (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009; Arikewuyo, 2009). As such, the recruitment and selection of school leaders is an essential task for district leadership. Selection and recruitment should be done in a systematic manner and not left to chance. Recruitment and selection criteria need to be methodical and objective. Principals, as instructional leaders in their building are responsible for student achievement, making them influential factors in overall student performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). Current practices of recruitment and selection must therefore include completing an appropriate preparation program as well as holding the required endorsements. Without these, there would

be principals in leadership positions that do not have the necessary skills to fulfill their job duties.

Research suggests that principal leadership accounts for about 20% of a school's impact on student achievement, second only to the impact of teachers (Crow et al., 2017; Gurley et al., 2015; Greenfield, 1985; Cosner et al., 2015; Searby et al., 2017; Quin et al., 2015; Young et al., 2017; Fuller et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). As such, school principals being instructional leaders of schools has become an important topic in educational leadership literature in recent decades. Federal and state accountability measures have as such placed a lot of pressure on principals and assistant principals. This altered perspectives on instructional leadership created the need for changes in performance evaluations for school leaders (Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010). Although instructional leadership was introduced in the 1970s, the reform eras of the 1980s and 1990s caused a bigger focus on the behaviors expected of instructional leadership. As instructional leader became the newly emphasized role of the principal, the evaluation of effectiveness of the principal also needed to change (Taylor et al., 2011; Arikewuyo, 2009; Searby et al., 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). More recently, authors have begun to call for reform of school leadership roles via professional development aimed at increasing leadership capacity. Experts are of the belief that, by restructuring leadership with more focus on instructional leadership, much greater resources might be brought to bear on the improvement of instructional practice that would in turn enhance student achievement. Researchers also caution school districts on the potential effects on keeping certain aspiring leaders in their leadership positions for lengthy periods as that could limit their understanding and abilities to become effective building principals (Fusarelli et al., 2019; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Gurley et al., 2015). A concern with the

predictable retirement of principals and an alarm at the future leadership performance have led some school districts in the United States to partner with educational leadership faculties of universities for the development and implementation of different programs to build leadership capacity. Benefits from this partnership may include resource expansion, and powerful interventions for developing practices (Hitt, Tucker, & Young, 2012). Several authors have encouraged school leaders to develop leadership teams in their schools, which practice would lead to effective and stronger results in instructional leadership capacity building as well as student achievement (Greenfield, 1985; Peel & Wallace, 1996; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Gurley et al., 2015; Leithwood et al., 2019).

There is the need for programs that address leadership training for teachers who aspire to become leaders, assistant principals, new principals, and experienced principals (Greenfield, 1985; Peel & Wallace, 1996; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Gurley et al., 2015; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Such programs would help program participants sharpen their leadership skills through collaboration with experienced, mentor principals and develop a deeper understanding of the diverse demands of school leadership roles. This type of professional development program for incumbent as well as aspiring leaders is quite rare in school districts (Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Gurley et al., 2015). Researchers suggest that, training and ongoing professional development for aspiring school leaders should not only prepare them to continue to be effective leads in their respective buildings, but also to concurrently increase their ability to assume greater responsibilities as instructional leaders as the need arises in the different phases of their careers. School districts are therefore encouraged to develop systematic leadership succession programs for aspiring principals or to grow their own leaders for the future from within their districts (Fusarelli et al.,

2019; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Gurley et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The development of effective educational leaders is fundamental and requires the cultivation of the habits of heart, mind, and soul. North Carolina State University's program admits individuals who faculty and district partners believe have excellent leadership potential. Team measures leadership potential in a variety of ways and continually use data on graduate performance to refine recruitment and selection processes (Fusarelli et al., 2019; Quin et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

The complex nature of schools requires specific leadership skills to ensure that schools are led by highly qualified principals. For this reason, district leadership must have an effective principal development system in place known as principal pipelines which are "the range of talent management activities that fall within a school district's scope of responsibility when it comes to school leaders" (Gates, Baird, Master, & Chavez-Herrerias, 2019, p. 14; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Others also posit principal pipelines as "local systems ensuring large groups of school leaders are properly trained, hired and developed on the job" (Mendels, 2012, p. 48). Simply putting some programs and policies in place is not enough. Successful principal pipelines may include specific components discussed below.

Conditions that Promote Leadership Pipeline Development

Underlying Issues of Leadership Pipeline Development

The development of principal pipelines is not a one-size fits all program. Principal pipelines are specific in nature and focused on the needs of school districts and staff involved. Although principal pipelines must be flexible and fluid, there are components that must be present for them to be deemed successful in producing educational leaders with the skills necessary to lead schools that are complex in nature (Crow et al., 2017; Kaplan & Owings, 2017;

Gurley et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). A synthesis of the literature identified eleven elements of a principal leadership pipeline including the following areas:

- Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations
- Professional Development /High-Quality Training
- Selective Recruitment and Hiring
- On the Job Support for Development and Retention
- Instructional Leadership Activities
- Increased Institutional Perspective
- Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices
- Strengthened Technological Skills
- Culturally Responsive Practices
- Funding
- Policy

Below are detailed descriptions of the different elements.

Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations

The first on the list of identified elements that promote principal leadership pipeline talks about leadership, principal standards, and expectations. Standards-based reform is trending as it relates to instructional leadership and as such, preparation programs will have to work harder to meet the standards and needs of the individuals going through the programs. Leadership standards should therefore be clear and include rigorous job requirements detailing what administrators must know and do (Crow et al., 2017; Gurley et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). As schools continue to evolve and instructional accountability pressures continue to

increase, the university programs must also evolve and provide adequate training rooted on instructional leadership that adequately equip individuals to be credentialed for the educational leadership positions. Various educational groups have developed leadership frameworks. In 1994, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) created the Interstate School Leaders License Consortium (ISLLC) to lay the foundation for educational leadership standards (Murphy, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). ISLLC standards were created to shape the knowledge, performances, and skills of prospective leaders. The standards were later revised in 2008 and again in 2014 (Lindahl & Beach, 2009; Hall, Childs-Bowen, Pajardo, & Cunningham-Morris, 2015). While the ISLLC standards provide the raw materials, accreditation authority falls to the purview of the Educational Leadership Constituency Council (ELCC). The six ISLLC standards were the basis for educational leadership accreditation, but an internship was added by ELCC (Murphy, 2005). Educational leadership programs are however shaped by the ISLLC standards.

The McREL Balanced Leadership framework is based on a meta-analysis of work by Marzano and colleagues (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Jacob et al., 2015). McRel Balanced Leadership is based on research describing the knowledge, beliefs and behaviors of educational leaders that lead to student achievement (Miller et al., 2016). The McRel framework places emphasis on 21 school leadership responsibilities with a heavy emphasis on helping principals understand the focus of the change that is required to achieve the complex change needed for achievement (Jacob et al., 2015). The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) framework unlike the previous two frameworks, is built on the foundation that growth of individual leaders leads to school growth that positively affects student learning (Hall et al., 2015). The ASCD framework focuses on “four key roles of the building

administrator: Visionary, Instructional Leader, Influencer, and Learner and Collaborator” (Hall et al., 2015, p. 5). All frameworks discussed have common threads. They are based in research proven strategies and include stakeholders from various levels of education, such as professors, superintendents, current and retired principals, teachers, and community members. The standards should be based in a philosophy or theory of action and represent program dimensions that can be used to measure how they vary their content, delivery, and quality (Oplatka, 2011). Standards are the foundations of a principal pipeline that create the foundation of university programs and training.

Leadership succession programs would help clarify the roles and expectation of participants as they go back in their respective schools and assume the roles of leadership. Gurley et al. (2015) describe how academy members stated increasing awareness of what would be expected of them as “we spent time in the academy looking at what the principalship is like, because a principalship is quite different from an assistant principalship. It is similar, yet quite different” (p. 231). Participants can study leadership skills and become more aware of and ready to analyze and have different perspectives, lenses of the types of decisions they would have to make, as they develop their own vision of leadership, individual strengths, and weaknesses that better prepares them as would-be principals (Gurley et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Professional Development /High-Quality Training

The second element identified to promote effective principal leadership pipeline discusses professional development and high-quality training which also entails coaching and mentorship. Ongoing professional development takes many forms and is an essential element to supporting and retaining qualified educational leaders. Leadership succession and professional development programs have the potential to develop aspiring school leaders in numerous areas

including the strengthening of their knowledge base and skills in instructional leadership (Peel & Wallace, 1996; Greenfield, 1985; Arikewuyo, 2009; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Gurley et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Program participants could experience increased awareness of school district functions that could result in the development of different perspectives that were absent prior to their participation in the programs. Participants could also acquire skills in collaborative practice as well as the use of technology to improve their performance.

Participants could also gain deeper clarification of their future role as building principals which would have positive impact on their confidence in not only in the effective performance of their roles but also in their ability to be successful interviewing to become principals (Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Gurley et al., 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Cosner (2019) recommends for leadership programs to be started in small groups and at a level that is realistic for the capacities that exist within the preparation program and gradually build, extend, and enhance this work overtime as capacities are developed. Consideration of the internal capacities that exist and planning for initial improvement is also key. Findings from the study of Fusarelli et al. (2019) indicate that North Carolina State University's (NCSU) nationally recognized leadership academies undergo constant review, revision, and continuous improvement with key components continually vetted by panels of principals, university professors, superintendents, innovative leadership educators, and professional development organizations. The current design reflects the core tenets of the original program, but as NCSU has grown to serve almost one quarter of all school districts in North Carolina, and continually customizes the design and content to meet the needs of district partners. Coaching and Mentorship-Pipeline program developers will need to factor in their budget, areas that will acknowledge all the human resources possible required by the program (Weiner & Woulfin,

2018; Neumerski, 2012; Young & Crow, 2017; Pounder & Crow, 2005). This may include resources such as acquiring coaches and mentors for aspiring leaders. To help select the right mentors, selection should include multifaceted requirements and not just experience.

Selective Recruitment and Hiring

The third element involved areas under selective recruitment and hiring include cohorts, recruitment, and selection. To be considered an effective leader, one must possess a specific skill set. Hitt et al. (2012) identified four key recommendations: demonstration of success as a classroom teacher, demonstration of success in leading adults in some capacity, requirement of an advanced degree, and screening for passion and commitment to leadership. One way to enact this vision of partnerships is to create cohorts. An examination of previously built programs revealed that virtually all the programs were cohort based. The cohort structure allowed for meaningful engagement, exploration of values and decision making of leadership decisions, and created stronger links to faculty members (Jackson & Kelly, 2002). Additionally, cohort members developed stronger connections amongst themselves which created a collection of leaders with diverse experiences and backgrounds—including race, class, gender, teaching experiences, and various areas of educational leadership. Program developers should factor in diverse approaches that will amplify the effects of formal learning through collective supports such as cohorts and professional networks. Although the development of supportive networks can be manifested in many ways, program delivery for organized cohorts is ideal. Through their shared experiences, peer support and trust, they build a community of learners and practitioners (Boylan, 2016; Hitt et al., 2012; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015).

Recruiting educational leaders is a complex process that requires a purposeful, focused selection process. Clifford (2012) referred to the Quality School Leadership identification

process for hiring qualified principals. The process includes having an effective hiring committee recruiting candidates based on criteria that best meet schools and district goals, conducting an onsite performance assessment of the strongest candidates, and planning for smooth transition. Effective hiring committees include central office staff, school connected teachers and classified staff, parents and community members which match a principal candidate to the schools' characteristics and needs (Clifford, 2012). Clifford (2012) made further reference to Learning Point Associates' (2009) conclusions of emerging school principal recruitment practices. The practices included preparing for succession, allowing time, getting school board agreement, setting priorities, examining the responsibilities of the position, updating school and district information, documenting the process, and being strategic about recruiting. Additionally, Ash, Hodge, & Connell (2013) identified ten steps to effective recruitment and hiring which included a pre-screening, screening, and interviewing, follow-up, and selection processes.

To ensure that selected candidates are qualified, district leaders are obligated to initiate possible changes to current selection criteria. It is noted that, current practices are subjective and often not based on solid criteria. There have been questions whether standardized tests are good indicators for successful leadership. Selection, therefore, suggests going beyond just candidates meeting qualifications and requires objectivity (Mulkeen et al., 2007; Arikewuyo, 2009). Palmer (2018) proposed using "criteria such as the twenty-one leadership responsibilities espoused by Waters, Marzano, & McNulty (2004) coupled with new innovative procedures such as the performance tasks developed by Wildy, Pepper, & Guanzhong (2011) can help ensure that schools have the best leaders that can raise or sustain student achievement" (p. 211). The leadership responsibilities include areas of affirmation, being a change agent, effective communication possession, flexibility, ideals/beliefs, involvement in and having good

knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, monitoring and evaluating, building positive relationships, and visibility (Waters et al., 2004). Using leadership responsibilities, coupled with valid and reliable performance tasks in conjunction with selection committees sets the foundation for selecting qualified candidates (Wildy et al., 2011; Mulkeen et al., 2007).

On the Job Support for Development and Retention

The fourth element identified as a condition that promotes effective leadership pipeline discusses the issue of on-the-job support for development and retention, which includes experiential learning as well as leadership development pathways. In leadership succession programs, participants would be given the needed confidence and assurance of good performance in their future roles. There is the need for district leaders to endeavor to develop future leaders' knowledge and skill base to be able to take over the principals' jobs with confidence. In their study, academy participants gave many indications of the program goal as having been successfully met. Authors noted, "one academy session that met favor with many participants included coaching in interviewing skills designed to help assistant principals develop greater confidence in applying for open principal positions" (Gurley et al., 2015, p. 231; Crow et al., 2017). An intervention, if well prepared, organized and implemented, will lead to administrators that would better serve as principals and school leaders enabling schools to establish a continual capacity of "individual, instructional and organizational renewal" (Greenfield, 1985, p. 90; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015). Given that organizational and individual development continues to be important to leadership, educational leaders will need regular work and support in maximizing their ability to succeed on the job (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018).

Leadership pipeline development for educational leaders should be developed with consideration based on individual needs of aspiring leaders. Selection implies taking a pool of

qualified applicants, with individuals purposefully, thoughtfully, and deliberately selected (Crow et al., 2017; Nash & Bangert, 2014). Analysis of the structural model representing the relationships between principals' life experiences and their transformational leadership behaviors found that principals' early leadership work experiences and interactions with mentors had the largest relationships with their transformational leadership behaviors. Results suggest that information related to principals' life experiences and their transformational leadership behaviors may help with decisions for admitting students to educational leadership programs and with the recruitment of new and experienced principals (Nash & Bangert, 2014; Quin et al., 2015). As such, "effective leaders communicate the common goals, values, and mission that serve to propel an institution forward and provide an anchor and protection from bureaucratic demands" (Shulman & Sullivan, 2015, p. 279). Shulman & Sullivan (2015) believe it is also important to consider the characteristics of individual leaders and ways to transform leadership because, transformational leaders inspire those around them to work enthusiastically toward common goals. Marks & Printy, in their research, found "that transformational leadership is a necessary but insufficient condition for instructional leadership" (2003, p. 370; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015). Thus, when the coexistence of transformational and shared instructional leadership in an integrated form of leadership, influence school performance, it is measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students. Authors suggest that a strong transformational building leadership is essential in supporting the commitment of teachers. Transformational leaders incorporate teachers in building a shared vision and setting clear goals for their school. As such, they "show individualized attention to the needs and aspirations of teachers, and stimulate and challenge teachers to try new approaches, they may also be sought more for advice and collaboration" (Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015, p. 14; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015). With

increasing accountability and pressures for schools to improve through collaboration, it is important for “principals to have close social relationships with teachers and other principals to support the exchange of information both within their school as well as in the larger district” (Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015, p. 29; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015).

There must be a consistent model of leadership where the program provides critical learning opportunities for program participants. There must be effective implementation of experiential learning opportunities whereby through internships for instance, participants could have a firsthand experience in leadership. Effectively implemented, internship opportunities can help produce powerful learning experiences for participants. Program courses can be more powerful if they are wrapped around clinical experiences that will help with the reinforcement of the principles under study. There is the need for the use of field-based inquiries, action research, use of cases and other useful tools, problem-based learning, to connect theory and practice (Boylan, 2016; Clemans, Berry, & Loughran, 2012; Weiner & Woulfin, 2018; Muijs & Harris, 2003; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Acquiring knowledge in the areas of school culture, community relations, school improvement, social justice, and competent school management may all come as best practices through the clinical experiences acquired from the leadership program (Hitt et al., 2012; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Developing a pathway for leadership is essential for the program. In this phase of the pipeline, program directors could determine right matches, by considering, the background as well as the contextual support for the aspiring school leader (Hitt et al., 2012; Weiner & Woulfin, 2018; Young & Crow, 2017). Exemplary programs will often benefit from the team of leaders with vision, commitment, and capacity to coordinate stakeholders, and are able to secure resources and help with implementation of critical program features. Such individuals may be

superintendents, college deans, district directors or a combination who in this case could serve as role models for program participants (Young & Crow, 2017).

Instructional Leadership Activities

The fifth element discussed instructional leadership activities. Research indicates the importance of instructional leadership to clearly play a critical role in how principals can improve student achievement through their effective work with teachers. Instructional leadership is the collaborative process between principals, teachers, and other stakeholders who serve to promote excellent educational agenda (Vogel, 2018; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2019). Aside classroom instruction, school leadership accounts for a large amount of the factors that contribute to student success. As such, “learning-centered leadership is a holistic phenomenon as opposed to a set of performances on discrete components” (Reardon, 2011, p. 76). Principals can create the optimal conditions for improved student academic and social learning when they ensure certain processes of the core components are in place to support teaching and learning. Leadership succession has the potential to develop aspiring leaders’ skills in conducting classroom observations and give effective feedback to teachers. Participants will benefit from the focus on instructional leadership as an essential aspect of their learning in leadership preparation programs. The focus on instructional observation and feedback would help strengthen instructional practices in their respective school buildings to help develop a stronger and more learner-centered school environment. Leadership succession programs could educate participants on different strategies to effectively support their teachers in their instructional practice.

All these exposures would also make participants more informed on issues that matter for all schools (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Shaked et al., 2018; Gurley et al., 2015; Fuller et al., 2015;

Vogel, 2018; Fusarelli et al., 2019; Kaplan & Owings, 2017). Principal evaluations with focuses on leadership responsibilities, knowledge and skills of the leaders, processes of leadership, and outcomes of leadership are of great importance. The purpose of the evaluation was to improve the skills of principals to be effective leaders through ongoing professional improvement efforts (Fuller et al., 2015; Fusarelli et al., 2019). There is the need for district leadership of in-service principal professional development, and state departments of education policies in ensuring the proper preparation of new and aspiring principals with the capability of serving as effective instructional leaders. The need to create a dialogue between researchers and practitioners to develop a more authentic and dynamic framework for an in-depth discussion into effective instructional leadership practices and how aspiring principals can acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become effective instructional leaders with positive impact on student achievement (Vogel, 2018; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Effective leaders have vision and can connect the disparate pieces and develop a cohesive view of their schools which is an alignment of goals that lead their organizations to succeed. It is important to be strong instructional leaders and set the direction and tone for quality teaching. Rather than work in a directive and prescriptive manner, principals need to work collaboratively with teachers towards the creation of a warm and caring learning environment (Sanzo, Sherman, & Clayton, 2011; Fusarelli et al., 2019; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2019; Kaplan & Owings, 2017).

Increased Institutional Perspective

The sixth element identified to promote effective principal leadership pipeline discusses the program's ability to increase participants' perspectives on their individual institutions. Professional development in leadership succession programs have the potential to impact the

understanding of participants on what goes on in their school districts from an institutional perspective. Participants could learn about “district curriculum, instructional issues, and many new initiatives and programs from multiple perspectives” (Gurley et al., 2015, p. 228; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005;). Participants could grow in their awareness of various district functions which they previously were not aware of. Program participants could end up being more appreciative of the chance to be made abreast with district programming and initiatives which would help with a more successful performance of their duties. Participants could therefore form a better knowledge and understanding of what is going on in their school districts as well as what is working in other schools, acquiring new ideas from other participants in similar roles (Taylor et al., 2011; Smylie & Eckert, 2017; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2019; Gurley et al., 2015). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) acknowledges the importance of developing a strong leadership pipeline and, thus, allows states and districts to use federal funds to support leadership development (Young et al., 2017). In their research, Young et al. (2017) delineate this focus on leadership within ESSA and offer examples of how states are planning to support leadership development. A steadfast internal commitment to and ownership of accountability motivate continuous improvement approaches as well as organizational learning.

Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices

The seventh element discussed increased strength in collaborative practices. Principal pipeline implementation has the potential of also strengthening collaborative practices amongst school districts and universities. One key area is the partnership between school districts and neighboring universities. Leadership succession programs would be helpful in developing strong collaboration amongst program participants. Gurley et al. noted in their study how participants,

“due to the large geographical area of the school district, and due to the isolated nature of their positions as assistant principals, opportunities for them to collaborate with others, like job professionals was nearly nonexistent prior to the academy” (2015, p. 229). Program participants would appreciate the benefit of consistent meetings with, sharing and bouncing off ideas from others who play similar roles from other schools. A district administrator also shared that the power of collaboration has been a positive outcome. Clearly, “development of collaboration and communication was a strong and positive outcome” (Gurley et al., 2015, p. 229; Shun-wing & Sing-ying, 2016). In their study, Gurley, et al. (2015) also describe how participants in a 2-year academy formed a group on their own where members “shared readings, problem-solved together, visited one another’s schools, and finally chose to conduct a small action research project together to further explore the impact of their increased skills in providing feedback to teachers regarding instructional practice” (p. 229). Program participants could enjoy positive feedback from their teachers on the improvement of their instruction and practice. Other collaborative efforts could be found in partnership between school districts and nearby universities. Principal pipelines must be strategic and intentional in nature, involving multiple stakeholders to produce, support, and retain qualified principals. Partnership therefore contributes a lot to program success (Hitt et al., 2012; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The collaboration between the school district and a university or program will help with tailoring programs to the district’s needs in instructional reform as well as in-service activities. Benefits from this partnership may include resource expansion, and powerful interventions for developing practices (Hitt et al., 2012; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Partnerships will also help in the face of financial pressures. To ensure the alignment of leadership preparation programs with district needs and expectations, some

school districts have pursued collaborative relationships with outside organizations and local universities (Hitt et al., 2012; Pounder & Crow, 2005;). Accountability demands are making principals responsible for school review and planning, local selection of staff, school-based staff development, performance appraisal, financial management, and the establishment of school councils. Role expectations of principals and other school leaders are dramatically changing.

Universities can therefore “play an important part in preparing school administrators for these changing responsibilities” (Johnson, 1994, p. 9; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Further university support may include tuition discounts which is often one of the roadblocks to continuing education. University partnerships have proven to have a positive influence on supporting principals’ leadership skills. Overall, cohort creation is a positive outcome of university partnerships. Research effort may be undertaken largely by academics, but the effort will require the advice, co-operation, and support of the education community. This effort may involve Ministers of Education, research funding agencies, departments of education, professional associations, community stakeholder groups, and educators, as well as those whose interests are apparently pre-eminent in restructuring schools (Johnson, 1994; Cosner, 2019; Fusarelli et al., 2019; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Research suggests universities and public schools to work together to establish leadership programs that work on the integration of theory and practice aimed at providing participants the opportunities to experience real life situations. As such, “new administrators armed only with theories lack key experiential skills that might ease their transition into professional positions” (Peel & Wallace, 1996, p. 11; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Cosner et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). For a meaningful application of theory to practice, educational leadership faculty must embrace collaboration between the candidate, the university faculty, and the coach. The creation of planned experience

would also offer candidates the opportunities to develop “the capacity to think with complexity taking into account multiple perspectives, to form a unique sense of self that is value-based and authentic, as they relate to others with respect and openness, especially with those who are not like them” (Israel & Fine, 2012, p. 304; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015). In school leaders’ work bridging policy and practice, principals need to understand and manipulate, current organizational conditions and structures, individuals, routines, and values.

Addressing organizational theory could reveal opportunities to develop principals as puzzle-solvers in implementation, rather than technical problem-solvers. As such, “professional learning opportunities should be experiential in nature, with the analysis, evaluation, and development of structures and practices” (Woulfin, 2017, p. 173; Shun-wing & Sing-ying, 2016). School districts picking participants from their district to create a cohort of administrators help produce a strong collaborative learners and establishment of teamwork (Cosner et al., 2015; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). School leaders play vital roles in school-wide improvement of student learning. There is the need for targeted improvement towards school success. Acknowledgement of the complexity of sustained program improvement and many of the supports needed to be cultivated. The importance of generating and sustaining collective commitment among staff, program designers, etc. to ongoing program redesign and improvement should be stressed (Cosner et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Concentration on collaborative learning will help prepare principals who would in turn appreciate collaborative learning amongst their teachers. This is because, “collaborative learning mechanisms were found to be positively related to both teachers’ sense of collective efficacy and teachers’ commitment to their schools” (Shaked et al., 2018, p. 480; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015).

Strengthened Technological Skills

The eighth element discussed strengthened technological skills. The establishment of principal leadership pipeline strengthens technological skills, promoting innovative practices amongst program participants. Innovative practices are linked to school leadership. For school leaders to meet the changing needs of the digital workforce, there is a need to move themselves, their students, and staff beyond their traditional roles and responsibilities (Young & Crow, 2017). The partnership as well as diversity in funding may help in fostering innovation and reduce the vulnerability of the program. All over the world, there is an increasing call and allocation of resources for developing and implementing innovations geared towards the improvement of public education (Moolenaar, Daly, & Slegers, 2010; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Educational policy makers, practitioners, and scholars throughout the world have therefore acknowledged the vital role principal leadership plays in the generation and implementation of innovations (Moolenaar et al., 2010). Gurley et al. (2015) describe how the Assistant Principals' Academy incorporated the use of technology. They indicated that, participants in the program were given mini laptops for which they were expected to use daily in observing teachers, taking notes in meetings, analyzing data, and providing feedback to teachers. Participants were also trained in the use of the devices and of multiple software applications. A respondent in their study indicated how "the use of technology helped me make better use of my time and complete my regular responsibilities as well as for curriculum and instruction across the board." Participants in this study were also required to use their new laptops daily to communicate with one another. Members were required to "Tweet and Twitter.' We were required to use it every day" (Gurley et al., 2015, p. 230). According to the study, this requirement resulted in the opportunity of opening lines of communication for program

participants between sessions. A side benefit to this requirement was that assistant principals who developed much stronger understanding of the world of social networking, a world where students are constantly interacting with one another (Gurley et al., 2015). Technology use in leadership preparation programs would help participants build skills not only for the performance of their duties but also in their future roles as building principals as technology use is the thing now (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Cosner, 2019; Gurley et al., 2015). In their study Moolenaar et al. (2010) found that, transformational leadership had a positive association with schools' innovative climate. Also, "principals' social network position, in terms of centrality, was also related to schools' innovative climate." Principals who were sought for professional and personal advice, and who were also connected with their teachers enjoyed more willing teachers who were invested in change and the creation of new knowledge and practices. Moreover, "work-related closeness centrality was found to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative climate" (p. 624; Moolenaar & Sleegers, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Practices

The ninth element identified to help promote effective principal leadership pipeline discusses the issue of culturally responsive practices. To ensure improved student learning outcomes, current school principals must possess a deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning, and intercultural sensitivity (Israel & Fine, 2012). A quality leadership preparation program must include the components of purpose, curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, selective admissions, appropriate degrees, research, adequate financial support, and ongoing program assessment. To develop the art and skill of leadership in the principal, it is also important to coach and mentor the candidate for quite some time (Israel & Fine, 2012; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Funding

The tenth element discussed funding issues. The issue of funding was also identified in the literature as an element that can help promote an excellent principal leadership pipeline. Financial support is a particularly important element in a leadership preparation program. The availability of financial assistance will allow the program in the recruitment process, for more selection of candidates and especially targeting candidates from populations that are often underrepresented. Financial support can also help with recruiting strong teachers who might otherwise not be able to afford to participate in the program. If the program depends solely on the funding from the district budget, it may not get enough attention or resources to meet the goals of the program. Some school districts work with partners to explore different ways to make it feasible for participants (Hitt et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Funding from diverse sources may come with its own problems and as such, program directors should also be prepared when outside funding is no longer available.

Policy

The last and eleventh element that can promote principal leadership pipeline discusses policy support. The creation of a high-quality leadership development model will require a lot of district and state policy support. Areas that are of importance may include standards, accreditation, and assessment (Young & Crow, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). There is the need for policies that will guide program change and help encourage participation in professional learning and growth. The creation of some strategies that will help support recruitment of candidates and access to high -quality development will be important (Neumerski, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The elements of state and local policy will help organize

and implement leadership development around teaching and learning which will have a great impact.

Conditions that Challenge Leadership Pipeline Implementation

The dynamic nature of the field of educational leadership makes the opportunities of designing, delivering, and researching educational leadership development incredibly challenging. Areas that affect educational leadership may include “rapid and evolving knowledge on learning, teaching, and leading; the demands of society; the persistent demographic changes of schools; and the increasing complexity of the job of school leader” (Young & Eddy-Spicer, 2019, p. 8). As such, “providing educational leaders with high-quality educational leadership preparation experiences that ensure their readiness for practice is an enduring challenge for the field regardless of national context” (Young & Eddy-Spicer, 2019, p. 8; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Mulkeen et al., 2007). Research indicates leadership programs have not incorporated enough effective internships and field experiences, nor have they recruited high quality candidates, thereby failing to connect theory to practice. To improve student achievement, leadership programs should work on the provision of a clear focus on the leadership practices and theory. There is the need for the provision of pre-service programs that can develop and retain effective school leaders. This is because, “school leadership is essential to the success of school organizations” (Quin et al., 2015, p. 72; Arikewuyo, 2009). Quin et al. (2015) found that a lack of vision on the part of the leader and a vague school mission statement contribute to fragmentation of goals, and ambiguity regarding the roles of school personnel, rendering school leaders particularly vulnerable.

Literature on leadership lacks case studies of failed or ineffective leadership from which much can be learned. As such, a comparative analysis of failed and successful strategies can

assist in avoiding the pitfalls many leaders fall into in these challenging times while simultaneously providing strategies for success (Shulman & Sullivan, 2015). As the principalship is becoming an ever more demanding role, beginning principals must endure pressures in performing their duties. Thus, “school organizations find it difficult to recruit school principals with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience” (Shun-wing & Sing-ying, 2016, p. 541; Arikewuyo, 2009). In this regard, for the purpose of enhancing their professional development tomorrow, it would be important to learn from beginning principals about the challenges they encounter on the job. Shun-wing & Sing-ying (2016) demonstrated that the new principals in their study were with the expectation that, they would be equipped with skills of “empowering leaders and motivating underperforming staff; the practical technique of financial management; the skills of dealing with legal matters regarding school management and the capacities of curriculum and instructional leadership” (p. 540; Arikewuyo, 2009).

Overview of Education System in Ghana

Leadership pipeline implementation cannot be overemphasized for the development of national education systems. This is because education for any country is an important element for national development. However, national development processes are influenced by various factors. These range from social, economic, technological to political influences. Like most economies globally, the national development processes of African countries are influenced by many factors. Their different national systems influence their national development systems differently. Subsequently, their different national systems have potential for influencing leadership pipeline implementation for education differently. Africa, particularly West Africa, has systems following their colonial legacies of the British and or the French. Ghana follows the colonial legacy of the British.



Figure 1: Map of Africa With Ghana Highlighted



Figure 2: Map of Ghana With the Central Region in Red

History and Background

After different countries gained independence, there were on average higher school enrollment rates in former British colonies as opposed former French colonies (Benavot & Riddle, 1988; Garnier & Schafer, 2006). Each model of education established by the colonial powers of the British and the French in sub-Saharan Africa defined the nature of the relationship between the educational system and other institutions differently, what should happen in school, who may teach, and who is responsible for the provision of education (Garnier & Schafer, 2006; Kadingdi, 2004). The major aim of British colonial schooling at the time, was to provide Africans with some minimal level of education and build administrative capabilities of traditional chiefs. The colonial government increasingly involved itself in the content of educational programs using inspection and supervision to monitor the spending of its funds. Since the British wished to avoid an indigenous educated elite, officials opposed general education beyond the primary level. Cost considerations also played a role in the British

administration preferring vocational training over general literacy and general education (Bolt & Bezemer, 2009; Cogneau & Moradi, 2014; Kadingdi, 2004). Many scholars argue that the persistent difference in education between English and French speaking Africa is a legacy of the colonial past whereby countries inherited and followed the very distinct education models that their colonizers established (Bolt & Bezemer, 2009; Cogneau & Moradi, 2014; Garnier & Schafer, 2006). Thus, “French-like schools are found in Francophone Africa, and English-like schools have prevailed in Anglophone Africa” (Garnier & Schafer, 2006, p. 155).

Local communities and individual schools in British colonized Africa enjoyed far more independence in recruitment, pedagogical practices, and general policies. In many instances, community representatives had a voice in the selection of principals, who were expected to exercise significant autonomy in the administration of their schools (Garnier & Schafer, 2006; Kadingdi, 2004). Furthermore, in the decades following independence, the recruitment of teachers, control of parents over teachers’ behavior, and the tradition of teachers’ autonomy were factors that encouraged parents in English speaking nations to enroll their children in schools (Garnier & Schafer, 2006; Kadingdi, 2004). The consideration of children’s education sometimes depended on religious affiliations because schooling originated in the African continent with Christian missionaries. In some instances, Muslim parents who associated modern schools with Christianity were unwilling to enroll their children in schools (Garnier & Schafer, 2006). Ghana’s education programs started during World War II. Christian missionary schools were aligned with the Western educational system emphasizing on issues that were in aversion to indigenous culture, with a high regard for western culture (Cogneau & Moradi, 2014; Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011; Kadingdi, 2004). After Ghana attained independence in

1957, education became a high priority on the then government's agenda (Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011).

Since Ghana's independence in 1957, its education system has gone through many phases of being a highly regarded African nation to a period of collapse and recently being supported by a donor funded FCUBE program (Kadingdi, 2004; Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011).

Governor Sir Gordon Guggisberg emphasized a need for better teaching and improved management of schools in the then Gold Coast era, however, challenges such as shortage of teachers and inadequate funding made the Governor's plans far hard to achieve. For instance, schools in the rural areas were still based in unsuitable buildings, poorly equipped, and staffed or, in some cases, operated under trees (Kadingdi, 2004). The Ghana Ministry of Education (MOE) has set goals and standards of various kinds, to create school reform and restructure schools, however, its efforts to promote various agenda that will lead to improved practice on a wide scale have yet to emerge (Kadingdi, 2004). Although Ghana's education system has come a long way, the increasing challenges of the twenty-first century demand for restructuring if it is to provide quality professional support programs. This would make school staff more responsive to national and global demands (Kadingdi, 2004).

Legal Framework of Education in Ghana

The importance of education to the development of any nation cannot be overemphasized. As such education is critical for human resource development and therefore important for national development. Education in Ghana has been supported by Acts, Legislations and Regulations (Ghana Education Service Headteachers Handbook 2010:3). The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana constitutes the supreme law of the land which directs the over thrust of education development in the country. The Acts and Regulations

promulgated by parliament supplement the constitution. All these enactments specify educational objectives and the structure for implementing the policies. A major development in education in the early 1950s was the implementation of the 1951 Accelerated Plan for Education. This plan received approval of the National Assembly in August 1951. The most important feature of the Accelerated Development Plan was the policy to ensure the rapid expansion of primary and secondary education in the country. The implementation of the plan enabled a vast number of children to have access to education.

The 1961 Education Act (Act 87)

The 1961 education Act was passed by the National Parliament in 1961. The major features of the Act were as follows:

- (i) Education became compulsory.
- (ii) Two stages of the pre-tertiary system of education were introduced:
 - a. Primary and Middle school.
 - b. Secondary Education
- (iii) Fee-free education at the first level of education (primary and middle schools) was introduced.
- (iv) Any parent who failed to send his /her child to school was to be prosecuted.
- (v) Government assumed the responsibility for the control and management of all schools.
- (vi) The education system was restructured to support the rapid economic and social development of Ghana.

- (vii) Emphasis shifted to producing citizens who would use their potentials and powers of science and technology to transform the environment for the benefit of themselves and the nation at large.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana -article 25 Clause (1)

The constitution of the Republic of Ghana provides direction for basic education delivery. The portion of the constitution that provides the mandate for basic/elementary education delivery is Article 25 Clause (1) of the 1992 constitution which states:

“All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view of achieving the full realization of that right. In this regard, basic education shall be free, compulsory and should be available to all.”

The 1992 constitution of Ghana is therefore currently the fundamental law that guarantees the Ghanaian child his/her right to basic education. The constitution also commits the government of Ghana and all other institutions charged with that responsibility to provide quality basic education for all Ghanaian children irrespective of their age, sex, religion, tribe, percentage, physical condition, and locality. Individuals are therefore required by the constitution to protect the rights of all children (Ghana Education Service 2010a:5)

Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE)

The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) was a comprehensive sector-wide program. It was introduced in 1995 in fulfilment of the 1990 International Convention of Education for All (EFA) and the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana, to ensure that all children of school-going age had the right and access to quality basic education. The FCUBE had three main objectives:

- To increase access and participation: ensuring that all school-going children are in school and complete basic education.
- To improve the quality of teaching and learning: to promote efficient and effective quality teaching and learning in basic schools.
- To improve efficiency in management: to ensure efficiency, probity, and accountability in the management of schools (Ghana Education Service, 2010a :5).

The 2008 Education Act (Act 778)

The education Act of 2008 (Act 778) seeks to embody the aspirations of the people of Ghana for a national system of education which provides knowledge, skills and social values required to build a united country capable of competing globally in a world increasingly driven by and dependent on science and technology. Simply, the Act seeks to provide for the establishment of an educational system intended to produce well balanced individuals (intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically) with the requisite knowledge, skills values, and aptitudes for self-actualization and for the socio-economic and political transformation of the nation (Ghana Education Service, 2010a:6).

The Basic Education system in Ghana

Basic education is the minimum schooling needed to ensure that children acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills as well as skills for creativity and healthy living. This definition underscores the importance of basic education as a right to every Ghanaian child. It is for this reason that the constitution of the republic of Ghana makes it mandatory for every Ghanaian child to have access to quality basic education. The government of Ghana had therefore committed herself to several International protocols in ensuring basic education for all Ghanaian children. Basic education in Ghana is therefore free, compulsory, and universal. The

current basic education is derived from the education Act of 2008 (Act 778). Elementary education in Ghana comprises two years of kindergarten, six years of primary school and three years of junior high school education, thus 2-6-3 basic education system (Ghana Education Service -2010a: 8-9).

Kindergarten Education (4-6-year-old)

The early years in the growth of children are critical for the physical and physiological development, the stimulation of intelligence, personality formation and the development of positive social behavior in children. Lessons taught at this level are taught through play, with emphasis on numeracy, literacy, and creative arts (Ghana Education Service -2010a :9).

Lower Primary (6-8-years), upper primary (9-11years) and junior high (12-14 years)

Primary education is divided into two levels to reflect the stages of growth and development in children. The first three years constitute the lower primary and children at this stage are encouraged to develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills which they derive from concrete experiences. The last three years of primary education constitute the upper primary. At this stage, children are encouraged to reflect, think creativity, and find out things for themselves to satisfy their curiosity, ask questions, criticize, solve problems, observe, view information critically and assimilate new knowledge. The Junior High School constitutes a 3-year post primary education. It is the transitional period from basic to secondary education. The junior high school program is to ensure that students appreciate the use of the hand as well as the mind (Ghana Education Service -2010a 9-11). In addition, the program provides opportunities for students to acquire basic design and technological skills and basic scientific knowledge and skills that will enable them to:

- Consolidate knowledge and skills acquired at the primary level.

- Discover their aptitudes and potentials.
- Induce in them the desire for self -employment.
- Appreciate the use of the hand as well as the mind.
- Understand the environment and the need for its sustainability so that they may become eager to contribute to its survival.
- Cultivate the desire for lifelong learning.

Senior High School (SHS) education in Ghana

The Professor Anamuah-Mensah Commission in 2006-2007 reviewed the educational system once more with a few reforms geared towards quality educational delivery in Ghana. The new structure then became, the original 2-6-3 with an additional 4-year Senior High School (SHS), thus 2-6-3-4 system. The implementation of the new educational system started in 2007 when the Senior High School in Ghana was introduced, with the intake of the first batch of the 4-year Senior High School students. However, with the change of government in 2009, the new administration decided to revert the Senior High School education from 4 years to 3 years. At the SHS level, all students choose Core subjects consisting of English Language, Integrated Science, Mathematics, and Social Studies. Each student also takes three or four Elective subjects, chosen from one of seven groups: Sciences, “Arts” (social sciences and humanities), Vocational (visual arts or home economics), Technical, Business, or Agriculture. At the end of Senior High School, all students take the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination, or WASSCE, in each of their seven or eight subjects. These exams are given nationwide in April-June each year, but the results are not available until the following August.

School Leadership preparation and requirement

Education for any country is an important element for national development, making it a critical issue for any national agenda. To ensure that children attain a minimum period of schooling, the government of Ghana has committed itself to several international protocols to provide basic education for all Ghanaian children. In 2017, the incumbent government also introduced the free Senior High School (Free SHS) as an initiative of a part of a broader effort to make Ghana internationally competitive in educational standards, agriculture, tourism and more. Schools are administered in most cases by experienced teachers who serve as leaders (headteachers). The subject of “school leadership” has gained considerable attention, discussion and extensive study by theorists and researchers. School leaders are considered as pillars of the educational system and seen as the major agents in the promotion of school effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Bush & Jackson, 2003). In Ghana, school leaders are expected to perform an array of duties to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their schools to achieve the set objectives and goals (Ghana Education Service, 2010a; Ghana Education Service, 2010b). The Ghanaian educational system has gone through many changes with the view to improving all aspects and levels of education. The last major educational reform in 1987 brought about the Junior Secondary School (JSS) system. However, there was little emphasis on the development and preparation of headteachers (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). On the other hand, the introduction of the Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) led to improvement of efficiency of school management (Zame, Warren, & Trimetia, 2008). The FCUBE policy requires headteachers to receive training in school management (Ghana Education Service, 2001) to enable them to effectively perform their tasks. In 1994, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ghana Education Service (GES) developed

a headteachers' handbook to help facilitate the performance of headteachers' duties in the provision of quality education (Oduro, 2003). Headteachers are perceived as the principal instrument (Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms on Ghana, (RPCRERG, 2002) through whom leadership and management in schools are carried out. Due to the difference, they make in schools and being an influential factor, headteachers ought to be trained prior to the assumption of duty. To better position them to improve educational standards and overall student achievement, they will also need ongoing professional development. However, the provision of formal pre-service and ongoing training for headteachers is lacking (Oduro & MacBeath, 2003; Oplatka, 2004; Bush & Oduro, 2006). There are teacher training colleges, however, there are no specific courses for aspiring headteachers and with no completion of set programs, some teachers still receive direct appointments to head schools and or take up other management positions especially in rural areas (Oduro, 2003). Additionally, educational leadership graduates from Ghanaian universities do not become headteachers within any short period of working. In most cases, it is the experienced and long-service teachers who are often promoted to headteacher positions (Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). In their research, Bush and Oduro (2006) revealed that most Ghanaian headteachers were appointed without proper management trainings and only a few received appropriate in-service training following their appointment. In a survey conducted in the capital city of Ghana, Accra it was noted that headteachers lacked leadership proficiency and this was due to the absence of leadership preparation programs (Zame et al., 2008).

Appointment and training of headteachers

Different criteria are used for the recruitment and selection of headteachers in different countries. Research shows that, a structured approach to headteacher appointment can help

increase the validity of recruitment and selection of school leaders (Middlewood, 1997; Bush & Jackson, 2003; Wong, 2005). RPCRERG (2002) indicates that although district directors manage education with the support of the assistant/deputy directors in charge of specific schedules and the regional managers of education units of religious organizations, appointment of headteachers is by the authority of the school district directors. The governing bodies therefore have no role in the appointment of headteachers. In their research, Bush & Oduro (2006) noted that the Ghana Education Service (GES) uses two approaches to appoint headteachers. The first is often through direct posting. In this case, newly trained teachers are often posted to rural areas to lead schools. Due to the under activeness of rural life, it therefore appears that working in rural schools is not attractive among teachers. The second strategy is done through selection interviews of headteachers in urban schools, where candidates for interviews are often selected through senior officer recommendations or an application process (Bush & Oduro, 2006).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Participants

A sample of convenience, made up of 50 participants agreed to participate in the survey and 48 responded, giving a response rate of 96%. Participants included district leaders, principals, and aspiring principals from the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abriem (KEEA) District in the Central Region of Ghana. The sample size was determined by Cochran's formula at a Z value of 95% confidence interval. Participants were selected at random from schools in the KEEA District. Participants represented similarly in gender, educational level, years of service, and levels of schools to the populations that they represented. Participants were also represented from both rural and urban communities of the school district. Names and personal information of participants were entered into a database with password protection.

Data Collection

Data were collected using the Survey Monkey Cloud Based System, where the data were analyzed. The total number of population sample was generated using a Cochran's sample size methodology at a confidence interval of 95%. KEEA has a potential participants of 159 of district leaders, headteachers, and aspiring headteachers. Once the sample size and the sampling techniques were completed, 50 participants was estimated as the adequate number to generalize the study. The survey contained 17 questions under 11 domains with estimated completion time of between 10-12 minutes. All information taken from the study was coded to protect subjects' names. No names or other identifying information were used when discussing or reporting the data. All files and data collected were secured, accessible only to the researcher. A survey was sent to all the consenting school district leaders, principals and aspiring principals in KEEA District based on the literature about principal pipelines in adequately preparing principals for

the job. The survey examined the level of how participants viewed the establishment of a principal leadership pipeline or program, if any, in their school district.

Survey questions were under eleven main areas identified from the literature review of this study. Study participants evaluated each item on the survey using a 5-point Likert scale (1-Disagree, 2-Somewhat Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Agree). The data will be destroyed after five years once they have been fully analyzed. At the end of the survey, participants were required to email the survey back to the researcher. With the use of the Survey Monkey, a link was embedded in an email as well as the WhatsApp Messenger, an American freeware, cross-platform centralized messaging and voice-over-IP service owned by Facebook Inc., that allows users to send diverse messages, documents, and other content. This became the better choice for participants as it allowed them easier access to complete the survey. The original plan for data collection for the study changed when the researcher could not make a trip to Ghana due to the spread and prevention of COVID-19. The researcher, therefore, set up a WhatsApp Group (KEEA Project Team) made up of educational professionals based in Ghana who supported in the participant identification, survey dissemination, and data collection processes. For uniformity and transparency, all information sharing and coordination were done via this group chat. Group members were charged with the coordination of survey dissemination and participant responses were automatically populated into the cloud-based account where the descriptive analysis of the survey was generated into tables and figures.

Data Analysis

The study utilized a mixed method procedure as it employed the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research to address issues raised as the use of either quantitative or qualitative approaches by themselves is inadequate (Creswell, 2009). Participants' responses

were used to help in the interpretation and explanation of the emerging factors and to describe their perceptions on the leadership preparation program or pipeline in their school district. The eleven elements found in the literature to be associated with effective principal preparation programs or pipelines have questions that require one or more answers. In the event where more than one question revolves around that element, the data were disaggregated in chapter 4 (Findings), but in chapter 5 (Discussion), some responses were averaged providing an aggregate response for that element. The overall survey of 50 participants yielded 96% response rate representing 48 participants. After the completion of the survey, random participants were engaged in a semi-structured, three-item interview designed to gain greater insights on the issues on principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA. This helped in keeping with the qualitative research tradition of capturing participants' own words which helped for the emergence of data analyses. The interviews were conducted over the phone. Interview questions allowed for open-ended responses and were made flexible enough to help the researcher in collecting information on unexpected dimensions of the topic.

Interview questions included: 1. Is there a principal (headteacher) preparation program or pipeline in the KEEA school district? 2. What does it look like? 3. What if any are the factors (positive or negative) influencing the principal (headteacher) preparation program or pipeline development in KEEA District? For uniformity, the interviews were conducted by the same researcher. Individual interview durations ranged from 10 to 30 minutes depending on participant responses. For precision, validity and reliability, the researcher transcribed interviews verbatim. Written responses on surveys and the transcribed interview responses were repeatedly read for accuracy and possible corrections. In the case of a follow-up and easier access to interview participants, the researcher also set up WhatsApp chats with individual

interview participants. The researcher continuously wrote notes to show impressions of the data. Notes were color coded, attached to the pages of each component to identify the major themes that arose. The researcher scribbled related sentences to connect matching themes. These procedures helped with identifying data as they relate to the emerging themes.

Data collection and comparison of the sources were ongoing for both the quantitative and qualitative data. As Creswell (2009) indicates, “the concurrent data collection results in a shorter data collection time period as compared to one of the sequential approaches because both the qualitative and quantitative data are gathered at one time at the research site” (p. 214). Cross-participant analysis were performed to identify themes or categories that are consistent with factors (positive or negative) influencing the development of a principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District. As each piece of qualitative data was analyzed, commonalities of findings emerged. This method of qualitative content analysis allowed the researcher to develop a rich understanding of the factors, be it positive or negative, that impact the development of principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District.

Research Questions

The two research questions associated with this study are:

1. Is there a principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District?
2. To what degree does the program align with research-based elements?

Limitations of the Study

Like all other studies, this study has limitations. Due to the spread and prevention of COVID-19 and travel limitations, the researcher was unable to travel to interview participants in-person, for direct access to gather more in-depth data that could help gain deeper insights into the issue at hand. Interviews were conducted over the phone and as such, the researcher could not

get pertinent information such as the facial expressions and body language of interviewees to help probe for explanations of certain responses. The researcher could not get access to other materials such as artifacts to gather extra information. There were also no student achievement data or graduation rates. For fear of incurring high phone bill for interview participants, the opportunity to probe further was also limited as researcher could not go beyond a certain amount of interview time. Another area worth noting was that data was not available to determine the cost of participation in a preparation program.

Delimitations

Study participants included district directors, headteachers (principals), assistant headteachers, and aspiring heads from the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abriem (KEEA) District in the Central Region of Ghana.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The survey and follow up semi-structured interviews examined the perceptions of participants on the development of a principal preparation program or pipeline in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abriem (KEEA) District in the Central Region of Ghana, West Africa. Survey questions were under eleven main areas identified from the literature review of this study. Study participants evaluated each item on the survey using a 5-point Likert scale (1-Disagree, 2-Somewhat Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Somewhat Agree, 5-Agree). The overall survey of 50 participants yielded 96% response rate representing 48 participants. After the completion of the survey, 5 random participants representing 10% of the sample were engaged in a semi-structured, three-item interview designed to gain greater insights on the issues on principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District. The two research questions associated with this study are:

1. Is there a principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District?
2. To what degree does the program align with research-based elements?

Analysis of Survey Data

The eleven elements found in the literature to be associated with effective principal preparation programs or pipelines have questions that require one or more answers. In the event where more than one question revolves around that element, the data were disaggregated so that all questions and results are shown. Analysis of the data was based on the eleven elements of a principal leadership pipeline including the following areas:

- Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations
- Professional Development /High-Quality Training
- Selective Recruitment and Hiring

- On the Job Support for Development and Retention
- Instructional Leadership Activities
- Increased Institutional Perspective
- Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices
- Strengthened Technological Skills
- Culturally Responsive Practices
- Funding
- Policy

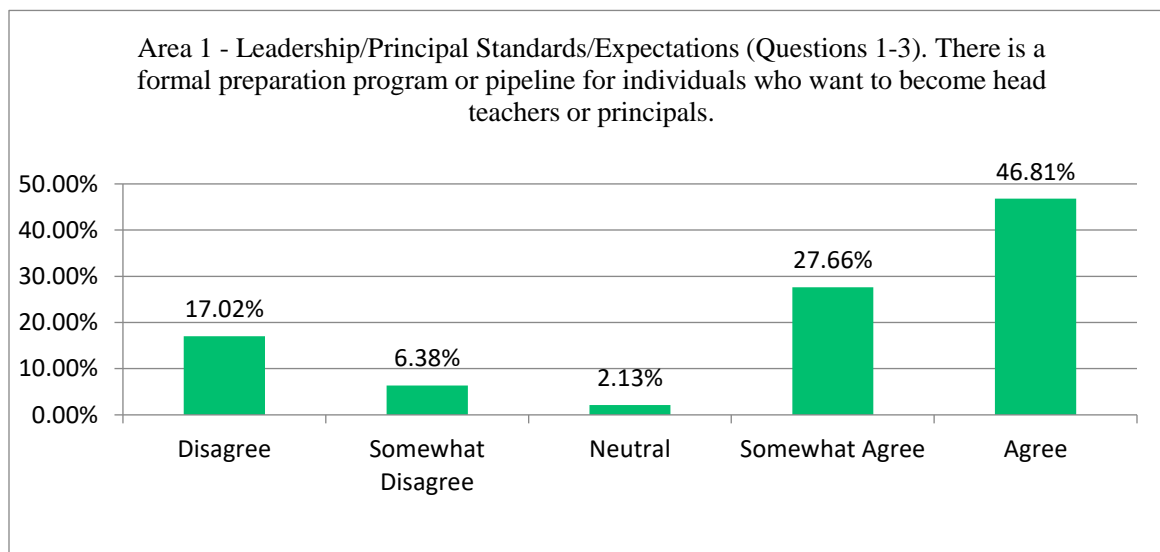


Figure 3: Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations

The first area of Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations comprised of three questions. On the question of formal preparation, 22 participants representing 46.81% of survey participants agreed and 13 participants representing 27.66% somewhat agreed that there is a formal preparation program or pipeline for individuals who aspire to become headteachers or principals. On the other hand, three participants representing 6.38% somewhat disagreed and eight participants representing 17.02% disagreed.

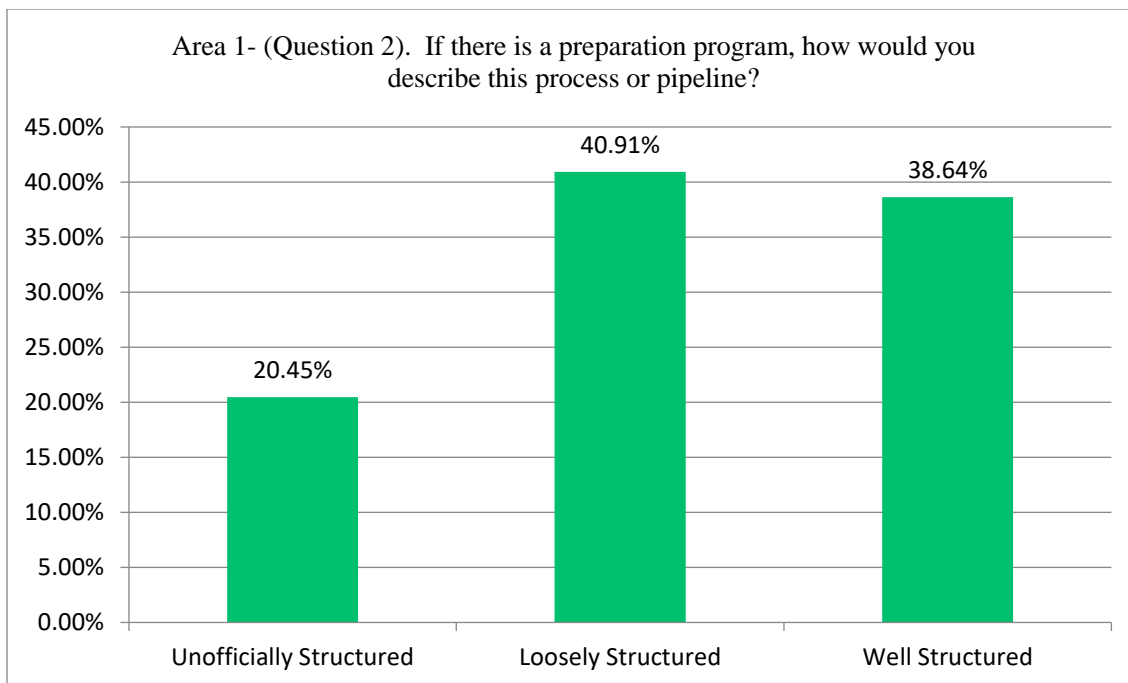


Figure 4: Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations

On the second question in area one which is about the description of the program, a total of 17 participants representing 38.64% of participants agreed that the principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District is well structured while 18 participants representing 40.91% agreed it is loosely structured. Some participants however believed that the preparation program in place was unofficially structured. This was represented by 9 participants who formed only 20.45% of the population.

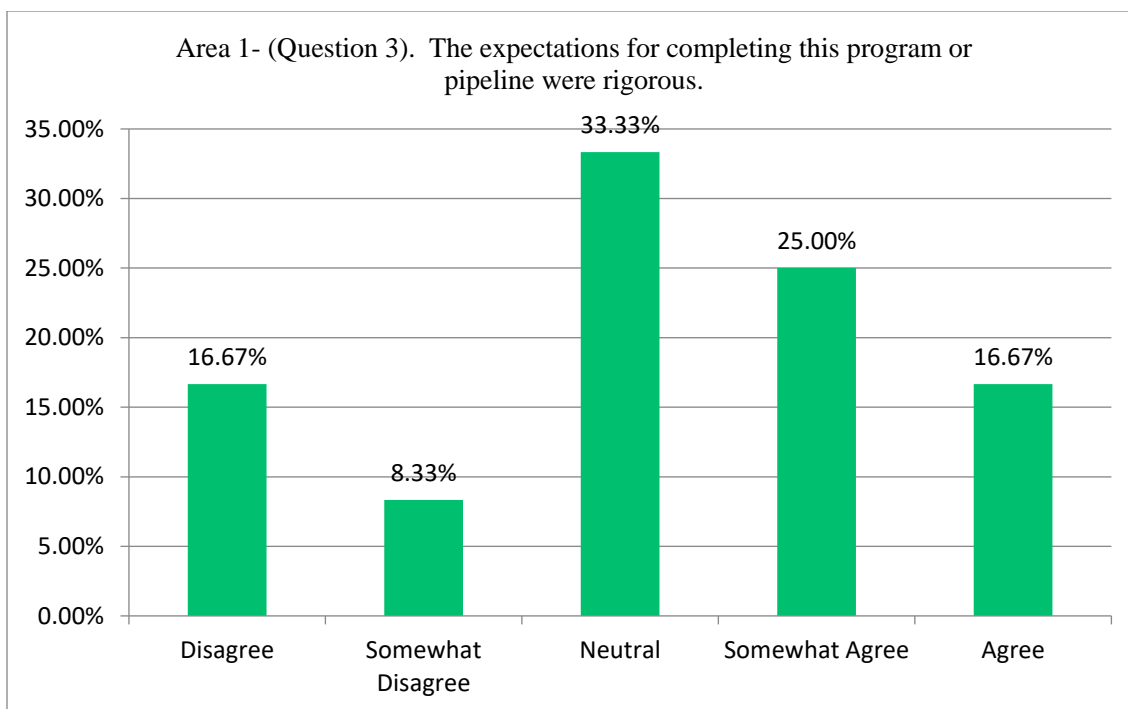


Figure 5: Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations

The third question in area one was about the expectations on the completion of the program. There were 8 participants representing 16.67% who agreed that the expectations for completion were rigorous, while 12 participants making 25% somewhat agreed. However, four participants representing 8.33% somewhat disagree that the expectations for completing this program or pipeline were rigorous. There were 8 other participants who disagreed, and this formed 16.67%.

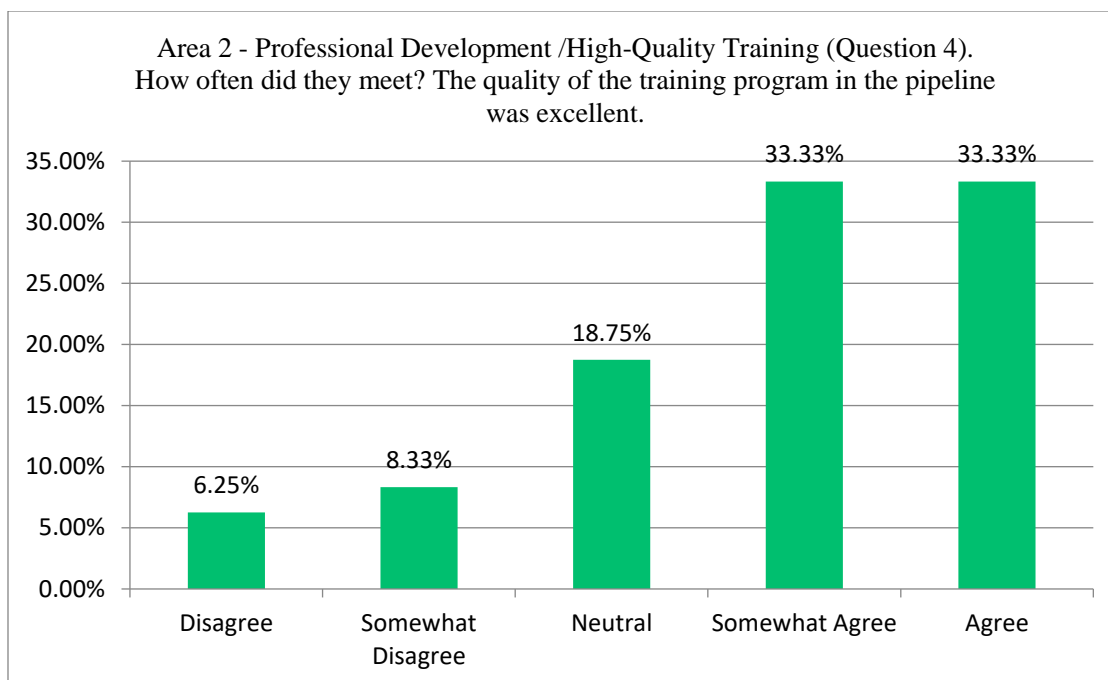


Figure 6: Professional Development/High Quality Training

The literature indicates the need for an increase for more professional training and support for school leaders due to the ever-changing context of the field of practice for school administrators (Searby et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2011; Arikewuyo, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Area two on the survey discussed the quality of the professional development in the KEEA District. Out of the 48 participants, 16, representing 33.33% agreed on the excellence of the program. Participants who somewhat agreed were also 16 in number, representing 33.33%. However, 4 participants who formed 8.33% somewhat disagreed that the quality of the training program was excellent. Three participants representing 6.25% disagreed that the quality of the program was excellent.

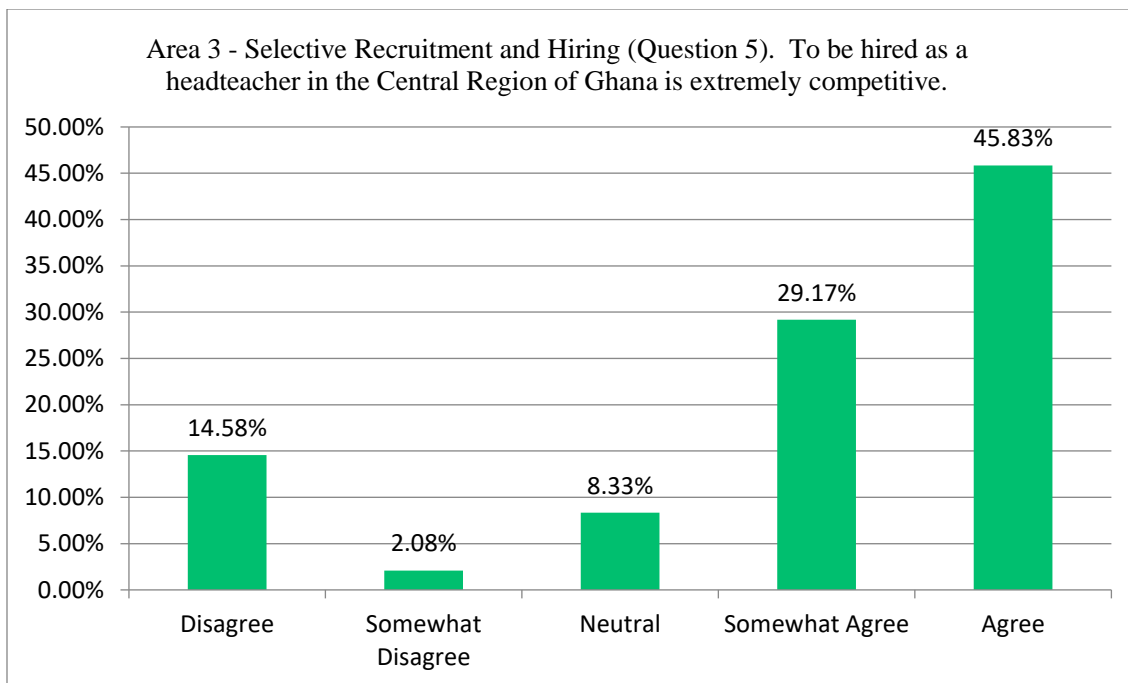


Figure 7: Selective Recruitment and Hiring

The literature points to the importance of making competitive, the selection and recruitment of aspiring school leaders (Mulkeen et al., 2007; Arikewuyo, 2009; Wildy et al., 2011; Waters et al., 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). In area three, regarding the competitiveness of being hired as a headteacher in the Central Region, 22 participants representing 45.83% agreed that, selection and recruitment of school leaders in the Central Region of Ghana is extremely competitive, while 14 participants representing 29.17% somewhat agreed to the competitiveness of the selection and recruitment. One participant, representing 2.08% however somewhat disagreed whereas 7 participants representing 14.58% disagreed with this assertion.

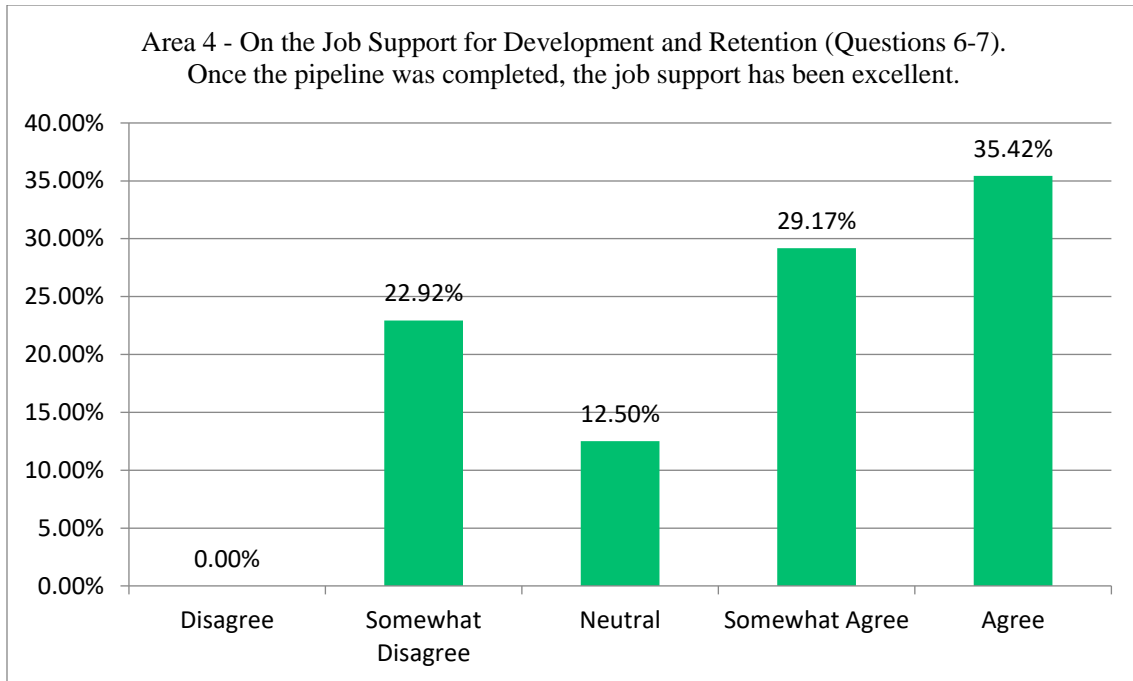


Figure 8: On the Job Support for Development and Retention

Job support for development and retention, according to the literature, is a vital component of a successful leadership pipeline (Greenfield, 1985; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Gurley et al., 2015; Crow et al., 2017). There were two questions in Area 4 that discussed the issue of job support and retention. For the first question, 17 participants representing 35.42% indicated agreement that, once the pipeline or program was completed, the job support was excellent. Participants who somewhat agreed were 14 in number, representing 29.17%. However, 11 participants representing 22.92% somewhat disagreed that, once the pipeline was completed, the job support was excellent.

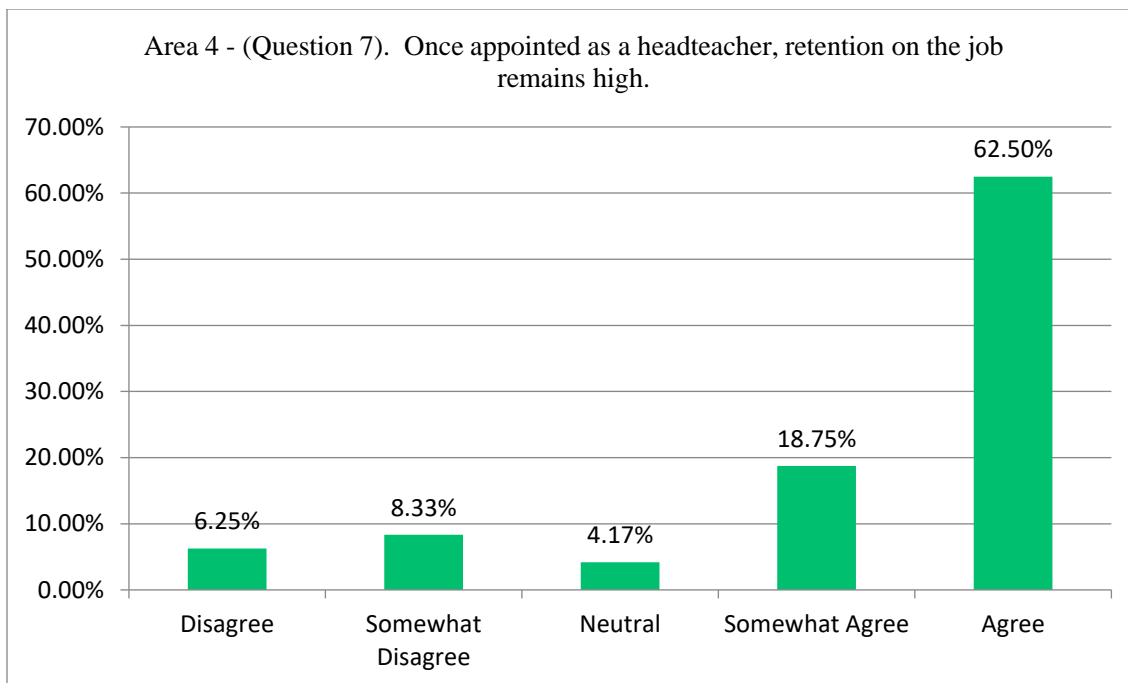


Figure 9: On the Job Support for Development and Retention

On the second question in Area 4, the survey showed that, 30 participants, representing 62.50% agreed that once appointed as a headteacher, retention on the job remains high. On the other hand, 9 participants who formed 18.75% responded that they somewhat agreed to the fact that retention on the job is high. Participants who somewhat disagreed that retention on the job remained high were 4, representing 8.33 % whereas participants who disagreed were 3, representing 6.25%.

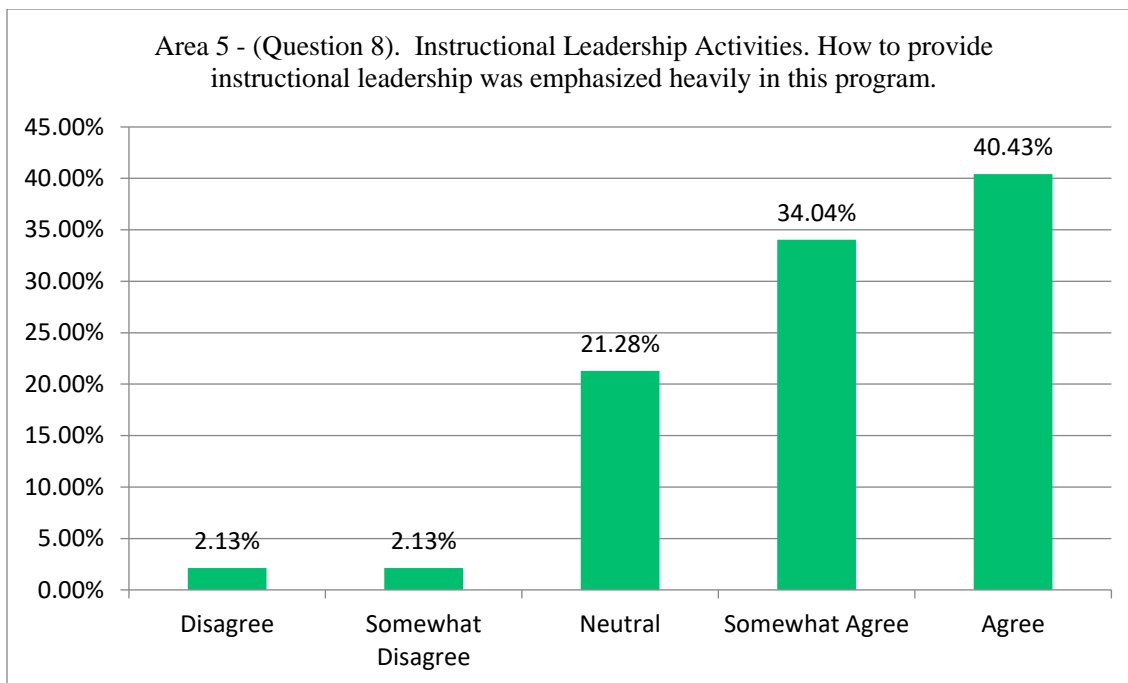


Figure 10: Instructional Leadership Activities

Area five on the survey discussed Instructional Leadership Activities. With 19 participants representing 40.43%, participants agreed that provision of instructional leadership was heavily emphasized in the preparation program. On the other hand, 16 participants representing 34.04% somewhat agreed to this. However, only one participant representing 2.13% somewhat disagreed as well as one participant representing 2.13% also disagreed to the idea that provision of instructional leadership was heavily emphasized.

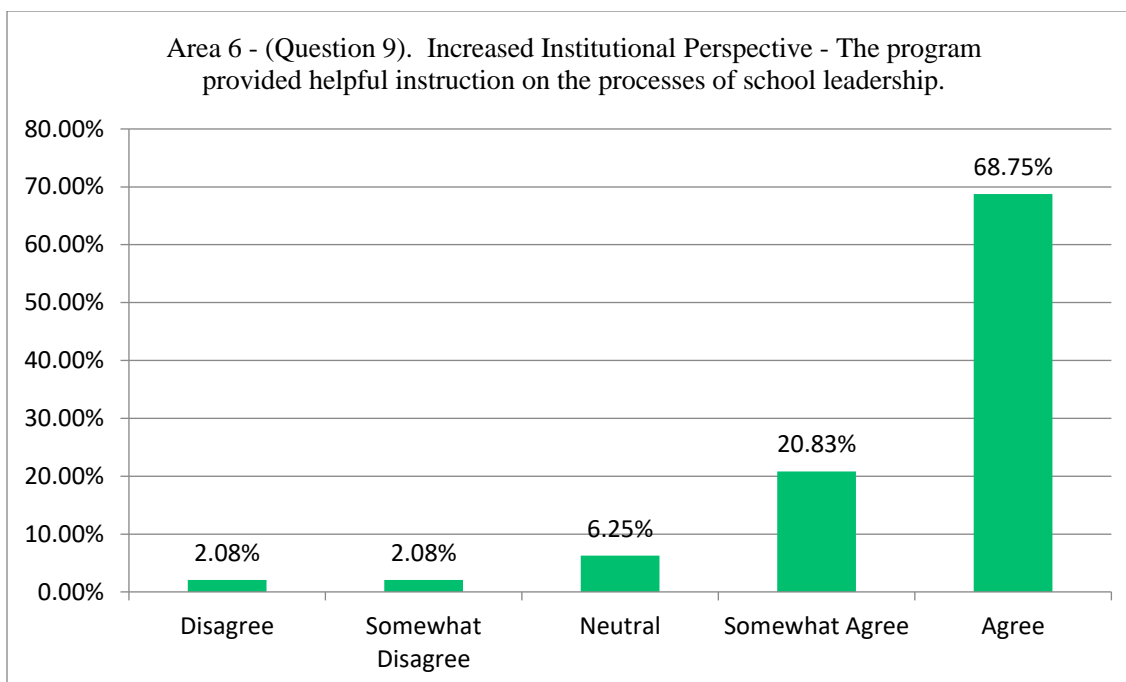


Figure 11: Increased Institutional Perspective

The literature indicates the importance of school leaders having a great institutional perspective (Vogel, 2018; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2019). In a leadership pipeline program, program participants acquire rich experiences in ongoing professional development on the knowledge of their school districts and institutions (Gurley et al., 2015; Peel & Wallace, 1996; Greenfield, 1985; Arikewuyo, 2009; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). Area 6 on the survey discussed increased institutional perspective and 33 participants representing 68.75% agreed that, the program provided helpful instruction on the processes of school leadership. On the other hand, 10 participants representing 20.83% somewhat agreed. One participant representing 2.08% somewhat disagreed as well as one participant forming 2.08% disagreed to the assertion that the program in place at KEEA provided helpful instruction on the processes of school leadership.

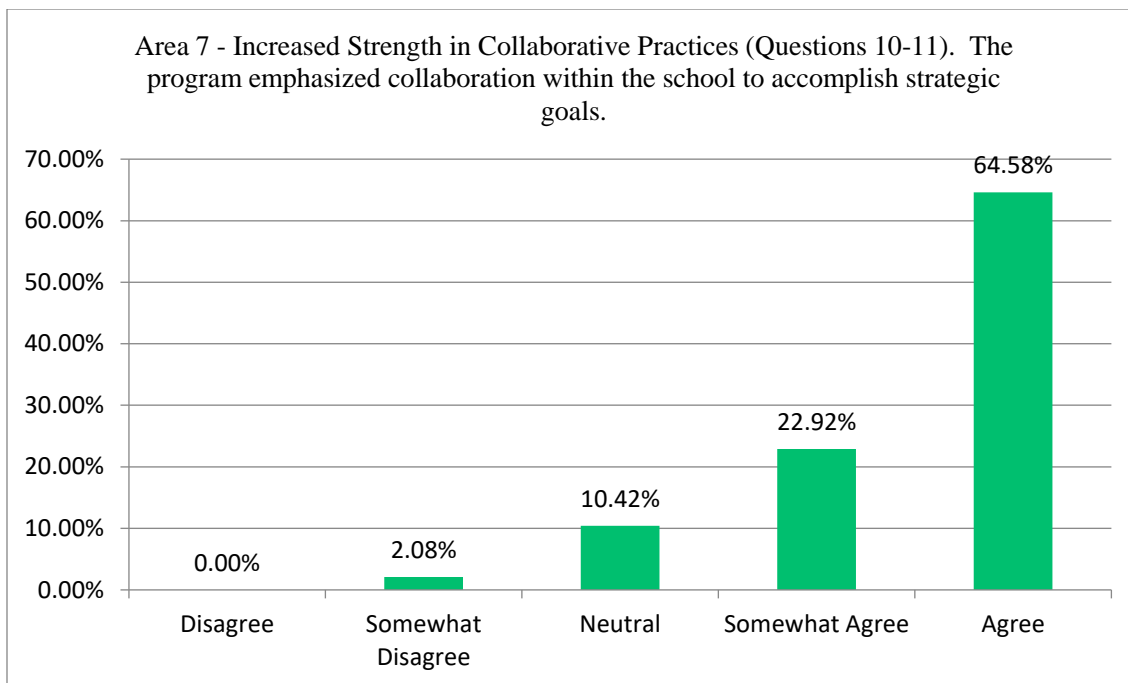


Figure 12: Increased Strength in Collaboration Practices

Questions 10 and 11 on the survey discussed areas of Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices which was area 7. Survey responses showed that, 31 participants representing 64.58% agreed that the principal preparation program in KEEA district emphasized collaboration within the school to accomplish strategic goals but 11 participants representing 22.92% also somewhat agreed. Only one participant representing 2.08% somewhat disagreed with this.

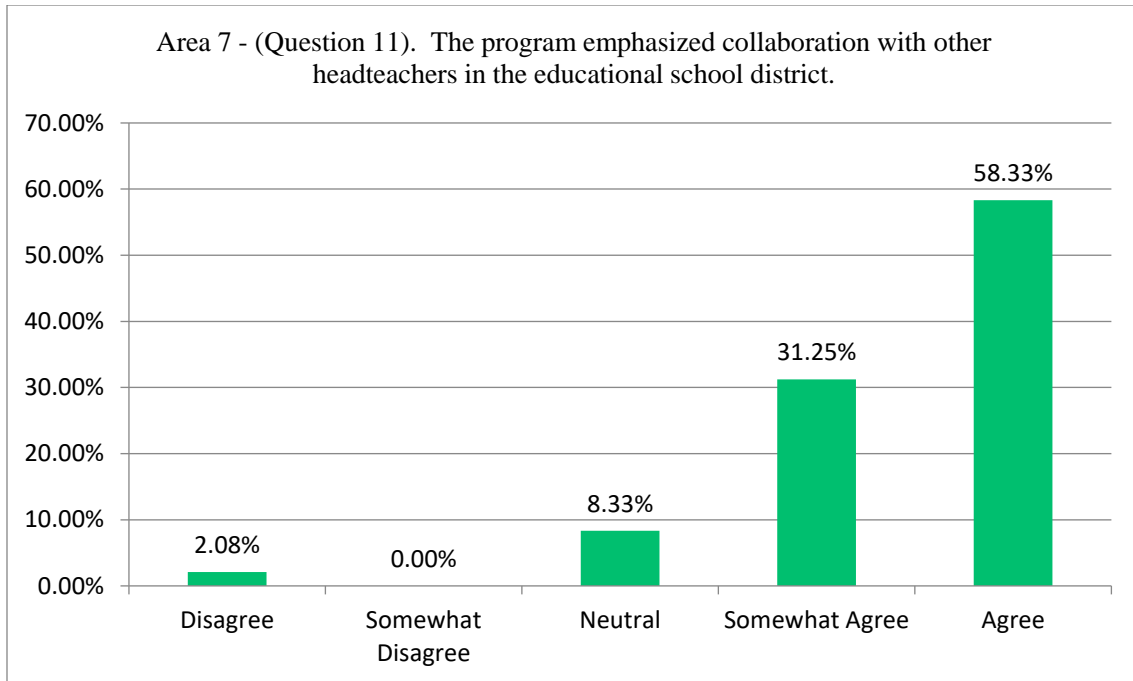


Figure 13: Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices

On question 11 in Area 7, 28 participants who represented 58.33% agreed that the program emphasized collaboration with other headteachers (principals) in the school district. Some participants also somewhat agreed, and they were 15 representing 31.25%. However, one participant who represented 2.08% indicated disagreement that, the program emphasized collaboration with other headteachers (principals) in the district.

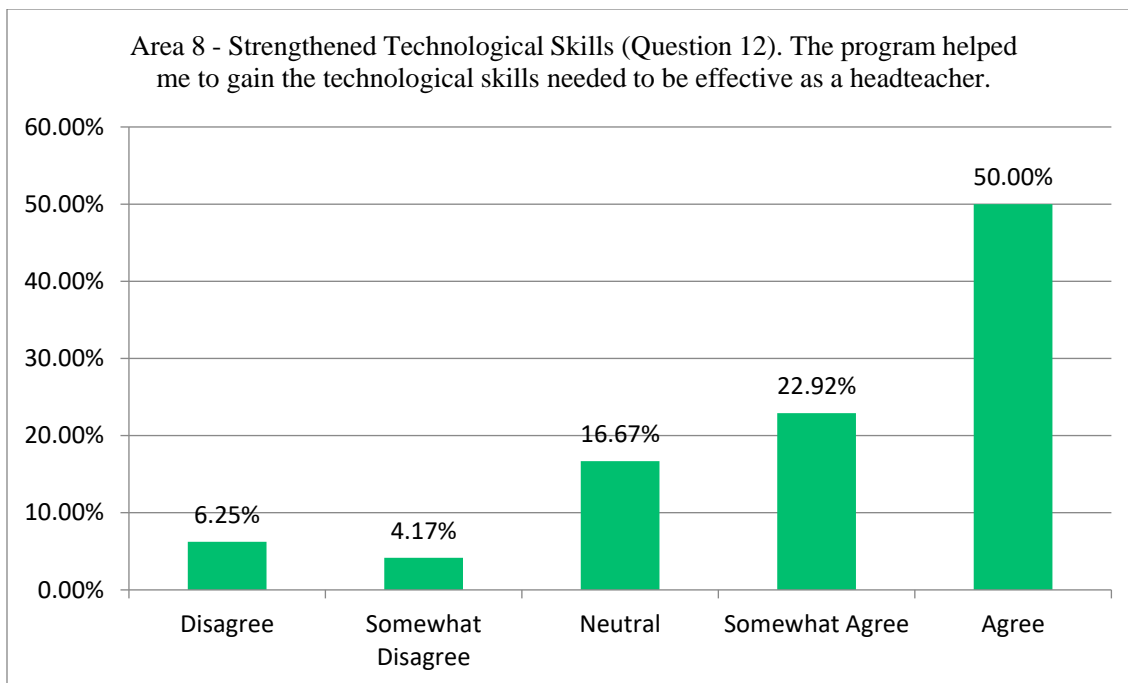


Figure 14: Strengthened Technological Skills

Question 12 which was Area 8 on the survey was on Strengthened Technological Skills. There were 24 participants representing 50% who agreed that the preparation program helped them to gain the technological skills needed to be effective as headteachers (principals). However, 11 participants who represented 22.92% somewhat agreed to this assertion. There were 2 participants representing 4.17% of the participants who somewhat disagreed and 3 participants representing 6.25% who disagreed that the program helped them to gain the technological skills needed to be effective as headteachers (principals).

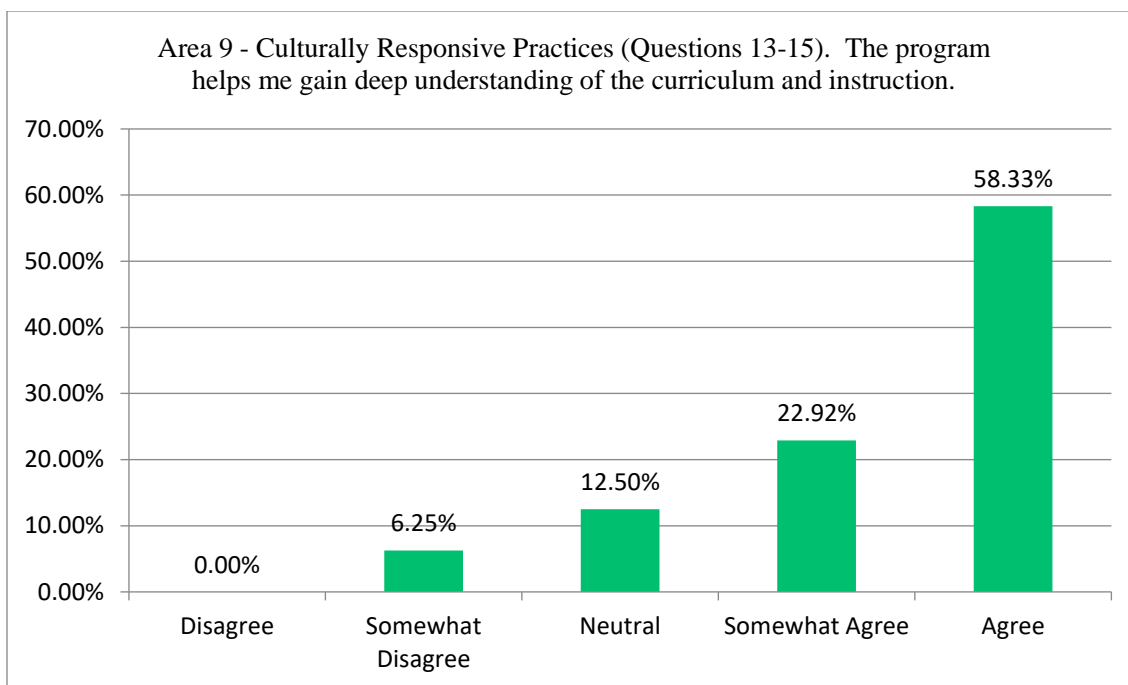


Figure 15: Culturally Responsive Practices

Area 9 discussed Culturally Responsive Practices. There were three questions on this topic. The first question in this area indicated how the program helps headteachers gain deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction. With 28 participants representing 58.33%, participants indicated agreement with the statement that the program helps with their deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction. Other participants who somewhat agreed to this were 11, representing 22.92. There were 3 participants, however, who somewhat disagreed, and they represented 6.25%.

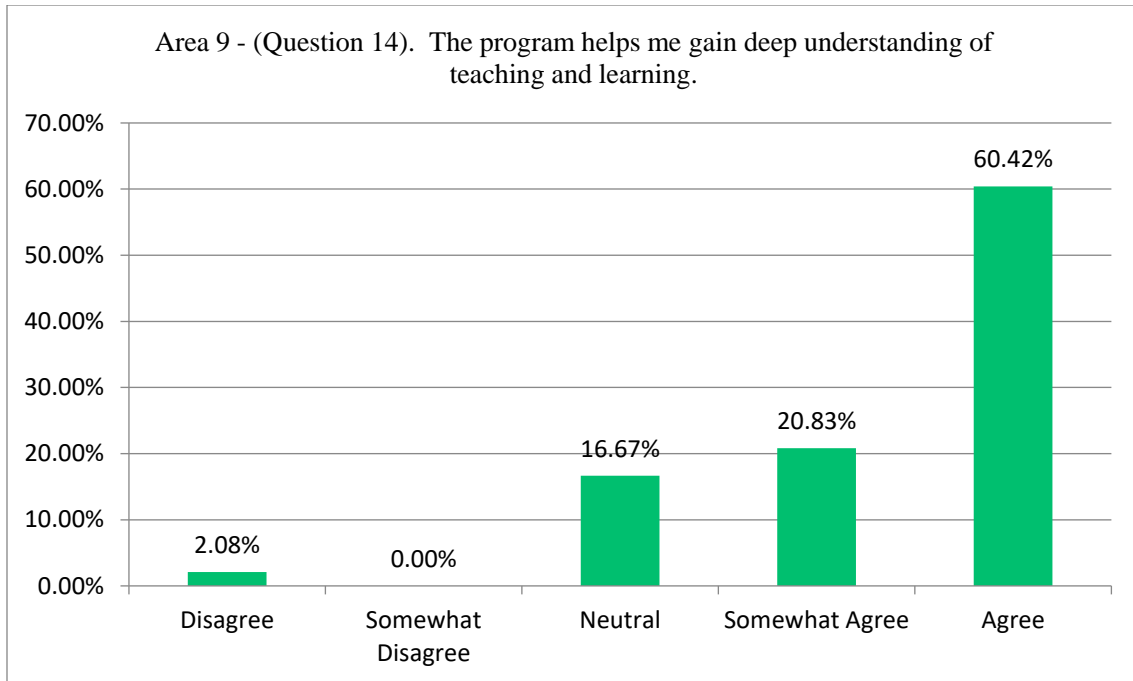


Figure 16: Culturally Responsive Practices

On the second question in Area 9, there were 29 participants representing 60.42% who agreed that the program helps them to gain deep understanding of teaching and learning. Other participants who somewhat agreed to the program helping them gain deep understanding of teaching and learning were 10, representing 20.83%. On the other hand, one participant representing 2.08% disagreed that, the program helped to gain deep understanding of teaching and learning.

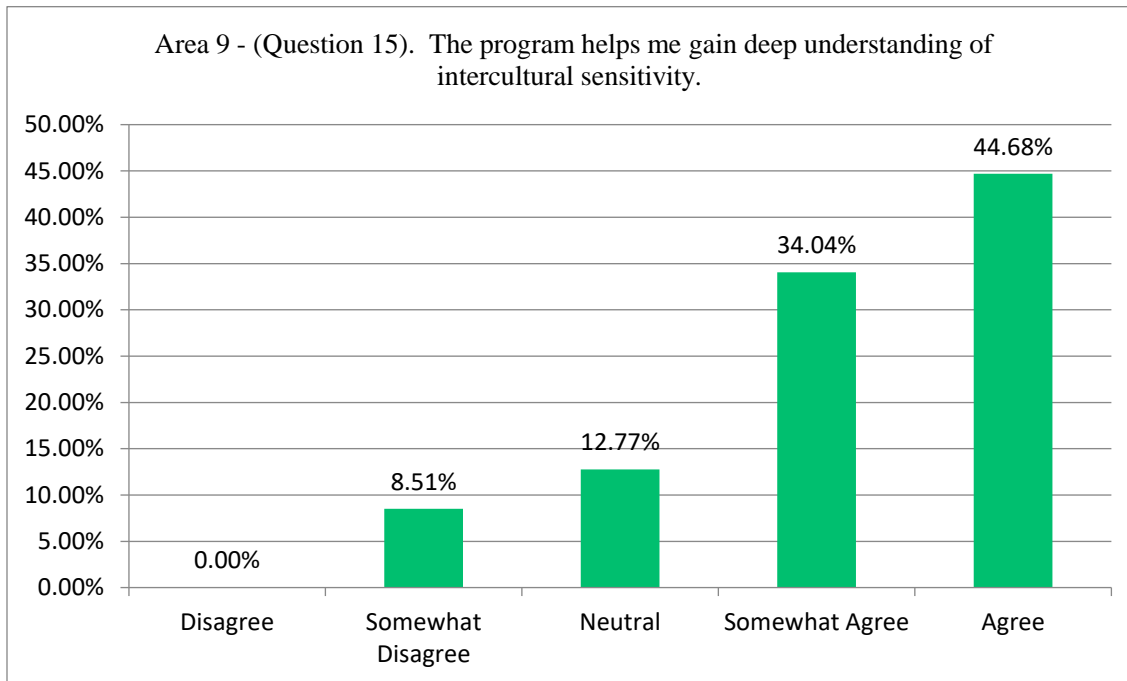


Figure 17: Culturally Responsive Practices

On the third question on Culturally Responsive Practices, 21 participants representing 44.68% agreed that the program helps them to gain deep understanding of intercultural sensitivity. On the other hand, 16 participants who represented 34.04% somewhat agreed to this statement. Participant responses also showed 4 participants representing 8.51% indicating somewhat disagreement to this statement.

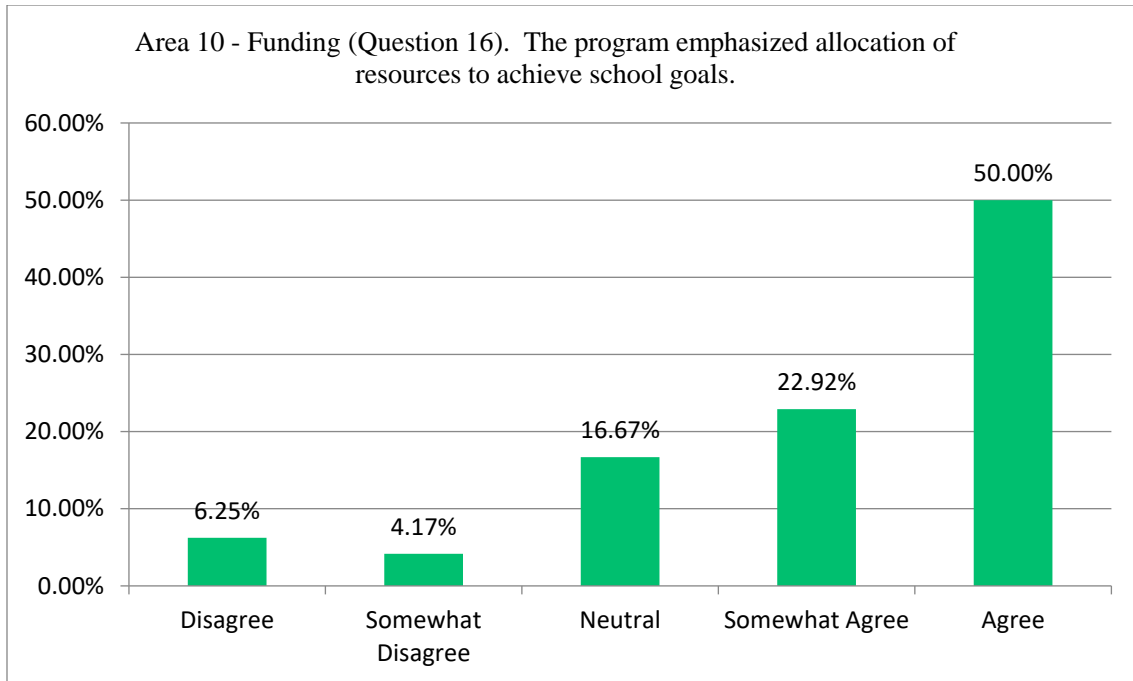


Figure 18: Funding

Funding is Area 10 on the survey. There were 24 participants representing 50% who indicated agreement with the statement that, the preparation program emphasized allocation of resources to achieve school goals. Other participants somewhat agreed to this and they were 11, representing 22.92%. Two participants indicated somewhat disagreement, representing 4.17%. There were 3 participants however, who disagreed, and they represented 6.25%.

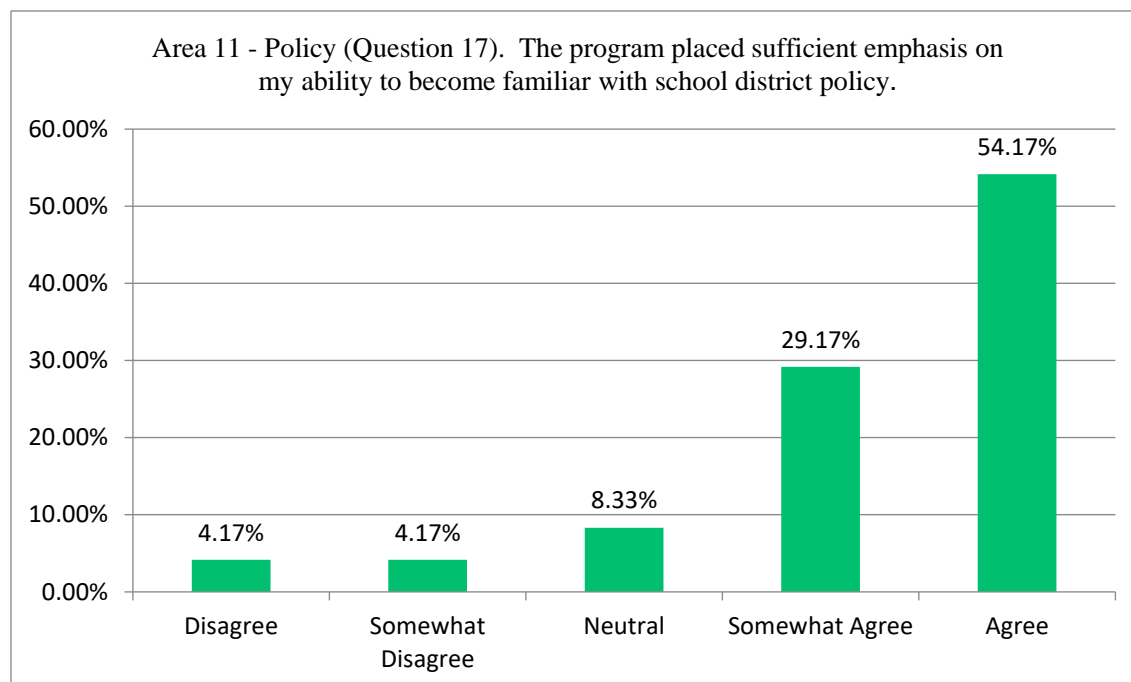


Figure 19: Policy

Area 11 discussed policy. Survey responses showed 26 participants representing 54.17% who agreed that the KEEA headteacher (principal) preparation program placed sufficient emphasis on headteachers' ability to become familiar with school district policy. There were 14 participants who represented 29.17% indicating somewhat agreeing to this assertion. However, 2 participants representing 4.17% somewhat disagreed as well as 2 participants representing 4.17% disagreed.

Semi-structured interviews

After the completion of the survey, five participants representing 10% of the sample population were randomly selected to engaged in a semi-structured, three-item interview designed to gain further insights on their perspectives on the principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District. This helped in keeping with the qualitative research tradition of capturing participants' own words which helped for the emergence of data analyses. The interviews were conducted over the phone as the researcher could not travel for a face-to-face

interview due to the spread and prevention of COVID-19. Interview questions allowed for open-ended responses and were made flexible enough to help the researcher in collecting information on unexpected dimensions of the topic. Interview questions included:

1. Is there a principal (headteacher) preparation program or pipeline in the KEEA school district?
2. What does it look like?
3. What if any are the factors (positive or negative) influencing the principal (headteacher) preparation program or pipeline development in KEEA District?

A request was sent to the interview participants, with flexible time set and at participants' availability. Interviews were conducted over the phone with a follow up through WhatsApp messenger. On the question of the existence of a preparation program or pipeline, all participants indicated there was something in place but not sure if it could be referred to as a "pipeline" for leadership in KEEA District. The district "however has some form of protocol in place for headteachers," as indicated by one participant. All participants shared that there are meetings held at the beginning and then at the end of the school terms to share ideas but nothing ongoing. On other occasions, as one participant shared, some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) like the US AID could also come in to share some ideas "but nothing that the KEEA District has in place as ongoing."

This led to the question of how headteachers grow their skills and all participants agreed that headteachers often learn on the job. As one participant shared, "headteachers are given a manual to read and "if you don't understand, you call the officer in charge of training to explain to you." The participant added that, sometimes one may face challenges and that is when "you learn." The participant sometimes also calls on his or her older assistant who has served longer

in the district for help and “he or she shares their experiences.” In other situations, if the assistant is not able to help, then the participant would call on the training officer for help.

On the third question on possible factors (negative or positive) that may be influencing the principal preparation or pipeline development in KEEA District, participants stated that a better organized and more consistent program or pipeline for headteachers would be helpful in the sense that, it would give more experience to incumbent and aspiring heads, and “people could bounce off ideas from one another instead of them working in isolation.” A headteacher referred to the idea of working together to learn from one another and being able to have some form of “uniformity” across board which could be another way of “grooming others” as “we grow together, and people get to polish little by little.” This, the participant added, “will bring a lot of improvement and quality which will reflect in our various schools.” Participants held the view that, there are too many leadership gaps that need to be filled with one of the most important being the means of communication and information dissemination. Participants also agreed that although getting better these days, when major meetings are held at the district levels, it is sometimes difficult for individuals at the circuit levels to get information. This, according to a participant, led to the creation of a WhatsApp platform for headteachers, which has been a helpful medium of communication. In another instance, one participant indicated, “the purpose is often to match a certain goal, but we often deviate, and school leadership has to be creative.” According to this headteacher, as a head with three assistant heads for instance, “there is the need to always be creative. This is because three heads oversee three different levels (KG, Primary and Junior High School), with separate needs, which can be challenging.” A meticulously organized program in place, the headteacher added, “will help create a community of learners that can share great ideas and not operate in isolation.” Another participant indicated that,

headteachers have been complaining about the need for the school district to do more than just giving information to heads to go and “learn on the job.”

Although participants had some areas of concern regarding a better way for district leadership to help headteachers thrive on the job, there were three main areas that all participants thought the KEEA District handles quite well. These were finance, supervision, and monitoring as well as policy. As one of the participants indicated, “they always train you on how to keep your books and so finance is very strong.” Another participant indicated, the district “does not play when it comes to the head managing the books and so there is more training on the area of bookkeeping.”

One participant explaining how supervision and monitoring is done said, “they come to the school to check on how students are learning, teachers are teaching and the possible support that can be given.” In this case therefore, supervisors go to the schools to check on the principals and during those visits, they can sometimes enter classrooms to see how teaching and learning are going on. It is during such visits that they also help the principals solve any problems they may have. The supervisor can come in at any time, observe teachers’ notes, attendance etc., and at the beginning of the term, “the headteacher must create an action plan, which directs you.” Headteachers, according to this participant, “need a transparency chart to reflect everything you do and that will tell how effective you are, e.g., teachers’ attendance, lesson plans, and teaching styles.” Another participant referred to the fact that “they can also call children and check on how much they have learned, when they do a walkthrough.” This makes “you ready at any time because you can’t tell when they will come in to pay a visit.” This brought about a question on cultural sensitivity where a participant added that, certain elements in the curriculum especially cultural studies at the primary level uses “Our World Our People.” Cultural sensitivity was one

area that was intentionally inculcated in the curriculum. As one participant indicated, “Ghanaians always see themselves as one people irrespective of cultural differences.” The participant added that, cultural studies for instance seeks to educate students on moral, cultural and citizenship issues. Education is structured in such a way that, “we see ourselves as one people and most Ghanaians are sensitive to where we come from and the tribes we belong to.” Participants also shared that, with any policy introduced, there is capacity building for all headteachers and “this will not be introduced without you having the capacity built” and “you cannot do whatever counter to the policy; then you get yourself in trouble.” Courses are run not only for headteachers but even for directors and “the different levels are built, and Ghana Education Service (GES) is serious about policy implementation and you are well briefed, so you do well.” Generally, participants were with the view that although the system provides some trainings in various areas, they are not as consistent and ongoing to keep them abreast with trends in leadership development. In keeping with the literature, it is important for district leadership to view ongoing professional development for principals as a key component to principals’ growth and student achievement, instead of wasting “resources on one-shot workshops, rather than designing ongoing and consistent support that would help align school activities with best practices and support principal problem solving” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p. 7).

The next and final chapter discusses recommendations for policy, practice, future research, and conclusion.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

There is no doubt that principals' roles are important in setting the direction for successful schools, however, current knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop highly qualified and effective school leaders is sparse (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Mendels, 2012). As such, the recognition of the importance of school leaders in teaching and learning coupled with a growing shortage of high-quality leaders in American schools, increased the interest in leadership development as a major reform strategy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). The investment of tremendous amounts of time and resources on school leadership help them to be successful on the job (Mendels, 2012). This mixed methods study is a look at principal leadership pipeline development in Komenda Edina Eguafo Abriem (KEEA) District in the Central Region of Ghana, West Africa, to understand how the school district develops its principal program or pipeline for incumbent and aspiring school leaders. A sample of 50 participants made up of district leaders, principals, assistant principals, and aspiring leaders from schools in the KEEA District were randomly selected to participate in the study. Data were generated through Survey Monkey Cloud and semi-structured interviews with 10% of the sample participants.

In this chapter are the summary and discussion of the findings as well as the conclusions that were drawn from the collected data. This final chapter also gives recommendations for practice, policy, and future research. The study has significance for the field of international education. It will enhance an adequate understanding and appreciation of how education is developed and promoted within a set of different contexts. It will provide policy planners with

the adequate knowledge required for putting in place effective processes and practices for leadership in the development of education.

Research Questions

The two research questions associated with this study are:

1. Is there a principal preparation program or pipeline in KEEA District?
2. To what degree does the program align with research-based elements?

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

The eleven elements found in the literature to be associated with effective principal preparation programs or pipelines have questions that require one or more answers. In the event where more than one question revolves around that element, the responses were averaged providing an aggregate response for that element. The results provide a base for ongoing discussions and action on research-based practices to prepare and retain candidates to effectively lead schools.

In Area 1, the survey and interview data about the existence of a headteacher (principal) preparation program or pipeline in the first place seems uncertain. There were three questions in Area 1 on Leadership/Principal Standards/ Expectations. Answers to all three questions reveal the possibility of something like a pipeline or program but not as organized or formal. Most survey participants, who formed about 41%, also viewed the program in place as loosely structured. Only eight participants representing 16.67% agreed that expectations for the completion of the program in place were rigorous. This was largely confirmed by interview participants. In their viewpoint, there exists some structure that the district has in place for school leaders but were not sure if this can appropriately be referred to as a principal preparation program or pipeline, as its organization was not very consistent with elements of a structured

program or pipeline. All participants shared that, there are meetings held at the beginning and then at the end of the school terms, to share ideas but nothing formal or ongoing. On other occasions, as one participant shared, some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), like the US AID, could also come in to share some ideas, but there was nothing that the KEEA District has in place that could be referred to as a pipeline or preparation program. Just as in the GEEA literature, most Ghanaian heads were appointed without any specific management training and only a few received appropriate in-service training following their appointment (Bush & Oduro, 2006). A pipeline determines the succession in all roles because leaders will be developing at all levels (Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010). In a case of an open position for instance, it becomes easier for a smooth succession as there will be others ready to move to that position. A leadership pipeline therefore helps with being proactive for the future. A leadership pipeline has the potential of helping to build set skills in potential leaders (Papa, 2007; Searby et al., 2017; Hallinger, 2010).

Area 2 on the survey discussed Professional Development/High Quality Training. Responses, as shown in Figure 6, indicate a combined total of over 65% of the participants either agreed or somewhat agreed that the quality of the training program was excellent. As also revealed in the semi-structured interviews, although trainings may not be ongoing, trainings on any issue were often well organized. In the literature review, ongoing professional development takes many forms and is an essential element to supporting and retaining qualified educational leaders. Leadership succession and professional development programs have the potential to develop aspiring school leaders in numerous areas including the strengthening of their knowledge base and skills in instructional leadership (Gurley et al., 2015; Peel & Wallace, 1996; Greenfield, 1985; Arikewuyo, 2009; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). The

data from both the survey and interviews are indications for leadership in the KEEA district to move towards more rigorous and an ongoing approach on training or professional development for leadership. Aspiring and incumbent school leaders need more opportunities and trainings that will allow them to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships (Fusarelli & Militello, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Area 3 responses on Selective Recruitment and Hiring were of great interest. Responses revealed that, there is more work to do as far as the recruiting and hiring processes of headteachers. Survey data from Figure 7 above indicate that about 15% of participants disagreed that “to be hired as a headteacher in the Central Region of Ghana is extremely competitive.” From participant demographic information, most of the people who disagreed were in the urban setting. This makes one wonder about the hiring process for developing school leadership in the district from rural versus urban areas. As confirmed by the literature, there are two approaches used by the Ghana Education Service (GES) to appoint headteachers. The first is the appointment through direct posting, involving appointing newly trained teachers to lead schools, especially in the rural areas. Due to the under activeness of rural life, working in rural schools is non-competitive among teachers who might otherwise have aspired to be appointed as headteachers. The second process is done through selection interviews of headteachers in urban schools (Bush & Oduro, 2006). The literature reveals that for effective pipeline development, there is the need for positive changes in the hiring and selection processes of district leadership (Ash et al., 2013; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Arikewuyo, 2009). Selection means that leadership takes a pool of qualified applicants of individuals who are purposefully, thoughtfully, and deliberately selected (Crow et al., 2017; Nash & Bangert, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

Area 4 survey viewpoint On-the-Job Support also warrants some discussion. The close split between responses on participants who agree (35.42%) and somewhat agree (29.17%) in Figure 8 indicate some inconsistency. The percentage of participants who somewhat disagree (22.9%) to this point is also worth noting. This was backed by the responses of interview participants who mostly indicated that, headteachers often learn on the job. As one participant shared, “headteachers are given a manual to read and “if you don’t understand, you call the officer in charge of training to explain to you.” For some participants, one may face challenges and that is when “you learn.” Others sometimes call on older assistants who have served longer on the job for help. In other situations, if the assistant is not able to help, one could call on the training officer for help. As indicated by the literature, given that organizational and individual development continues to be important to leadership, educational leaders will need regular work and support in maximizing their ability to succeed on the job (Greenfield, 1985; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015). Although training should be ongoing for all principals (headteachers) regardless, new headteachers (principals) always need the extra help and training to boost their self-efficacy which will in turn help with overall student achievement. These strategies coupled with others will help ease off some stress, making headteachers stay longer to achieve mastery, be empowered and as such have better ways of handling situations. The literature again indicates that, “new administrators armed only with theories lack key experiential skills that might ease their transition into professional positions” (Peel & Wallace, 1996, p. 11; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Cosner et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). It is interesting however that, on the other question for On-the-Job Support, retention on the job seems to be remarkably high as per the responses of participants. It appears participants find ways to be creative to stay on the job,

despite not receiving what they need to stay on the job. This could be due to many factors, one being the difficulty with acquiring a job in the first place.

Area 5 discusses Instructional Leadership Activities. Per the literature, instructional leadership demands a collaborative process between principals, teachers, and other stakeholders who serve to promote an excellent educational agenda (Vogel, 2018; Mulkeen et al., 2007; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2019). As shown in Figure 10, survey responses indicated high numbers of individuals who either agreed or somewhat agreed that, how to provide instructional leadership was emphasized heavily in the KEEA program. This formed a combined total of 74%. Interview participants also unanimously agreed to this assertion. In the area of supervision and monitoring for instance, one participant referring to how supervision is done said, “they come to the school to check on how students are learning, teachers are teaching and the possible support that can be given.” Another participant referred to the fact that “they can also call children and check on how much they have learned when they do a walkthrough.” Interview participants talked about headteachers’ action plan on teaching and learning and how officers may pop in and ask if one needs any assistance. This may not be enough because, the role of the principal is so complex, it demands a well- structured and consistent supervision and monitoring especially around instruction. As the literature indicates, in a well- structured headteacher (principal) preparation program, participants will benefit from the focus on instructional leadership as an essential aspect of their learning. A focus on instructional observation and feedback would help strengthen instructional practices in their respective school buildings to help develop a stronger and more learner-centered school environment. Preparation programs could educate participants on different strategies to effectively support their teachers in their instructional practice. All these exposures would also

make participants more informed on issues that matter for all schools (Gurley et al., 2015; Muijs & Harris, 2003; Shaked et al., 2018; Fuller et al., 2015; Vogel, 2018; Fusarelli et al., 2019; Kaplan & Owings, 2017).

Area 6 discusses Increased Institutional Perspective and most of the participants agreed that the program in place indeed provided helpful instruction on the processes of school leadership. As indicated in Figure 11, a combined total of about 90% of participants either agreed or somewhat agreed to this. As already discussed, interview participants shared how supervisors came in the schools unannounced to check on how teaching and learning was going on as well as check on the action plan of the headteacher. As one participant indicated, “the supervisor can come in at any time, observe teachers notes, attendance etc. and at the beginning of the term, the headteacher must create an action plan, which directs you.” Heads, according to this participant, “need a transparency chart to reflect everything you do and that will tell how effective you are, e.g., teachers’ attendance, lesson plans, teaching styles.” According to the literature, in a pipeline, participants could learn about “district curriculum, instructional issues, and many new initiatives and programs from multiple perspectives” (Gurley et al., 2015, p. 228; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). The need for school leaders receiving ongoing support in diverse areas is vital. This should not be an occasional activity. In a leadership preparation program with ongoing opportunities, participants could grow in their awareness of various district functions which they previously were not aware of. Program participants could end up being more appreciative of the chance to be made abreast with district programming and initiatives and this would help with a more successful performance of their duties. Participants could, therefore, form a better knowledge and understanding of what is going on in their school districts as well as what is working in other schools, acquiring new ideas

from other participants in similar leadership roles (Gurley et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2011; Smylie & Eckert, 2017; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2019).

Area 7 on the survey discussed Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices. Most participants, representing 88% as shown in Figure 12, agreed, or somewhat agreed that the program emphasized collaboration within the school to accomplish strategic goals. This came as a surprise as interview participants agreed on the fact that supervisors came in to check in and offered help where needed, but did not, however, agree with the fact that, the program necessarily emphasized collaboration with other headteachers in the school district. Participants were with the view that, a better organized headteacher (principal) program would be helpful in the sense that, it would give more experience to incumbent and aspiring heads, and “people could bounce off ideas from one another instead of them working in isolation.” A headteacher referred to the idea of working together to learn from one another and being able to have some form of “uniformity” across board and another way of “grooming others” as “we grow together, and people get to polish little by little.” This, the participant added, “will bring a lot of improvement and quality which will reflect in our various schools.” A program in place the headteacher added, “will help create a community of learners that can share great ideas and not operate in isolation.” Another participant indicated that, heads have been complaining about the need for the school district to do more than just giving information to heads to go and “learn on the job.” As the literature indicates, program participants would appreciate the benefit of consistent meetings with, sharing and bouncing off ideas from others who play similar roles from other schools. School leaders appreciate the power of collaboration as a positive outcome. (Gurley et al., 2015; Shun-wing & Sing-ying, 2016). When school districts pick participants from their district to create a cohort of administrators, they help produce strong collaborative

learners and the establishment of teamwork (Cosner et al., 2015; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

Area 8 on the survey talked about Strengthened Technological Skills, a total percentage of 73% of participants agreed or somewhat agreed that the program helped them gain the technological skills needed to be effective. Interview participants discussed to the issue of information dissemination within the school district. According to interviewees, there are too many leadership gaps that need to be filled with one of the most important being the means of communication. Participants shared the view that major meetings are often held at the district levels and sometimes it is difficult for individuals at the circuit levels to get to know. Important information, participants indicated, sometimes do not get to the right people on a timely manner. This according to a participant led to the creation of a WhatsApp platform for headteachers, where information is shared, providing substantial assistance. In another interview a participant indicated that, “the purpose is often to match a certain goal, but we often deviate, and school leadership has to be creative.” According to this participant, as a headteacher with three assistant headteachers, “there is the need to always be creative.” This is because three heads oversee three different levels (KG, Primary and Junior High School), with separate needs, which can be challenging. The literature indicates that, all over the world, there is an increasing call for an allocation of resources for developing and implementing innovations geared towards the improvement of public education (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Pounder & Crow, 2005). This is an indication for the need for KEEA district leadership to review infrastructure issues. Educational policy makers, practitioners, and scholars throughout the world have therefore acknowledged the vital role principal leadership plays in the generation and implementation of innovations (Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Area 9 on the survey discusses Culturally Responsive Practices. As shown in Figure 15, majority of the participants forming a combined total of 81% agreed or somewhat agreed that the program helps them gain deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction. Interview participants support this assertion where they talk about how officers come in to check in and help with any areas of misconception, visiting classrooms to check on both teachers and students as well as talking to random students. Interview participants also talk about how officers would check on their “Action Plans” and offer to help with any areas of concern. A great majority of participants agree that the program in place helps with deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction. This is in line with culturally responsive practices. As one of the interviewees indicated, cultural sensitivity was one area that was intentionally inculcated in the curriculum. As one participant said, “Ghanaians always see themselves as one people irrespective of cultural differences.” The participant added that, cultural studies for instance seeks to educate students on moral, cultural and citizenship issues. Education is structured in such a way that, “we see ourselves as one people and most Ghanaians are sensitive to where we come from and the tribes we belong to.” As the literature indicates, to ensure improved student learning outcomes, current school principals must possess a deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning, and intercultural sensitivity (Israel & Fine, 2012).

Area 10 on the survey dealt with funding. According to the literature, some school districts work with partners to explore alternative means of funding program costs for participants (Hitt et al., 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). It is worth noting however that in this study, data were not available to determine the cost of participation in a preparation program. Funding from diverse sources may come with their own problems and as such, program directors should also be prepared when outside funding is no longer available.

Participants reported preparation in managing fiscal resources (bookkeeping) as strong. As shown in Figure 18, a combined total of 73% of the participants indicated that the program emphasized allocation of resources to achieve school goals. Interview participants, however, referred to the need to sometimes be creative as a headteacher in making things work. As one of the participants indicated, “they always train you on how to keep your books and so finance is very strong.” Another interviewee indicated, the district “does not play when it comes to the head managing the books and so there is more training on the area of bookkeeping.”

Area 11 on the survey involved Policy. As shown in Figure 19, a combined total of 83% of participants agreed or somewhat agreed that the program placed sufficient emphasis on their ability to become familiar with school district policy. This seems contrary to interview responses where participants unanimously agreed that any policy introduced by the Ghana Education Service (GES) comes with a capacity building for all leaders and heads can “get in trouble” should they do anything different. Participants indicated that “courses are run not only for heads but also directors and the system is serious about policy implementation. You are well briefed and so you do well.” Most participants agreed that the program emphasized their ability to become familiar with school district policy. The literature also indicates that, the creation of a high-quality leadership development model will require a lot of district and state policy support (Young & Crow, 2017; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

In summary, results indicated the need for district leadership to take a critical look in developing a proper principal (headteacher) program or pipeline, incorporating all the recommended characteristics of a successful program to help develop the prerequisite skills in aspiring and incumbent school leaders. There were other factors that could have also influenced the study results. In general, most responses were on the affirmative with a few areas where

participant responses indicated an even split or quite close responses between the people who agreed or strongly agreed. In other situations, although survey implied one thing, interview participants also indicated otherwise. Although these came as surprises, results generally indicate the need for a better organized and more formal leadership preparation program for the school district.

Research Question 1

Is there a principal leadership program or pipeline in KEEA District?

School leadership is a major key to school improvement and as such, the roles of the current and aspiring headteachers are critical within the educational system and it is paramount that they are adequately prepared to take on the task of leading diverse schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Findings from the study support the need for a well-structured pipeline or program for aspiring and incumbent school leaders in the KEEA District to help build the needed skills for school heads. The follow-up questions revealed some confusion concerning the existence of a principal preparation program or a pipeline. Participants may have responded on the survey to make the school district look good, when in fact, the follow up indicated there may be problems.

Research Question 2

To what degree does the program align with research-based elements?

While the quality of teaching influences levels of pupil motivation and achievement, it has also been demonstrated that the quality of leadership matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching (Muijs & Harris, 2003; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2015; Kaplan & Owings, 2017; Pounder & Crow, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2019). Findings from this study indicate that, many factors would help start the conversation on how the KEEA

educational system can be revamped to better organize aspiring and current school leaders' preparation programs. These factors are rooted in many areas included in the recruitment, selection, and development of effective school leaders. To a large degree, the protocol in place in the KEEA District does not align with research-based elements.

Recommendations for Policy, Practice and Future Research

Recommendations for Policy

The complex nature of schools requires specific leadership skills to ensure that schools are led by highly qualified principals. For this reason, district leadership must have an effective principal development system in place known as principal pipelines or leadership preparation programs which are “the range of talent management activities that fall within a school district’s scope of responsibility when it comes to school leaders” (Gates et al., 2019, p. 14; Pounder & Crow, 2005). The recommendations that flow from the findings of the study are meant to suggest to policy makers on areas of focus to address the challenges of maintaining a high quality, principal leadership pipeline or program. The interviews with selected school leaders in Komenda Edina Eguafó Abriem (KEEA) elaborated issues identified in the literature review of this study on the importance of a leadership pipeline in school districts. Evidence from the study suggests some confusion with the existence of a principal preparation program or pipeline. The study recommends for policymakers to focus and explore the different ways to help school leaders of KEEA District to succeed on the job. Policy agendas can include comprehensive reviews of research-based activities on the recruitment, preparation, and development of school leaders. Policymakers should also find better ways of communication and especially to make research easily accessible. As confirmed by the literature, a survey conducted in the capital city

of Ghana, Accra revealed that the headteachers lacked leadership proficiency due to absence of leadership preparation programs (Zame et al., 2008; Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018).

Study participants were either in a rural or urban setting. As such, some of the answers reflected participant experiences in their settings or some known facts about the questions asked. For instance, on the question of Selective Recruitment and Hiring, about 15% of survey participants disagreed that selective recruitment and hiring as a headteacher in the Central Region was extremely competitive. Most of those respondents were from the urban setting. Another area worth noting was about program expectations. About 17% of participants disagreed that expectations were rigorous, and majority of those respondents were from the rural setting. In another area of the On-the-Job Support for Development and Retention, about 23% of survey participants somewhat disagreed that on-the-job support was excellent. Most of those participants were also from the rural setting. Coupled with the even split of answers from participants from rural and urban settings in other survey areas and supported with answers from interviews, this seems to be an issue of equity based on rural and urban settings which should be explored by policymakers. Policymakers will want to explore research-based practices on equity in education. This is most important as the effort will help with student achievement, with an overall impact of better economy and social outcomes for the nation. There is the need to put systems in place that would ensure that every student has the equal opportunity to succeed and that starts with investing in the headteacher (principal) who is at the helm of affairs. This is a complex issue as educational leaders must be extremely knowledgeable in allocation of basic resources that directly impact student learning (Kaplan & Owings, 2017; Leithwood et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). With the current free Senior High

School (free SHS) education initiative in 2017, it would be important to invest in the development of effective headteachers.

Recommendations for Practice

To plan and implement a well-structured pipeline or program, school leadership can do better on placing more emphasis on instructional leadership, by integrating theory and practice, and providing more research-based strategies and preparation for headteachers in working effectively with the school community. They should also offer aspiring and incumbent leaders with hands-on leadership opportunities, by exploring all aspects of leadership development from recruitment to ongoing development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Lonyian & Kuranchie, 2018). Research suggests universities and public schools to work together to establish leadership programs that work on the integration of theory and practice aimed at providing participants the opportunities to experience real life situations. As such, “new administrators armed only with theories lack key experiential skills that might ease their transition into professional positions” (Peel & Wallace, 1996, p. 11; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Cosner et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005). According to the literature, it is imperative for organizational theory to be addressed which could reveal opportunities to develop principals as puzzle-solvers in implementation, rather than technical problem-solvers. In this case, “professional learning opportunities should be experiential in nature, with the analysis, evaluation, and development of structures and practices” (Woulfin, 2017, p. 173; Shun-wing & Sing-ying, 2016,).

Recommendations for Future Research

More research must be focused on factors that promote the success of school leaders in the district. Research evidence must be collected on the effectiveness of the different approaches as opposed just describing ways to attract and or retain school leaders. Future studies can carry

out research that tracks the effects and consequences of interventions to improve teaching and learning, which has a direct reflection on school leadership. From the findings, it was interesting to note that, despite all the areas that seem to be lacking, retention rate is quite high. An interesting future study could investigate what accounts for headteacher retention on the job despite their poor preparation and less support on the job. This will help unravel other areas of importance to determine whether the district has some good strategies on retaining leaders. The literature refers to the importance and benefits of the partnership between school districts and universities in the production and development of effective school leaders (Hitt et al., 2012; Coleman, & Reames, 2018; Pounder & Crow, 2005). It would therefore be interesting to explore the impact of the school district and universities partnership, if any, in the production and development of school leaders. This would help explore the different ways of supporting potential and aspiring school leaders. Findings also revealed some issues about the selection process for school leaders. It would also be interesting to look at schools in the rural setting as opposed to the urban through the lens of leadership preparation and development. Another study could look at the formal versus informal preparation of headteachers and student achievement. In the literature, the idea of school principals being instructional leaders of a school is an important topic in educational leadership (Leithwood et al., 2019; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). A future study could also explore student enrollment level for future enrollment (cohort survival rate).

Conclusion

Throughout this paper I have discussed the different concepts from the literature that would enhance the role of school leaders and prepare them for this complex role. The study of principal pipeline development in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abriem (KEEA) District in the

Central Region of Ghana, West Africa included a literature review followed by a survey on eleven elements identified from the review of literature. Additional interviews with selected school leaders and decision makers in the KEEA district was an added in-depth information to the literature review findings, confirming that the issues identified in the literature were particularly important and current. A review of the literature in this study captured some key domains of leadership practice although leaders “work in other domains, such as their engagement with parents and communities and their efforts to advocate for their students, staff, and schools, which are essential to effective leadership practice” (Young et al., 2017 p. 721). Finally, this study contributes to principal leadership pipeline development as an important practice in school districts. Planning and ensuring an adequate supply of qualified school leaders is essential for a school district to thrive. The literature reveals that, there is not enough research on principals and leadership pipeline (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Mendels, 2012). As such, this contributes to why “new administrators armed only with theories lack key experiential skills that might ease their transition into professional positions” (Peel & Wallace, 1996, p. 11; Coleman & Reames, 2018; Cosner et al., 2015; Pounder & Crow, 2005).

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

Please rate the following statements on your level of agreement with 1 being low and 5 being a high level of agreement.

Area 1 - Leadership/Principal Standards/Expectations

1) There is there a formal preparation program or pipeline for individuals who want to become head teachers or principals.

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Agree
5. Agree

2) If there is a preparation program, how would you describe this process or pipeline?

- Unofficially Structured
- Loosely Structured
- Well Structured

Please provide a brief description:

3) The expectations for completing this program or pipeline were rigorous.

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Agree

5. Agree

Go to next page

Area 2 - Professional Development /High-Quality Training (how often did they meet?)

4) The quality of the training program in the pipeline was excellent.

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Agree
5. Agree

Area 3 - Selective Recruitment and Hiring

5) To be hired as a headteacher in the Central Region of Ghana is extremely competitive.

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Agree
5. Agree

Area 4 - On the Job Support for Development and Retention

6) Once the pipeline was completed, the job support has been excellent.

1. Disagree
2. Somewhat Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Agree

5. **Agree**

7) Once appointed as a headteacher, retention on the job remains high.

1. **Disagree**

2. **Somewhat Disagree**

3. **Neutral**

4. **Somewhat Agree**

5. **Agree**

Go to next page

Area 5 - Instructional Leadership Activities

8) How to provide instructional leadership was emphasized heavily in this program.

1. **Disagree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Somewhat Agree**
5. **Agree**

Area 6 - Increased Institutional Perspective

9) The program provided helpful instruction on the processes of school leadership.

1. **Disagree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Somewhat Agree**
5. **Agree**

Area 7 - Increased Strength in Collaborative Practices

10) The program emphasized collaboration within the school to accomplish strategic goals.

1. **Disagree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Somewhat Agree**

5. Agree

11) The program emphasized collaboration with other headteachers in the educational school district.

1. Disagree

2. Somewhat Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Somewhat Agree

5. Agree

Go to next page

Area 8 - Strengthened Technological Skills

12) The program helped me to gain the technological skills needed to be effective as a headteacher.

1. **Disagree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Somewhat Agree**
5. **Agree**

Area 9 - Culturally Responsive Practices

13) The program helps me gain deep understanding of the curriculum and instruction.

1. **Disagree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Somewhat Agree**
5. **Agree**

14) The program helps me gain deep understanding of teaching and learning.

1. **Disagree**
2. **Somewhat Disagree**
3. **Neutral**
4. **Somewhat Agree**

5. **Agree**

15) The program helps me gain deep understanding of intercultural sensitivity.

1. **Disagree**

2. **Somewhat Disagree**

3. **Neutral**

4. **Somewhat Agree**

5. **Agree**

Area 10 - Funding

16) The program emphasized allocation of resources to achieve school goals.

1. **Disagree**

2. **Somewhat Disagree**

3. **Neutral**

4. **Somewhat Agree**

5. **Agree**

Area 11 - Policy

17) The program placed sufficient emphasis on my ability to become familiar with school district policy.

1. **Disagree**

2. **Somewhat Disagree**

3. **Neutral**

4. Somewhat Agree

5. Agree

END OF SURVEY – PLEASE SAVE THE SURVEY AND EMAIL TO:

eturk003@odu.edu

Appendix B: Letter of Consent

Partial fulfillment towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Research Primary Investigator

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LETTER OF CONSENT

October 19, 2020

Dear Education Professional:

As an experienced educator with excellent credentials, you are being invited to participate in an educational impact study on principal pipeline development in Ghana. I am particularly interested in looking at schools in the central region of Ghana.

This research will require about 30 minutes of your time. During this time, you will be asked to indicate your level of agreement with specific questions with 1 being low and 5 being high level of agreement. Extra space will be provided should you wish to add any comment. The format of the questions will be through the online platform *Survey Monkey*. A link will be e-mailed to you,

where you can access the list of alignments, indicate your level of agreement, then complete your participation by clicking "submit" to send your feedback.

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this research; however, if you have concerns, you are welcome to contact the researcher of this study at any time.

Participants in this study may have a better understanding of the importance of a leadership pipeline and increase their overall understanding of leadership practices. You may also find the experience enjoyable and rewarding, as many people working in education do not get to share their expertise by contributing to the bigger social and educational picture. Your participation in this research may also benefit others by helping people to understand the importance of establishing a leadership pipeline for headteachers in Ghana.

All information taken from the study will be coded to protect subjects' names. No names or other identifying information will be used when discussing or reporting the data. All files and data collected will be a secured locked cabinet, accessible only to the researcher. Once the data has been fully analyzed it will all be destroyed after five years.

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. If you choose to withdraw, all information from you will be destroyed.

The results from this study will be presented in writing in partial fulfillment towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and in journals read by educators and policymakers, to help them better understand the purpose and importance of establishing a leadership pipeline. At no time, however, will your name be used or any identifying information revealed.

Please e-mail the primary researcher Eunice Turkson at Old Dominion University:

eturk003@odu.edu, should you require any information or have questions about the study.

If you have questions about this project or your rights as a participant in the project, you can contact Dr. Laura Chezan, the chair of the DCOEPS Human Subjects Review Committee at lchezan@odu.edu

If you agree to share your expertise by participating in this educational impact study, please read the statement below and sign the document to indicate your consent. Please sign and return the consent form to eturk003@odu.edu.

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study on the development of principal pipeline in Ghana, and authorize the use of my records, any observations, and findings found during this study for education, publication and/or presentation.

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Date)