EdQual

A Research Programme Consortium on
Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries

Research Project:
LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT OF
CHANGE FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

WORKSHOP REPORT No.5
HEADTEACHER NEEDS ANALYSIS
WORKSHOP

Effective Leadership:
the Driving Force of Quality Basic Education

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Tamale and Cape Coast, Ghana

University of Cape Coast

EdQual

A Research Programme Consortium on
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Abbreviations

GES   Ghana Education Service
INSET   In-service Training
KEEA   Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem
MoES   Ministry of Education and Sports
NGO   Non-Governmental Organizations
PTA   Parent Teacher Association
SMC   School Management Committee
TLM   Teaching + Learning Materials

1.   Introduction

As part of the research activities designed for the EdQual Leadership and Management Large Scale Project, two parallel workshops were held concurrently in Tamale and Cape Coast, Ghana under the theme ``***Effective Leadership: the Driving Force of Quality Basic Education'***. The rationale was to understand leadership activities performed by primary school headteachers and how they promote quality education in Ghana. Quality education is critical in Ghana's efforts towards reducing poverty in the country. Improving quality education through school leadership is therefore necessary for ensuring successful implementation of Ghana's educational reform. Understanding how headteachers perceive their own work and the challenges associated with their leadership tasks is critical in the delivery of quality education.

This report presents views expressed by headteachers during the Needs Analysis Workshops (NAW). It also presents main issues emerging from the researchers' workshop held in Cape Coast.

2.   Aims of the Workshop

The workshop aimed to create opportunities for kindergarten and primary school heads to:

i. reflect on their role and understand how their leadership impacts on achieving quality education in disadvantaged contexts;

ii. share ideas on key school-based leadership issues that need to be tackled in order to achieve improvement targets;

iii. identify critical competencies they require to perform their professional tasks efficiently and effectively;

iv. share ideas about successful leadership practices within difficult contexts.

3.   Participants

In all, 240 headteachers drawn from 12 out of the 130 districts in the country participated in the Needs Analysis Workshops. The districts were Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) and Agona Swedru districts (Central Region); Krachi and Akatsi districts (Volta Region); Techiman and Asutifi South districts (Brong Ahafo region); Savelugu and Bimbilla districts (Northern Region); Kasena Nankana and Bolga districts (Upper East Region); Sissala East and Sissala West districts (Upper West Region). All the participating schools were remotely located and deprived. The majority of these schools had been neglected by existing research initiatives. This was to give our project a unique focus and attract the interest of educational policy makers.

4.   People

Dr. Mike Fertig and Dr. John Lowe (both of the University of Bath, UK) and Professor Leon Tikly (EdQual RPC Project Director, University of Bristol, UK). Group work facilitators were Dr. Albert Dare, Mr. J.M. Dzinyela, Dr. George Oduro and Dr.(Mrs) Dzama L..Forde (for Northern Zone) and Prof. Amuzu-Kpeglo, Mr. S. Atakpa, Dr. Y Ankomah, Rev. J. K. Ark-Boham, Mrs J. Koomson, Mr.

Baafi-Frempong, Dr.(Mrs.) R. Bosu, Dr. Sena. Kpeglo and Dr. (Mrs) Kafui Etsey (for Southern Zone).

5.   Activities

These included presentations, group work/group reports and plenary session discussions.

6.   Issues emerging from Open Forum

The following were the main issues that emerged from brainstorming discussions held with the headteachers:

6.1 School improvement initiatives

Headteachers were given the opportunity to share ideas about quality teaching and learning initiatives that had been introduced in their schools over the past five years. It provided an opportunity for the facilitators to explore how proactive the headteachers were in initiating changes and implementing strategies towards improving quality teaching and learning in their schools. Overall the finding was that all initiatives had been external to the headteachers, with their roles primarily limited to implementing the initiatives. Initiatives introduced by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), the Ghana Education Service (GES), the District Assemblies and some NGOs included the following:

- School Feeding Programme
- GETfund initiative: construction of new classrooms and offices, with each classroom having three fans.
- Donation of play materials for kindergarten by a Dutch-based NGO (Nkwanta District)
- Construction of Classroom blocks (District Assembly) at Nkwanta Roman Catholic Public School; the Head reported that an NGO Science Education Programme organized a quiz for many schools, the aim of which was to have an excursion to the Mole National Park. Proudly, five of the pupils who qualified to be among the twenty successful participants, happened to be from his school.

Apart from initiatives introduced by the NGOs which had direct bearing on quality improvement, all the other initiatives focused on improving infrastructure to expand access.

6.2 Perceptions on quality education

The majority of the headteachers defined quality education in terms of school achievement. Thus learning outcomes in terms of test scores and national examination results were marks of quality education. After brainstorming on why schools with the same quantity of resources end up attaining quality at different levels, factors identified included the following:

- level of teacher commitment to duty
- teachers' school attendance

- teachers' time on task (i.e. the contact hours of interaction between teachers and pupils)
- parental support for their wards
- the level of accountability and transparency demonstrated by heads in dealing with teachers
- headteachers' leadership style
- headteachers' fairness in managing conflict
- teamwork in the school (the team in terms of teachers, heads, School Management Commitee, Parent Teacher Association and non-governmental organisations)
- effectiveness of supervision
- adequacy of teaching and learning materials
- attitude of pupils towards schooling and learning.

Following discussion of the differentiating factors listed above, headteachers were challenged to acknowledge the importance of their leadership roles in improving quality teaching and learning in their schools. While lack of resources emerged as critical in promoting quality education, the effectiveness of headteachers' leadership was identified as a tool that could make a difference in the school. Some ways in which headteachers' could achieve this feat include their:

- Awareness of the importance of their leadership roles in the process of achieving quality education in the school.
- Capacity for providing professional guidance (in-service training) for teachers.
- Effectiveness in monitoring teaching and learning resource utilization in the school and pupils' learning activities in the classroom.
- Ability to manage inhibitive cultural values that tend to affect teachers' performance and pupil learning.
- Skills in promoting harmony between the school and the community to enhance community participation and involvement in school management
- Ability to maintain discipline in school.

6.3 Headteachers' vision for their schools

The vision that the headteachers had for their schools were explored through two questions:

1. Where would you like your school to be in the next five years?
2. What would you need to help achieve your five year goals?

The main visions listed were as follows:

In the next five years I would like my school to:

- Be counted as the best in the region in terms of academic and moral performance
- Have children who have the capacity to read and understand their books
- Improve on enrolment and performance of girls
- Have all children of school going- age in the immediate surroundings enrolled
- Have high retention rate for enrolled pupils
- Improvement in staffing and quality of teacher
- Have adequate teaching and learning materials supplied

- Benefit from effective supervision
- Develop the spirit of teamwork
- Increase the level of community participation in school management
- Benefit from the School Feeding Programme
- Have an effective Parent-Teacher Association
- Have ICT facilities to make teachers and pupils computer literate
- Have access to electricity
- Have safe drinking water
- Be a model school in areas like literacy, numeracy and problem solving.

As to what they will need to help them translate their vision into reality, the following were listed:

To help me achieve my five year goals, I would need;

- In service training for headteachers and teachers
- Disciplined teachers and pupils
- Dedicated teachers
- Adequate and timely supply of teaching and learning materials
- Strengthened relations with Parent Teacher Associations, School Management Committees and District Assemblies
- Professional Support from Circuit Officers and District Office.
- Parental support for pupil learning
- Adequate sanitation facilities
- Furniture and other needed logistics to be adequately provided and supplied to teachers and pupils.
- The removal of the 'Shift System' and the construction of more classrooms
- An increase in the 'Capitation Grant' and have it made available to school authorities on time
- School lands to be well demarcated to prevent encroachment from the local community
- Recreational facilities
- Effective community participation.

7.   Issues emerging from Group Activities

Participants were put in small groups to reflect on their leadership tasks and share their findings with their colleagues. Issues emerging from the group reports are presented in Tables 1 & 2.

7.1 Major tasks performed by headteachers

Similar tasks came out for both the Southern and Northern zone schools. The major 'common' tasks identified by the headteachers were related to supervision, maintenance of discipline and coordinating meetings. Details have been provided in the table 1:

Table 1: Major tasks of headteachers

What are the major tasks the headteachers embark on, on a day to day basis?	
Southern zone	**Northern zone**
• Upgrading school infrastructure e.g. classrooms, libraries, etc • Staffing (looking for professional teachers) • Correspondence: receiving and responding to letters from District Assemblies, GES, etc. • Writing situational reports • Organize school-based INSET for teachers • Ensuring that school compound is beautified e.g. flower planting • Presiding of staff meetings • Monitoring and Supervising teaching and learning • Ensuring effective use of teaching time • Ensuring effective and efficient use of Teaching and Learning materials	• Checking teacher attendance • Monitoring and Supervising teaching and learning. • Vetting lesson notes • Attending meetings e.g. PTA,SMC,GNAT • Chairing staff meetings • Organizing out of class activities e.g. sports, cultural, cleanup… • Checking on teacher and pupil attendance and punctuality • Ensuring good sanitation • Ensuring discipline among staff and pupils • Planning and organizing for open, speech and prize giving days • Assigning duties to teachers

7.2 Support required for accomplishing headship tasks

Views expressed by the headteachers (see table 2) suggest that they attach much importance to support offered by stakeholders in the child's education.

Table 2: Skills\support required by headteachers to carry out major tasks effectively

What kinds of skills/support are required to carry out those tasks effectively?	
Southern zone	**Northern zone**
• Support (fiscal, human and material) from NGOs, District Assembly and stakeholders • Encouraging/allowing heads to initiate	• Adequate supply of facilities • Build the capacities of Headteachers in leadership and management • Support from the District Assemblies,

	internal generated funds	NGOs, and other stakeholders
	• Organization of Open Days would encourage communication (feedback) between school and its stakeholders	• The organization of school based In-service Training
	• Adequate supply of physical resources (e.g. furniture, TLMs, computers)	• Incentive packages to motivate teachers (internal and external) by the Government/community
	• Increasing financial resources (e.g. Capitation Grant Monies need to be released/disbursed on time)	• Improvisation of TLMs using local and foreign materials.
	• Upgrading/improving conditions of service for heads	• Community sensitized on the importance of educating the girl-child.
	• Attaching all Headteachers in order to function effectively as managers (this means Headteachers must not be given any teaching load/ assignment. This occurs in a few schools)	• Have an effective SMC/PTA in the school
		• Having a well stocked library that is effectively used
	• Develop human resources, (e.g. in-service training to improve skills)	• Continued support from Government, NGOs, SMC/PTA, community.
	• Develop material resources (school plant)	• Creating awareness of Government policies among parents
	• Well motivated staff	• Financial assistance
	• Secured school premises	• The need for more workshops for teachers.

7.3 Challenges faced by Headteachers:

A number of challenges were identified by the headteachers in the process of accomplishing their leadership tasks. These have been summed up below:

Table 3: Frustrations experienced by Headteachers in trying to achieve their goals.

What have been some of the frustrations you have encountered in trying to achieve your goals?	
Southern zone	**Northern zone**
• Managing school funds e.g. capitation grant	• Poor conditions of service
	• Inadequate school infrastructure
• Apathy of parents and guardians towards school activities such as PTA meetings	• Poor attitude of District Assemblies
	• Negative attitude of GES officials towards head teachers.
• Unfavorable teaching and learning space and facilities	• Heavy workload of the Headteacher
• Interruption of teaching and learning in schools e.g. Market days	• Unprofessional attitude of some teachers
	• Misuse of instructional time
• Parents harassing teachers over discipline issues	• Inadequate supply of text books

• Teacher attrition	/Teaching + Learning Materials
• Unfavorable support from Stakeholders	• Lack of preparation of scheme of work and lesson notes by teachers
• Delay in the supply of textbooks from government	• Inadequate funding
• Inadequate teaching and learning materials	• Proposals are either delayed or not approved
• Financial problems - Capitation Grants inadequate to run the school	• Difficulty in getting resource persons to support in-service training of staff
• Lateness and absenteeism on the part of both teachers and pupils	• Inadequately trained teachers.
• Poor staffing (teacher quality and quantity)	• Poor knowledge and understanding of Government policies
	• Lukewarm attitude of community to school
	• High illiteracy rate of community
	• Irregular attendance of both teachers and pupils
	• Frequent transfers of teachers
	• Non-payment of responsibility allowances.
	• Late supply of registers, teacher note books and chalk
	• Lateness/absenteeism of both teachers and pupils

8. Conclusion

The resource team and researchers acknowledged the difficult conditions within which the headteachers were providing leadership. They commended the headteachers on persevering under such difficult conditions to help pupils to attain quality education. They also encouraged the headteachers to avoid focusing on the negative aspects of their leadership experiences and rather adopt an optimistic attitude towards challenges they encounter while accomplishing their professional tasks. They reminded the headteachers about the important role they have to play in implementing quality education initiatives in Ghana. Headteachers need to motivate teachers both intrinsically and extrinsically because motivation is critical to ensuring quality teaching and learning. They should also create the requisite environment to promote intrinsic motivation in them. The resource team emphasized that the leadership styles employed by the headteachers are critical in promoting quality teaching and learning. It is important that the leadership provided by the headteachers enables them to monitor and appraise the performances of teachers.

In conclusion the headteachers were urged to reflect on questions such as listed below as they carry out their leadership responsibilities:

1. How does my leadership impact on achieving quality education?

2. What are the major leadership tasks I perform on a day to day basis?

3. What kinds of skills are required to carry out these tasks effectively?

4   What kinds of skills are required to work with the SMC, PTA, parents etc.?

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