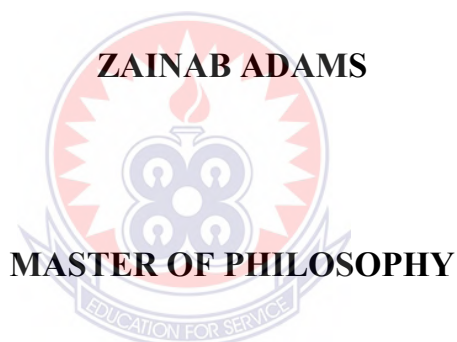


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE HEADS OF SENIOR HIGH  
SCHOOLS IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA:  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF STAKEHOLDERS**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**2023**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE HEADS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN  
THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA ; THE PERSPERTIVE OF  
STAKEHOLDERS**



**A Dissertation in the Department of Educational Administration and  
Management, Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Educational Administration and Management)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**JANUARY, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

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

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....



### Supervisor's Declaration

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

**Supervisor's Name:** Prof. Hinnah Kusi

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **DEDICATION**

To my family, Mr. Abdul-Salaam Haruna; my husband, Ishaque Marfo Abdul-Salaam; my son, Bashira and Nazira Tweneboaa Abdul-Salaam, my twin daughters.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My foremost thanks go to the Almighty God for granting me strength, good health and all it takes to write this piece of work. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Hinnah Kusi.

I am highly indebted to Mr. Alexander Amankwaa and Daud Adam, for typing and going through the work. I also owe much gratitude to Mr. Salam Saham Sienu, Mr Rufai Sabtui and Mr Tahiru Mustapha for their time and energy .



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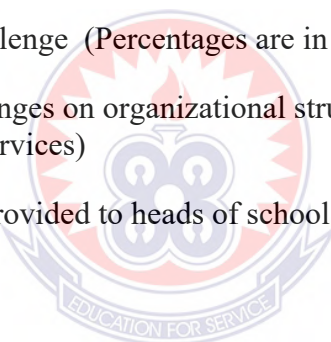
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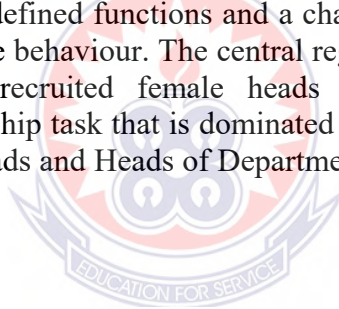
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## ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by female heads of senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana, as well as the available support systems. A mixed-method approach was used, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. Data was analyzed using concurrent triangulation mix-method. The study included various educational stakeholders such as headmistresses, assistant heads, heads of departments, teachers, and district/municipal/metropolitan directors of education. The results showed that there was a division among participants regarding the existence of socio-cultural challenges faced by female heads. Some believed that cultural biases against women were diminishing in the southern part of Ghana, while others recognized the need for interventions to address unfriendly environments and challenges related to support staff. Additionally, limited resources posed a challenge in organizing training programmes for staff members, despite efforts to conduct workshops and seminars. In conclusion, the study found that female heads of senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana did not face significant human resources, socio-cultural, or organizational challenges in the execution of their duties. The research also indicated that significant support services were provided to female heads of schools in line with their responsibilities. The study recommended the organization of sensitization programmes to create a women-friendly environment and address gender-based issues among educational stakeholders. Furthermore, it suggested the establishment of clearly defined functions and a chain of command, with appropriate sanctions of insubordinate behaviour. The central regional education directorate could prepare to the newly recruited female heads psychologically, emotional and adequately for the leadership task that is dominated by men. Such workshop could be extended to Assistant Heads and Heads of Department before taking up the leadership mantle.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The quality of life of any nation depends on the quality of its human resources. Education is universally accepted as a key factor in all human resource development programmes. The primary purpose of education, especially secondary education is to impart knowledge and skills as well as prepare students for further education in universities, training colleges or entering the world of work. (Cole, 2004) notes that good results for students entail effective instruction, and effective instruction in a well-run school in turn depends on effective leadership. Education imbues in the individual the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to fit into society. When these are lacking in a nation, it puts the nation in a very disadvantageous position because the backbone of every nation is education. Implicitly, looking and thinking through the state of underdevelopment in some nations, one finds that the majority of the population is illiterate, poor, and saddled with diseases. Additionally, ignorance tends to be an enormous problem confronting the continent of Africa. According to the 2010 World Bank Report, there were 960 million illiterates in the world.

Moreover, the International Labour Organization (ILO) noted in 2009 that 200 million children and youth around the world go to work every day instead of school. Out of this figure, 29% or 40 million of them are in Sub-Sahara Africa (NCCE, 2011). Ideally, it must be borne in mind that the world continues to become a complex place and the masses must be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of the complex economic and political system of the 21st century. Placing

this argument within the Ghanaian context, it can be argued that Ghana as a nation can move from mere economic growth to accelerated growth, and this can be achieved and sustained with a literate population in which both men and women can serve as leaders to promote literacy. Leadership is prime in every organization and there have been concerns about leadership ever since civilization began. This is especially evident in the styles used. It permeates the entire human endeavour, ranging from religion through business to educational enterprise. Leadership is of particular significance in educational governance because of its far-reaching effects on the accomplishment of educational goals (Day, 2001). Over the years, leadership positions in the institution have been largely held by men. This was because female education was not given priority in Ghanaian society and even on the African continent. In the Ghanaian education system, administrative and teaching roles are played by both males and females, but over the years, men have ascribed to themselves greater authority and power to lead (Edem, 2017).

This has relegated women to the background. Gender disparity in this context has been widespread regarding leadership positions. For example, in secondary schools in Ghana, teachers who are not female occupy less than 45% of leadership positions (Adjei-Boadu, 2001). Secondary education or high school, according to Day (2001), is the level of education between elementary school and college, usually offering general, technical, vocational and college preparatory courses. These schools are referred to as high schools in the United States of America. In Ghana, until 2007, all high schools were referred to as secondary schools. The average entry age for secondary education in Ghana is 16 years. This includes senior technical education where various trades are learned (Government of Ghana, GOG, 2002). The Government of Ghana (2002: xxviii) in its 2002 Education Reform Report

Conceptualizes secondary education which is now high school education as: “Education provided at the Senior Secondary level/Schools, technical, vocational institutes and through apprenticeship schemes. The curriculum at this level is diversified to cater for different attitudes, abilities, interests and skills of students, provide some with opportunities for further education and training and introduce others to a wide range of relevant occupational skills.” Deductively, the current high school education which is the same as the senior secondary school of the recent past is to provide formal education for students with the principal objective of preparing them for further education and training in tertiary institutions. In the Senior High Schools, the Ministry of Education, 2015 observes that School management and leadership are key, both for the rollout of the Free SHS policy and to arrest the poor trend in examination results. This challenge places responsibilities on both male and female heads in Senior High Schools. Leadership has been a central focus of studies in many fields including education. Specifically, a fundamental requirement for educational administration is leadership, because it is needed to influence teachers, students and even parents in the realization of educational goals. In a school setting, the success or failure of the school depends, to a large extent, on the leadership ability of the head. Thus, the school leaders’ role as the chief executive is enormous. But equally, this role is challenging, especially when the leader is a female member of society who has a lot of misconceptions or perceptions regarding leadership roles (Edem, 2017). Even within the school community, the female teacher may encounter challenges relating to the school structure, dealing with students and teachers, creating an enabling school climate and environment, ensuring accountability and transparency, and influencing decision-making processes. Education for All (2005), maintains that the key characteristics of a good school leader are, first and foremost,

the quality of their leadership. It is through effective leadership practices and the ability to overcome various leadership challenges that a school will survive. Conceptually, leadership is the ability to influence individuals to work towards attaining organizational objectives (McCabe, 2011).

Leadership is required wherever two or more people with a common objective engage in activities of some sort towards achieving a common goal. Research indicates that one of the most reliable indicators of true leadership is an individual's ability to find meaning in negative events and learn from even the most trying circumstances. An individual's ability to function is a function of a support system made available (Gibson, 2002). There are many definitions of leadership and up to date, no one definition is wholly accepted by everyone. In the view of (Duodo, 2001), leadership is conceptualized as the ability to organize and influence the efforts and mobilize the resources of a group to achieve organizational goals. At the core of most definitions of leadership are two key functions: providing direction and exercising influence (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Situating this definition of leadership within the context of Senior High School, leaders are to provide direction and exercise influence in matters relating to managing the admission of students, receiving teachers posted to schools, assigning teachers to classes, report writing, conflict management, goal setting and organizing and chairing of staff meetings, among others. Analytically, school leadership as a subset of educational leadership dwells on enlisting and inspiring the talents and energies of academic and non-academic staff and other stakeholders towards achieving school goals. In Ghana, it has been observed that although females dominate first and second cycle educational institutions, they are under-represented in leadership positions, especially at the Senior High School level. Afful-Broni (2004), observes that, the role of women in national development has

gained some recognition. Even before the inception of females on the national stage, they had exercised leadership at the international level; there have been female heads of state in Liberia, Chile, Singapore, Brazil, New Zealand and Germany. In Ghana, females have served as chief justice of the Republic of Ghana, Speaker of Parliament, Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, heads of corporate organizations and also as parliamentarians. Contemporarily, women have gained recognition as agents of development because of their numerical strength and the role they play in socio-economic development and politics. Although at the onset of the 21st century, there have been invigorated female participation in leadership (including school leadership), their representation has been disproportionate as compared to men who have posed a series of challenges females face as leaders (Cole, 2004).

The proposition by Cole (2004) finds expression in the narratives by (Mutopa, Maphosa & Shumba ,2006) who observe that female leaders are found in all sectors of the global economy. This is true for the Ghanaian economy, but compared to men, there are fewer female leaders. In the educational sector, females have been given opportunities for leadership positions but not without challenges. But there has been relatively little focus on these challenges. Due to this, some females choose not to vie for leadership positions or opt-out based on the slightest provocations. For example, a female head may be expected to take her child to the hospital during working hours. If she does this several times, she may be unduly criticized by her male counterparts as being ineffective. This is a social challenge that alongside other organisational and human-related challenges should be supported by varied forms of support systems. In Ghana, changes taking place in the Senior High Schools open a window of opportunities for more women to move into educational leadership. Unlike in the past, females were largely considered for leadership because of the innate perception of



men that they were too bossy and autocratic (Agyeman, 1999). Some of these perceptions are gradually dwindling and today's woman is knowledgeable, versatile and courageous in taking decisions and implementing them as well as visionary and result-oriented. Indeed, it is true that Ghana has played a pioneering role in the fight for gender parity. For example, there have been female leaders placed in several positions. Some of these female leaders are Justice Sophia Akuffo, Georgina Wood (former Chief Justice), Charlotte Osei (former Chairperson, - Electoral Commission), Naana Jane Opoku Agyeman (former Minister of Education & Vice Chancellor), Jean Mensah (current Chairperson, Electoral Commission), and Josephine Nkrumah (Head – National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)). Some of these achievements by females have been influenced and heralded by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU). Furthermore, as part of the Ghana Government effort to fulfill Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes gender equality, opportunities have been given to females to occupy leadership positions in the educational sector (Dampson, 2019). However, despite these efforts, there are still prejudices in some parts of the country towards female administrators/leaders which have prohibited effective delivery of services. The perception that women do not possess leadership traits is institutionally and structurally based and have become an instrument used by men to marginalize women leaders. Some of these social and cultural prejudices, according to (Bailyn, 2004), are used to discourage more women from realizing their leadership dreams. Also, these challenges affect female leaders in Ghana despite their tenacity and determination to work in their leadership functions. Hudak (2000) argues that the debate regarding fair treatment of male leaders and the challenges they face should be exposed dispassionately because research has indicated in many fields that women have fared differently in their professional careers (Carl,

2007; Fishel & Pottker, 2005). Usually, females experience higher levels of attrition than their male counterparts. This unequal situation is compounded by the fact that women also tend to receive less compensation than men, their rates of advancement are slower and are often interrupted by the time devoted to raising their children. Implicitly, one can say that there is a link between gender and leadership tasks. (Carl, 2007) argues that women choose career paths viewed by society as a male domain; they tend to introduce a deviant pattern in that role since it is viewed as a challenge. Deductively, the leadership challenges female heads of Senior High Schools faced are said to be rooted in a certain belief system that has socio-cultural, organisational and human resource dimensions. Accordingly, support systems are needed to address these challenges. Although the content of the perception society generally holds towards female leadership roles is declining, women still have to prove that they are more than capable of taking on leadership roles that defy traditional organization and values. This brings to light the challenges female leaders face. Relative to school leadership, (Brannigan, 2005) reiterates that despite the competence of women educational leaders, they do face challenges based on the assumption that they are too weak to handle high academic positions, too emotional to handle peculiar challenges, too feeble when it comes to physical strength and endurance, too dependent, and lack independence and autonomy. Other authorities such as (Denys, 2008) and (Kanter, 2007) perceive some of the challenges female leaders face as family constraints, marginality (women are excluded from the headship of professions dominated by men), and the sexist perspective of society which perceives women as helpers rather than leaders. Accordingly, women should be warm and supportive and not ambitious and initiative.

The propositions of (Denys, 2008) and (Kanter, 2007) are in line with the arguments of (Hudak, 2000) and (Holtkamp, 2002) who note that stereotypical images of women managers have served as challenges to their advancement as professionals, especially as it relates to educational leadership. Traditionally, many of the challenges females face as leaders emanate from what is often referred to as role and conflict theory (Mead, 1934; Miller, 1982; Kusi, 2012). According to this theory, role conflict occurs when a person is expected to simultaneously act out multiple roles that carry out contradictory expectations. Role theory is a perspective in sociology and social psychology that considers most of the everyday activities to be the acting out of various socially defined role categories (eg. Manager, mother, teacher, etc.). Each role, according to (Mead, 1934) and (Walters, 2017), is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to face and fulfill. Implicitly, an individual's behaviour is context-specific; it is based on his social position (role) and other factors. According to Walter (2017), role conflict is based on six assumptions, three of which are of general application to this study: the division of labour in society takes the form of the interaction among heterogeneous specialized positions called roles. Roles are occupied by individuals who are called actors. Changes and challenges in conditions can render a social role outdated or illegitimate, in which case social pressures are likely to lead to role conflict or change (p. 88). Additionally, a model according to Miller (1982), which is conceptually linked to this study, is the structural functionalism theory. According to this theory, everyone has a place in the social structure and every place has a role or function that has an equal set of expectations and behaviours. Rationally, it means that life is more structured and there is a specification for everything. Analytically, as seen in the literature (Kusi, 2008; Walters, 2017), role conflict theory and structuralist theories are linked to the

feminist's which essentially aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. It examines women and men's social roles, expectations, interests, chores and themes. It is based on discrimination, oppression and stereotyping.

Feminism is opposed to people perceiving society as patriarchal wherein females are considered as inferior species, hence, they are denied access to both honoured and societal roles. Therefore, leadership roles in societal affairs and governance exclusively belong to men. It is because of these underlying social theories that (Walters, 2017) propounded the concept of a support system for female leadership. She defined a support system as a network of people and individuals, programmes, activities and legislation that provide practical and emotional support for women leaders. Some of these support systems, according to (Walters, 2017) include training opportunities for women, enhancing women-friendly culture, promoting gender equity through legislation, encouraging recruiting policies that do not discriminate against women, confidence-building seminars for female leaders, flexible work schedules for women and equality in salary structure for both men and women. Other support systems according to Walters (2017), are anti-sexual harassment policies for women, effective career mapping for women employees and comprehensive job protection policies for pregnant women. The underlying thinking informing (Walters, 2017) support system principle is that the need for promoting women leadership is as important as creating an enabling environment (support system) for women to enhance their leadership qualities and positions.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Globally, leadership has become a major issue of research in various sectors of economic life including fields in education . Particularly, regarding education, the

focus has been on the experiences of white males and females under-representation but not on the challenges they faced (Walter, 2017). Throughout history, leadership positions have been dominated by men, and in the past century, this injustice has been pervasive for some time now (Walter, 2017). But much more to the problem is the reality that even females who have braved the storm to enter into leadership positions face unprecedented challenges that are often given a blind eye by the public. (Walter, 2017). Research has shown that in most West African countries, female leaders face a myriad of challenges that are socio-cultural and are largely summed up as the “glass ceiling” concept (Trigg, 2006).

Helgesen (2007) notes that even in the United States of America, school leaders who are female still face the challenges of negative views held against them by their peers, parents and employees. In Ghana, the 2010 population census puts the population of the nation at 30.8 million out of which females constitute 53.39% (Ghana Statistical Service Report, 2021). Because females constitute the majority of the population in Ghana, one would think that their impact would be proportionately significant in all spheres of life including occupying leadership positions. On the contrary, their impact especially in decision-making is limited and even when they form part of the decision-making teams such as school heads and assistant heads, they are confronted with challenges (Kusi, 2019). There are myriads of researchers on women in school leadership by (Finzel, 2006; Kusi, 2012; Northhouse, 2006) especially as it regards their underrepresentation in top-level leadership positions, but fewer studies have provided limited insight into the nature of challenges women undergo even when they are given leadership positions. Ascertaining these challenges would be a useful approach to understanding the factors accounting for these challenges. Generally, Senior High Schools in Ghana face many challenges that affect teaching and learning.

Some of these challenges include inadequate teaching and learning materials, an irregular supply of textbooks and inadequate financial resources. There is also an inadequate shortage of teachers for some subjects on the instructional timetable. In addition to these challenges is the perceived challenges female leaders face as heads of some institutions where their numbers in terms of teaching staff is disproportionately lower than the males (Ajayi, 2007). This stems from the position that women are weak and cannot stand at par with men (Walters, 2017). The Central Region of Ghana is often considered as the cradle and hub of educational institutions in Ghana, especially as it relates to Senior High Schools. Some of these high schools are headed by females, although they are under-represented. Could the underrepresentation and challenges they experience be based on the perception that they cannot make themselves good leaders? Are the leadership challenges they face emanating from societal conventions that regard gender and leadership as traditionally men's jobs? Could the challenges female heads face in these Senior High Schools be an expression of human resource, socio-cultural or maternal-related challenges? These questions and significant others have engaged the minds of education stakeholders especially civil society organizations such as the National Commission for Civic Education that have organized a series of workshops and other sensitization programmes to mitigate the leadership challenges female heads in schools face (NCCE Report, 2011).

However, a report by the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development (CIKOD) maintains that female heads in secondary schools still complain of leadership challenges (Gyimah & Thompson, 2009). It is against these overlapping concerns about challenges female heads face that this research attempts to ascertain the existence and extent of challenges female heads in Senior High

School face and the support system put in place to mitigate these challenges in the Central Region of Ghana.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the challenges facing female heads of Senior High Schools in the Central Region of Ghana as well as the support systems put in place for them. This purpose was achieved by examining the perspectives of the stakeholders (Heads, HODs, and Teachers) in the Schools and Directors of Education.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. to determine the human resource challenges that female heads of Senior High Schools encounter in the Region.
2. to investigate the socio-cultural challenges that female Senior High school heads face in the Region.
3. find out how organisational structures contributing to the challenges faced by female heads in the Schools.
4. explore the support systems instituted by stakeholders in mitigating the challenges female heads of Senior High Schools encounter in the Region.



### **1.5 Research Questions**

Base on the research objectives above, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the human resource-related challenges that female heads in Senior High Schools encounter in the Central Region of Ghana?
2. What are the socio-cultural factors female heads of Senior High Schools face in the Central Region of Ghana?
3. How are the organisational structures in Senior High Schools contribute to the challenges female heads face in the Central Region of Ghana?
4. What are the support systems that could be put in place to mitigate the challenges faced by female heads in the Central Region of Ghana?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The results of the study would be useful to heads of Senior High Schools who are females in the Central Region in particular and Ghana in general by revealing to them the factors accounting for the challenges they face as heads. The findings of the research would form the basis of female heads developing strategies to cope with the challenges they encounter thereby improving upon their leadership roles and responsibilities. Moreover, recommendations from the study would inform the Ghana Education Service on the nature of training programmes needed to equip female heads of Senior High schools in terms of the challenges they face. The findings of the study would form the basis for female heads developing strategies to cope with the challenges they encounter thereby improving upon their leadership roles and responsibilities. The recommendations from the study would inform the Central Regional Education Directorate and GES on the nature of training programmes



needed to equip female heads of Senior High schools with regards to the challenges they face. The results of the study would contribute significantly to knowledge with respect to female leadership in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. It would provide different perspectives in terms of data collection. The results of the study would improve upon people's understanding of the Goal-setting theory and the role of women in education. The findings especially data on the nature and effects of the challenges female heads encounter in Senior High Schools would create awareness among stakeholders such as the Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education, researchers and particularly Senior High School in the Central Region. The underpinning theories of this study are the Shakeshaft female Leadership Theory and the Goal Setting Leadership Theory. The theory by Shakeshaft (1987) outlines female leadership experience in educational leadership. The Goal Setting Theory of Lock and Lathan stresses organizational behaviour. The significance of this study regarding these two theories would be whether the data or result of the study stand to affirm these theories or reject them. The results of the study would be useful to heads of Senior High Schools who are females in the Central Region in particular and Ghana in general by revealing to them the factors accounting for the challenges they face as heads. The findings of the research would form the basis of female heads developing strategies to cope with the challenges they encounter thereby improving upon their leadership roles and responsibilities. Moreover, recommendations from the study would inform the Ghana Education Service on the nature of training programmes needed to equip female heads of Senior High schools in terms of the challenges they face. The findings of the study would form the basis for female heads developing strategies to cope with the challenges they encounter thereby improving upon their leadership roles and responsibilities.

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### **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

The research is geographically limited to the Central Region of Ghana, which is the cradle of education in Ghana and which hosts a lot of Senior High Schools headed by females. The study was conducted in ten Senior High Schools headed by females with a focus on the challenges faced by these heads in the discharge of their duties. The research did not include infrastructural challenges the female heads face in these Senior High Schools and field data was obtained from the female heads as well as male personnel whose works and behaviours are linked to the challenges faced by

female heads, at the school and district levels. The Central Region is one of the 16 administrative regions of Ghana. Socioculturally, it is inhabited largely by the Fantis whose mainstay is fishing on the coastal fringes and farming in the hinterland. It has 13 administrative districts. Particularly among the Fantis and Effutus there is the socio-cultural importance of the canoe, which is an important object of livelihood. These canoes are designed with various inscriptions that communicate with the people. Apart from the Fantis and Effutu, the region also has relatively smaller linguistic groups such as the Agonas and Gomoas which are fairly related to the Akan. Despite being considered, the fourth poorest region in Ghana (next to the three Northern regions). It is rich in natural resources and hosts a considerable number of migrants. It was the first part of the then-Gold Coast to come into contact with European and missionaries. It is predominantly Christian; Muslims constitute 9% of the population. More than half of the population is illiterate, even though several well-known Senior High Schools are cited in the coastal part of the region. The family system is both nuclear and extended. The traditional family provides its members with social capital and ensures cooperation within the community. Community leadership is provided by chiefs who are assisted by Queen mothers. Specifically as it regards education and literacy, the region has been in the news in recent times for the poor performance of schools in the BECE despite the fact that it is home to three public universities and some of the best high schools in the country. Males in the region account for nearly 70% of the literate population and women just over 46%. Culled, from: United Nations Family and Population Authority (UNFPA, 2010). Cultural Sensitivity and Programming: The Case of the Government of Ghana

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study, which comprises the background to the study, a statement of the problem and purpose of the study ,objectives and research questions, as well as the significance and organization of the study. The second chapter deals with a review of related literature to the research, while chapter three is an outline of the methodology which consists of the research approach in terms of the philosophical underpinning, the research design, population, instrument, sample and sampling procedures for data collection as well as ethical considerations. The fourth chapter constitutes the data analysis and discussion of results and the fifth and final chapter embodies the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the review of literature relating to the challenges facing female heads of Senior High Schools in the Central Region of Ghana. The literature is largely reviewed within the context of the objectives set for the study, namely the challenges female school leaders face (student, teacher, family/home and culture-related challenges) and how they affect administrative services in school settings. Preceding these thematic areas are other important sections of the review which include both theoretical and conceptual frameworks; female theories and other theories of leadership that apply to the study. The review ends with an empirical aspect. The word “leadership” has been on the lips of development organizational practitioners for a long time and its challenge are abound in every organization, institution or group. The issue of female leadership has even heightened the challenges of leadership. In school settings in particular, where female leadership is a rising phenomenon in recent times, the urge to put this subject matter in an academic perspective is increasingly becoming significant.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

There are two theories that are of general application to this study and conceptually linked to the overall study of leadership. These are the Goal Setting Theory propounded by Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, and Shakeshaft Female Leadership Theory.

### **2.1.1 Goal-setting leadership theory**

Lock and Latham (1968) conceptualize goal-setting theory as an organizational behaviour theory that espouses how an organization through the behaviour of its members should progress from a sound theoretical foundation to more effective leadership practices. Essentially, every organization has foundational goals but as it progresses, the implementation of these goals are characterized by a series of challenges especially of the leadership. However, the leaders have to remain resolute in surmounting these challenges and achieving the goals set.

Goal-Setting theory is applied to leadership in high schools which like other entities, are result-oriented. Contextually, the leadership role of the female head of Senior High Schools is to implement the general educational objectives of the nation, the specific aims of the school, inspire participation of students and teachers in the teaching-learning process, help teachers achieve their individual goals through lesson plans, schemes of work. She makes subordinates participate in decision making through motivation. Invariably, if the female head is unable to live up to the challenge she faces, achieving the goals will be a mirage.

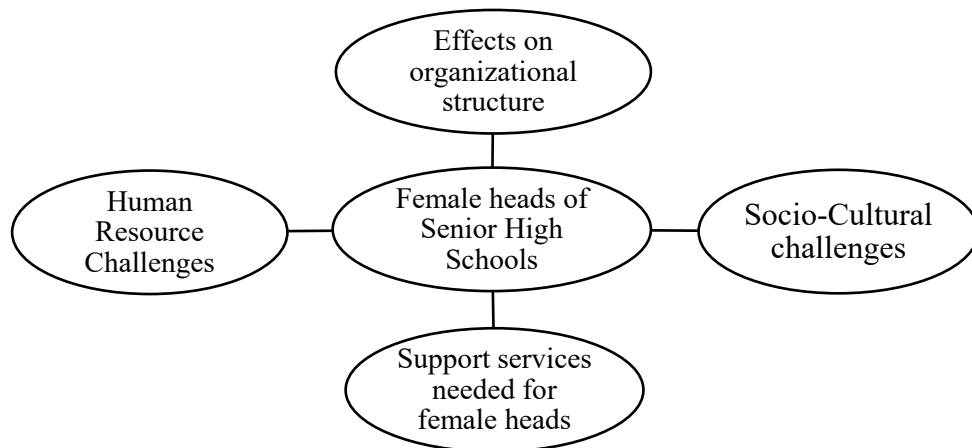
### **2.1.2 Shakeshaft female leadership theory**

This theory espoused by Shakeshaft (1987) highlights women's experience in educational leadership. Shakeshaft's female leadership theory was borne out of field survey research in the United States of America which revealed that more than two-thirds of teachers in the United States were females, but only a minority of them held leadership positions as seen in Senior High Schools in Ghana. The study also indicated that females generally lack confidence in applying for leadership positions in contrast to their male counterparts. This can be likened to organizational leadership

development in Ghana in which, due to a variety of socio-cultural and other factors females largely hesitate to avail themselves of leadership positions. The survey, however, concluded that in the absence of destructive criticism, stereotyping and other challenges, women could be effective leaders. Shakeshaft after conducting a survey on female leadership in educational administration in the United States of America concluded that female leaders have a psyche that makes them less able to deal with negative comments.

Shakeshaft (2006) notes that although females can be very good leaders, they take criticism too personally allowing their confidence to be unnecessarily damaged. She further argues that it is the social structure of society that is the root cause of women behaving in this manner. Bringing this argument within the Ghanaian context, one would not be surprised if female leaders in Senior High Schools behave unruly in their leadership functions based on how Ghanaian society and the general social structure perceive female leaders. The literature is rife with evidence that in Ghana, females are not seen as leading men (Mankoe, 2007; Ortiz & Marshall, 2006). In disabusing this sort of perception regarding female leadership, Shakeshaft (1987) proposed collaborative leadership, sensitization programmes on gender equality, and female staff development programmes. This move would curtail the tags women receive as being nosy instead of being emotional and managerial instead of being labeled as manipulative.

## 2.2 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**

Source: Field data, 2021

This conceptual framework which is the self-construct of the researcher, depicts the interplay between the female school leader and the various challenges she faces. These affect the teaching and organizational structure of the school. The underpinning variable of the conceptual framework is female leadership in Senior High Schools in the Central Region of Ghana. This leadership is perceived to be challenged by factors such as human resources in the school (students, teachers), socio-cultural (family, culture and tradition); and organizational structure. Unless the female leaders in Senior High Schools are given the needed support system such as training, a women-friendly culture, confidence-building activities and a flexible working schedule, they may not achieve the following.

- a. Teaching and Administrative Services
- b. Instruction and curricular activities
- c. Co-curricular activities
- d. Admission, attendance and record-keeping



- e. Supervision and counselling
- f. Motivation and teacher professional development

### **2.3 The Concept of Leadership**

Leadership is defined differently by different writers due to the varying perspectives from which they view the concept. For example, Cohen et al (2011) defined leadership as:

- a. An influence process directed at either an individual or group.
- b. Filling the gap between subordinate desires and abilities, on the one hand organization objectives, on the other hand.
- c. Ability to get others to behave as the manager intended.
- d. A manager realises his intention and satisfies the needs of his employees at the same time.
- e. Influencing employees to do what they don't want to do and like it.

The above-listed items constitute effective leadership practices. Organizational leadership theories agree that effective leadership is one of the important contributors to overall organizational success (Rono, 2002). Thus, the qualities of an organization's leadership determine the qualities of the organization itself. Deductively, a school with all kinds of facilities, teachers, students and non-teaching staff without a well-informed leadership to manage the affairs of the school will not yield good results. Maicibi (2005) states that without the requisite leadership skills, effective performance cannot be realized in a school, though the school may have all the required instructional materials and financial resources available. Fertig (2008) reiterates that leadership in a school setting is important for ensuring the effective utilization of human and material resources, and school time. In this respect, it is,

therefore, necessary that school leaders (male and female) are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to make a difference in the lives of those they serve especially the students. Reinhartz and Beach (2004) are of the view that since school leadership plays a very important role in the teaching and learning process of a school, there is a need to equip school leaders so that they demonstrate commitment relating to inclusiveness, collaborative leadership, intellectual vitality in the workplace and overall reflective visionary leadership.

According to Rost (1993) the definition of leadership is about two sets of players: leaders and followers. Leadership to him constitutes excellent management, a relational process that makes a good leader, that leadership and management are complementary, and that leadership is an influence relationship between leader and follower who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purpose. In leadership, influence relationships have two characteristics. It is multidirectional, which means that influence flows in all directions and not only from top to bottom. Secondly, it is non-coercive, meaning that it is not based on the authority power of dictatorial actions, but on persuasive behaviour that allows anyone in the relationship to freely agree or disagree and ultimately to drop into or out of the relationship (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996). Accordingly, leading or influencing requires skills such as diagnosing, understanding the situation one is trying to influence, adapting by altering one's behaviour and other resources that one has available to meet the contingencies of the situation and communicating by interacting with others in a way that people can easily understand and accept. Northouse (1999) argues that leadership is a highly sought-after and highly valued phenomenon. As with the concept of love, it is not easy to define leadership. The complexity of the concept of leadership is corroborated by (Finzel, 2006) who opined that decades of academic analysis have given more than

350 definitions of leadership. Rationally, never have so many scholars laboured so long to say so little.

According to Finzel (2006), many theories of leadership have come and gone, some look at the leader, some look at the situation, but none have stood the test of time. An interpretation of the above submission suggests that no consensus exists among scholars about a single criterion that may be useful in distinguishing leadership from other concepts such as management and administration. Within the context of these scholarly arguments, this study takes a stand for a criterion that is useful in differentiating leadership from other concepts. This criterion is “influence” or the ability to influence. Mankoe (2007) underscores that leadership is simply the ability to influence individuals towards attaining organizational leaders who both lead and manage effectively. In this context, a leader is a guide, conductor or coach. A similar argument on leadership by one of the influential leaders of the 21st century, British Field Marshall, Bernard Montgomery could be applied to highlight the concept of leadership as influence. Shortly after the Second World War, he wrote that leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common cause, purpose and character which inspires confidence (Maxwell, 2007). It can be said in relating this passage to Senior High School settings that although securing school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials are some of the tasks of a school leader, these tasks can never be completely fulfilled unless the school can mobilize teaching and non-teaching staff and students for a common objective. An example of this is the current objective of ensuring that public Senior High Schools are free for all Ghanaian children as espoused by the Education Strategic Plan, 2018-2030 (Ministry of Education, 2017). The use of the phrase “capacity and will to rally” in Marshall’s perception demonstrates the overlapping tendencies of the various meanings of the

term and even gives credence to (Adesina's, 2009) assertion that leadership is indeed a long-standing topic of concern. Perhaps, it could be said that few issues have received as much attention and concern from various writers. Mankoe (2007) indicates that there is an obvious leadership requirement where two or more people are gathered together for a common purpose and objective, and thereby engage in some actions to achieve organizational objectives. There are leaders in business entities, schools, socio-political institutions, organizations and systems. What one deduces from this definition of leadership is that a leader is a person who can get others to do something for an institution or group.

Dampson (2019) observes that:

*In the minds of some individuals, leadership is a term that connotes images of powerful dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from a top gleaming skyscraper or shape the course of nations.*

This perspective on leadership generated the interests of many people, either striving for leadership positions or investigating the concept. Whether an individual is interested either in becoming a leader or in researching the subject matter, key issues that must attract his attention are creating an impression on the minds of people, influencing people, rallying people, advancing a common objective and involving people. Leadership abilities by females in this context means that the female head must be able to impress his staff, students support staff and even authorities above her, influence her subordinates positively, rally or mobilize personnel around a common objective and influence individuals or groups towards a common purpose. All of these dimensions of leadership cannot be achieved by the female heads of schools if they do not involve various stakeholders of the school such as students, teachers, parents and support staff. Another angle of leadership that is stressed by

many is the concept of vision. Donkor (1986) opines that leadership is the creation of a vision about a desired future state that seeks to enmesh the members of an organization in its net. Contextually, a school leader (male or female) in a high school will have the ultimate vision of achieving the best results in national examinations, fostering discipline, and forming the character of her students to become future leaders. Implicitly, the acquisition of a vision by a female leader in a school means she should also be able to adequately communicate that vision, win the trust of workers, students and parents she deals with daily and be seen to be leading by example. Leadership from this perspective is a kind of inducement that makes an individual or group enthusiastic and willing to follow and perform a task (Dampson, 2019). But an element of leadership that is less talked about and which the female leader must imbibe is training and equipping her followers to succeed her. She cannot be a "success."

Hughes (1994) observes that people in an organization have gifts, abilities and skills that can be improved upon by the head of a school through thinking so that when she exits, someone is already trained enough to succeed her. Certainly, the divergence of opinions regarding the meaning of leadership is understood and accepted. There may be people who perceive leadership purely in economic terms, others give socio-political considerations; and others view the concept in a psychological terms. Leadership is also a process by which certain means strategies or roadmaps influence a group to achieve a common goal. According to Chapman (2008), leadership in this context is construed as a transaction that occurs between the leader and the follower. In relationship to these diverse concepts of leadership, the leader should ostensibly be conceived as a person contributing the best ideas, the person possessing the maximum knowledge of the situation, the person who liked best and hated least or the person

offering the best guidance. Analytically, if a female qualifies, she should assume a leadership position and not be sidelined and discriminated against. From whatever angle leadership is viewed, the point of convergence that stands out is that the leader possesses the ability to get things done with the support and cooperation of individuals and groups within an organization. This can be done by enlisting or inspiring the energies of others and by psychologically motivating them to reach organizational goals. Indeed, female leaders in Senior High Schools in Ghana must, through their leadership skills, awaken the consciousness of teachers, support staff, and crave the support and co-operation of some who are experiencing apathy and inertia. The concept of leadership can be perceived from different perspectives.

Eagly and Karau (2002) opined three perspectives as follows: First, there is the attribute of personality. This essentially refers to the symbolic expression of leadership which posits that leaders are born and not made. A deeper analysis of this is that leaders are not nurtured but are endowed by nature. Another perspective surrounds status, titles or positions that are recognised in a formal organisation. Here, the person and position become confused as this recognition may disappear when he vacates the status, title, position or office. The third perspective of leadership is the function or role performed as a leader in an organised group. This is referred to as functional leadership. This means that leadership is not viewed as existing in isolation but as related to interpersonal relations, and group operations. Implicitly, leadership comes out as a group phenomenon. Thus, the fundamental issue in leadership in this context is what the leader does to help the group define its goals, achieve its objectives and maintain its strength as a body. Kaballa and Glynn (2007) see leaders as agents of change and as persons whose acts affect other people more than other people act affecting them. Implicitly, leadership occurs when one group member

modifies the motivation and competencies of others in the group. This concept of leadership depicts that the use of influence and interpersonal relationships are included in leadership which affects people's behaviour and performance in achieving organizational goals.

Musaazi (2010) conceives leadership as a process whereby everyone in the group and the prevailing circumstances need to be understood in the leaders. This is why high moral standards and exemplary characters should be the hallmark of an effective leader. Rationally, school leadership preparation programmes should include moral and ethical formation; meaning that every leader should have personal and professional ethical standards and qualities. Accordingly, the search for school leaders for Ghana's secondary schools should place great emphasis on this as a required ingredient. Maxwell (2007) observes that a leader should be able to foster the process of growth, renewal and progress within the organisation. The leader does this by developing unique leadership qualities that will help the community grow from one level to another and from strength to strength. Wood (2006) emphasizes that a leader needs the proper perspectives to see, hear and know what a group's direction should be. This perspective is called vision. It helps the leader to plan, listen and think deeply about the organisation. And whatever vision or knowledge the leader possesses should be integrated with what others in the group aspire for. This invariably calls for qualities such as creativity, flexibility and open-mindedness relating to the changing times and needs of the organisation he leads and of society in general. This means school leaders need to understand group dynamics especially as it pertains to going through unpleasant times in the life of the organisation. At the school level, effective leaders should find new and meaningful ways of listening to their subordinates and communicating their needs and aspirations such as continuing professional



development, taking study leave and providing accommodation facilities. When the leader fails to pay attention to these aspirations, there are unwanted tensions that are counterproductive to the health and growth of the organisation. Kusi (2019) notes that organisations exist to provide valuable services for people and since leadership exists in cultural and human contexts, organisational leaders should be able to shape the culture of an organisation by infusing a sense of common values, ideas and principles in those organisations. This will raise the spectrum of leadership above the technical aspect and place it with the cultural domains. Hence, it is expedient to conclude that the effective functioning of a social system such as a school depends on the quality of its leader.

#### **2.4 School Leadership**

School leadership falls under the broad spectrum of the concept of educational leadership. Regarding school leadership, Dampson (2019) argues that school leadership is the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of pupils and parents towards achieving common educational aims. The domains of school leadership, according to Dampson (2019), are pupils' academic performance, school improvement and reforms, supervision and accountability. From this perspective, school leadership centres largely around teaching and learning and the harnessing of various resources to positively influence teachers, students, and parents. A female head of a Senior High School is a school leader whose actions influence teachers, students, parents and non-teaching staff. As an effective school leader, the female head focuses on school achievement and improvement and formulates local school policies by leading, managing and administering. The school leader in a typical high school in Ghana should be able to plan educational programmes, manage teachers and students effectively, formulate and implement financial plans, supervise and serve as



a role model for teachers and students and carve out vision and policies for a school entity. Not much has been documented about the lives and careers of females in educational leadership in developing countries (Bailyn, 2004). In a cultural context, societal beliefs have had some negative effects on women's attitudes, values and norms as they relate to their leadership roles in an educational setting. Some researchers such as Carl (2007) and Sayo (2011) have argued that rapid modernisation processes have had a positive influence relating to employment opportunities for women and their professional development especially in the fields of education and nursing. For example, in East Africa, the industrial boom from the 1980s to date has opened opportunities for employment for women (Daily Nation, 2009). The only drawback has been that women are often represented in the lowest-paying positions and occupations.

In more economically developed societies such as Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Philippines, China and South Korea and even in some Islamic countries, there is a higher rate of females in secondary primary schools (Mythili, 2017). This gives credence to the argument that the higher the educational levels of females, the higher the percentage in technical occupations, but this concept is often overlooked in many developing countries where, due to socio-economic factors schooling for females is relatively low. Indeed, it has been since the past five decades that the entry of more girls into school and females into higher education has been realized. Much more historically, the women's movement in nations such as India, Lebanon, Egypt and Kenya has challenged the prevailing male-dominated structures in these countries and pulled down gender equality. Accordingly, they strived for the introduction of gender-sensitive policies in elementary and secondary schools. This enabled women to take up headship positions in these schools. The policy of recruiting female teachers in the

schools was a strategy for improving girls' education (Abdela, 2000). In bridging the barriers between men and women in various spheres of life, there must be an in-depth understanding of some of the specific barriers to women's advancement or access to educational leadership positions in developing countries which invariably contribute to the development of career strategies for women. Exploring the lives of career women principals or headmasters in developing countries could pave the way to understanding the challenges they face collectively, (Swanson, 2009). A variety of studies have suggested various explanations that account for the low representation of women's leadership in the educational system in the developed world.

Among these factors are cultural scripts that identify feminine attributes as ineffective leadership (Kiamba, 2008). But although some semblance of cultural factors serves as hindrances to female leadership in schools and other settings, they are not as pronounced as they are in less developed countries such as Ghana. In fact, in Ghana, it has only been in the late 1990s to date that women have begun to head basic schools and in the early 2000s their headship roles in secondary school have begun to gain prominence (Kusi, 2019). Female discrimination and male dominance in educational administration have been a thorny issue for the school leadership position and if this is not checked, it could lead to recruiting more males into the teaching profession. It should also not be forgotten that women's under-representation in school leadership may be attributed to women's own decision not to apply for promotion in educational institutions for a variety of reasons such as lack of aspirations, lack of awareness of the promotions system, lack of confidence that they will succeed, gender-based discrimination, fear of failure and lack of competitiveness (Adjei-Boadu, 2001). According to Donkor (2015), policymakers need to expand the concept of school leadership in Ghana to include instructional leaders who will work with staff as

guides and models for teachers, keep the school closer to the community, serve as facilitators of knowledge and facilities managers and create a safe environment devoid of conflicts. School leadership in this context is seen as a constellation of behaviours and cultures in an educational system that influences both pupils' and staff's performance. It drives motivation, innovation, charisma and the building of relationships.

In fact, Edwards (2015) concurs that leadership is about relationships relating to universal differences or otherwise. School leadership from this perspective is what school leadership does to influence teachers, pupils, non-teaching staff, policymakers, and the education directorate to do extraordinary things that become the hub of transformation, value creation and transfer and the realization of the collective dream of the school. Hence, school leaders in Ghana should be effective to bring about efficiency and results. In the Central Region, female school leaders can bring about effective administration influence resource utilization, control school culture and lead team efforts for both pupils and staff. Bush and Glover (2014) observe that what school leadership entails may depend on who is asking and answering the question of “what is school leadership” because many practices are going on in schools that may not necessarily be termed leadership practices. He further argues that the meaning of school leadership has gone through changes from educational administration to educational management. Arguably, there are differences in the operations of these terminologies – administration, management and leadership. Afful-Broni (2004) and Bush and Glover (2014) all agree that there is great interest on all fronts in Ghana, particularly in the Ghana Education Service, School leadership is very important. At the school level, it is supposed to be effective, strategic and transformative. Bush and Glover (2014) contend that the school leader, the principal or the

headmaster/headmistress, has a busy schedule and is supposed to demonstrate multi-leadership in the event of a scarcity of space. They ought to have certain leadership abilities such as being able to think strategically, become action-oriented and get others to support and plan the vision and mission of the school. Implicitly, this calls for innovative strategies, focus, teacher motivation and stakeholders' involvement in a shared vision and mission which the female head of a Senior High School in the Central Region is expected to exhibit. Another implication of Bush and Glover's proposition is that a school leader is different from a person who gives a set of orders or directions, but rather he builds confidence in teachers to enhance student-teacher interaction. Hence, if the authorities in the Central Region of Ghana consider the region to be the hub or educational capital of Ghana for the overall social, economic and political environments of the nation, leadership enhancement programmes should be instituted to boost the management of the schools. Hughes (1994) postulates that leaders get things done by making tasks clear and providing rewards at their disposal such as favour and awards to staff who perform excellently, appropriately or behave congruently with organization expectations. He narrated that although school leaders describe and prescribe the efforts to translate school plans into actions and create change or develop policies, it is obvious that under certain circumstances, those who have the ability to act may not have the authority to act and those with the authority to act may not have the ability to do so. Hence, a successful school has an attribute that sets it apart from an unsuccessful organization. That attribute is effective leadership. In addition, Lambert (2002) points to very important issues of consideration when examining the role that school leaders might adopt to yield quality education in any school system. These are required skills for handling the changes that are expected to flow from policy initiatives so that they can perform. Lambert also argued that the

days when school heads did everything by themselves are over and that it is now time to synergize operations. This is indeed an error in which school leaders are supposed to involve the substantial participation of other educators within the school setting.

Fullan (2002) contends that leadership in education has become more critical, as a result of the complex system that has been developed. Thus, the need for school leadership to encourage teamwork cannot be over-emphasized. The achievement of school goals is based on the quality of efficiency of the leader in question. Hence, a school leader should be interested in using interpersonal skills to build trust and work with others; and he must possess the ability to develop, articulate and implement the mission of the school. Here one may deduce that the prime professional responsibility of headmistresses in the Central Region is effective management of their respective high schools so as to fulfill the hopes of the students enrolled in the schools and serve the legitimate purpose of the broader society. Yammarino et al. (2008) believe that in order to provide the leadership needed to enhance the educational attainment of students and meet societal expectations for educational organizations, a school leader exhibits or demonstrates knowledge and skills in educational administration. He must be trained and possess skills, abilities and understanding of human relationships.

## **2.5 Female Leadership Theories**

Female leadership theories are derived from the propositions of women's leadership and feminist leadership. This is characterized by one key question: Does gender make a difference to how leadership is exercised or perceived? Batliwala and Pittman (2010) argue that the mainstream literature regarding female leadership has a gender conception of women's leadership characterized by qualities such as nurturing, collaboration and consensus-building. In other words, women are viewed negatively

when they adopt the styles and traits characteristic of male leaders. Cheng (2002) expanded 'on the argument by noting that the challenge women leaders face is how to conform to what is expected of them by men while still retaining their credibility and effectiveness as leaders . Fullan (2002) conceptualizes feminist leadership as women with a feminist perspective and vision of social justice, individually or collectively transforming to use their power, resources and skills in non-oppressive inclusive structures and processions to mobilize others, especially women, around a share of socio-cultural, economic and political transformation. What one deduces from the above point is that female leaders advocate for inclusiveness, collaboration, and empowering women to become leaders in consensus building.

### **2.5.1. Role Conflict Theory**

The role conflict theory is sometimes referred to as the role incongruity theory. According to the tenets of this theory, according to Eagly and Karau (2002), the theory is based on prejudice, and this prejudice is against women. The theory stereotypes gender roles (assigning a particular role to a gender, male or female) and people's expectations of each gender is based on a person's expected role in society. Role Theory is a perspective in sociology and social psychology. It conceives the everyday activities of individuals as acting out of various socially defined roles (eg. Manager, mother, teacher) and each role is a set of rights (Alexander, 2012), duties, expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to face or fulfill. Analytically, a man or woman's role or behaviour is context-specific. There are two elements or assumptions underlying role conflict theory. First, there is the issue of division of labour and this can be expressed in terms of gender. Arguably, roles are acted out or occupied by individuals who are called "actors" and who are expected to play or act a particular role based on the social structure of the society in which they find

themselves. Second, change conditions can render a social role outdated in which case social pressures are likely to lead to role change (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

This latter point can be illustrated by the assumption of a leadership role by the Ghanaian warrior Queen Yaa Asantewaa when in response to social pressure, she assumed the leadership role of the Ashanti Kingdom. Another example that can be made regarding this point is that in the last thirty years or more, many females were designated as Housemistresses while men assumed leadership positions in Senior High Schools. In those periods a female was not designated as the head of a Senior High School because that would be uncharacteristic of her gender or social identity. Social identity in this context is a person's self-concept and societal perception of him or her regarding membership in a social group. Implicitly, human beings are stereotyped in terms of age, gender, ethnicity or religion.

### **2.5.2 Attribution theory of leadership**

The Attribution Theory of Leadership suggests that a leader's judgement about his employees is influenced by the leader's attribution of the causes of the employee's performance. The theory is viewed from two perspectives. The first is the leader's attribution for and reaction to poor performance by subordinates and the second is the observer's attribution for and reaction to the leader. Sadie writes: "The attribution approach starts with the position that the leader is essentially an information processor." Based on information about subordinates and their behaviours, the leader decides and attributes the cause of each subordinate's behaviour and selects strategies to deal with any poor performance (Sadie, 2005). Judging from the dictates of this theory, it means that attribution is based upon the leader's ability to process



information based on the unique nature of the behaviour is consistent and applies to all the employees.

## **2.6 Leadership Challenges Faced by Female Heads**

One of the most interesting and defiant aspects of the careers of educational leaders is the dominance of women in the educational arena, while women are absent at the top of the leadership hierarchy. Indeed, it can be argued that women make up a larger portion of the workforce in basic education, but their leadership roles in secondary and tertiary education are disproportionately lower compared to men (O’Neil, Plank & Domingo, 2005). The truism of this argument is that, in Ghana, Wood (2006) noted that the majority of classroom teachers are women who have family responsibilities that hinder them from climbing to the top. At the basic level, especially, the ascribed reason for women's dominance of classroom roles as mothers is that people perceive them to be better teachers of children than men because they are loving, patient and nurturing (Wood, 2006). However, females nowadays are availing themselves of leadership positions in schools. The challenges female leaders face in school-setting are dealt with in detail according to the thematic areas.

## **2.7 General Discrimination against Women Leaders**

A key challenge that is at the root of all challenges female leaders face in schools is discrimination. Riger and Galligan (1980) observe that despite the competence of women educational leaders, they face the challenge of discrimination based on the assumption that they are too weak to handle high academic positions. Implicitly, they are seen as too emotional to handle peculiar challenges, too feeble when it comes to physique, very dull, not task-oriented enough, and lacking independence and autonomy. Much more grave in terms of discrimination is the notion, according to



Fishel and Pottker (2005), the presence of women as colleagues or bosses upsets the traditional relationships between men and women. In Ghana, this notion runs contrary to what Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey said: “The surest way to keep the people down is to educate the men and neglect the women.” “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a nation”. Hence, there is a need for Ghana to pay due attention to helping women move upwards on the leadership ladder. It cannot be true that, no matter the educational level of a woman, she would only end up in a man’s home as a wife. General discrimination against female leadership positions is rooted deeply in the attitude towards females. In the context of this study is defined as the general expression of either positive or negative feelings towards something which distinguishes it from other terms like value, belief or opinion (Koballa & Glynn, 2007).

This definition connotes verbal or non-verbal expression. A normative question posed regarding the attitude of men and other elements of society towards female leadership ability is: Do women and men differ in leadership styles and capabilities? Many companies, for example, associate masculine characteristics with success and achievement, denoting that men are more successful than women in leadership capabilities and the distinctive characteristics that set men apart in the view of (Carl, 2007) are assertiveness, aggressiveness and task-oriented. Females, in the view of (Carl, 2007), are modest, quiet, selfless and nurturing – styles or abilities that lack the force of character and that are associated with non-executive managers. It is based on the negative attitude towards female leadership that leadership has been perceived and portrayed as a masculine construct. This has led to women facing far greater obstacles on the leadership ladder as they progress from primary school to secondary school and tertiary. The attitude of Ghanaian society, in particular, and society in general

toward women's leadership is common. Linked to this line of thinking is the view of (Adeyemi-Bello & Tomkiewicz, 1996) that women who are in managerial positions are exposed to discriminatory stress, situations and events that make their leadership positions difficult. The discrimination against women leaders, which produces certain attitudinal constructs, invariably produces a third element called marginality, which Brannigan (2005) thinks creates a lot of pressure on female leaders. Marginality in this context means placing females outside or at the edge of organizational leadership structures. For instance, women who have entered male fields are often seen as outsiders or strangers. They suffer from a lack of acceptance and attention. Essentially, female leaders in Ghana continue to contend with discrimination politically, economically and socially and this marginalization is more visible in educational domains. According to Ortiz and Marshall (2006), societal misconceptions and discrimination regarding the role of a mother have had a negative effect on working mothers. There is the perception in Africa that a good mother must give less effort and priority to paid work demands and more time to domestic chores (Adjei-Boadu, 2001). In contrast to societal judgement and discrimination against others, employed fathers are regarded as better parents and are professional and competent. This notion includes the belief that mothers should do more than fathers to be labeled as good parents and that mothers are held to higher standards of responsibilities than fathers (Sadie, 2005). Based on this societal prescription, full-time employed mothers are seen as violating the norms of the caretaker's role, but employed fathers embody the provider role. As a result of these judgments, motherhood has a detrimental effect on women's career opportunities.

## 2.8 Gender and Leadership

Research has been conducted as to whether or not there are sex differences in leadership and differences can be seen from a relationship based or task-based perspective (Lumbert, 2002). Bush and Glover (2014) observe that most research on gender and leadership compares the leadership styles of women and men. They noted that in contrast to the gender-stereotypic expectation that women lead in an interpersonally oriented style and men in a task-oriented style female and male leaders did not differ in these two styles in organizational studies. Their study in the *Psychological Bulletin* pinpoints the fact that women adopt more democratically leadership style than men. Analytically, the works of Eagly and Karau (2002) brings to the fore the ideological dimensions of masculinity in institutions including educational institutions. Most often than not, in these institutions, masculinity is imposed upon female leadership. Eagly and Karau (2002) cited the example that in the American Congress only one female was able to have a direct effect on any reproductive policy, and other women have experienced sexual harassment by men. At the Ghanaian and African levels, it has been only in recent times that women have begun to assert their influence. For example, a few women are Pro-Vice-Chancellor and even Vice-Chancellor as has been the case of Jean Naana Opoku Agyeman of the University of Cape Coast. A few women have become leaders at the National level in Ghana and Africa. For example, there have been female Speaker of Parliament, Chief Justice, etc and there was the first African female leader in the person of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Rationally, the arguments and narration above point to the conclusion that effective leadership is not the exclusive domain of either gender and that both men and women can learn from one another. Another inference that can be made is that women should not be considered more ineffective the leadership than men. The

same can be said in educational institutions of which Alexander (2012), observes that although there has been a stereotypical attitude of men towards women, several women have performed outstandingly in many Senior High Schools in the Southern areas of the United States of America. Equally, in the formative period of Ghana's post-independence educational development, the heads of a majority of basic and Secondary Schools were men. However, from the mid-1990s to date, women have assumed headship roles at all levels of the educational spectrum in Ghana. Hence, one stands to argue that although research has indicated no substantial differences between the behaviours of male and female leaders, differences still exist in perceptions of this behaviour (Shakeshaft, 1987; Kusi, 2008). In other words, leadership continues to be described in stereotypical masculine terms. Alternatively, the fact that at the school level leadership is a central theme in the literature on school improvement, and that education is a field numerically dominated by women, yet despite the evidence of a growing willingness of females to take up leadership positions in the field, educational leadership is still a male preserve.

### **2.8.1 Family/Home-based challenges**

Women's contribution to family welfare is observed in the roles they play. These include, but are not limited to income-generating, household responsibilities (catering for both children and husband) and sometimes caring for external family members. Denys (2008) notes that it is the responsibility of the woman to tidy up the home, prepare the children for school and prepare meals. In this regard, the relationship between her career and leadership role and the family runs into conflicting expectations since she must satisfy conflicting expectations. Here, it must be reasoned that the nature of the family (large or small, extended or nuclear determines the degree of the challenge. For example, the absence of the children (who may have

embarked upon an independent life) increases the likelihood that the female leader has no time to work professionally. Another family-related challenge argued by Bailyn (2004) is the nature of support she receives from her husband. Inarguably, female school leaders experience some sort of guilt in their attempt to combine family and career. This is rationalized within the context that a female's role is very aligned with motherhood in society and her success as a career woman will be a measure of how she performs as a mother, cares for her husband and receives the husband's support. Perhaps, this would explain the reasons why comparatively fewer women than men occupy headship positions in Senior High Schools in Ghana.

The scenario for Ghanaians regarding low-level participation in Senior High School headship positions is very similar to that of Tanzania where (Kusi, 2019) cited (Mythili, 2017) narrated that only 12.7 per cent of Secondary Principals are women in Tanzania. Particularly for the Central Region, out of 76 Senior High Schools, only 28 are headed by females. Kusi (2019) cited in (Mythili, 2017) observes that despite the efforts being made by the Government and international agencies to narrow the gap between men and women in decision making and terms of leadership positions in the country, the situation remains unbecoming for a 21st century nation. Sadie (2005) observes that as it relates to family/home-based challenges to female leadership, some husbands deprived their wives of further education by leaving for them all of the responsibilities for parenting and taking care of the family while they (husbands) progressed in their studies and even when they completed further studies, they did not give opportunities to their wives to also pursue further studies. Some of the husbands fear that if their wives go for further studies, they mess up with other men, and even if they allow their wives to go for further studies, these women despise them. In Ghana, the traditional division of labour leads people to expect domestic responsibilities to be

women's primary roles; meaning that many obligations that distract them from their performance of that primary role cause role conflict (Adjei-Boadu, 2001). Consequently, this gender-based division of labour frees men from domestic responsibilities. Such domestic responsibilities include child care and home chores. Carl (2007) notes that women do virtually 100% of childcare work in developing countries which reduces their time in the workplace. Implicitly, the pressure that women face in balancing career and family is the most significant and private domestic challenge they face as school leaders. Domestic responsibilities sap their energy and time. It is therefore reasonably argued that children or family are not one of the many factors that women consider in their decisions to take up leadership positions. Many mothers feel tired of trying to balance paid work with the commitment to their families and parents. Some even reduce their hours at work when they have children and in rare cases, some women quit work.

## **2.9 Socio-Cultural Challenges Encountered by Female Leaders**

Socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices dominant in society have differential effects on boys' and girls' education. In most cases, more prejudice is placed on girls while girls are favoured in all aspects of life. Traditionally, according to Adjei-Boadu (2001) girls are viewed as inferior and therefore discriminated against right from birth. Also, studies by Carl (2007) and Kusi (2019) show that the disadvantaged position of girls emanates from the parental and societal attitude which stresses the values of sons against daughters. Implicitly, girls' education is given less attention while that of boys is deemed very important since they are expected to be breadwinners, heirs, professional person and leaders of society. Thus, the girl child is socialized to be a self-sacrificing person destined for biological reproduction and service to others, especially her family. In many African societies, including Ghana,

Mankoe (2007) narrates that girls become helpers to their mothers at an early age and gradually internalize their roles and fate as the inferior sibling. Specifically, in rural Ghanaian society, the belief is that a spiteful place for the female is the kitchen, and therefore, many households see no reason for spending so much time, money and energy to give her a western type of education. Mankoe (2007) went on to explain that Ghanaian society feels that no matter what females in a man's home are a wife and benefit largely the family of the man. Therefore, for a woman, higher education was not a necessity. Women in Africa in this context have been related to the background as housekeepers who should not be leaders or decision-makers in every facet of life. Mankoe (2007) observes that the Ghanaian culture demands that women submit to their male counterparts in matters of decision making. These traditional and socio-cultural challenges have found their way into the workplace. For example, some public institutions still do not regard and accept women as capable leaders. Adjei-Boadu (2001) observes that the Ghanaian social image of the differences between women and men is a projection of its social and cultural environment. This is why, in some conservative Ghanaian society, the formal education of girls is viewed with suspicion as a threat to family morality and prestige. In fact, some parents fear losing honour, prestige and bride price due to the effect of schooling of their daughters. In some instances, teenage pregnancy makes some parents reluctant to support their daughter's education. School settings socio-cultural issues become more pronounced for a female head of school who works in different cultural sets (Adjei-Boadu, 2001). Particularly, women in school leadership urban-rural settings are hard hit by prejudice because most men in those areas are the staunch custodians of culture. Female school heads are scrutinized for their social behaviour more than male school heads, making the work of the female school leaders more difficult. In secondary schools, many



female heads of schools, due to some cultural practices have challenges when dealing with adolescent behavioral problems, especially when they are disciplinary problems relating to boy-girl relationships. Sergiovanni (2007) observed that women are supposed to be led and not to lead. These beliefs are grounded in stereotypes about women. One of these stereotypes indicated by Lunyolo, Ayodo, (Tikoko & Simatwa, 2014) is that any form of assertiveness shown by a woman to be a lady is interpreted as aggression. For instance, female leaders who are strict, assertive and forward-looking in leadership positions are referred to as "iron ladies" (Mankoe, 2007). This makes it very difficult for a woman to exert much authority over men since culturally, society still suffers from the myth that women are too emotional and weak for senior management positions. Again, this kind of cultural stereotype leaves women marginalized.

In Kenya, for instance, the (Daily Nation, 2009) a leading news outlet observes that culturally, women who get into leadership positions are seen as troublemakers. These findings agree with those of Kiamba (2008) who found that there is subtle discrimination in universities and training colleges disguised in the requirements for promotions and appointments. These findings also find expression in the beliefs of Brunner and Kim (2010) who argued that some barriers that women often felt they were denied include school board prejudices against women leaders, school board members' perceptions that women are not strong managers, and their perceptions that women are unqualified to handle budgeting issues and finances. In Ghana, the same can be said about these cultural perceptions and attendant challenges. Adjei-Boadu (2001); for example, noted girls are trained to become good mothers while boys are prepared for white-collar jobs like administrators or bankers. If this cultural challenge is to be overcome, the training of girls should start at an early age at home, school and



at the societal level for future careers as managers or leaders. After all, the belief that men make better leaders than women is not supported by all. Fitzgerald (2007) and Kiamba (2008) believe that female headmistresses play a greater parental role, are transparent, accountable, dependable, well-organized and trustworthy. In support of this argument, in Ghana, most of the Senior High single-sex (girls) schools that perform well in the regional West African Examination Council (WAEC) are headed by women. Another cultural dimension that constitutes a challenge that female heads face regarding leadership is a patriarchal system by which authority is male-dominated (Brunner & Kim, 2010). A practical example in Ghana is that, in most organizations including district education directorates and Senior High Schools, the interview panels are dominated by men. This is so because African cultures favour men. Any interesting closing argument to this section of the literature is seen in the words of (Lunyolo et al, 2014). To overcome the anomaly of cultural bias against female leadership, there is a need to sensitize society and communities to the potential God has bestowed on women. Everybody exists because of women. She carefully carries a baby in her womb for nine months and even after birth, she is safe in terms of treatment, feeding, love and care. Otherwise, if she chooses to abort it, there would be no more whatsoever.

## **2.10 Human Resources Challenges Confronting Female Heads**

Within the context of this study, human resources constitutes the pool who are recruited to occupy and work in the various units of an organization to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Mankoe, 2007). Essentially, the human resources in Senior High Schools are the teachers including the headmaster, the accounting staff, the security personnel and the janitors. The human resource challenge for head teachers entails the development of the workers, their competencies and the process of

developing the entire organization (Edem, 2017). In school organization, Rogers (2005) notes that the line staff are the personnel directly involved in achieving the main goals of the school. In Senior High Schools, these include the heads, the assistant head (academic and administration) and the housemaster/mistress. Also, in Senior High Schools in Ghana, there is the technical and advisory staff such as the accountant, librarian, and security personnel who are indirectly involved in the achievement of the school goals. Furthermore, in Senior High Schools in Ghana, the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (World Bank, 2005) categorizes the human resource in Secondary Schools as administrative staff (headmaster, deputy headmaster, heads of departments) teaching staff (all teachers), and support staff (accountants, bursars, secretaries, drivers, grounds men, cooks and school nurse and messengers). A key challenge encountered by heads of Senior High Schools is that of developing human resources. This involves increasing the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the human beings in the school. Human resource development is conceptualized by (Swanson, 2009) as the process of developing and unleashing expertise to improve the organizational system, work process, team and individual performance. A key challenge, in this case, is that some of the employees become obsolete and rustic if they do not get up-to-date training with new methods, work, skills and knowledge. This is very true, especially for the teaching staff that do not go to attend professional development workshops. Other human resource challenges headmasters face in Senior High Schools which have implications for leadership performance are resolving conflicts, the complexity of managerial roles, and the uncooperative attitude of the school board. Particularly for female heads in Senior High Schools, Mankoe (2007) observes that managing conflicts is more problematic, especially when the conflict is between two female staff. The Education for All

Global Monitoring Report (2005) outlines some of the challenges heads of Senior High Schools face like lack of cooperation between the head and some teachers, work overload, lack of commitment to training by workers, poor interpersonal relationships, lack of cooperation between the school head and the board and illiteracy of some board members. In the wake of all of these human resource challenges bedeviling heads of Senior High Schools, Nthenya (2012) opines that if the head is well-versed in the art of human resource planning in education, especially the process of human resource management, the challenges can be overcome. Some of these processes of human resource management are effective personnel inventory (assessing human resource skills and potentials), human resource forecasting (predicting future personnel requirements) task analysis and staff appraisal and control and evaluation (Nthenya, 2012). Control and evaluation entail obtaining feedback on the overall effectiveness of the school operation in terms of the degree of attainment of the human resource objectives noted by (Nthenya, 2012). Socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices dominant in society have differential effects on boys' and girls' education. In most cases, more prejudice is placed on girls, while girls are favoured in all aspects of life. Traditionally, according to Adjei-Boadu (2001) girls are viewed to be inferior and therefore discriminated against right from birth. Also, studies by Carl (2007) and Kusi (2019) show that the disadvantaged position of girls emanates from the parental and societal attitudes that stress the values of sons against daughters. Implicitly, girls' education is given less attention while that of boys is deemed very important since they are expected to be breadwinners, heirs, professional person and leaders of society. Thus, the girl child is socialized to be a self-sacrificing person destined for biological reproduction and service to others, especially her family. In many African societies including Ghana, Mankoe (2007) narrates that girls become

helpers to their mothers at an early age and gradually internalize their roles and fate as the inferior sibling. Specifically, in rural Ghanaian society, the belief is that a rightful place for the female is the kitchen, and therefore, many households see no reason for spending so much time, money and energy to give her a western type of education. Mankoe (2007) went on to explain that Ghanaian society feels that no matter what a woman's role is in a man's home as a wife and how it benefits largely the family of the man, she is still subjected to being unequal to the man. Therefore, for a woman, higher education was not a necessity. Women in Africa in this context have been related to the background as housekeepers who should not be leaders or decision-makers in every facet of life.

Mankoe (2007) observes that the Ghanaian culture demands that women submit to their male counterparts in matters of decision making. These traditional and socio-cultural challenges have found their way in the workplaces. For example, some public institutions still do not regard and accept women as capable leaders. Adjei-Boadu (2001) observes that the Ghanaian social image of the differences between women and men is a projection of its social and cultural environment. This is why in some conservative Ghanaian society, the formal education of girls is viewed with suspicion....as a threat to family morality and prestige. In fact, some parents fear losing honour, prestige and bride price due to the effect of schooling their daughters. In some instances, teenage pregnancy makes some parents reluctant to support their daughter's education. In school settings, socio-cultural issues become more pronounced when a female head of school works in different cultural settings (Adjei-Boadu, 2001). Particularly, women in school leadership in rural settings are hard hit by prejudice because most men in these areas are the staunch custodians of culture. Female school heads are scrutinized for their social behaviour more than male school

heads, making the work of the female school leaders more difficult. In secondary schools, many female heads of schools, due to some cultural practices, have challenges when dealing with adolescent behavioural problems, especially when these problems are disciplinary problems relating to boy-girl relationships.

### **2.11 Support Systems for Female Leadership**

It is widely accepted that every organisation needs qualified potential human and material resources to achieve its goals. It is in light of this that organisations make investments into the professional development of their members and give them emotional and moral support. Collectively, the professional training, support and guidance administered to members to enhance their work are referred to as support systems. Support systems within the domain of this research constitute concrete ways or interventions needed to assist more women in moving forward into leadership positions. O'neil, Plank and Domingo (2015) itemize support systems as the network of people and institutions that offer practical and emotional support to female leaders. These include training support, encouraging women-friendly culture, legislation that encourages women-friendly culture and promotes gender equity, recruitment policies that do not discriminate against women, confidence-building seminars, flexible working schedules for women, and equal opportunities in terms of salary scales. Other support systems or activities are the development of anti-sexual harassment policies, effective career mapping for women, the provision of childcare facilities in workplaces and comprehensive job protection policies for pregnant women. A key support service that should be given to female leaders is professional training. The concept of staff training for females to enhance their leadership skills will further influence their performance or productivity. The world is dynamic, hence, for female heads of school to cope with life changes, they ought to be trained managerially

(Dampson, 2019). This stresses the need for periodic in-service training. Another form of support service that can be given to females is accommodation. Female leaders who are far from their workplaces should be given accommodation closer to the schools. In secondary schools in Ghana, this relates particularly to some of the assistant headmistresses who have no accommodation closer to the school. This will help them to be effective in terms of regularity and punctuality. These are the words of Oyetuny (2006) which bring about a high level of dedication and commitment. Another form of service that can be given to female school leaders is motivation. According to Damposn (2011), female heads of schools need to be stimulated or influenced to bring out their best in meeting school goals. The motivational elements include a cordial working environment, human relations and an appreciable pay structure. These elements will result in job satisfaction which has a positive relationship with the degree of commitment to work. Again, quality interpersonal human relationships are another important form of support system that female heads can receive. Indeed, Mankoe (2007) observes that family members, subordinates of female headmistresses, associations and even friends of female school leaders need to extend moral and professional assistance to female heads of schools to boost their morale. In Senior High Schools in Ghana, some of these support systems can be actualized through support for girls' leadership and the identification of role models for girls in their formative years. For example, Abdela (2000) thinks that some girls' and women's individual and collective leadership can progressively change discriminatory gender norms. Women should therefore act as role models to normalize the idea and practice of women holding power. She added that formal institutional change such as the introduction of quotas, often enables women to access leadership positions.

## 2.12 Organizational Structures

School heads often face organisational challenges in the course of their work. Some of these organisational challenges include workload, limited careers and low pay. Some principals, according to Carl (2007), face other problems such as the feeling of professional isolation and loneliness, dealing with multiple tasks, managing time and priorities, managing the school budget, dealing with ineffective female staff and stubborn male staff, and managing the school plant and site. Tackling these problems has emotional implications, especially when it pertains to making very tough decisions. In all human endeavours, there must be a sense of organization. To organize is to establish the various functioning structures of an entity. As human beings, the physical and financial resources of an institution must be organized. Dampson (2019) iterates that to effectively facilitate the administrative and managerial processes, improve upon an enterprise, ensure optimum use of human resources, stimulate creativity, and eliminate overlapping and duplication of work, an institution must be well organized. This is why a school is departmentalized according to varying activities into individual units. These units in a high school are headed by various heads, such as the assistant headmasters for academic and administration, heads of departments, housemasters and housemistresses, bursary, and sports. The functioning of the various school units leads to a framework of relationships. A Senior High School is a formal organization because it has well-defined rules and regulations, objectives and policies and a division of labour (limitation on the activities of individuals. Within the context of this research, the organizational structure of Senior High Schools affects the functioning of female heads in the execution of their leadership roles. For example, Dampson (2019) points out that if an organization such as a high school does not have well-defined rules and regulations,



clearly defined objectives and policies, effective coordination, and an effective communication system, the head will find it difficult to effectively lead. “Organizational structure as implied above is construed as the typically hierarchical arrangement of lines of authority, communication, rights and duties of an institution” (Dampson, 2019:58). The structure of an organization can be delineated into four subsections. These are functional, divisional, matrix and line structures. In Senior High Schools, an example of a functional structure is the classification or categorization of the school into various departments and units such as subject departments, houses, sports, bursary, etc. Relative to a divisional structure, the Senior High School has divisions that take care of academic and administrative activities, respectively. The matrix function is the interplay of the activities of two or more functions. For example, the sporting department can organize sporting activities among various boarding houses, which in themselves are also separate departments. The line function depicts a chain of command in terms of authority and communication. In many organizations including high schools, this function is vertical—meaning that instruction flows from the head of a department to his deputies, and to various heads of departments and other functional units. Some Senior High Schools have management committees or boards of directors that influence the work of the headmaster/mistress. The organizational structure of a school can pose a challenge to the head of the school if there is no clear or defined system of authority and accountability; prompt decision making, effective communication, utilization of qualified and competent human resources, discipline and economic use of resources (Dampson, 2019). For example, if there is apathy among staff or the unavailability of adequate staff, in terms of communication, favouritism and too much dependence on the headmistress and her deputies, the leadership will be challenged.



### **2.13 Summary**

Chapter Two, which constitutes a review of related literature, is essentially focused on the key concepts of leadership and the themes that underpin the research questions. The themes include home/family challenges to leadership, cultural challenges, human resources challenges, and support systems for improving female leadership in school settings. These major themes were preceded by the conceptual and theoretical framework and the general discrimination against female leadership. The literature ended with an empirical study that focused largely on the perception of society against female leadership and the gaps in the literature. From the review of the literature, it is clear that the issue of female leadership is complex. The inclusion of women in educational administration should therefore not be taken lightly by stakeholders as it is a powerful force to promote equity, create a model for other aspiring leaders and bring into administration a different style of leadership. The review of the literature shows that females still face socio-cultural, organisational and human-related challenges. Although these challenges affect some females who may shy away from some leadership positions, it is encouraging for them to improve themselves and the school system in which they work.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Individuals and institutions have challenges in their existence and operations. Females as leaders encounter varying forms of challenges, no matter the place of work. This study investigates the challenges female heads of senior high schools face in the central region of Ghana. This chapter presents the blueprint or methodology adopted in the collection, organisation, presentation and interpretation of results. Accordingly, the research philosophy and design, the population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis and ethical considerations are described in the chapter.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm and Approach

This study adopted a pragmatic philosophy or paradigm in which both positivist and interpretivist approaches were utilized. In other words, this approach embodies both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The ontological and epistemological bases of the research are that the truth of arriving at the facts and figures in this data was arrived at through a combination of both the positivist and interpretivist positions (Frowe, 2001). Creswell (2009) is of the view that researching from different angles, especially as it relates to the collection, organisation, presentation and analysis of data from different angles and at multiple levels contributes to understanding social reality, which more often than not exists at different levels. This proposition is true for social realities such as leadership challenges in schools. The philosophy of pragmatism adopted hinges on the fact that

neither quantitative nor qualitative approaches were adequate all of the time in providing explanations and generalizations from a particular set of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, Creswell (2009) is of the view that there is much to be gained from a fusion of interpretivist and positivist philosophies in studying a phenomenon provided the researcher is aware of how he is employing the methods adopted and how they relate to his or her problem. Basically, the rationale for employing pragmatic (quantitative and qualitative methods) in this study was to reconcile the two data collection methods for an in-depth understanding and for credible or valid results on the challenges female leaders (heads) in senior high schools are encountering in the central region of Ghana. The combination of the two philosophical approaches enhances mutual confirmation of the findings. The quantitative approach enabled the researcher to describe the challenges, situations and conditions relating to female heads without subjective or emotional manipulation of the variables, whereas the adoption of the qualitative approach enabled the understanding of the problem. These two methodological approaches provide more reliable information on the challenges facing female heads in senior high schools in the study areas. Particularly, regarding the interpretivist philosophy, advocates of this philosophy hold the view that there is no objective social reality, but instead, there are multiple realities. Hence, researchers who adopt this paradigm are aware that the social reality ( in this case, the leadership challenges of female heads) is not independent of the social meaning given in the social setting (Senior High Schools). They believe that research undertaken with an interpretivist connotation focuses on the social relationships (e.g., relationships in the school environment and the mechanisms by which participants (school heads, teachers, parents) in the central region (setting) navigate and create the social world (network of relationships). In

other words, according to Cohen and Manion (2008), interpretivist research is context-specific. For this study, aligning the interpretivist research with the positivist philosophy helped the researcher understand perceptions regarding the leadership challenges heads of senior high schools face in the central region of Ghana. Regarding the pragmatic philosophy aligned with the interpretivist approach in this study, it contends that objects have an independent existence and are not dependent on the emotions or predisposition of the investigator or knower (Cohen & Manion, 2008).

This philosophy leans toward the natural or pure sciences which rely heavily on experimentation, observation, correlations and calibrations. A major strength of this school of thought is its sense of objectivity and the fact that it relies strictly on numerations as a basis for making generalizations. The weakness of this philosophy is that meaning or social reality can be realized only through numerical analysis even though in some cases, meaning can be realized better from body language, words and feelings than from figures. In essence, the reliance on both the positivist philosophy, which hinges on the ideology of numerology and the interpretivist which believes that social reality is a result of interaction between the researcher and the research enhances the depth and breadth of understanding the phenomenon. The paradigm underpinning this study was both pragmatic. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), positivist is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality. This paradigm focuses on knowledge generated or confirmed by the senses and hypothesis, which is objective, factual and not subjective or leaning towards value judgement. Regarding the interpretivist paradigm, it is based on the view that knowledge is generated with due respect to the differences between people implying that subjective value judgement cannot be deemphasized (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Accordingly, the research approach

is both quantitative (positivist learning) and qualitative (interpretivist in nature). In this context, the research approach was a mix-method. Quantitatively, the researcher used data that were structured in the form of numbers or that can easily be transported into numbers while the qualitative data were represented by interview data generated from the verbal narration.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed concurrent triangulation design to investigate female heads regarding their daily challenges.. The purpose of this design was to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic as Creswell (2014) to best analyze the research problem. Also, triangulation is defined as measuring the same concept using two or more methods. Indicators of the concept are first collected in each method, and the underlying or latent concept is measured within each method (Johnson et al, 2012). The measurements taken within each method are then correlated. The goal is that of a more accurate measure; that is, triangulations would achieve a better estimate of the error inherent in any measurement both within and between the methods. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008) the mixed-methods design goes beyond the limitations of a single approach because it integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The rationale behind this design is that the researcher values both forms of data equally and treats them as such. Data is thereby merged, and the results of analyses are used simultaneously to understand the research questions through the comparison of findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Cresswell (2008) stated that during interpretation, this design helps the researcher “to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings” in order to elaborate valid and well-substantiated conclusions about the problem under study. Again, quantitative and qualitative data are collected

concurrently and later compared with the aim of determining convergence, differences and combinations. It sampled the views and opinions of female heads regarding their daily challenges in the Senior High Schools of the Central Region.

### **3.3 Population**

A population can be defined as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested (Kusi, 2019). The population of a study can be both heterogeneous or homogeneous. The population of this research is heterogeneous; comprising males and females and various categories of respondents such as heads of senior high schools who are females, teachers, assistant heads and district directors of education. The target population of the study is all female headmistresses, teachers and district directors of education in senior high schools, Central Region. The estimated population was 1,000. Since schools exist as groups, stratified sampling techniques were first and foremost used in selecting them. The accessible population consisted of headmistresses, assistant headmistresses, teachers and five district directors of education in ten schools located in five districts of the Central Region of Ghana. These districts were Effutu Municipal, Asikuma-Odoben Brakwa, Cape Coast Metropolitan, Abura-Asebu Kwamankese, and Awutu Senya. The schools from which the accessible population was drawn were Aggrey Memorial Zion SHS, Aburaman SHS, Senya SHS, Obrachire SHTS, Efutu SHTS, Winneba SHS, Wesley Girls, Odoben SHS, Academic of Christ the King and Breman Asikuma SHS.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Kusi (2012) defines a sample as a small subset of a larger population whose selection is based on the knowledge of the elements of a research purpose. The purpose of

selecting a sample was that it is not possible, in all cases, to select the entire population of a study, hence, only part of the population that is representative enough can be selected. Creswell (2009), describes sampling as a process of selecting several individuals or objects from a population such that the elected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the population. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the 10 schools headed by female heads, the 5 districts directors in which there were female heads of senior high schools and 15 assistant heads of schools. The justification for using purposive sampling for these categories of respondents was that they were known to have the information required and they were few in terms of their respective populations. Purposive sampling was constructed to serve a very specific need or purpose. By using this sampling method, the researcher decided that there was a need to know and set out to find people who could and were willing to provide information, knowledge, and experiences. Therefore, the researcher adopted purposive sampling in selecting the five district directors of education, 10 female heads, and 15 assistant heads of schools who are female. Regarding the 45 teachers (5 from each school) to give them an equal chance of being selected as per their large numbers, and because they were in groups (separate schools), stratified sampling and systematic sampling techniques were adopted, respectively. Regarding systematic sampling, the teachers were selected based on the list of teachers on files in the various schools. The 25 heads of departments were purposively selected.

**Table 1: Sample size**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
District Directors	5
Heads	10
Assistants Heads	15
Heads of Departments	25
Teachers(others)	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

The design of research instruments, such as questionnaires and interview schedules, is a critical step in ensuring that data collection aligns with the research objectives and generates meaningful insights.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaire**

The first step in designing the questionnaire was to clearly define the research objectives and the specific information needed from teachers and heads of departments. This helped in determining the scope and content of the questionnaire. To inform the questionnaire design, a thorough review of relevant literature on the challenges faced by female school leaders was conducted. This helped identify potential questions and themes to be addressed. The research questions were transformed into structured and clear questions. Each question was designed to collect specific information related to the research objectives. Depending on the nature of the questions, five (5) Likert-scale items were incorporated to collect responses from participants. Before finalizing the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of teachers and heads of departments who were not part of the main study. This helped identify any ambiguities or issues with the response format. Based



on the feedback received during the pilot test, the questionnaire was refined and revised to ensure clarity, relevance, and ease of completion.

### **3.5.2 Interview**

Similar to the questionnaire, the interview schedule was developed with clear objectives in mind. Interviews with female heads of schools, assistant heads, and district directors of education aimed to obtain in-depth insights and validate information provided by teachers. The interview schedule included a semi-structured framework with a list of key topics and questions to be covered during the interviews. It allowed for flexibility in exploring specific issues in depth. Open-ended questions were included to encourage participants to share their perspectives and experiences in their own words. These questions allowed for rich qualitative data collection. Probing questions were designed to follow up on participants' responses, seeking clarification, examples, and additional details to gain a comprehensive understanding of their views and experiences. Similar to the questionnaire, pilot interviews were conducted with a small group of participants to test the interview schedule. This helped refine the schedule and ensure that it effectively captured the required information. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, were embedded in the interview process to protect participants' rights and ensure ethical research conduct. Overall, both the questionnaire and interview schedules were carefully designed to align with the research objectives, collect relevant data, and maintain ethical standards. This thoughtful instrument design contributed to the success of the data collection process and the quality of the information gathered for the study.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

Cohen and Manion (2008) conceptualize the validity of instruments as the accuracy or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, and interpretation of the data collection process. Basically, it is referred to as the degree to which the conclusions drawn by the researcher come from the study results. This means validity is concerned with the researcher's explanations of the extent to which the data represents the reality of the situation being studied. It is meant to represent the success of a method in probing and accessing what it sets out to probe or assess. The research instruments were validated taking cognizance content and face validity into account. Face validity was ascertained by giving it to colleagues in the Department of Educational Administration, experienced teachers and significant others to obtain their suggestions. Face validity refers to whether the instrument appears as though it is meaning the appropriate construct. On content validity, the instrument was given to the researcher's supervisor. Content validity considers whether the items are in line with the overall substance of the research work especially as it relates to the problem statement and research questions. During both processes of validation, the researcher takes note of grammatical errors, typographical mistakes and ambiguities. The reliability of the instruments relates to the similarity (internal consistency) of the results if the instrument is administered repeatedly to the same individuals and produces the same results. In checking the reliability of the questionnaire, it was tested using 15 teachers, including headmistress, in a district not sampled for the study, but had similar attributes as those that were used in the main study. Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data often repeated trials (Creswell, 2009). The test re-test method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. In test re-test reliability, respondents are administered

identical scales at two different times under nearly similar conditions. This approach was considered appropriate by the researcher because it allowed a lapse of time between the two tests which the researcher used to prove the reliability of the instrument. The pre-test involved 6 female teachers and the results after the second test showed that there was no significant difference between the first test and the second test. The data was input, and with the use of Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21.0, Cronbach alpha co-efficient was computed to determine the internal consistency of the scores of the question items using a Likert scale. The internal constituency score was 0.7 for the questionnaire items.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of this study is enhanced by including participants differing viewpoints, giving more credibility to the findings. The trustworthiness is again enhanced by the exact description of the procedure, by motivated participants and by the important quotations from the interviews (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Curtin and Fossey (2007) stated that the concept of trustworthiness is very important because it is necessary to estimate the accuracy of a qualitative study.

Also, by way of ensuring credibility the researcher followed this procedure:

1. The interviews were conducted using language that were understood by both the researcher and participants to avoid misunderstanding between the researcher and the interviewees.
2. The interview took place at a quiet and serene environment void of distortions.
3. The supervisor for this study's regular inspections by giving constructive criticisms helped the researcher to check for flaws and problems in the study.

4. Participation of the participants in the interviews were strictly voluntary and their privacy and confidentiality were strongly maintained at all time.

### **3.7.1 Credibility**

According to Bryman and Bell (2008) and Kusi (2012), credibility is involved with the process of establishing that the results or the qualitative data are credible or believable from the perspectives of the participants in the research. Here, much emphasis is placed on the capability of the researcher and the participants. In this regard, understanding the phenomenon being investigated is vital, and the researcher ensures that the participants feel comfortable about the phenomenon being investigated. The researcher in this study after collecting and analysing the data reported her interpretations and inferences to the participants. These participants then checked their responses and perspectives as feedback (Kusi, 2019).

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Educational and Administrative Management. Copies of the introductory letter were sent to the Central Regional Education Directorate and the various schools where the study was intended to be carried out. Participants' consent was obtained before they participated in the study. The researcher then met the participants at a meeting and made an appeal to them for their assistance, which they gladly accepted. Subsequent reminders were made to the participants through school visits and phone calls. According to Kusi (2017), Informed consent is an agreement between relevant individuals and organizations on the basis of appropriate information. It involves giving information about the study, how it will be carried out, the nature of their participation, the time requirement, the kind of data to be collected and how it will be used and reported.

Kusi (2017) is of the view that when informed consent from participants is obtained, it will enable them to make a decision to participate in the study depending on the quality of information they receive about it. The participants were given consent forms to sign before they participated in the study. Cresswell (2008) as cited in (Kusi, 2012) advises researchers to provide targeted participants with an informed consent form to sign before they participate in the study. Confidentiality was ensured by keeping information safe from third parties. They were also assured that the findings of the study were strictly for academic purposes only. Questionnaires were given to the sample population in the selected schools by the researcher. A copy of the permission letter from the Central Regional Education Director was also given to the respondents. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the study to the participants. The items on the questionnaires were also explained to the respondents before they were presented. In all, it took the researcher two weeks to administer the questionnaire. The researcher, upon analysis of the quantitative data conducted the interview based on the emerging issues. Here, the researcher interviewed the heads and district directors of education individually in their respective offices. Thus, the interview took the form of face-to-face contacts with the respondents. The interview phase also took two weeks to be completed.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Generally, all the data were edited to determine their accuracy and appropriateness. Regarding the questionnaire data, descriptive statistics such as the percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. The interview (qualitative data) was transcribed and read through several times to identify themes and patterns. Thematic analysis was emphasized; the data were further categorized based on various themes generated from the research questions. Qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and

procedures that assist research in organizing and explaining the qualitative data collected (Creswell, 2009). It essentially means making sense of relevant data collected from sources such as interviews, observations and document analysis. In the analysis of the qualitative data in this research, the mode of meaning of the data was determined by transcribing it and arranging it into themes and sub-themes. This thematic arrangement involves coding that data and categorizing it for the purpose of cross-case analysis.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical consideration is defined as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for and set behaviour expectations for the most correct conduct towards subjects in research. Bryman and Bell (2011) conceptualize ethical consideration as the ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge and respect for democratic values and the quality of the qualitative research process. For ethical reasons, the various stakeholders in senior high school education, such as the female head mistresses of senior high schools and the district/municipal directors of education in the central region were all contacted before field entry for data collection. This was permission-seeking. Moreover, teachers as participants during the interview sessions were treated with courtesy and respect. All participants were told about the nature of the research and told of their freedom to either decline or withdraw from the process if they so wished. Ethical consideration was carried out by applying three main concepts namely anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent. Before field entry, the researcher obtained all relevant letters of introduction from the University of Education, Winneba to the various sampled district directorates and schools.

### **3.10.1 Anonymity**

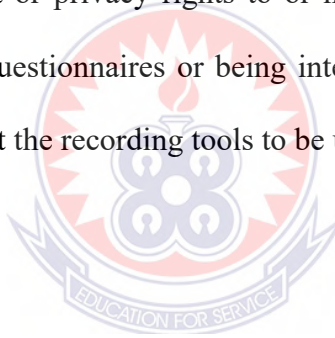
The researcher ensured anonymity by concealing the identities of the schools and all of the respondents by using codes for the individuals and pseudo names for the schools. The researcher also ensured that there were no addresses or occupational details during the interview (Cohen & Manion, 2008).

### **3.10.2 Confidentiality**

The respondents were protected regarding questions and other information. They were asked not to write their names on the questionnaires (Cohen & Manion, 2008).

### **3.10.3 Informed Consent**

The respondents' consent or privacy rights to or not to take part in the research in terms of filling out the questionnaires or being interviewed would be upheld. There would be agreement about the recording tools to be used (Cohen & Manion, 2008).



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results. Accordingly, appropriate tables are used to present and discuss the results. The mean and standard deviation were adopted to describe the quantitative data. The results regarding the mean distribution are based on a five-point Likert-type scale of one (1) to five (5), as follows: Five (5) represents strongly agree, Four(4) represents agree, Three (3) represents undecided, Two (2) represents disagree and One (1) which is the lowest of the values represents strongly disagree. Relevant verbatim comments are quoted to register the critical voice of the participants and are aimed at reflecting the qualitative data. The presentation and discussion of key findings are based on the research questions which dwelled on ascertaining the human resource challenges, the socio-cultural challenges, the influence of the challenges on organizational structures of the senior high schools, and the support systems put in place to mitigate the challenges faced by the female heads in the schools.

#### 4.1 Background Characteristics of Participants

This section constitutes the profile of participants and there are seven (7) biodata characteristics that are presented for the analysis. These are age range, academic qualification, rank in the Ghana Education Service, teaching experience, position in school, year(s) served in the current position and marital status. These, it is argued, can influence a person's disposition regarding leadership. Frequency represented Percentages in tables were used to analyze this section .



#### 4.1.1 Age Range respondents

Age is a very important demographic variable that can be used as a measure to understand and cope with the issues of life. Particularly, the ages of people can assist them in relating to the challenges of life. Figure 1 presents the age profile of the total of 100 respondents who participated in the research. In all, the age ranges of the respondents were 35 to 59 years.

**Table 2: Age profile of respondents (N=100)**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
35-45	50	50
46-56	33	33
57- Above	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, (2021)

Table 2 shows the age profile skewing to the middle ages between 35 and 45. This age group of respondents could be the teachers, including the heads of departments who constituted the highest number of respondents. The second highest percentage constituted respondents whose ages ranged from 46 to 56 years. They had a score of 33(33%). This could be the headmistresses and assistant heads. In Ghana, for teachers to be made headmistresses in secondary schools, they must have attained the rank of Deputy Director and many years of service in the Ghana Education Service. The last and smaller age regiment could be the Directors of Education who had a score of 17(17%). Their ages were between 57-59. What is very important regarding the age regime of the respondents is that they were mature enough to understand and dilate on the challenges the heads of schools face. Abdela (2000) argues that appreciating the challenges of life comes with age and that generally, the older a person, the wiser and

more experienced they are. It can therefore be summarized that respondents could appropriately respond to teacher-related challenges that the female heads of school encounter in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana.

#### **4.1.2 Academic qualifications of respondents**

The academic standing of a person, to all intents and purposes, enables her to have adequate professional and analytical skills, especially as it relates to the teaching profession. In fact, for a person to be able to teach in a senior high school, hold a position of headship and even become a Metro Director of Education, he/she must possess the required academic qualification as a professional as prescribed by the Ghana Education Service. Table 3 represents the academic qualifications of the respondents. The results on the academic qualifications show that the majority 52 (52%) of the respondents had a first degree (a bachelor's degree), followed by 33 (33%), who possessed a post-graduate diploma. The rest of the participants had a Master's degree which accounted for 15 (15%). Deductively, it can be said that those with the first degree and post-graduate diploma were the teachers and assistant headmistresses while those with the Master's degrees could be the headmistresses and Directors of Education. Analytically, it is not feasible for a person without a bachelor's degree to teach in a senior high school and that qualification must be a professional one; that is, the person must be a trained teacher. This could explain why 33% of the respondents had post-graduate Diploma qualifications. This could be bachelor's degree holders who acquired a post-graduate diploma in education, which qualifies them as professional teachers. The rest of the respondents 15(15%) had Master's degrees. These certainly were the headmistresses, assistant headmistresses and District Directors of Education. In Ghana, it is a matter of principle and regulation that for one to be a headmistress, or Director of Education, in addition to his

professional rank, must have a minimum of a Master's degree. Not surprisingly, none of the respondents had a PhD degree. In many instances, personnel with doctorate degrees often aspire to teach in universities, technical universities head colleges of Education or even be principals. Analytically, the nature of the data is very significant as it pertains to the respondents commenting on headship and leadership challenges.

**Table 3: Academic qualifications of respondents**

<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
Bachelor's degree	52	52
Post-Graduate diploma	33	33
Master's degree	15	15
PhD	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

#### **4.1.3 Rank in the Ghana Education Service**

Rank in the Ghana Education Service is a very important variable. It determines the upward mobility of teachers on the professional ladder and in qualifying for positions especially headship and assistant headship positions. It is also a key determinant regarding what level one teaches in terms of first and second cycle institutions. Table 3 provides the ranks of the respondents/ participants.

**Table 4: Ranks of respondents/ participants (N=100)**

Participants	Principal Superintendent	Assistant Director	Deputy Director	Director II	Total
Teachers	18	32	0	0	50
HODs	0	12	8	0	20
Assistant Heads	0	4	11	0	15
Heads	0	0	10	0	10
Director	0	0	0	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data (2021)

The table shows a detailed distribution of participants within Ghana Education Service, categorizing them into specific ranks and roles. Notably, the highest number of participants are teachers; (32 respondents) are at the rank of Assistant Director and (18 respondents) of them are at the rank of principal superintendent. These constitute the majority of the respondents which represent 32% and 18% respectively, totaling 50% of the total population. While none of the teachers falls within the rank of Deputy Directors and Director II, 12 Heads of Department fall within the rank of Assistant Director representing 12% and 8 Heads of Departments falls within the rank of Deputy Director, also representing 8%. However, there is a relatively smaller representation of participants in higher administrative positions, such as Assistant Heads, Heads and Directors. 4 Assistant Heads fall within the rank of Assistant Director representing 4% and 11 of them are on the rank of Deputy Director which represents 11%. All 10 Headmistresses fall within the rank of Deputy Director which is the required rank for headship in the Ghana Education Service and all 5 District/ municipal directors fall within the rank of Director II which is also the requirement for district or municipal directorship, representing 5% out of the total population of 100%.

#### 4.1.4 Position in school

School management and administration especially in senior high schools is a collective effort in which people occupy various positions in contributing to the overall objectives of the school and even the district or municipality. Edem (2017) observes that when one is given a position of responsibility, he better appreciates the challenges of an institution. The positions respondents held are indicated in Table 5.

**Table 5: Position respondents held in schools/ officers**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
District Directors	5	5
Heads	10	10
Assistant Heads	15	15
Heads of Departments	20	20
Teachers(others)	50	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data (2021)

Table 5 depicts the various positions the respondents held in their respective schools and offices. The highest percentages were the heads and assistant heads (25%) and heads of department (20%). Other positions held were (50%) and directors 5(5%). It can be deduced that housemasters/mistresses, guidance and counseling coordinators and sports and cultural coordinators were drawn from the teacher population in this research. Analytically, whatever positions were held by the respondents, this should constitute adequate experience and discernment for them to appreciate the leadership challenges head mistresses encountered in senior high schools in the Central Region. In other words, their leadership experience should be to the benefit of the schools especially as it relates to finding solutions to the challenges that the female heads face. This is particularly true with the guidance and counseling coordinators, heads of

departments and district directors of education, who work closely and directly with the headmistresses.

#### 4.1.5 Marital status

Marital status especially for female staff, be it heads or ordinary teachers, constitutes a socio-cultural phenomenon, which is a major issue in this research. Marriage life confers a greater sense of responsibility and respect, but it also embodies challenges for female employees who must combine home and work responsibilities. Equally challenging is the status of being a single mother or a widow who must cope psychologically with the loss of a spouse. Table 6 presents the marital status of the respondents.

**Table 6: Marital status of respondents**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage(%)</b>
Married	68	68
Single	23	23
Widow	4	4
Seperated	11	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field Data (2021)

The highest percentage recorded for the marital status variable was 68 (68%), and this was for respondents who were married. This was followed by 23 (23%) of respondents who were single. The least percentages were those for widows 5 (5%) and those separated 4 (4%). Rationally, whatever the status of the respondents, it entails challenges for themselves and by extension, the female heads in the senior high schools. The female heads of the senior high schools in line with the role conflict theory could be challenged in performing their leadership roles, either in dealing with

school personnel or in coping with their home/family roles. It is often argued that female contributions to the home are not limited to housekeeping but also income generating to make-up for the economy of the family. Besides, Denys (2008) observes that some husbands are opposed to their wives working, let alone taking up positions in the workplace. These husbands often perceive role conflict in the relationship between their wives careers and loyalty to the family. As a result, the woman might receive a lot of support from her husband. This challenge extends to her job site at the school. The situation even becomes worse if the school head or even some of his staff are single mothers who have multiple problems and must manage and lead. This is rationalized within the context of the decreased income and support that these single mothers experience. These experiences may create psychological trauma or imbalance, which is often transferred to school settings as transferred aggression. This can affect the leadership position of the female heads of schools. Much more serious could be a situation in which the District Director of Education or head of department or even the assistant head is experiencing marital challenges. This can negatively influence the participation of these personnel in decision-making and adhering to the chain of command.

#### **4.2 Analysis of Research Questions**

Four research questions were considered under this section. They hinge on issues relating to human resource challenges, socio-cultural factors, organizational structures and supports services.

#### **4.3 Research Question One (1)**

**What are the human resource challenges that female heads in senior high schools encounter in the Central Region?**

The objective of research Question Number One was to ascertain from participants the teacher-related challenges, challenges relating to non-teaching staff and students related challenges





**Table 7: Teacher related challenges**

S/N	TEACHER RELATED CHALLENGES (ITEMS)	SCALE						M	SD
		SA F(%)	A F(%)	U F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)			
1	Teachers delay in conveying of information to female heads.	5(5.3)	22(23.4)	33(35.1)	20(21.3)	14.9	2.83	1.11	
2	Conflict resulting from the over desire of my colleagues to attract attention from female heads.	4(4.2)	20(21.2)	26(27.6)	27(28.7)	17(18)	2.65	1.13	
3	Teachers are unable to take initiatives.	5(5.3)	13(13.8)	20(21.2)	36(38.2)	20(21.2)	2.44	1.13	
4	Mismanagement of logistics and facilities by teachers.	3(3.1)	17(18)	14(14.8)	28(29.7)	32(34.4)	2.27	1.20	
5	The slow pace of teachers in managing/organizing student functions.	5(5.3)	14(14.9)	21(22.3)	36(38.2)	18(19.1)	2.47	1.12	
6	The inability of teachers to strictly adhere to a routine timetable.	3(3.1)	17(18)	10(10.6)	33(35.1)	31(33)	2.49	1.19	
7	Uncooperative and lack of team spirit among teachers.	9(9.6)	16(17)	17(18.1)	30(31.9)	22(23.4)	2.23	1.28	
8	Non-compliance to agreed-upon decisions by teachers.	6(6.4)	16(17)	20(21.3)	38(40.4)	14(15)	2.57	1.13	
9	Lateness by teachers.	5(5.3)	22(23.4)	18(19.1)	29(31)	20(21.3)	2.60	1.12	
10	Challenges relating to regularity.	2(2.1)	21(22.3)	29(31)	28(30)	14(15)	2.61	1.05	
11	Inability of teachers to complete the timetable.	4(4.2)	20(21.3)	17(18)	36(38)	17(18.1)	2.67	1.14	
12	Opposition to change by teachers.	4(4.2)	21(22.3)	14(15)	34(36.2)	21(22.3)	2.55	1.19	
13	Challenges resulting from discrimination/bias relating to gender role.	7(7.4)	14(15)	11(11.7)	32(34)	30(32)	2.50	1.27	
14	Uncooperative PTA, e.g. Involuntary attitude.	7(7.4)	17(18.1)	27(29)	25(27)	18(19.1)	2.32	1.19	
15	Non-conforming attitude of teachers towards professional development workshop.	4(4.2)	16(17)	10(10.6)	34(36.2)	30(32)	2.68	1.20	
16	Administrative incompetence among frontline staff who are teachers.	4(4.2)	12(13)	14(15)	38(40.4)	26(28)	2.26	1.12	
17	Teachers not accepting other responsibilities.	2(2.1)	16(17)	12(13)	34(36.1)	30(32)	2.21	1.14	

**Source:** Field Data (2021)

The results as shown in Table 7, showed a high level of uniformity in the responses of participants regarding the challenges posed by the teachers to female heads of senior

high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. Essentially, as per the mean and standard deviation scores which fell within 2.00 to 2.99 and 1.00 to 1.99, respectively, the respondents disagreed with all the items regarding teacher-related challenges. For example, regarding relay in conveying information from teachers to heads, 20(21.3%) and 14 (14.9%), which reflected a mean of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.1 respectively, suggest that the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. It is often said as an adage that time is of the essence, and according to Edem (2017) information from human resources in schools settings, especially teachers, is very vital in administering any school entity. Ideally, heads of schools require the timely conveyance of information relating to student progress, the needs of teachers, teacher motivation and the general wellbeing of teachers in order to make informed leadership decisions. Rogers (2005) supports this argument by noting that teachers are the key human resources in any school setting and the effective and timely communication or relay of information from the teachers to the heads of schools and other staff members will greatly contribute towards the development of the school. Another key variable that was investigated as a human resource challenge on which the heads disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively, was non-compliance to unanimously agree upon decisions by teachers. Regarding this, 38% and 14% (Mean = 2.6, SD = 1.13) disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. These results are very important because the end product of every administrative or leadership venture is decision-making. When school decisions are made based on collaboration or consultation, it is incumbent upon all school personnel, especially teachers to comply. Non-compliance by any segment of human resources, especially the teachers poses a significant threat to the school. Tamir (2015) is of the view that non-compliance with school decisions by teachers constitutes a rebellion and is very

inimical to the head of the school achieving a set of goals and objectives. Thankfully, this was not the case with the teachers in the senior high schools that were headed by females in the Central Region of Ghana. The few head respondents 6(6.3%) and 16(17%) who strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, were insignificant compared to those who agreed. They probably did so either on stereotypical grounds or out of mere disobedience. A fourth item of significance that teachers negatively responded to or disagreed with was the inability of teachers to complete the timetable. This had scores of 4(4.2%) and 20(21.7%) who strongly agreed and agreed, respectively against 36 (38.2%) and 17(18%), ( $M=2.55$ ,  $SD=1.44$ ) for those who disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The results indicate that, the majority of respondents generally disagreed with these assertions. It must be said that the timely completion of a school timetable constitutes the collective responsibilities of all human resources in a school, especially the teachers who are the key implementers of such a timetable. Arguably, the acquisition of knowledge and skills by students and good learning outcomes will largely be a measure of the extent to which teachers are able to complete the school timetable. Bailyn (2004) observes that continuing professional development of teachers has a direct bearing on the quality of performance of the teaching force and subsequently, on the achievement of institutional goals. This assertion is the basis of item 1, in Table 2, which relates to the non-conforming attitude of teachers towards professional development workshops. For this item, the respondents generally disagreed as evidenced by the scores of 34(36.1%) and 30(31.9%) for disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. The mean and standard deviation scores were 2.26 and 1.20, respectively and these fell within the disagree column of the Likert-type scale. The usefulness of these results is that, no matter the qualification of a teacher in the teaching service, he should continue to learn through

workshops and seminars and even conferences in order to update his knowledge and skills with the changing times. It is a fact that some teachers either have Bachelor degree, Diploma in Basic Education or Master's degree without any professional qualifications or continuous professional development or pedagogical training. Such teachers, in order to be qualified to teach at the high school level, must engage in continuous professional development through workshops and seminars.

Mythilo (2017) and Eagly and Chin (2010) also note that an institution such as a high school can only progress and make the desired impact when its human resources are continually trained on the job through workshops and other forms of orientation. Inarguably, teachers in high schools should engage in continuous professional development in order to be able to cope with the technological, economic, legal, social, political and pedagogical environment inside and outside the school through knowledge, skills and attitude improvement. The refusal of heads to the items shows that most teachers in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana showed willingness, self-motivation and enthusiasm to participate in the professional development workshops. Apart from all of these propositions in favour of professional development workshops, it is part of teachers' job requirement for promotion and personal development in the Ghana Education Service. More often than not, an employee, including a teacher in a high school, is expected to perform other functions designated by his head in addition to his specific assigned role. This was an inquiry raised during the fieldwork, and it relates directly to teachers not accepting other responsibilities. This is a serious human resource management challenge for heads of institutions – males or females. Regarding this item 34(34.6) and 30(31.9%) (M=2.21; SD=1.4) respondent disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. This implies that teachers not accepting other responsibilities was not a

challenge for the female heads of senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. This probably could be a result of the female heads effective leadership and management skills which made the teachers accept other responsibilities. Another plausible explanation regarding the acceptance of other responsibilities by teachers could be the personality of the female heads of the high schools. The heads could have demonstrated pleasant moral dispositions, which may have inspired the teachers to take on other responsibilities. This comes within the realm of practical leadership, i.e, leadership by example which the heads passed as a test of professional ethical standards and qualities, (Kaballa & Glynn, 2007).



**Table 8: Challenges relating to non-teaching staff**

S/N	CHALLENGES RELATING TO NON-TEACHING STAFF	SCALE						
		SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	M	SD
1	Challenges relating to task completion by non-teaching staff.	9(9.4)	15(25.2)	33(34.7)	21(22.1)	7(7.3)	3.07	1.08
2	Challenges relating to conforming to laid down rules in financial control.	7(7.4)	15(16)	33(35)	29(31)	10(7.3)	2.79	1.08
3	Challenges relating to punctuality and irregularity by non-teaching staff.	11(12)	19(20)	28(29.4)	25(26.3)	11(12)	2.94	1.19
4	Opposition to change by the School Accountant.	4(4.2)	9(9.4)	38(40)	28(29.5)	15(16)	2.56	1.01
5	The inability of the School Security Head to take initiative.	7(7.4)	24(25.3)	29(31)	24(25.3)	10(11)	2.94	1.12
6	The poor pace of work of nutrition (feeding) students.	2(2.1)	18(19)	30(32)	25(26.3)	19(20)	2.56	1.08
7	Conflict resulting from members of non-teaching staff attracted my attention.	5(5.3)	12(13)	25(26.3)	38(40)	14(15)	2.51	1.04
8	Mismanagement of logistics by non-teaching staff.	7(7.4)	13(14)	29(31)	31(32)	14(15)	2.66	1.12
9	Non-compliance to agreed-upon routines by non-teaching staff.	5(5.3)	19(20)	25(26.3)	39(41)	6(6.3)	2.77	1.02
10	In voluntarism among non-teaching staff.	10(11)	27(28.4)	20(21)	27(28.4)	10(11)	3.00	1.20
11	Bias/discrimination among non-teaching staff.	4(4.2)	32(34)	15(16)	28(29.4)	15(16)	2.81	1.19
12	Male non-teaching staff disregards my role as a female head.	6(6.3)	19(20)	14(15)	26(27.4)	29(31)	2.44	1.25

**Source:** Field Data (2021)

Another very important category of human resources in all educational settings is non-teaching staff. In some jurisdictions, they are referred to as support staff. These personnel can ensure the smooth operation of any school, but they also pose a challenge to the school leadership based on their attitude, especially as it relates to task completion, opposition to change by the accountant, conflict resulting from members of the non-teaching staff to attract the school head's attention, and compliance with the agreed upon decisions.

#### 4.3.1 Routines by non-teaching staff

The non-teaching staff, collectively or individually, are very serious human resource management challenges for any school head. Regarding challenges relating to task completion, the majority 33(34.7%) ( $M=3.07$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ) were uncertain as to whether non-teaching staff completed their tasks or not. The respondents who agreed to this, 24(25.6%) were slightly more than those who disagreed 21(22.1%). The reason for the rate of uncertainty responses could be that the teachers who constituted the respondents may not have in-depth knowledge of the detailed tasks of the non-teaching staff; hence, they could not comment on it as such. Whatever the situation, it must be said that a measure of success for any staff in senior high schools is the rate of completion of assigned responsibilities. This could be the rate at which letters are typed, reports are written and submitted, or food is prepared. Trigg (2006) observes that a non-teaching staff that does not complete routine or major tasks on time cannot be relied on. Implicitly, it would be appropriate for GES to employ more teaching staff in the senior high schools if those at post are insufficient and therefore are overwhelmed and stressed by the workload, hence, their inability to complete assigned tasks on time. Opposition to change by the school accountant was another item that was responded to by teachers in terms of human resource challenges posed by the non-teaching staff. Regarding this item, 28 (40%) were undecided compared to 4(4.2%) who strongly agreed and 15 (15.7%) who strongly disagreed. The mean( $M=2.6$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=1.01$ ) shows that the respondents generally disagreed with the items that the school accountants were opposed to change. This score is acceptable because change is a fact of life and employees of various categories and levels must conform to change when it comes. Wood (2006) is of the view that the entire world, with all of its diverse institutions, is dynamic and embracing changes in institutional practices,



including accounting and general financial practices. A third item relating to human resource challenges posed by the non-teaching staff investigated in this study was conflict resulting from members of the non-teaching staff trying to attract or win the attention of teachers and headmistresses. This had a mean of 2.51 and a standard deviation of 1.04, implying that the majority of 38 (40%) disagreed that such conflicts occurred as compared to 12 (12%) who disagreed. Relating to those 4 (4.2%) who strongly agreed, it must be said that conflict cannot be avoided in organizations inasmuch as human beings have varying levels of thinking, perceiving and intelligence. What is important, according to Kusi (2019) , is how leaders such as school heads respond to and resolve conflicts when they arise.

#### **4.3.2 Agreed upon routines by non-teaching staff**

Regarding this item, 5 (5.2%) strongly agreed compared to 39 (41%) who strongly disagreed. The statistical scores ( $M=2.77$ ;  $SD=1.02$ ) show indications of disagreement with the item. This implies that there was a sense of agreement on routine tasks. Some of the contributing factors for non-compliance with the agreed-upon routine tasks as agreed upon by some of the respondents could be feelings of professional isolation and loneliness, dealing with multiple tasks that lead to further challenges of managing time and priorities and sometimes unmotivated staff (Swanson, 2009). These collectively pose challenges to female heads of senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana and have to be dealt with.



**Table 9: Students related challenges**

S/N	STUDENTS RELATED CHALLENGES	SCALE						
		SA F(%)	A F(%)	U F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	M	SD
1	Challenges to completion of the task by Students' Representative Council (SRC)	5(5.3)	39(41.4)	20(21.2)	24(25.5)	6(6.4)	3.14	1.06
2	Challenges relating to abiding by school rules by students.	11(12)	38(40.4)	13(14)	24(26)	8(9)	3.21	1.20
3	Mismanagement of school logistics by students' leadership.	3(3.2)	23(24.5)	15(16)	41(44)	12(13)	2.62	1.09
4	Non-voluntary working spirit among student leadership.	11(12)	30(32)	10(11)	35(37.2)	12(13)	2.81	1.23
5	Delays by students' leadership in conveying vital information.	8(9)	25(27)	14(15)	35(37.2)	12(13)	2.81	1.21
6	Challenges relating to strict adherence to timetables by students.	7(4.4)	22(23.4)	16(17)	32(34)	17(18)	2.68	1.23
7	Lack of teamwork among student groups and leadership.	10(11)	33(35.1)	15(16)	32(33)	5(5.3)	3.13	1.15
8	Non-compliance to laid down rules and decisions by students.	10(11)	27(29)	14(15)	33(35.1)	10(11)	2.94	1.23
9	Opposition to change by students.	5	23	19	33	14(15)	2.70	1.15
10	Lateness and truancy among students.	22(22.4)	28(30)	13(14)	18(19.1)	13(14)	3.30	1.38
11	Apathy on the part of the students' leadership.	7(7.4)	23(24.5)	21(22.3)	30(32)	13(14)	2.80	1.18

**Source:** Field data, (2021)

In Table 9, headmistresses, assistant headmistresses, Head of Departments and teachers provided information on students relating to challenges faced by female heads in the schools. In the table, even though there were some levels of agreement and disagreement for all of the items, the four main items on which the heads had strong opinions were challenges to completing tasks by the Students' Representative Council (SRC), abiding by school rules, non-voluntary attitude/spirit among student leadership, and delays by student leadership in relating vital information to school leadership. Regarding challenges relating to task completion by student leadership, 39 (41.4%) agreed compared to 24 (25.3%) who disagreed. The mean and standard deviation scores (M=3.14, SD=1.06) show that the majority of the respondents were

generally undecided on this issue. An analysis of the responses suggests that either some of the student leadership favoured certain heads in some of the high schools and therefore completed tasks given to them by the heads or some of the students disfavoured some of the female heads and therefore resisted instructions and tasks given by these heads. Gyimah and Thompson (2009), are of the opinion that positive responses to duties by students are largely dependent on the relationship between the student leadership and the school. Other reasons could be stereotypical and most student leaders will readily obey male heads more than female heads. In terms of challenges centering on students abiding by school rules, again, the mean score ( $M=3.2$   $SD=1.20$ ) suggests that the respondents were largely undecided regarding this item, although some 38 (40.2%) agreed against 24 (25.5%) who disagreed. What can be said regarding these statistics is that discipline is the underpinning factor in students abiding by school rules. In other words, the respondents possibly reflected the leadership styles of the female heads (Mankoe, 2007). If the female school heads adopt the appropriate leadership approaches suitable to the situation, the students will conform to school rules. This is because students often conform to varying forms of leadership styles and disciplinary approaches adopted by heads. Non-voluntary working spirit is another key item in Table 4. Regarding this, the mean (3.01) and standard deviation score ( $SD=1.23$ ) give the indication that the respondents were largely undecided regarding this, although 30 (31.9%) agreed with the assertion while 35 (37.2%) disagreed. Most often than not, volunteerism in many institutions, including educational institutions, is based on the commitment of students. By and large, it is not a collective exercise, hence, it may be a bit difficult to detect by the heads and assistant heads. Maxwell (2007) observes that one of the key measures of voluntarism is loyalty to an organization. Implicitly, if students feel a sense of loyalty

and pride toward the various senior high schools, they would demonstrate a spirit of voluntarism in matters such as reporting wrongdoers, taking colleagues to the school clinic and running routine errands for the heads of the schools, teachers and other support staff. Delay by student leadership in conveying very vital information was another important human resource challenge measured in Table 7 . Regarding this item, 35 (37.2%); (M=2.8; SD=1.21) indicated that respondents disagreed with the assertion. This means that generally, students were conveying vital information to the leadership of the senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. Ideally, information is the thread that runs through all organizations, including educational institutions, so its conveyance will augur well for the smooth operations of the institutions (Wood, 2006). It is particularly important for students to convey vital information pertaining to their welfare and problems so that the school leadership can attend to them. Analytically, in applying the findings of the research Question one to the two theories raised in the work, namely the Goal Setting Theory and the Female Leadership Theory, one would surmise that except for a few of the items such as task completion by non-teaching staff, to which the respondents were undecided, the completion of a task by the school SRC, lateness and truancy among students and lack of teamwork among student groups which also solicited undecided responses, the respondents largely disagreed with virtually all the other items in the tables (Tables 1-3). This means the issues related to these items do not generally exist. This is in line with the Goal-Setting Theory which focuses on achieving organizational goals and objectives. Of course, this can be done when according to the theory, the leader is not able to inspire the participation of followers (teachers, students and non-teaching staff) to participate in institutional activities and decision-making in setting and implementing the goals. The results also implicitly debunk an aspect of the female

leadership theory, which states that females lack confidence in applying for leadership positions and effectively leading. The results, on the other hand, conform to the other aspect of the female leadership theory, which expounds that in the absence of destructive criticism and stereotypical challenges, females could be effective leaders. It can therefore be concluded that social stereotyping associated with female leadership may not have existed in senior high schools as per the results indicated in Tables 1-3. In other words, female heads of schools may have demonstrated competence in terms of discipline, supervision for task completion, effective implementation of professional development activities and motivating teachers to accept additional responsibilities.

#### **4.4 Research Question Two (2)**

**What are the social-cultural factors facing female heads in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana?**

The purpose of research question two was to ascertain the socio-cultural impediments to female heads of senior high schools. The important variables considered were the perceived weakness of females as leaders, the presence of females as bosses in work settings which upsets men relative to the traditional relationship between males and females, that females destined for leadership are patriarchal, that the psychological posture of women does not make them suitable for leadership, and many other socio-cultural challenges. Regarding all of these variables, the heads and assistant heads disagreed that these were challenges that impeded their leadership.

**Table 10: Socio-cultural challenge (Percentages are in brackets) N=94**

S/N	SOCIO-CULTURAL CHALLENGES (ITEMS)	SCALE						
		SA F(%)	A F(%)	U F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	M	SD
1	The perception by the males' personnel in the school is that females are too weak traditionally to handle academic positions.	7(7.4)	14(14.8)	11(11.7)	32(34)	30(32)	2.3	1.2
2	The presence of women as bosses in the work setting upsets the traditional relationship between males and females.	3(3.2)	17(18.1)	10(11)	33(35.1)	31(3)	2.2	1.1
3	Women are destined to be home keepers and not to lead men in organizations.	4(5.3)	22(23.4)	33(35.1)	20(21.3)	14(15)	2.8	1.1
4	The female heads of schools have limited time for leadership tasks in schools.	4(4.3)	20(21.3)	26(28)	27(29)	17(18.1)	2.6	1.1
5	Female leaders most often than not do not receive support from their spouses.	4(4.3)	20(21.3)	17(18.1)	36(38.3)	17(18.1)	2.5	1.1
6	Any form of assertiveness shown by female leaders because of their leadership role is viewed as aggressiveness.	5(5.3)	13(14)	20(21.3)	36(38.3)	20(21.3)	2.4	1.13
7	Leadership is patriarchal; hence, males should always dominate.	3(3.2)	17(18.1)	14(15)	28(30)	32(34)	2.2	1.2
8	Traditionally, females are unsuitable for top positions because they are too emotional and lack leadership qualities.	4(4.3)	21(21.3)	14(15)	34(36.2)	21(22.3)	2.5	1.9
9	Society has not recognized the effectiveness of female leaders.	5(5.3)	22(23.4)	18(19)	29(31)	20(21.3)	2.6	1.2
10	Leadership varies from culture to culture and the Ghanaian society has not fully recognized the role of women in leadership.	9(10)	16(17)	17(18.1)	30(32)	21(22.3)	2.5	1.2
11	The psychological posture of women does not make them suitable for leadership.	5(5.3)	14(15)	20(21.2)	36(38.3)	18(19)	2.4	1.2
12	Female leaders are often center of attraction and face sexual harassment.	6(6.4)	16(17)	20(21.3)	38(40.4)	14(15)	2.6	1.3
13	Females demonstrate intemperate attitude towards other females under their leadership.	2(2.1)	21(22.3)	29(31)	28(30)	14(15)	2.6	1.0
14	Because of the bias perceptions female face from men in general, female leaders are often bias towards male subordinates.	7(7.4)	17(18.1)	27(29)	25(27)	18(19)	2.6	1.1
15	Female leaders often rely on male followers in matters of decision making, (they are not independent)	4(4.3)	16(17)	10(11)	34(36.1)	30(32)	2.2	1.2

**Source:** Field data, 2021

Regarding males' perceptions that females are too weak to handle academic positions, the majority, 32 (34%) reflecting a mean of 2.32 and a standard deviation of 1.27 give indications of disagreement with the item. This means that female leaders in senior high schools were not discriminated against or perceived as being academically weak. These results debunk Riger and Galligan (2006) observation that despite the competence of female educational leaders, they are perceived by their male counterparts as being weak to handle high academic positions. Many who harbour these perceptions view females as being too emotional to handle peculiar challenges, too feeble when it comes to physique, very dull and not task-oriented. Perhaps one reason why this perception is not holding, according to the results, is due to the many sensitization programmes aimed at defining the significant role of females in Ghanaian society. The results also contradict the Female Leadership Theory that connotes that it is the social structure of society that is the root cause of women behaving weakly. As per these results, the social structure of the Central Region and Ghana as a whole did not pose any socio-cultural challenges to the female heads of the senior high schools. The second item in Table 9 which is of relative significance in terms of socio-cultural challenges to female senior high school heads was the presence of women as bosses in work settings as an upsetting factor given the traditional relationship between males and females. Regarding this, items 33(33%) and 31(31.41%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. This was in line with the mean score of 2.2 and standard deviation of 1.19 which also indicates that the head and assistant heads felt that such challenge was not prevalent. This result is very surprising because Ghana is a very cultural society in which traditional role conflict is an issue. In fact, the results run contrary to the role conflict theory which, according to Eagly and Karau (2002), is based on prejudice largely against women leaders. This

theory also reflects the stereotypical inclination against women regarding what females ought to do as their assigned role in society. Arguably, it is not easy to strictly adhere to this theory in the Ghana Education Service which appoints heads of schools both males and females. Through hard work and demonstration of competence they all go through the ranks equally with no particular favour for females. Hence, they all received equal responsibilities and recognition and were given headship positions. Any item that is similar to the one on role conflict discussed above is the one about leadership being patriotic; hence, males should always dominate. This had a score: (M=2.27, SD=1.20) with percentages of 32(34.4%) for strongly disagree and 28(29.7) for strongly disagree. Both percentage and mean scores indicate that the heads and assistant heads disagreed with this item. One could argue that respondents rejected this sort of patriotic dominance of males and the subservient roles of females because of the massive and rapid waves of modernization that are engulfing hitherto conservative and male-dominant societies, especially those in Africa.

Indeed, Carl (2007) argues that modernization processes are gradually and positively influencing the perception of males against females. For example, this modernization process is seen in the rise of several educational institutions in the Central Region of Ghana which is seen as the educational hub of the country. Moreover, there are now many women's movements, such as FAWE that are challenging the prevailing male-dominated structures, especially in Africa. These have led to gender-sensitive policies in workplaces. The fourth item of great debate with which the majority of the respondents disagreed was women are destined to be housekeepers and not to lead men in organizations. This had a mean score of 2.83 and a standard deviation of 1.11, all indicating disagreement, according to the respondents. The overall percentage of those who disagreed was 34(35%). This perception is given attention by Denys (2008)



who argues that it is the duty of a woman to tidy up the home, prepare the children and prepare meals. But this perception is gradually changing as women now engage in income-generating activities; hence, the relationship between a female career and her leadership role is gradually running out of the conflict zone to a more collaborating posture between the female leader and her husband. In fact, nowadays, according to Bailyn (2004), female leaders are receiving support from their husbands. Hence, the rate at which husbands view their wives as homekeepers is not decreasing although there are still instances in Ghana where the traditional division of labour expects domestic responsibilities to be women's primary role. In sum, it can be inferred as per the data in Table, 9 that the social-cultural belief that men should always lead women is wearing away. Females are now demonstrating assertiveness, and in many instances especially in Ghana male dominance is decreasing because of modernization. On a larger note, girls are now made to go to school in Ghana and institutions such as the Girl-Child Education Unit at the GES are expanding the rights of the Girl-Child.

#### **4.5 Research Question Three (3)**

**How are organizational structures in senior high schools affected by the challenges females heads faced in the Central Region of Ghana?**

Research question three was formulated to investigate the influence of the challenges female heads of schools face on the organizational structures in senior high schools. Heads of departments, assistant heads and heads responded to the items.



**Table 11: Influence of challenges on organizational structures (Administrative Services)**

S/N	INFLUENCE OF CHALLENGES ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES (ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES) (ITEMS)	SA F(%)	A F(%)	U F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	M	SD
1	Challenges heads face have an effect on the smooth running of the system (High School)	28(56)	16(32)	3(6)	3(6)	0-	4.38	0.86
2	Planning of the school curricular activities is affected by the challenges negatively.	10(20)	23(46)	8(16)	7(14)	2(4)	3.64	1.08
3	Challenges encountered by the heads negatively affect the implementation of well-defined rules and regulations.	12(24)	23(46)	6(12)	6(12)	3(6)	3.70	1.15
4	Challenges faced by the school heads negatively affect adherence to the chain of command of the school.	2(4)	25(50)	11(22)	8(16)	4(8)	3.26	1.05
5	Challenges faced by heads lead to the overlapping of functions.	4(8)	16(32)	13(26)	12(24)	5(10)	3.04	1.14
6	Challenges faced by the school heads often lead to poor coordination of activities.	6(12)	26(52)	7(14)	8(16)	3(6)	3.45	1.09
7	Challenges faced by the heads affect staff-staff relationship.	3(6)	16(32)	7(14)	12(24)	12(24)	2.7	1.31
8	Challenges faced by the heads hamper cordial relationship between teachers and students.	4(8)	11(22)	6(12)	17(34)	12(24)	2.51	1.38
9	Challenges faced by the heads breed emphasis on individual interest more than organizational objectives.	3(6)	12(24)	11(22)	18(36)	6(12)	2.71	1.14
10	Challenges faced by the heads result into disregard for the school authority.	4(8)	13(26)	7(14)	13(26)	13(26)	2.6	1.34
11	Challenges faced by heads impact negatively on the decision-making process.	10(20)	18(36)	11(22)	8(16)	3(6)	3.4	1.17
12	Challenges faced by the heads often lead to poor communication between school authority and teachers and staff.	5(10)	21(42)	7(14)	10(20)	7(14)	3.1	1.26

**Source:** Field data, 2021

The data in Table 11 revealed that the majority of respondents were largely uncertain about items such as the planning of school curriculum activities (M=3.36, SD=1.08); implementation of well-defined rules and regulations (M=3.70, SD=1) adherence to the chain of command of the school (M=3.2, SD=1) overlapping of functions

( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.14$ ) poor coordination of activities ( $M=3.4$ ;  $SD=1.09$ ) decision-making process ( $M=2.48$ ;  $SD=1.17$ ) and poor communication between school authorities, teachers and staff ( $M=3.14$ ;  $SD=1.26$ ) Respondents' uncertainty regarding these items could be borne out of the fact that they did not either know the depth of influence of these variables did not have any influence or had very limited influence. On the other hand, respondents strongly agreed with the item pertaining to the smooth running of the school system. This response is very important since the general smooth running of every school system should not be impeded by any obstacle, human or material (Dampson, 2019). The responses obtained from Table 10 regarding the smooth running of the schools also implied that the organizational structure was not in fact well organized and therefore posed a negative influence on the work of female heads of senior high schools. Other items which the respondents merely disagreed were staff relationships, cordial relationships between teachers and students, emphasis on individual interests more than organizational objectives, and disregard for school authorities. These variables had mean scores of 2.2, 2.56, 2.76 and 2.64 respectively. These variables largely hinge on human relations which are crucial for the existence of any organization and organizational objectives which should be the focus of all employees and the organization. Without a cordial human relationship among, and between staff, an organization will be very toxic and there will be a sort of close climate and negative tone (Winston & Patterson, 2006). The prevalence of such an administrative atmosphere runs contrary to the Goal-Setting Theory which dwells on how the behaviour of human beings, through the relationship they establish, can either obstruct or enhance the goals and objectives of that organization (Lock & Latham, 1968).

#### 4.6 Interview Responses

##### **Theme: Organizational challenges and their influence on female heads.**

One area of organizational challenge that many heads of such face whether they are males or females is with the board of governors. Regarding this, one headmistress noted; There has not been any problem with the composition of the school board neither have I had a problem with the board as such (Headmistress #1).

Assist Headmistress observed:

*“The chain of command on staff and students are good because the rules and regulations of the school are followed “(Assistant Headmistress #1).*

A participant during the interview session commented:

*“Both females and males on the school board of governors are serving and playing their roles effectively”. (Headmistress #2).*

Another participant who was an assistant headmistress had this to say:

*“Not much of influences on work and morale have been detected on the organization structure. Workers are just doing as they formally do” (Assistant Headmistress #2)*

The responses obtained from the headmistresses and their assistants under-score some general agreement with the quantitative data. These results point to the fact that, generally, the organizational structures in the senior high schools in the Central Region were largely not negatively affected by the challenges the female heads in the schools face. Whatever influence may have existed was rather positive. This has significant implications for the Female Leadership Theory by Shakeshaft (1987) which highlights women’s experience in educational leadership. Ideally, it could be

that the female school heads in the Central Region of Ghana did not experience most of the challenges female leaders face as posited by the theory.

#### **4.7 Research Question Four (4)**

**What support services are put in place to mitigate the challenges faced by the female school heads in senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana?**

The object of research question four was to find out remedies in terms of support services that are put in place as a mitigation to the challenges faced by the female heads of senior high school heads in the Central Region of Ghana. Some of the support services that the research sought to ascertain are training support, emotional support, promotion of women-friendly culture, promotion of gender equality culture and passage of affirmative action legislation. Other variables explored were the creation of a friendly and flexible working schedule for females, the formulation of anti-sexual harassment policies, the provision of childcare facilities and the mentoring of female heads of schools. These items were responded to by District/Municipal Metropolitan Directors of Education and heads of schools in the Central Region. The responses are captured in Table 11.

**Table 22: Support services provided to heads of schools**

S/N	SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED TO HEADS OF SCHOOLS	SA F(%)	A F(%)	U F(%)	D F(%)	SD F(%)	M	SD
1	Emotional support to heads of the schools during maternity leave.	2(40)	2(40)	1(14)	0(0)	(14)	2.57	1.51
2	Training support	0(0)	4(80)	0(0)	1(20)	00(0)	2.29	0.76
3	Promotion of women friendly culture	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	0(0)	2.14	1.01
4	Promotion of gender equity policy	0(0)	4(80)	0(0)	0(0)	1(20)	2.43	1.13
5	Confidence building seminars for female heads.	1(20)	2(40)	0(0)	1(20)	1(20)	3.14	1.57
6	Creation of a friendly and flexible working schedule for females	1(20)	2(40)	1(20)	0(0)	1(20)	2.50	1.38
7	Formulation of anti-sexual harassment policies.	2(40)	1(20)	1(20)	1(20)	0(0)	2.0	1.16
8	Provision of childcare facilities in workplaces.	0(0)	1(20)	1(20)	2(40)	3(43)	4.0	1.16
9	Passage of affirmative action legislation.	0(0)	0(0)	1(20)	2(40)	2(40)	3.57	1.27
10	Mentoring of female heads of school	1(20)	1(20)	0(0)	3(60)	0(0)	2.86	1.22
11	Support system to enable them handle the Human Resource	1(20)	2(40)	0(0)	1(20)	1(20)	2.50	1.38
12	Organizational challenges and what support system put in place.	1(20)	3(60)	0(0)	1(20)	0(0)	2.71	1.13

**Source:** Source: Field data, (2021)

The results in Table 12 reveal that generally, there were support services provided and that the provision of 10 of these support services was very good (aggregate mean of 2.00 – 2.99 for all of the 10. The ten (10) support services that had “very good” in terms of the provision were emotional support to heads of schools during maternity leave. (28.6%, M=2.5; SD=1.5) Training support (85.7%); M=2.2 SD=0.76) Promotion of women-friendly culture (42%; M=2.14, SD=1.07) and creation of friendly and flexible working schedule for female (42%; M=2.50; SD=1.38)

These items, to which the responses were very positive, are vital for the smooth functioning of any female in an organization. For example, as it regards emotional support, all human beings need emotional support in their areas of work, (Maxwell,

2008); but much more emotional support is needed for a female head of school who has undergone the life-threatening exercise of giving birth and has the responsibility of caring for the newborn child. No wonder the period for maternity leave in Ghana has been extended. Ideally, emotions, especially those borne out of physical and psychological experiences such as giving birth are very sensitive, and female staff, according to the Ministry of Education (2017), should be supported. As it pertains to training support and confidence building seminars, which had scores of 85%, ( $M=2.2$ ;  $SD=0.76$ ) and 28% ( $M=3.1$ ;  $SD=1.57$ ) respectively, these are all part of the professional development routines for every institution, including educational institutions. These should be adhered to periodically and should be characterized by more confidence-building seminars. This is because socio-cultural and traditional practices of male-dominant leadership in Africa place females generally in the area of low self-concept and self-esteem, thus rendering them to struggle with psychological emotions when they are placed above males as their leaders. Such female heads in these positions often lack the confidence to lead (Mankoe, 2007) and will therefore require some training-related confidence boosters. Other two related items that are significant in Table 11 as they relate to supporting services for female school heads are the promotion of women-friendly culture, 42% ( $M=2.14$ ;  $SD=1.07$ ) which is very general and the creation of a friendly and flexible working schedule for females, 42% ( $M=2.5$ ;  $SD= 1.38$ ) which is more specific and constitutes a subset of women-friendly culture. Rationally, all well-meaning organizations have a timetable that every employee must abide by and educational institutions are no exception to this. In fact, for the heads of senior high schools, the schedule is very tight since the Educational Directorates, students, teachers and non-teaching staff are many. For a female head of school who has other responsibilities such as caring for her home and extended

family, the issue of role conflict may arise if there is no friendly and flexible working schedule. Role conflict is expressed in the role conflict theory as expressed by Eagly and Karau (2002), and per the role of women traditionally, they should not be given leadership positions in a formal organization. In table 11 there are two variables whose scores are very significant as far as support services for female heads of school are concerned. These are the promotion or provision of childcare facilities in workplaces and the passage of affirmative action legislation. These two items had scores of 42% (M=4.0; SD=1.6) and 28% for uncertain (M=3.5; SD=1.7), respectively. Regarding the former the mean score of 4.0 means the respondents were uncertain regarding what they thought about the issue while pertaining to the latter, the mean score was 3.57; SD= 1.27 suggesting satisfaction response. Analytically, these scores suggest that policies regarding these issues were generally either non-existent or poorly executed. Particularly, as regards campuses show that these facilities do not exist at all. According to Adjei-Boadu (2001), the absence or rather, poor implementation, of such policies or facilities constitutes a significant difference between what is happening in Africa and other developing societies and what is being practiced in western and advanced societies. It, therefore, behoves all policymakers in Ghana to pay attention to these two items so that the accomplishment of the Goal Setting Theory as espoused by Lock and Latham can be a reality.

#### **4.8 Interview Responses**

In line with triangulation concurrent mixed-method, interview data were collected from Heads of schools and assistant heads.



**Theme 1(one): Support from District in providing training support.**

Regarding training support for heads of school a headmistress noted:

*Rarely these training are provided by the district authorities  
(Headmistress #1)*

Another Headmistress noted:

*Once in a while workshops are arranged. (Headmistress #2)*

*A female District Director of Education observed:*

*We do organize training programmes but resources are often  
inadequate (DDE2)*

A third respondent said;

*It is very rare, (Assistant headmistress #1.)*

*A District Director of Education noted:*

*Our district head organized a lot of training for teachers (DDE1)*

The interview data from participants shows that training support though provided, was not in the measure expected, meaning that training support was scanty. Professional development for heads of schools is a vital component of all school life. This is especially true for newly appointed heads. Without such training, according to (Edem, 2017), newly recruited heads of schools that are new or reassigned to new stations will not get the sort of orientation needed to acclimate to the school environment, culture and ethos. Ideally, an institution can make meaningful progress and make the desired impact if the heads and their subordinates are regularly receiving professional training. In fact, all staff need on-the-job-training. In these modern times, Adjei-Boadu (2001) argues that technological, economic, legal, social and political environments within and outside the school often create the need to improve the head



of school skills and knowledge on the job. This training will enhance the realization of the Goal Setting Theory as indicated in this study. The skills and knowledge, in addition to a variety of information the head acquires through training support, will contribute to their professional development and the development of those they are leading.

## **Theme two (2) Promotion of Women Friendly Culture.**

Women-friendly culture constitutes daily or regular practices in the administrative routines of an organization that assists women relative to their gender-related and the other psychological challenges to cope with work conditions in an organization.

Regarding the promotion of women-friendly culture, a headmistress observed;

*“Quite often this takes place”.*

*“Often male subordinates are always reluctant to adhere to the courtesy that is due ladies. Sometimes, some even shout at ladies in the wake of simple conflict. My assistant Headmistress often complains of lack of decorum on the part of the male staff”.* (Headmistress #3)

An assistant head mistress's response corroborated what the headmistress noted:

*“When you are sick as a female and plea with a male to help you with your class he often refuses. This type of mean culture does not motivate females to co-opt with male counterparts”* (Assistant Headmistress #2)

A third response emanated from another Assistant Headmistress;

*“There is often laid down procedure for settling disputes or issues in hierarchical order. But at times our male counterparts will put aside the rules and just talk rough to you. This does not admit that it is all of them who do this. In fact, only a few of them do this”.* (Assistant Headmistress #2)

In addition to interview data collected from the headmistresses and their assistants, additional data were generated from District Directors of Education in the region regarding support services rendered to female heads of schools. Particularly,

regarding a women-friendly environment in the schools the responses were as follows:

*We expect that the workshops and seminars we organized would help our male and female staff to relate well in an atmosphere of friendship and cordiality (DD3).*

Another District Director of Education pointed out the following:

*We always encourage the men to display a women-friendly environment in the schools but we often hear that some of our female headmistresses are somehow not cordial, especially with the female staff who work with them (DDE4).*

A third District Director of Education had this to say:

*I wish that there was a very friendly women-friendly culture. However, many times we hear of an unfriendly atmosphere between the female heads and the non-teaching staff. I do not know but I think this could be due to the way some of the support staff especially the females handle their work schedules. (DDE5)*

Analytically, the aggregate of the responses shows that although the promotion of women-friendly culture was a challenge, it was not pervasive. Elements of the responses that do not support women-friendly culture run contrary to (Shakeshaft, 1987) Female Leadership Theory. Those few schools personnel who did not promote women-friendly culture may imply that they may not have had various interpersonal relationships. When this happens, it leads to low performance among females in school settings. Male teachers need to extend both professional and moral support to female staff. There should be female related facilities such as washrooms and childcare centers that assist female heads to function effectively.

### **Theme three (3) Support System for dealing with socio-cultural challenges**

In African societies, including the Ghanaian society, socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices are dominant and often permeate learning institutions. Participants were asked about the extent of support female heads of schools receive in dealing with socio-cultural challenges.

Regarding this, a headmistress commented;

*“I think though not perfect, some effort is being exerted regarding this. There is not much cultural or gender-related discrimination in this school”.* (Headmistress #4)

An assistant headmistress dilated;

*“Sometimes that are socio-cultural challenges and the support system in dealing with it can be described as very good. It is due to these socio-cultural norms and settings that make people react to the appointment of female heads. But think the few sensitization workshops conducted is doing much to mitigate this canker”* (Assistant Head#4)

Second assistant headmistress narrate;

*“There have been little cultural-related stereotype conduct from male staff”* (Assistant head#5)

There were also responses from the District Director of Education regarding support systems relating to socio-cultural challenges.

For example, a District Director of Education commented:

*We don't hear much about socio-cultural challenges faced by the headteachers for the schools. So there isn't a support system that I can remember that we put in place ow we need to put in place.* (DDE5)

Another director of Education pointed out:

*In my view, cultural behaviour against women is a thing of the past, especially in this southern part of Ghana. We don't have those problems here, so I do not think of any interventions (DDE3)*

A third participant iterated:

*All of our female heads are very much aware of our cultural practices and our traditional people too have long since gotten to understand the importance of education for their children, so there is no such thing as socio-cultural challenges which may require an intervention (DDE2)*

Rationally, the responses regarding theme three depict above-average support for dealing with socio-cultural challenges in the senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana. This is very important because it will bring the administration of the school to a halt. These findings, to some extent, are in line with Shakeshaft's (1987) Female Leadership Theory, which has tenets that relegate women to the backbench in terms of leadership positions in schools. The findings also run contrary to traditional belief, which often views women as inferiors and therefore highly discriminated against. Arguably, the relegated position of women on the leadership ladder shows that their disadvantaged leadership position often emanates from parental and societal attitudes that stress the values of sons against daughters (Adjei Boadu, 2001). As a result, girls' education is given little or no attention while that of boys is seen as very important since boys are expected to be breadwinners, heirs, professional personnel and leaders of society. For instance, a (UNESCO, 2012) Report on Africa recounts that, due to socio-cultural reasons, the son is destined for biological reproduction and service to others, especially the family. By contrast, boys are highly valued, wanted and favoured. The girls become helpers to their mothers in their early years and gradually internalize their roles and disadvantages.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The last chapter presents and discusses the research findings based on the research questions and the themes that emanated from the questions. This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, recommendations as well as areas for further research.

#### 5.1 Summary

The research focuses on the challenges female heads of senior high schools face in the Central Region of Ghana. Based on the problem being investigated, the researcher carved out four research questions aimed at ascertaining (A) the human resource challenges, (B) the socio-cultural challenges, (C) the influence of these challenges on the organizational structures of the school and (D) the support system put in place to remedy these challenges. The research was situated within a pragmatic philosophical underpinning that considers both interpretivist and positivist paradigms. Accordingly, the qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection were adopted, thus ushering the research into the triangulation concurrent mixed-method design. The population of the research comprised female headmistresses, assistant headmistresses, head of department teachers and directors of Education in five districts. The total sample size of the study was 100 questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Data were analyzed with the use of percentages, mean average, and standard deviation. Thematic analysis was also adopted for the analysis of the qualitative data. The researcher took due cognizance of ethical considerations, which encompassed constructs such as credibility anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, transferability, dependability, conformability and rapport building. The key

findings centered around four thematic areas that reflect the four research questions, which dealt with human resource challenges, socio-cultural challenges, the influence of the challenges on the organizational structures of senior high schools and the support system put in place to curb these challenges.

### **5.1.1 Human resource challenges**

Findings emanating from the research on human resource challenges confronting heads of senior high schools in the Central Region generally revealed a state of disagreement in terms of the responses of the participants. This was particularly true for responses from female heads and assistant heads. However, responses on the same variable (Human resources challenges) revealed slight differences in that although the majority showed or indicated disagreement with nearly all of the items, a few were undecided or uncertain in their responses as it related to challenges regarding task completion by non-teaching staff and in voluntarism among non-teaching staff. Regarding student-related challenges, there were equally mixed responses. Five of the respondents were undecided regarding variables such as task completion by students, abiding by school rules, the non-voluntary working spirit among student leadership, a lack of teamwork among student leadership, and lateness and truancy among students. The respondents disagreed with the rest of the variables which touched on the management of school resources by student leadership, delay by student leadership in conveying vital information, strict adherence to the timetable by students and apathy on the part of student leadership. The net effect of the findings regarding human resources challenges is that the school authorities should pay greater attention to students' conduct and discipline. Students especially, and their leadership constitute a vital part of the human resources of every educational institution.

### **5.1.2 Socio-cultural challenges**

The results revealed that socio-cultural issues did not pose any real leadership challenges to the heads of the senior high schools who were females in the Central Region. In other words, all of the headmistresses and assistant headmistresses disagreed that there were no socio-cultural challenges. Particularly significant in the findings for the very conservative Ghanaian work environment was the finding/and disagreement that women are destined to be homekeepers and not to lead men in organizations. No wonder there is also disagreement with the item that leadership is patriarchal and that males should always dominate. Arguably, these are the two cardinal beliefs that drive other opinions against female leadership.

### **5.1.3 Influence of the challenges confronting female heads of schools on organizational structures**

There were diverse responses regarding the influence of the challenges female staff encountered on the organizational structures of the schools. For example, some respondents strongly agreed that the challenges affected the smooth running of the schools, while others either disagreed or were undecided on the rest of the other items. For instance, respondents disagreed on items such as influence on the staff-staff relationship, cordial relationship between teachers and students, emphasis on individual objectives rather than organizational objectives and disregard for school authorities. The respondents were undecided regarding the authority's implementation of rules and regulations, adherence to the chain of command of the school, overlapping functions, and poor coordination of school activities. These and a few others had mean scores ranging from 3.0 to 3.99 which is interpreted as undecided on the Likert-type scale. The cumulative score generally revealed that the organizational structures of the schools were not affected by the challenges the female heads of



schools face. These results all the more confirm previous results (see tables 10) that there were virtually no serious challenges faced by the female heads of the schools in the Central Region. This is very important for the quality delivery of education in the Metropolis since the female heads of schools will have less to worry about.

#### **5.1.4 Support system instituted by policy makers**

This section describes the extent of support services provided for female heads of schools by policymakers such as the Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Education and the National Teaching Council. Except for the item on the provision of childcare facilities to which the respondents were undecided, the rest of the support services provided were either very good or satisfactory. For example, there were satisfactory scores for confidence building seminars and passage of affirmative action legislation while the support system for socio-cultural challenges, mentoring of female heads, formulation of anti-sexual harassment policies and promotion of gender equality policies had mean scores that were described as very good. Naturally, what the provision of a support system does is that it motivates the female school leader to obtain more training aligning their work with goal-setting theory. This is particularly true for services that are centered on the professional training of staff.

**5.2 Conclusions**  
The findings of the study have largely demonstrated that female heads of senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana did not face many human resources, socio-cultural and organizational challenges in the exercise of their duties. The findings also showed that there were significant support services rendered to the female heads of schools in line with their duties. The findings imply the need to continue to appoint females as leaders in senior high schools and to provide continuing professional development training for them. Given the numerical population of females in Ghanaian society and their acquisition of management and leadership training from



various learning institutions, there is an implicit need for greater sensitization programmes for men, traditional leaders and significant other stakeholders for women to be accepted as school leaders. The findings also imply that policymakers such as the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education should have watchful eyes on occurrences of this discrimination among women in school settings and nip these in the bud before they propagate. Such sensitization programmes and watchful eyes should be extended to traditional leaders, who most often are still conservative and view females as inferiors and therefore unfit for leadership.

## **5.2 Limitation**

The study's limitations relate directly to the issues of data collection. Some of the respondents were hesitant to give responses, thinking that they were being evaluated or assessed for their jobs. This could bring into question the validity of the data collected. However, the researcher was able to explain to them the objective of the research as a purely academic exercise. This otherwise caused them to provide objective responses. Other limitations relate to the cost of fieldwork and accessibility to the schools. Also, due to accessibility and proximity, the study was limited to Senior High Schools headed by females visited in the selected schools in the Central Region of Ghana. However, the interventions and results can be replicated or adapted for use in other assemblies or circuits in the Central Region of Ghana.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

Firstly, it is evident that female heads of senior high schools in the Central Region of Ghana generally did not encounter significant human resources, socio-cultural, or organizational challenges in the execution of their duties. This suggests that the educational institutions studied have a relatively supportive environment for female

leadership. Secondly, the findings underscore the presence of substantial support services provided to female heads of schools to aid them in fulfilling their roles effectively. This indicates a commitment to facilitating their leadership and ensuring a conducive working environment. Furthermore, the study's results suggest the importance of continuing to appoint females as leaders in senior high schools. It also highlights the need for ongoing professional development training tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by female educational leaders. Overall, while some challenges were identified, the study's holistic view suggests that these challenges did not severely impede the work output of female heads. Consequently, the findings emphasize the importance of not only appointing more female leaders but also conducting gender-based sensitization programs to further promote gender equality and inclusivity in educational leadership roles.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Regular and continuous professional development workshops, seminars and conferences should be organized by the GES Directorate in the Central Region for the newly recruited, and on the job training personnel to prepare female heads both psychologically, emotionally, and adequately for the leadership task that is dominated by men. Secondly, sensitization programmes such as women-friendly environment, gender based issues should be organized for stakeholders in education. Moreover, Clearly defined functions with regards to chain of command should be stated for which insubordinate behaviour must be sanctioned. Adequate and regular workshops seminars and conferences should be organized by the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Services for the newly recruited, and on the job training should be provided to prepare female heads both psychologically and emotionally and adequately for the leadership task that is dominated by men. Such workshops can be

extended to assistant heads and heads of departments before taking up the leadership mantle. Lastly, policymakers such as the GES and MOE should make a conscious effort to provide childcare facilities in workplaces to alleviate the challenges female teachers and heads face. Paying great attention to this challenge would let the female concentrate on their job.

### **5.5 Suggestions**

The researcher suggests that other researchers interested in the same topic can conduct future research in other regions of the country to compare findings and generalize the findings. Again, H.O.Ds should be interviewed in future research to discover more hidden challenges that female heads face. Research can also be conducted to find out the challenges female assistant heads face.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Introductory Letter

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND  
MANAGEMENT

Date: .....

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES**

The researcher is a student in the Department of Educational Administration and Management at the University of Education, Winneba. She is undertaking a research titled **CHALLENGES FACING FEMALE HEADS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND SUPPORT SYSTEM IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA**. Please respond to the questionnaire. You are assured of confidentiality for any information provided.

Please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

.....  
Ms. Zainab Adams  
(Student)

## APPENDIX B

### Questionnaire for Female Heads and Assistant Heads

#### SECTION I: BIODATA/PERSONAL

##### 1. Age:

30 – 40 years

41 – 45 years

46 – 50 years

51 – 55 years

56 – 60 years

##### 2. Academic Qualification

Diploma

First Degree

Master's Degree

Others, please

specify.....





**3. Rank:**

Principal Superintendent

Assistant Director II

Assistant Director I

Deputy Director

Director II

Others, please

specify.....

**4. Teaching Experience:**

Under 5 years

6 – 10 years

11 – 15 years

16 – 20 years

20 years and above



**5. Number of years as head or assistant headmistress:**

1 – 5 years

6 – 10 years

11 – 15 years

15 years and above



## 6. Marital Status

Married

Single

Widow

## SECTION II

### RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS (FOR HEADMISTRESSES AND ASSISTANT)

Read the following statements and use the scale below to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale of 5 – 1 (5 = Strongly Agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree).

S/N	GENERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TEACHERS (ITEMS)	5	4	3	2	1
1	The behaviour of teachers dictate the kind of relationship I have with them.					
2	The laid down rules and regulations of how things should be done determine my relationship with the teachers.					
3	The emotional support we provide for each other influence my relationship with my teachers.					
4	There is a consistent and clear set of values that influence my relationship with my teachers.					
5	Regular and supportive communication influence my relationship with the teachers.					
6	My relationship with my teachers has been generally good.					
7	My relationship with my teachers is constantly undermined because I am a female leader.					
8	In decision making that requires voting the males who are in the majority always sway the decision to their advantage.					
9	My relationship with my female staff has been challenging.					
10	Strict supervision of my teachers has negatively influenced our working relationship.					

**SECTION III: HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES**

Using the scale provided in section II, please provide answers to the questions below:

S/N	HUMAN RESOURCE CHALLENGES (ITEMS)	5	4	3	2	1
1	I experience the most challenges from the teachers.					
2	I experience the greatest challenges from the non-teaching staff.					
3	I experience the greatest challenges from the finance department.					
4	A key challenge I face is based on the administrative incompetence of my frontline supervisors (Heads of Department, Housemistresses / Housemasters).					
5	The student leadership gives me much challenges.					
6	Constant request for study leave by teachers has been a challenge					
7	Managing myriads of conflicts has been a serious challenge for me.					
8	My male teachers and other staff often disregard my role as head.					
9	Though qualified, but inexperience of the human resources has been a challenge.					
10	Poor motivation among the human resource has been a challenge.					
11	Accepting other responsibility by teachers has been a challenge.					
12	Student indiscipline in the school has been a source of challenge.					
13	Apathy on the part of teachers is a challenge.					

**SECTION IV: SOCIO-CULTURAL CHALLENGES HEADMISTRESSES AND ASSISTANT HEADMISTRESSES FACE (FOR HEADS AND ASSISTANT HEADS)**

Using the scale in section II, please answers the following questions:

S/N	SOCIO-CULTURAL CHALLENGES (ITEMS)	5	4	3	2	1
1	The perception by male's personnel in the school that females are too weak traditionally to handle academic positions.					
2	The presence of women as bosses in work setting upsets the traditional relationship between males and females.					
3	Women are destined to be home keepers and not to lead men in organizations.					
4	The female heads of schools have limited time for leadership tasks in schools.					
5	Female leaders most often than not do not receive support from their spouses.					
6	Any form of assertiveness shown by female leaders because of their leadership role is viewed as aggressiveness.					
7	Leadership is patriarchal, hence, males should always dominate.					
8	Traditionally, females are unsuitable for top positions because they are too emotional and lack leadership qualities.					
9	Society has not recognized the effectiveness of female leaders.					
10	Leadership varies from culture to culture and the Ghanaian society has not fully recognized the role of women in leadership.					
11	The psychological posture of women does not make them suitable for leadership.					
12	Female leaders are often centre of attraction and face sexual harassment.					
13	Females demonstrate intemperate attitude towards other females under their leadership.					
14	Because of the bias perceptions female face from men in general, female leaders are often bias towards male subordinates.					
15	Female leaders often rely on male followers in matters of decision making (they are not independent).					

**SECTION V: EFFECTS OF THE CHALLENGES HEADMISTRESSES FACE ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES (FOR HEADMISTRESSES, ASSISTANT HEADMISTRESSES, TEACHERS AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS)**

Please use the scale in section II to answers the following questions:

S/N	EFFECTS OF CHALLENGES ON ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES (ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES) (ITEMS)	5	4	3	2	1
1	Challenges heads face have positive effect on the smooth running of the system (High School).					
2	Planning of the school curricular activities are affected by the challenges negatively.					
3	Challenges encountered by the heads negatively affect the implementation of well-defined rules and regulations.					
4	Challenges faced by the school heads negatively affect adherence to the chain of command of the school.					
5	Challenges faced by heads lead to overlapping of functions.					
6	Challenges faced by the school heads often lead to poor coordination of activities.					
7	Challenges faced by the heads affect staff-staff relationship.					
8	Challenges faced by the heads hamper cordial relationship between teachers and students.					
9	Challenges faced by the heads breed emphasis on individual interests more than organizational objectives.					
10	Challenges faced by the heads result into disregard for the school authority.					
11	Challenges faced by the heads impact negatively on the decision-making process.					
12	Challenges faced by the heads often lead to poor communication between school authority and teachers and staff.					
13	Challenges faced by the heads results in poor relationship between the school and the P.T.A/Board of Governors.					
14	Challenges faced by the heads affect the smooth functioning of departmental heads.					
15	Subject leaders' works are negatively affected by the challenges faced by the heads.					
16	Challenges faced by the heads result into poor relationship with circuit inspectors/supervisors.					

S/N	CHALLENGES FACED BY HEADS	5	4	3	2	1
17	Challenges faced by heads place heavy work burden on the line executives (Heads of Department, Housemasters, Housemistresses and coordinators).					
18	Challenges faced by heads lead to poor reporting system.					
19	Challenges faced by heads result in non-acceptance of change and innovation in the school.					
20	Challenges faced by heads result into irregular staff meetings.					
21	Challenges faced by heads lead to a close system in the school.					
22	Challenges faced by the school negatively affect a stimulating work environment.					

## SECTION VI: SUPPORT SYSTEM INSTITUTED BY POLICY MAKERS

Please indicate in degree of provision of the following support services to heads of schools using the following scale: 1 = Excellent, 2 = Very Good, 3 = Satisfactory, 4 = Undecided, 5 = Poor, 6 = Very Poor.

(FOR DISTRICT DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION AND THE HEADS OF SCHOOLS)

S/N	SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED TO HEADS OF SCHOOLS	Degree of Provision					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Emotional support to heads of the schools.						
2	Training support.						
3	Promotion of women friendly culture.						
4	Promotion of gender equity policy.						
5	Confidence building seminars for female heads.						
6	Creation of friendly and flexible working schedule for females.						
7	Formulation of anti-sexual harassment policies.						
8	Provision of childcare facilities in workplaces.						
9	Passage of affirmative action legislation.						
10	Mentoring of female heads of school.						

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Guide for District Directors of Education

1. Describe the Human Relationship challenges female heads face in your district.
2. What Human Resource challenges female heads of schools in your district face?
3. What Socio-cultural challenges female heads face in your district?
4. How are female heads of schools in your district supported in coping with the leadership challenges they face?

