

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



**STRATEGIES OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES OF  
BASIC SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS IN YILO KROBO  
MUNICIPALITY, GHANA**

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**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



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SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS IN YILO KROBO MUNICIPALITY, GHANA.**

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of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT,  
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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I, Akugre Azure Peter, 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** .....

### Supervisors Declaration

We hereby declare that, the preparation and presentation of this Thesis work was supervised in accordance with guidelines for the supervision of thesis as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

**Principal Supervisor:** Prof. Henneh Kusi.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Co-supervisor:** Dr. Mark Quansah.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents (Mr. Samuel Akugre and Mad. Cecilia Ayorigo) for supporting and taking care of me and my education from day one to date.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Special thanks go to my supervisors, Prof. Henneh Kusi and Dr. Mark Quansah, for taking time of their busy schedules to consciously go through this thesis as well as their valuable advice and suggestions. The completion of this thesis is as a result of the support I received from my family members especially my wife-Paulina, my father-Samuel Akugre, my mother-Ayorigo Cecilia, all brothers and sisters, and my children – Yvonne, Nadine and Bright and also my able Headmistress, Mad. Peace, I say thank you all. I will also like to convey my appreciation to all the participants who made time to respond to the interview guide deployed for gathering data for this study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	ix
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	10
1.3 Purpose of the Study	12
1.4 Objectives of the Study	12
1.5 Research Questions	12
1.6 Significance of the Study	13
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	15
1.8 Operational Definition of Terms	15
1.9 Organization of the Study	16
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>17</b>
2.0 Introduction	17
2.1 Theoretical Framework	17
2.2 Conceptual Framework	32
2.3 Summary of the Chapter	63
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>65</b>
3.0 Introduction	65
3.1 Research Paradigm	65

3.2	Research Approach	67
3.3	Research Design	69
3.4	Setting of the Study	71
3.5	Sample Size	72
3.6	Sampling Technique	72
3.7	Instrumentation	73
3.8	Trustworthiness	74
3.10	Data Analysis Procedure	77
3.11	Ethical Considerations	78
3.12	Summary of the Chapter	79
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION</b>		<b>80</b>
4.0	Introduction	80
4.1	Instructional Leadership Practices of Basic School Heads	82
4.2	Ways Basic School Heads Monitor Students' Progress	94
4.3	Measures Basic School Heads put in place to Ensure a Safe Environment for Students	100
4.4	Strategies Basic School Heads Employ to Create Learning Opportunities for Students	106
4.5	Assessment	112
4.6	Summary of Chapter	115
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		<b>117</b>
5.0	Introduction	117
5.1	Summary of the Study	117
5.2	Key Findings	118
5.3	Conclusions	120
5.4	Recommendations	122

5.5	Implications for Educational, Administration and Management	123
5.6	Limitations of the Study	124
5.7	Suggestions for Future Studies	124
5.8	Contributions to Knowledge	125
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>126</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>134</b>
	<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>134</b>
	<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>136</b>

## ABSTRACT

This study explored Strategies of school improvement practices of Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. The objectives of the study, based on Lezzote's correlates of effective schools, were to find out the instructional leadership practices exhibited by basic school heads, identify ways in which basic school heads monitor students' progress, examine the measures Basic school heads adopt to ensure a safe environment for students as well as the strategies employed by basic school heads to create learning opportunities for students in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. The study employed a qualitative approach underpinned by the interpretive paradigm. Specifically, the study employed a case study research design with purposive sampling procedure to select a sample of Twenty (20) participants. The study concluded that although the school improvement practices of basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality are in line with Lezzote's effective schools' model, there is no evidence to suggest that these influence learning outcomes. With evidence of the use of technology and virtual studies being ignored by the head teachers, the study recommends that the Yilo Krobo Municipal Education Directorate adopts a digital technology policy for all heads of basic schools in the Municipality. The Directorate should build the capacity of the heads and help them gain the competencies needed to enhance their school improvement practices through technology. The basic school heads should also study their schools' situations and adopt practices that best work for them.

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study. It consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, Significance of the study, delimitations of the study, operational definition of terms and organization of the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

School improvement in recent times in Ghana has come up as the basis of all pre-tertiary education policies. Quansah & Yamoah (2024). The introduction of the Free Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), Capitation Grant, the establishment of GETFUND, free uniforms, and school feeding program are all attempts by the government of Ghana to improve the quality of its education. These programs and policies are all founded on social improvement. Since 2017, the country has pursued ambitious reforms, including the introduction of free Senior High Schools for all pupils, and the innovative „one teacher, one laptop” scheme introduced to ease the burden that the COVID-19 pandemic placed upon the education system (UNESCO, 2023).

Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP), a government initiative supported by the World Bank is also meant to improve education for all in Ghana. GALOP emphasizes a strong focus on learning outcomes and innovative evidence-based interventions, accompanied by building stronger, accountable, and transparent education systems (Bjerde, 2023). In GALOP schools, classrooms are regularly assessed and learning outcomes are also measured through large-scale

assessments. The project also provided grants for less performing schools and supporting accountability systems that provide information to parents and communities. In addition, the introduction of the new standards-based curriculum and common core curriculum has placed much emphasis on teacher professionalism and quality. This has led to the introduction of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in Ghanaian basic schools. All these represent good efforts made by Ghana to improve the performance of her students at the basic level.

Despite numerous educational interventions by the Ghanaian government, significant concerns persist regarding the quality of education across the nation. A key indicator of this is the prevalence of low basic literacy and numeracy skills among primary school graduates roughly 80% of students fail to achieve these fundamental competencies by the end of primary education (UNESCO, 2023). This problem is further exacerbated by the uneven distribution of educational resources and quality of public schools in disadvantaged and rural areas face the brunt of inadequate infrastructure, limited access to qualified teachers, and insufficient learning materials (UNESCO, 2023). These shortcomings can be attributed, in part, to the nationally driven, top-down nature of educational reforms. Such centralized approaches often lack the necessary local context and engagement to effectively address the specific needs and challenges of individual schools and communities. This disconnect can lead to a decline in teacher morale and commitment, ultimately contributing to widespread underperformance in Junior High Schools (JHSs) across the country.

The concern surrounding Basic School underperformance is further amplified by the substantial financial resources allocated to education in Ghana. Data from Macrotrends (2022) reveals a remarkable increase in public education expenditure as a percentage of

GDP between 2010 and 2018, with peaks exceeding 30%. Similarly, Yeboah (2022) reports a doubling of public spending on education, from GH¢20.7 billion to GH¢40.4 billion, between 2013 and 2020.

It is also generally believed that the basis for any true development must commence with the development of human resources, and this is best achieved through quality education. Accordingly, (Yinusa & Basil, 2008), are of the view that the development of any nation rests on the quality of education available to its citizenry. Education capacitates individuals to reduce poverty and inequality, and acts as the basis for sustained economic growth. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and produces skilled empowerment that is capable of leading economic development (Opoku-Asare & Siaw, 2015).

Education is a critical component of any society's development, since it is considered as a means of increasing political and social awareness as well as of maintaining workforce levels (Onyara, 2015). World Bank (2016), pointed out that, these advantages have resulted in an increase in the number of students in the primary and secondary schools around the world. Education is a fundamental human right according to (Yara & Otieno, 2010). The provision of high-quality education to citizens is critical for the long-term growth, peace, and stability within and across countries (Oguntuase et al., 2013). In effect, it is through education that the nation's human resources which ultimately determine the character and pace of its social and economic development is developed (Ato, 2010). This means that education is able to empower people to function properly to meet their own needs and the demands of their community.

Dorleku (2013) added that through education an individual's intellectual, moral capacities, proper conduct, and technical competencies are developed to make them cultural members of their societies. Education therefore, grooms beneficiaries to adapt to the dynamic needs of the country, and spearhead the development of human capital for the country's economy and assists individuals to develop their capabilities, attitudes and behaviours that are acceptable to the society to meet empowerment needs (Aniwaba, 2020). These benefits of education can only be achieved if the education received is of high quality especially at the basic level. This is because, quality basic education serves as a springboard for further educational achievements.

(Moulton, 2001) explains basic education as a primary form of education characterized by reading, math, and other skills and knowledge critical to economic and social development. According to (Moulton, 2001), without basic skills, a person cannot comprehend the instructions on a bottle of medicine or a bag of fertilizer or read a government notice, nor compute a bill or write a letter. It is impossible to develop one's potential or to contribute in anything more than a rudimentary manner to society with quality basic education (Greaney, Italian, 1999). (Gyasi, 2016), discovered that academic performance is a primary source of concern in Ghana's educational system. Parents, instructors, student's policymakers and society as a whole are all eager to see pupils succeed in their academic endeavours. Even without the appropriate framework and resources, everyone expects a high level of performance at all times, and the schools head is usually held responsible for poor academic achievements.

According to (Ankomah, 2002), the quality of education is measured by how well students perform academically, or how well students deal with their studies; how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their facilitators, and the extent to which a student, facilitator, or institution has achieved their educational goals. As an outcome of education, academic performance refers to the capacity to achieve when one is tested on what one has been taught (Otoo, 2007), which relates to curriculum content, the learner's intellect, and hence depends on the learner's competence (Opoku-

Asare & Siaw, 2015). According to (Osei-Mensah, 2012), academic performance of students, is not only a pointer to the effectiveness or otherwise of schools but a major determinant of the future of youths in particular and nations in general.

Education occurs when people acquire knowledge and skills from what is being taught (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku 2012). As widely known and accepted to be the key to success and the force that drives civilization and development, education has become absolutely necessary. Indeed, the United Nations Millennium Development Goal Two (MDG 2) and the Sustainable Development Goal Four (SDG 4) underscore the need for an inclusive and equitable quality education which will promote lasting learning opportunities for all. However, the issue of quality has always been a global concern compelling educators around the world to continuously make changes in their schools and the systems that support them with the view to raising standards and improving quality (Harris, 2005).

Consequently, many countries introduced major reforms to make their schools effective. In England for instance, the academy model school and the London Challenge educational reforms were introduced to improve accessibility and quality

education, (Baars & et al, 2014). While (Wilkins, 2015) observes that the academy school model brought about the improvement of underperforming schools in England, (Baars & et al, 2014) claimed the London Challenge educational reform from 2000 to 2010 brought about significant improvements in student outcomes. The USA reforms equally saw the Charter and Contract Schools initiatives which proponents of the US reforms argued to have made significant contribution to the achievement of '*no child being left behind*' goal. This undoubtedly led to increased opportunities for learning and provision of access to quality education for students ( Wilkins, 2015).The Bangladeshi reforms likewise devoted attention to school reforms which centred on improvement practices to enhance quality education and make primary and secondary education easily accessible both for the poor and the rich (Konok, 2011). In Ethiopia, Amsale (2010) revealed that the reformation of school systems to ensure quality assurance in the educational system led the government to incorporate school improvement practices into the system in 2007.

The concern and need for quality education is not different in Ghana as successive governments over the years have attempted to implement major reforms in the educational system all in a bid to improve upon its quality. Considering the fact that Basic Education generally is thought to be a very significant stage in the educational system and believed to lay the foundation for further education, Gordon Guggisberg placed much emphasis on it by introducing the Educational Reform of 1919-1927. Similarly, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, acknowledging the significance of primary education, introduced fee-free compulsory primary and middle school education in the 1960s with the aim of promoting quality Basic Education. Successive governments have also initiated reforms both at the basic and the secondary school

levels with the ultimate aim of enhancing the quality and efficiency of our education. It is therefore evident that school improvement (SI) is considered critical in ensuring the development of education and serving as a tool for achieving good academic results in schools (Escobar, 2019).

(Radhika, 2018), asserts that the determinants of academic performance of the students include, class participation, class assignments, home-work, tests, examinations, and participation in competitions or other events. In Ghana, pupils' performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) is a major yardstick for the measurement of quality education at the basic level by many parents. Poor performance in this area therefore becomes a great source of worry to majority of Ghanaians. Therefore, the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders in education have put in place a number of measures aimed at addressing this perceived poor performance of pupils at the basic level of education aimed at improving the general quality of basic education in the country. For example, in 1996, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) was introduced to ensure that children get access to basic quality education. Strategies like Quality Improvement in Primary Schools (QUIPS), Child School Community Progress in Education (Child Scope) sponsored by the United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to improve children's reading, writing and numeracy skills were some of the measures towards quality education in Ghana (Akyeampong, 2004).

Irrespective of these frantic efforts (Norviewu-Morty, 2012) has observed a sharp decline in the academic performance of students from public basic schools in Ghana. Government efforts to remedy the situation have not yielded any enduring positive results (Atta-Quayson, 2007), (Myjoyonline News, 2012). The pressure of the parents

and other individuals upon teachers and school administrators to improve the academic performance has enabled schools to come up with advanced strategies. These include, promoting extra classes for students, introducing effective teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, using technology, rewarding students for good performance serves as a motivating factor and when they achieve low grades, and then they usually tend to work more for improvement. (Nyagosia, 2011). Head teachers, being the chief executive officers of schools, in collaboration with teachers, play various roles to improve academic performance. Considering this, there is extensive research trying to understand the role of head teachers and teachers in schools. The head teacher is in charge of the whole school and therefore makes decisions, supervises the entire school program and is fully responsible for the effectiveness and proficiency of all activities in the school, while the teachers are the primary implementers of the head teachers' decisions (Walker & Dimmock, 2012). However, the role of head teachers has become more complex and overloaded over the past decade. According to Fullan, the effective school heads are a minority. Due to the urgent need to make the school a better place for learners, the government has focused on improving school management by strengthening the role of head teachers and teachers. What this present study seeks to achieve is strategies to improve school performance of basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.

Leadership is argued to be an important variable to school improvement. Madhlangobe and (Madhlangobe, 2014) assert that leadership influences school improvement and that, schools cannot improve if leadership structures are not effective enough. (Day & et al, 2006) argue that the leadership of the head teacher (at the basic education level) is very crucial in school improvement as it has direct and

indirect effects on students' learning outcomes. As leaders, head teachers can influence change that can make schools more effective. Thus, as low academic standards and low pass rates are attributed to ineffective leadership (Inkoom, 2012), it is incumbent on head teachers to foster school improvement practices and promote success in school. Another factor considered key in school improvement is the practice of monitoring students' progress (Lezotte, 2024). As asserted by (Lezotte, 2024), schools will improve and become effective if measures are put in place to monitor students' progress holistically. In her view, (Cotton, 2014) observed that [educational research] literature on effective schooling identified monitoring of student learning a determinant of high-quality education. Thus, it differentiates effective schools and teachers from ineffective ones.

The American Federation of Teachers (2003) opined those efforts to improve schools will not be effective without an orderly and safe learning environment. Lezotte (2024) also admonished educators to make schools a place where students can feel safe, physically and emotionally. According to (Lezotte, 2024), school leaders must treat schools as "sacred places" to enable both students and teachers focus on learning. It is therefore, the responsibility of head teachers to create a safe and orderly school environment that will promote high level of student engagement and learning.

In addition, The American Institutes for Research (AIR) (2014) stressed the need to provide opportunity for students to learn. According to the AIR, it behooves schools to implement strategies that can promote deeper learning. In corroborating this assertion, (Lezotte, 2010) postulated that schools must ensure the creation of a syllabus must be flexible enough to allow re-teaching when the students are having trouble with certain key concepts. Instructional time should be utilized not only to

cover the syllabus but to help the students master it. Head teachers, therefore, have an important role to play in school improvement activities and so they must identify strategies or practices that will help reform teaching approaches for purposes of achieving improved learning outcomes. As Leaders of schools, head teachers should have an implementation chain where policies that are channelled from the top are monitored to ensure that they are properly implemented at the bottom (Birkland, 2010).

Literature reveals that, mostly, educationists focus on the concept of school improvement with a common emphasis and strategies for improving schools placed on students' performance (Madhlangobe & Gordon, 2012; Ghana Education Service, 2009; Kingsford, 2010). Apparently, this has resulted in the least attention placed on other practices such as leadership, monitoring students' progress, ensuring an orderly safe and learning environment, and provision of learning opportunities found effective in improving schools (Lezotte, 2024). It is against this background that, the researcher investigate the strategies to enhance school improvement practices of Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Basic education lays the foundation for further education and training. Quality Basic education has the capacity to widen an individual's academic prospects and make him or her marketable and ready for the job market. Although educational reforms and school improvement programs have been introduced at the basic school level to improve academic performance, they appear to have failed to produce the desired results. Academic performance is a major concern area in educational delivery in Ghana. Stakeholder like parents, teachers, students, policymakers and society as a

whole are anxious to see learners excel in their academic work. Even without the necessary framework and resources, everyone still expects the standard of performance should be high at all times, and for poor academic performance, the head and teachers of the school are mostly held responsible (Gyasi, Xi and Ampomah, 2016). In addition to various policies and programs by key stakeholders to improve pupils' academic performance, school heads have mounted desired strategies for achievement of quality education (Firmina, 2015). This implies that quality education cannot be achieved without the input of the teachers and heads of schools.

The effective improvement of Basic schools is a critical component of the overall educational system, directly influencing the quality of education provided to students. However, many Basic school heads in Yilo Krobo Municipality face significant challenges in implementing effective school improvement practices. The challenges are often rooted in adequate resources, insufficient training and limited support from both the government and the community.

School Heads, who are responsible for improvement of their schools, often lack the necessary skills, knowledge and tools to effectively implement improvement strategies. This gap in capacity can lead to poor academic performance, low students engagement and a lack of progress in key educational indicators.

The problem, therefore, is that many basic school heads in Yilo Krobo Municipality are not equipped with the necessary strategies, resources and support to effectively enhance School improvement practices. This situation not only hinders the development quality education but also undermines the potential of students and the broader educational system.

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

The purpose of the study is to explore and recommend practical strategies that can be adopted to enhance the performance of Basic school heads, and by extension, the quality of education in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

Specifically, the research sought to:

1. Find out the instructional leadership practices for school improvement in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.
2. Identify ways in which the Basic school heads in the Municipality monitor students' progress for school improvement.
3. Examine the measures the Basic school heads put in place to ensure safety for school improvement.
4. Explore the strategies for creating learning opportunities for students.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1 What are the instructional leadership practices employed by Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality for school improvement?
- 2 In what ways do the Basic school heads monitor learners' progress for school improvement?
- 3 What are the measures put in place by Basic school heads to ensure students safety?
- 4 What strategies are employed by the Basic school heads to create learning Opportunities for students?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Measures to improve basic schools have dominated discussions among educational stakeholders for a long time. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to benefit different levels of education practitioners on various aspects of school management.

### **Practical Significance**

The study will generate information on the roles that school management play in enhancing academic performance in schools. Additionally, it would bring into light knowledge about the leadership skills and management practices that lead to enhance school improvement practices of students through sustained and progressive school effectiveness. The findings would help the heads and teachers of schools to understand their roles in school, the importance of decision making and implementation to improving academic performance. Moreover, it would reveal the challenges schools face in terms of their management and recommend some alternative measures for dealing with them to improve performance. The findings of the study may challenge schools' administrators to improve their instructional leadership practices in order to improve pupils' academic performance.

### **Policy Significance**

The study would help give policy makers a sense of direction in deriving realistic strategies for improving teaching and learning achievement levels in basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality and the country at large. The donors, financiers and well-wishers may use the findings of the study to identify areas they need to improve so that better mechanisms can be put in place to bettering education management and administration for academic achievement. The findings of the study can be useful to

the Ministry of Education, in identifying managerial factors influencing pupils' academic performance in public Junior High schools. The study may be beneficial to parents for it will reveal the extent to which their involvement with school work of their children impacts on academic performance. Consequently, they may see the need to provide conducive environment at home and ensure their children attend school regularly so as to acquire the desired learning outcomes.

### **Methodological Significance**

The study may also be of great help to other researchers in the same field which will act as a resource material to facilitate their study. They could use it as a point of reference during their study as well as fill the gaps that have been left out. This study is likely to inspire other researchers to embark on similar studies into factors affecting academic performance of students in other Districts and Municipalities, so that more general information about practices that help improve pupils' academic performance in public basic schools will be available.

### **Theoretical Significance**

The findings of the study will provide insights in employing the quantitative approach in studying school improvement practices for improving academic performance in educational institutions.

Additionally, it would bring into light knowledge about the leadership skills and management strategies that leads to enhance the academic performance of students through sustained and progressive school effectiveness.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

The study was delimited to strategies of School improvement practices among head teachers of Basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The practices were delimited to instructional leadership, monitoring of students' progress, ensuring safe and orderly environment and creating learning opportunities for students.

### **1.8 Operational Definition of Terms**

The following definitions have been provided for the purpose of this present study.

**School Improvement:** Making schools better to enhance teaching and learning.

**School Improvement Practices:** Those practices that effect changes in schools to enhance students' performance.

**Basic Schools:** Public Junior High and primary Schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.

**Basic Education:** This covers education from kindergarten to Junior High.

**School Head:** A school staff member whose responsibility is to provide academic leadership and management of the school.

**Instructional leadership Practices:** Measures taken by basic school head teachers to enhance students' learning.

**Monitoring:** Activities pursued by basic school head teachers to keep track of students' learning.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, operational definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter Two comprises a review of related literature on school improvement and school improvement practices. The chapter also discusses theories underpinning the study. Chapter Three composed of the research paradigm, research approach, research design, Population, Setting of the study, Sample size, Sample technique, Instrumentation, Trustworthiness, Data collection procedure, Data analysis procedure, Ethical considerations and summary of the chapter. Chapter Four discusses the findings that were drawn from the data collected. And chapter Five consolidates the principal findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the review of related literature by researchers on school improvement while contextualizing at the basic school level. The literature consists of reviews at both global and local levels. The review begins with the theories underpinning the study and continues with the basic concepts on instructional leadership. The review further discusses some empirical researches that are related to the focus of the current study.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation of the study is rooted in the Effective School Theory (EST) put forward by (Lezotte, 2024) and the Leadership Instructional Theory. The EST discerns the fundamental attributes and methodologies that contribute to the efficacy of educational institutions in relation to student academic attainment and the overall improvement in performance of the school. On the other hand, the Instructional leadership theories collectively offer a structured approach for educational administrators to effectively lead and enhance the overall quality of education.

##### **2.1.1 Effective School Theory**

The Effective Schools“ model, propounded by (Lezotte, 2024), developed the “correlates of effective schools” model between 1991 and 2024, outlining seven essential factors for achieving heightened student learning. These include strong instructional leadership, a clear mission, safe and orderly schools environment, and climate of high expectations, frequent student progress monitoring, positive home-school relations, and an opportunity to learn. Adherence to these correlations is

believed to equip students with essential skills for societal success, regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnicity. Lezotte (2024) emphasizes that instructional leadership is crucial for enhancing academic performance, requiring training and collaboration between head teachers and teachers. Effective schools, according to Lezotte, maintain a clear mission, foster a safe and orderly environment, and create a climate of high expectations among staff and students.

Additionally, (Lezotte, 2020) argues that effective schools frequently monitor students' progress, distinguishing between first-generation monitoring without technology and the need for a second-generation with technology. While acknowledging the prevalence of first-generation monitoring in Ghanaian public schools, Lezotte suggests preparing for second-generation monitoring to meet global standards. According to Lezotte (2024), the seven Correlates of Effective Schools serve as robust indicators of educational institutions that achieve success in facilitating learning for all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic background or ethnic identity. These correlates are discussed below.

#### **2.1.1.1 Leading the Instructional Programme**

According to (Lezotte, 2024), strong instructional leaders are proactive and seek help in building team leadership and a culture that is conducive to learning and professional growth. In the effective school, the principal and others act as instructional leaders and effectively and persistently model and communicate the mission to the staff, parents and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.

Michael Lynch (2015) supported the assertion of (Lezotte, 2024), in his article “What factors make the school effective? (Michael Lynch, 2015), suggests that, first factor is quality leadership. Students perform better where the principal provides strong leadership. Effective leaders are visible, able to successfully convey the school’s goals and visions, collaborate with teachers to enhance their skills, and are involved in the discovery of and solutions to problem (Lynch, 2015). The following year, he again wrote that, “The first attribute is quality leadership. Students perform better when the principal and school board members provide strong leadership. Effective leaders are visible, can successfully convey the school’s goals and visions, and collaborate with teachers to enhance their skills, and are involved in the discovery of and solutions to problems” (Lynch, 2016). Amer, agreed to the assertion that in an effective school, the leader must be the “leader of Leaders” (Amer, 2022).

On the issue of school leadership Mondal, asserts that principal and other school leaders are focused on student achievement; support for improving and enhancing school culture, teaching, and learning; and effective collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and partners in the community. The principal and other school leader demonstrates and inspire an unwavering commitment to fulfilling the vision of the school among all members of the school community (Mondal, 2020). The head of the school bears the ultimate responsibility in the management of the school. All other factors are subject to his leadership.

#### **2.1.1.2 Safe environment**

In the effective school there is an orderly, purposeful, business-like atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning. A school environment must be a place where

students feel safe physically, emotionally, and mentally. According to (Lezotte, 2024), safe and orderly environment correlate was defined in terms of absence of student's undesirable behaviour (Lezotte, 2024). According to (Lezotte, 2024), teachers, parents and other mentors need to encourage a learning environment in school age kids by treating schools as „sacred places” He further stressed the need to go beyond the elimination of undesirable conditions and provide desirable conditions necessary for effective learning. He stated that when a school atmosphere is conducive for learning, students respond positively with positive attitudes.

#### **2.1.1.3 Clear and focused mission**

In the effective school there is a clearly articulated school mission and through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability. According to (Lezotte, 2024), an effective mission emphasizes innovation and improvement in providing learning for all students and educators of all backgrounds. The teachers must translate the mission so as to let it fall in line with what they teach. The mission and vision of the school will guide everyone's effort in the teaching and learning process (Lezotte, 2024).

#### **2.1.1.4 Climate of High Expectations for Success**

In the effective school there is a climate of expectation in which the staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain high levels of achievements when the staff and students believe that they can make it. In an effective school, students are expected to do well. (Lezotte, 2024), states that at effective schools, teachers genuinely believe that every student has the raw material to be successful (Lezotte, 2024).

### **2.1.1.5 Home-School Relations**

There must exist a partnership between the home and the school if effective school should be achieved. Teachers and parents must work together to help the children get the most out of the educational system. According to Lezotte (2024), in effective schools, parents understand and support the mission of the school. They are therefore given the opportunity to play a meaningful role in helping to shape the children (Lezotte, 2024). Lezotte opined that effective schools go beyond purely academic matters. Parents and other stakeholders can come together to work on issues such as drug use among students, gang acidity and bullying (Education.com, 2013).

Home-school relationships seem to be important for youth as they are for younger children. Although home-schools relationships tend to wane during or even before children reach adolescence, such relationships continue to play an important role in student's outcomes. Aspect of home-school relationships include communicating with teachers and school personnel, attending school events, volunteering at school, and participating in parent association and leadership. The extent to which parents attend and volunteer at school functions, for instance, has a consistent positive impact on adolescent academic achievement. There are several reasons why home-school relationships matter in schools. (Katamei & Omwono, 2015) posit that involvement and presence at school helps parent monitor their child's academic and social progress, acquire information they need to make decisions about their children's academic future, and foster positive relationships with school staff.

Home-school relationships also increase student's achievement by conveying to both teachers and parents' beliefs about the importance of education and appropriate behaviours for adult in society. In addition, when families of diverse backgrounds are

involved at the school level, teachers become more aware of cultural and community issues and, in turn, become more likely to engage and reach out to parents in meaningful and effective ways. Home-school relationships are also linked to various students' achievement outcomes beyond grades, including adjustment across transitions and students' educational expectations for themselves (Dounay, 2006). For instance parents frequently contact with school personnel and involvement in school policies and parent associations are positively related to students completing high school. Student also make successful transition from middle school to high school when parents monitor their progress, evaluate that information, and intervene by actively communicating with teachers. Home-school relationships function differently and serve different purposes depending on parent's level of education and ethnicity. A study by (Hill, & et al, 2004), revealed that, when parents with higher levels of education were involved, youth exhibited fewer behaviour problems, which in turn, was associated with achievement and aspirations by contrast when parents with lower levels of education were involved, family involvement was related to students' aspirations for success but not achievement. Moreover, in the same study, family involvement was more strongly related to achievement.

#### **2.1.1.6 Frequent Monitoring of Students for Progress**

A key instructional leadership function carried out by principal in effective schools is learning (e.g., students work products, curricular tests, standardized tests) to assess the schools (Lezotte, 2024) asserts that in an effective school, students' achievements are measured in terms of quality and equity. An effective school facilitates high academic achievement. In an effective school, a wide range of assessment tools are employed to measure the progress of the students in terms of their performance. Assessment is vital in every education. This is to ensure that teachers can work on improving the

performance of students over time. (Lezotte, 2024), concluded after research that, students who were regularly tested on their academic progress were more successful than those who were not. Frequent teacher written evaluations give teachers the needed information which is used to design strategies that will help them address the challenges of students (Education.com, 2013). According to Lezotte, assessment of students must be holistic and less formal.

#### **2.1.1.7 Opportunity for Students to Learn**

More time is needed for student on task. Students must not be rushed through their academic work. In an effective school, as outlined by Lezotte, school-going days are adjusted to make room for the all students to attain mastery of their task. School that finds creative ways to extend time on learning will be more effective (Lynch, 2015).

#### **2.1.3 Conclusion**

The effective school model by Lezotte has become one of the major models of education. The goal of the model is to help improve the schools' system in general, which culminates into improved standards of student's performance. The most significant feature of effective schools is to ensure that students can have a more active learning experience. The effective school model as explained and discussed above, provides a perfect frame for modelling of education. The correlates provide all stakeholders in education with knowledge on how to deal with issues of education. As noted, the model is only a frame and therefore there may be variations in its practicality.

The theory is relevant to this study because the seven correlates of an effective school as advanced by (Lezotte, 2024), demonstrate the need for effective leadership on the part of the administrator (school principal). To enhance and ensure that schools are

effective, the school must have a strategy in management practices. Heads of schools have become the main implementers of policies and strategies formulated by the other stakeholders of education. The success or otherwise of any educational program depends on how they manage the schools. It is for this reason that most of the models aimed at school improvement target the heads of schools. Several other authors built on Lezotte effective school model.

### **2.1.2 Behaviourist Theory of Leadership (BTL)**

The Behaviourist Theory of Leadership is a concept in leadership theory that focuses on the observable behaviours of leaders and how these behaviours of leaders and how these behaviours influence the performance and motivation of followers. Theory is rooted in behavioural psychology, particularly the work of B.F. Skinner and Edward Thorndike, and its understanding of leadership.

The Behaviour theory Approach is in contrast to finding out what characteristics or traits made leaders effective (Kwan, 2020). The behaviourists tried to find out what leaders did and how they carried out their tasks which made them effective (Hallinger & et al, 2020). Hallinger further defined leadership styles as the various patterns of behaviour favoured by leaders during the process of directing and influencing workers. Experts have propounded different styles of leadership over the ages. These styles, according to (Hallinger & et al, 2020), range from authoritarian to democratic. He cited McGregor as having summed up these two extremes in his Theory X (the authoritarian) and his Theory Y (the democratic), believing that his Theory Y was more appropriate for today's manager.

McGregor's Theory X propounded that the average person has an inherent dislike for work (Lewis, 2019). Because of this, most people must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to get them to put forward adequate effort towards the achievement of organizational goals (Aas & Paulsen, 2019). The average person, according to this theory, prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all. Huong & et al. (2020) describes this leadership style as task-centred because it concentrates on the task and ignores the people doing it and their needs.

A modern approach to management according to (Huong & et al, 2020) is expressed in McGregor's Theory Y which considers work as being as natural as play or rest, which the average person not only accepts but seeks responsibility (Tsakeni & et al, 2020). According to this theory, external control and the threat of punishment are not the only means of bringing about effort toward organizational objectives. Theory Y or the consultative style as referred to by (Tsakeni & et al, 2020), proposes that people enjoy solving problems, especially when they see the benefits involved from using a solution they helped devise. They explain that if you tell people what to do without consultation, they often react by reducing their effort or losing interest. Wherever possible the staff should be involved in how the job should be done (Sebastian & et al, 2019).

Behaviour is something that a person does that can be observed, measured, and repeated (Sebastian et al, 2019). Behavioral leadership theory argues that the success of a leader is based on their behavior rather than their natural attributes (Wilkinson & et al, 2019). Behavioural leadership theory involves observing and evaluating a leader's actions and behaviours when they are responding

to a specific situation. This theory believes that leaders are made, not born (Bada et al., 2020). According to the behaviourists, leaders are not born with any special uniqueness but can be trained, and traits that a leader must have can be taught and developed (Bada & et al, 2020). Therefore, anyone can be a leader, but they must have the proper and training for leadership qualities to develop (Skaalvik & et al, 2020). Interest in the behaviour of leaders has been stimulated by a systematic comparison of autocratic and democratic leadership styles (Skaalvik & et al, 2020). It has been observed that groups under these types of leadership perform differently:

1. Autocratically led groups will work well so long as the leader is present. Group members, however, tend to be unhappy with the leadership style and express hostility.
2. Democratically led groups do nearly as well as the autocratic group. Group members have more positive feelings, however, and no hostility. Most importantly, the efforts of group members continue even when the leader is absent.

#### **2.1.2.2 Relevance of the Behaviorist Theory of Leadership**

The Behaviourist Theory of Leadership is grounded on the principles of behaviourism and centres on the notion that leadership behaviour can be acquired, cultivated, and altered via the processes of reinforcement and conditioning. Although not the prevailing paradigm in the realm of educational leadership, behaviourist concepts provide pertinent attributes that may be effectively employed in the enhancement of fundamental school practices for the purpose of school development. For example, the use of Behaviourist ideas may be utilized to influence the behaviour of instructors and staff members, so enhancing their teaching methods and relationships with pupils. The establishment of explicit behavioural

standards for teachers, students, and school leaders, which concurrently supports the enhancement of educational processes inside schools, can be firmly rooted in behaviourist ideas. It is essential to acknowledge that although behaviourist concepts can be advantageous in moulding leadership behaviours and practices, an exclusive dependence on behaviourism may fail to consider the intricate social and emotional dimensions of educational leadership, as well as the necessity for heightened intrinsic motivation among teachers and staff. The idea is utilized to offer insights and comprehension about the behavioural components of school management that contribute to the general enhancement of the school.

The trait intelligence, (knowledge), and social factors (such as interpersonal skills, sociability) earlier studies focus characteristics, many of which a person needs not to be born with but can strive to acquire, do distinguish effective leaders from other people (Herawati & et al, 2020). (Herawati & Tjahjono, 2020) identified the following competencies that are characteristics of effective leaders such as; drive, leadership motivation, integrity, intelligence, and knowledge of the business. Drive refers to the inner motivation that leaders possess to pursue their goals. It also refers to a set of characteristics that reflect a high level of effort (Hallinger & et al, 2020).

Applications of the Behaviourist Theory of Leadership:

1. Training and Development: Leaders can be trained in specific behaviours that lead to positive outcomes.
2. Performance Management: Use rewards and punishment to shape the behaviour of their team members.
3. Team Building: Leaders can model desired behaviours to encourage positive team dynamics.

#### **2.1.4 Situational / Contingency Theory**

The contingency theory is a behavioural theory developed by Fred Fiedler through his 1958 scholarly work on leader effectiveness in group settings. The theory typically suggests that there is no exact leadership or management style that is most appropriate in organizing and managing a structured institution (Shala & et al, 2021; Tsolka, 2020). Although researchers have attempted to identify effective leader behaviours that would work in every situation the various researchers pursuing the behavioural view of leadership eventually found that leader behaviours that worked well in one situation were often not as effective in another situation (Yukl, 2011). This implies that different situations require different styles and that the effectiveness of a style depends upon the situation in which it was used (Yukl, 2011). In essence, a good leader must be willing to employ an appreciable level of dynamism in tackling specific circumstances and addressing particular needs in view of the times and other determining factors. As asserted by the theorist, best practices in human institutions are subject to the contingencies of individual and unique situations.

There are potentially many situational factors that could influence the effectiveness of leaders, hence the evolution of several different situational approaches. Fielder's Contingency Theory posits that leaders differ in the degrees of their orientation towards the task versus that toward the people (Kundu & et al, 2019). These differences make leaders more effective in some types of situations than in others. According to this model, leader effectiveness depends on whether the person's natural leadership style is appropriately matched to the situation (Tsolka, 2020). In other words, leader effectiveness is determined by both the personal characteristics of leaders and by the situation in which leaders find themselves (Tsolka, 2020).

(Mansour & Elziny, 2020) noted that the situational leadership theory states that leadership should tell, sell, participate or delegate depending on the readiness of followers. By telling, the leader defines the roles needed to do the job and tells followers what, where, how, and when to do the tasks (Mansour & et al, 2020). It is thus important that leaders understand their behaviour, the behaviour of their subordinates, and the situation before utilizing a particular leadership style (Anthony & et al, 2020). Mansour and Elziny (2020) noted that the situational leadership theory states that leadership should tell, sell, participate or delegate depending on the readiness of followers. By telling, the leader defines the roles needed to do the job and tells followers what, where, how, and when to do the tasks (Mansour et al., (2020). It is thus important that leaders understand their behaviour, the behaviour of their subordinates, and the situation before utilizing a particular leadership style (Anthony et al., 2020).

### **Assumptions of the Contingency Theory**

The emergence of this theory provided counterintuitive argument against classical theories which suggested that there is one ideal approach for effectively organizing and managing human institutions. Ever since this theory was developed, it has received multidisciplinary attention. Essentially, it is being largely discussed in literature in communications, human resource management, and educational management among others.

Literature is as a result of the theory's core assumption that there is no one best way to manage or lead a group of people, which mostly scholars resonated with.

Some other variables of the theory include the relationship that exists between the leader and their members, structure of task, and position power (Tsolka, 2020). In

essence, the contingency theory examines whether the existing leader-member relationship is good or poor; whether the task structure is high or low; and whether the power position of the leader is strong or weak. These factors invariably stimulate the leader to determine the exactness of the situation in which they are and whether their approach to leadership is ideal for that particular situation. The theory indicates that it is crucial for leaders to be mindful of these individual variables in dealing with specific issues. The theorist also pointed out that good leader-member relationship, high task structure and strong leader position is a solid combination in dealing with most cases in the organization. The reverse of this combination is rather detrimental to the growth of the organization. A good leader-member relationship is evident when members trust the leader, like the leader and get along with the leader. When there is poor leader-member relationship, the atmosphere is that of friction between the leader and the members. Also, members do not have confidence in the leader. In regards to high task structure, requirements are clear and the end goal is definite. With low task structure, requirements are unclear and end goal is vague. For leader's position power, the phenomenon is strong when leaders have the power to hire, fire, promote and give pay rises to subordinates. Meanwhile, this variable could be weak when leaders have no authority to do any of the aforementioned things. The assumptions are summarised as follows:

1. One of the assumptions underlying contingency theory is that no single type of institutional structure is equally applicable to all institutions. Rather,
2. Institutional effectiveness is dependent on a fit or match between the type of technology, environmental volatility, the size of the institution, the features of the institutional structure, and its information system.
3. The theory of contingency recommends that no leadership style is precise as a

stand-alone as the leadership style used is reliant upon the factors such as the quality, situation of the followers, or several other variables.

4. Contingency theorists assumed that the leader was the focus of the leader-subordinate relationship; Situational theorists opined that the subordinates played a pivotal role in defining the relationship.

### **Advantages of the Contingency Theory**

Based on the assumption of the contingency theory that there is no single best way of leading, the theory is considered as dynamic in nature (Suleiman et.al., 2018). This feature of the theory has a competitive advantage with respect to other theories of leadership. In essence, the dynamic nature of the theory gives managers the prerogative to change or modify organizational policies to suit a particular situation.

Another advantage of the theory is that it exposes leaders to several techniques of dealing with issues and this consequently helps the leader to boost their leadership and decision-making skills (Toluwase, 2017). Additionally, the theory is structured in a way that employees' inputs are considered in the decision-making process which consequently helps in the growth of the business.

### **Criticisms/ Disadvantages of the Contingency Theory**

Despite the fact that the contingency theory has received wide academic attention and appropriated in myriad studies on leadership and management, it is not without criticisms. Scholars such as Gille (2011) has suggested that the contingency theory largely concentrates on the key situation or issues that need attention of leaders but does not pay significant attention on the leaders themselves, leadership qualities and how leadership styles are modified. Some point to the fact that the failure of the contingency theory to propose a single approach of dealing with issues in an

organizational setting is a major flaw of the theory (Cherry, 2017; Suleiman et al., 2018). These scholars indicated that that in principle, the theory seem simple but practically it becomes complicated owing to the fact that although it is susceptible to dealing with various issues, there is no specific model embedded in the theory which can be practicalized to deal with the uniqueness of issues.

Another school of thought suggests that the contingency theory is reactive in nature (Toluwase, 2017). There is the suggestion that handling various situations become burdensome for the manager because the manager is always reacting differently to individual events which might be intricate in nature.

It is also argued that although literature on the contingency theory is somewhat expansive, a lot has not been done in to deal with unique or individual issues that the leaders may encounter (Gille, 2011). The aforementioned author opines that it is not adequate enough to suggest that a leader's action is contingent on the situation.

### **Justification of the Contingency Theory**

Situational Leadership considers the motivational level of employees when selecting a leadership style. For example, a motivated and willing employee will require less coaching than an unmotivated individual. Since motivation largely comes from within the individual, head teachers must understand what motivates their teachers or risk diminishing engagement and efficiency in our schools. Situational Leadership can provide leaders and managers of schools with the tools necessary to influence others

### **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

This section of the study is dedicated to reviewing the relevant literature pertaining to the primary concepts under investigation. This is done with the aim of offering a comprehensive examination of fundamental ideas relevant to the research questions

and objectives guiding the investigation into the complex dynamics of school improvement practices.

### **2.2.1 The Concept of School Improvement**

School improvement is a type of educational change strategy that aims to improve student outcomes and strengthen schools' ability to manage change (Hopkins, 2001). It creates a positive learning environment that maximize the educational outcomes and experiences of learners.

(Harris, 2002) outlined the following fundamental assumptions about school reform approaches:

- (a) Schools may improve themselves,
- (b) school improvement entails cultural change,
- (c) there are circumstances for change at the school and classroom levels, and
- (d) School improvement is concerned with increasing change capacity.

According to (Creamers & Reezigt, 2007), the general concept of school improvement is seen as unsophisticated and mechanistic in school improvement circles and thus would not work generally in all schools. Schools must innovate and invent their own remedies to individual challenges as well as general improvement. School improvement is a strong instrument for putting hypotheses to the test. School improvement can also bring fresh perspectives and opportunities for successful school aspects, which can be investigated further through effective school research. In recent years, there have been examples of fruitful collaboration between school effectiveness and school improvement, with innovative approaches to combining the two traditions/orientations being tried (Reynolds, & et al, 2000).

The concept of effective school improvement was defined as follows, based on (Hopkins & et al, 2018) definition of improvement: Effective school improvement is a planned educational change that improves student learning outcomes while also strengthening the school's ability to manage change. The term "managing" has been added to emphasize the processes and activities that must be carried out in school in order to accomplish change/improvement. The topic of school culture should not be overlooked if school improvement is to be successful. The danger of short-term and cosmetic improvements exists when the school structure changes but the school culture does not change (Creamers & et al, 2007). The qualities of the school culture must be favourable for school improvement to occur. Schools, for example, must have common goals and take ownership of their achievement. Collegiality, risk-taking, mutual respect and support, openness, and a lifelong learning mentality are also required.

The search for additional insights in other theoretical traditions such as organizational theories, curriculum theories, behavioural theories, and theories of organizational learning and human resources management incorporated different points of view in the theoretical analysis for useful insights for effective school improvement: (1) the integration of the school effectiveness and school improvement traditions; (2) the search for additional insights in other theoretical traditions such as organizational theories, curriculum theories, behavioural theories, and theories of organizational learning and human resource management (Hoeben, 1998; Reezigt, 2000). These theories were chosen in the hopes of providing concepts and connections between concepts related to the complicated process of school improvement, which involves educational concerns (such as curriculum), school management (such as school structure), and participant behaviour. (Lezzotte's 20210), model on the other hand

link school improvement with instructional leadership practices, monitoring students' academic progress, safe and orderly environment of students and providing pupils with learning opportunities (Levine & Lezotte, 2024).

The literature on school improvement emphasizes the need for modifying crucial processes in institutions and prioritizing school improvement within specific contexts in order to get in-depth insights into transformative processes (Harris, 2020). Extensive scholarly literature pertaining to the school improvement practices highlights the significance of capacity development and the influence of school environments. The presence of capacity development has a significant impact on achieving desired outcomes, since the absence of such capacity might hinder schools from maintaining ongoing school improvement initiatives that lead to enhanced student outcomes (Hopkins & Reynolds, 2001). (Harris, 2011) emphasizes the significance of intentional, focused, and strategic efforts to enhance capacity in order to achieve successful implementation of change. (King & Bouchard, 2011) suggest that the concept of school capacity encompasses five interconnected aspects that exert an influence on the calibre of teaching and academic performance inside educational institutions. The factors that contribute to an atmosphere of professionalism include the understanding, skills, and mind-sets of teachers for successful instruction, the logical structure of the curriculum, the leadership provided by principals, and the availability of technological resources.

Nonetheless, it is worth recognizing that school improvement practices involve a diverse array of variables and areas of concentration. The inclusion of these elements is crucial in order to improve the overall quality of education and enhance student outcomes within a school setting. Several crucial characteristics of school

improvement practices encompass: According to (Usman & Madudili, 2019), the concept of the learning environment comprises several elements such as learning resources and technology, instructional methods, modes of learning, and links to social and global settings. The phrase encompasses not only the cognitive aspects, but also the human behavioural and cultural components, which encompass the significant role of emotion in the process of learning. Learning environments exhibit variability across different classrooms and contexts, each characterized by distinct elements. The learning environment, as an integral aspect of school improvement practice, encompasses the physical, social, and psychological factors present within a school setting that have an impact on students' capacity to acquire knowledge and flourish.

### **2.2.2 Instructional Leadership Practices for School Improvement**

The concept of instructional leadership, as initially conceptualized by (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), refers to the actions undertaken by principals with the objective of enhancing and advancing the educational process within schools. These actions encompass a wide range of activities, including but not limited to fostering collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, engaging in school planning and management, and optimizing the utilization of school facilities and resources. Instructional leadership theories encompass conceptual frameworks aimed at comprehending and implementing leadership strategies with a specific emphasis on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. These ideas are founded upon the premise that educational administrators hold a pivotal position in influencing the calibre of teaching and academic performance among students.

There exists a multitude of models and notions that serve to elucidate the

phenomenon of instructional leadership. Several scholars in the field of instructional leadership commonly use the work of (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) as a primary source of reference. Scholars have expanded the conceptualization of instructional leadership to encompass many methodologies. According to (Robinson & et al, 2008), the notion of instructional leadership may be categorized into two distinct approaches: an "exclusive" approach and an "inclusive" approach. Scholars who classify instructional leadership as "exclusive" perceive the principal as the only individual accountable for establishing school objectives, overseeing operations, and formulating strategies for enhancing school performance. This particular viewpoint tends to concentrate only on the function of principals as instructional leaders (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Historical leadership theories have posited the notion that individuals had inherent attributes that equip them with the ability to effectively advise and exert influence over others within educational settings (Grigoropoulos, 2020). Subsequent theories have placed greater emphasis on external influences and degrees of expertise (Kwan, 2020). However, (Grigoropoulos & et al, 2020) suggested different schools of thought led to multiple instructional leadership models and theories including (1) Trait approaches, which deal with the great man theory, which emphasizes the individualities of the leader in the basic school; (2) Leadership style, which results from Michigan and Ohio State studies (Bratton, 2020) and emphasizes leader behaviours and (3) Contingency theoretical approaches, for example, the Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) theories, which make references to the importance of situational influences (Tsolka, 2020). Following (Grigoropoulos & et al, 2020), admonition, the instructional leadership theories utilized in this study include behaviourist theory of leadership and situational/ contingency theory quire a self-

belief system, which enables them to possess self-control of their thought, actions, inspirations, drive, and feeling throughout various levels of life. Bandura characterized self-efficacy as the “belief in one’s capacity to organize and execute the courses of action acquired to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 2022).

Social learning Theory also emphasizes the importance of students’ perceptions in the learning process with an emphasis on the idea that people frequently acquire knowledge, rules skills, strategies, beliefs, and attitudes by watching others (Bandura, 2022). (Bandura, 2023) was of the view that self-efficacy persuaded peoples’ choices because a person’s experiences and learning from others are the foundation through which a person reveals his or her behaviour. Bandura offered “triadic reciprocal causation” as an identifier for justifying how one’s personal behaviour and uniqueness, along with the surrounding environment, work in unison to make the concept of instructional leadership is an approach used by school leaders to focus on teachers’ behaviour in certain activities which indirectly impacts students’ academic achievement. (Leithwood & et al, 2000).

In instructional leadership, the head teachers’ role is deeply involved with setting the schools direction. The “mission” dimension focuses on the head teacher’s role in cooperating with the staff, ensuring the school continuously run on clear, measurable, and time-based goals that result is the academic progress of students. Head teachers are responsible for communicating goals, which should be widely known and supported throughout the school. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) define instructional leadership as principals’ behaviours aimed at promoting and improving the process of teaching and learning in schools involving teachers, students, parents, school planning, school management, school facilities, and resources.

Many instructional leadership researchers make Model Hallinger and Murphy (1985) the main reference (Nor Azni, 2015; Jamelaa, 2012; Yusri, 2012; Premavathy, 2010; Brown and Chai, 2012; Mattar, 2012; Peariso, 2011). Based on this model there are three dimensions in instructional leadership activities, namely, determining school missions, managing instructional programs, and creating a school learning environment (Premavathy, 2010). Instructional leadership sub-dimensions in this model include eleven leadership functions. These include; explaining school goals, supervising and evaluating teaching, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, assure instructional time, maintaining learning support, providing incentives for teachers, enforcing academic standards, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning (Brown & Chai, 2012).

Teachers are the main implementing agencies of teaching and learning in the classroom. The influence of instructional leaders on improving the quality of teaching of teachers can affect the learning of students. In addition, based on the research synthesis conducted by (Hallinger,2011) on the leadership models studied.It is observed that instructional leadership also has a great impact on students' learning. The findings of Abdul Ghani and Anandan (2012), (Zahara & Suria,2011),also show that instructional leadership practices contribute to the quality of student learning. Instructional leadership, thus, has a stronger influence on students' learning than transformational leadership (Ghani & Anandan, 2012).

The schooling sector requires leaders who are fully active in the improvement of instruction and curriculum in schools in a global educational environment where schooling systems are compared worldwide and where there are rising expectations for the development of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills (Naidoo & Petersen, 2015). School leaders

are therefore expected to show dynamic leadership that matches with the tenets of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skill sets. In the early 2000s, instructional leadership reclaimed its place in the leadership debate. From 2000 to 2015, we looked at publications about instructional leadership that were published in eight key journals on educational leadership. A significant number of scholarly publications on instructional leadership were published during this time span, according to the study. If we look for papers in other journals and forms of publishing, this figure will very certainly rise.

According to (Bush, 2015), there is a connection between the learning outcome to engagement with classroom practice and Instructional leadership. Effective schools are seen as the ones that are able to promote a high level of student achievement. Bush further states that there are effectiveness variables that substantiate the conceptual framework and instructional leadership. The following variables were related to school effectiveness. Strong administrative leadership; especially, in the areas of instruction and curriculum; Safe and orderly environment; Regular and systematic monitoring of student's performance; Systematic and broad-based reward system for students; Strong communicating support and a norm of academic press including a high expectation for student's performance and an emphasis on mastery of basic skills.

Instructional Leadership in the educational system globally is a critical concept because of the key role it plays in driving the school's curriculum outcomes if the concept is embraced holistically. The improvements in the supervision of instructions under leadership are of utmost importance to educational authorities and governing bodies of education. Instructional supervision is identified as a means to enhance the performance of teachers and students' achievement. It relates to professional roles

played by stakeholders and is required as a standard to improve performance.

Effective educational programs and systems place enormous responsibility on all learning activities if monitoring and evaluation guidance are rigorously and continuously practiced and, hence the need for supervision to achieve the outcomes. (Sergiovani, 2007) summarizing what supervision entails, maintains that supervision is carried out for good reasons, allowing schools to be better, encouraging and supporting teacher growth. Sergiovani argues that supervision enhances the student's progress throughout their academic and developmental stages of learning experiences. However, he posits that failure of any supervision depends on the information and source of authority that the supervisor bases instructions on. The sources of the five authorities are bureaucratic, technical knowledge, moral, professional and personal. The combination of these supervisory policies and practices has a place and should be used by supervisors to produce better results to promote school and teaching effectiveness. (Sergiovani, 2007), identified five themes that contribute to the facilitation of classroom instructions. These are supported for the preschool classroom and staff, professional development opportunities and strategies, presence in the classroom and programs, offering praise to teachers and staff, and overall knowledge of early childhood development.

Baffour-Awuah, (2011) suggested that improving school supervision on some support systems needs revision to improve instructional supervision in schools. Baffour-Awuah further suggested that GES should put into consideration separate managerial and administrative duties from instructional supervision. The motivation behind this approach is to enable head teachers to engage in regular supervision of instruction to promote effective teaching and learning (Baffour-Awuah, 2011).

Regular training programs should be organized to equip personnel at the regional, district and school levels with the knowledge and skills to improve instructional practices in schools. Baffour-Awuah further maintained that GES, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education should have a long-term plan and budgetary allocation specifically for programs to empower the personnel in charge of supervision at the basic level of education. GES again will take proper note of the methods of recruiting and selecting instructional supervisors and chief instructors of education; GES could include personnel from internal recruitments to this position and make it the number one priority to groom them (Baffour-Awuah, 2011).

Also, there is the need to pay attention to the supervision of instruction which could be improved by means of regular pre-service and in-service training. Particularly, in-service training of Lead teachers, head teachers and supervisors on pressing issues relating to the best practices of school supervision is not a priority. (Danso, 2009), supports the idea that offering regular in-service training, providing logistics and materials, and payment of allowances to circuit supervisors are great support needed to be given to promote effective supervision. Supervision can be effective only when officers and supervisors are from time to time-oriented with fresh related ideas on the job. (Danso, 2009) again suggested that external supervision should complement internal supervision to improve teaching and learning effectiveness. Training given at all levels will guide the headteacher and teacher, as well as the circuit supervisor in their duties relative to supervision in schools positively, provided the right feedback is given to the internal and external officers for further investigation to be done on pending issues.

School heads play a critical role in the development and maintenance of successful, productive schools and educational systems (Bush, 2008). In a research conducted in South Africa ( Bush,2005) cited in (Naidoo & Peterson,2011), claimed that many school principals lack the requisite abilities to perform successfully as school leaders and managers, and that, like corporate executives, they must understand and lead the 'core business.' The successful implementation of the curriculum, including reliable systems of evaluation of learners' educational outcomes and instructors' efficient and effective practice, is the primary activity in schools. (Bush, 2005) further argued that sustainable systems for educating and supporting school leaders are often insufficient throughout Africa.

While the leadership and management literature agree that professional development programs are necessary to ensure that school principals are fit for purpose, there is far less agreement about which leadership characteristic is more likely to produce the most favourable outcomes in terms of leadership, management, and organization output toward improved learner outcomes (Naidoo & Peterson, 2011). Even less agreement exists on how to adequately educate school administrators for the responsibility of effective instructional leadership in the classroom. What is obvious is that school principals who were trained in managerial models frequently fail to acquire the information and abilities they need to carry out their responsibilities as school heads and curriculum delivery leaders. According to (Vick, 2004), creating and communicating a focused vision and goal for maximum student performance is an area of school leadership development. Principals, according to Vick, must tell employees about performance goals, including student outcomes, and then assist them in achieving them. This implies that principals must be well-versed in the curriculum, instructional techniques, and assessment, among other things.

(Alsaleh's, 2019) research in Kuwait found that principals experienced challenges connected to the Ministry of Education's (MoE) highly centralized structure, whose responsibilities contradicted the declared purpose of increasing school leaders' leadership capacity. Most school principals explained that they did not set their own school goals; rather, they simply carried out the Ministry's mission and priorities. In other words, they saw themselves as supervisors who enforced and executed the Ministry of Education's vision and mission while also advancing the educational process. Mandatory curriculum goals, textbooks, and curriculum timeframes, according to all participants, limited their ability to contribute insight into the educational process.

The majority of research implies that principals' effects on classroom teaching are primarily mediated by school culture and modelling, rather than direct supervision and evaluation of teaching (Rodrigues & Ávila de Lima, 2021). Despite the fact that most principals were trained as teachers and apply what they've learned in the classroom to their leadership roles, they rarely meddle in classroom activities. Rather, they prefer to create the conditions and prerequisites for effective teaching by establishing professional frames of reference and educational infrastructure that helps teachers to improve their teaching methods.

Agasisti and et al. (2019) found that 73% of Italian principals said they rarely supervised students' work, more than half said they rarely provided feedback to teachers to improve their teaching effectiveness, and nearly half (46%) said they rarely or never observed educational activities in the classroom. The authors identified three unique types of principals, with the most common ('educative leaders,' accounting for 49% of all schools) focusing on a particularly high concentration on

supporting teachers' growth and training and a low level of active engagement in classroom activities.' The ones that do exist show a mix of the above- mentioned results for 'educational' and 'transactional' Italian principals. Portuguese leaders are mostly administrative, bureaucratic authorities tasked with enforcing national policies rather than engaging in educational discussions with teachers, and when they do, they rarely focus on classroom issues (Rodrigues & et al., 2021).

(Gurr & et al, 2007) believe that school principals' work is critical in assisting students in achieving positive outcomes and that instructional leadership makes a difference in this regard. The authors discovered that principals influenced student outcomes by focusing on teaching and learning, supported by a shared mission, values, and vision, as well as by developing school community members' organizational, personal, and professional capacities, considering and working with the school context, and using evidence-based monitoring and critical reflection to generate change, in three case studies conducted in Australian schools. The direct and indirect benefits of school leadership on student achievements are minimal, but considerable, according to evidence evaluated by (Leithwood et al., 2008). When only the school elements that assist explain this variance are considered, leadership explains roughly 25% of the difference in students' learning and performance. The authors also believe that leadership has an indirect impact on students' learning in the classroom: school leaders boost teaching and learning indirectly by influencing team motivation, commitment, and working circumstances.

According to (Rodrigues et al, 2021) when we analyze the very description of principals' obligations in national or regional law, the need of taking the context of leadership into consideration when evaluating how and why principals do or do not

lead instructional becomes extremely essential. In a number of places, instructional leadership is just not a job description for principals. In fact, in some nations, the role of being involved in specific instructional matters is simply not the responsibility of the principal. Scholars have long recognized the impact of specific circumstances on effective school leadership (Hallinger, 2020). Contextual variables that have been shown to influence principal instructional leadership techniques were detailed by Hallinger. Institutional context, community context, national cultural context, economic context, political context, and school reform context are among these aspects (Hallinger, 2016). The final aspect is the school improvement context, which refers to the "improvement journey" of a school (Hallinger, 2020).

School leaders are critical to the development and maintenance of strong, productive schools and educational systems (Maponya, 2020). According to Naidoo and Petersen (2015), many school principals lack the requisite abilities to perform successfully as school leaders and managers (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017) and they, like managers in the corporate sector, must understand and lead the 'core business.' The primary activity in schools is the successful execution of the curriculum, which includes reliable procedures for assessing learners' educational results and instructors' efficient and effective practice. According to (Lincuna & Caingcoy, 2020), instructional leadership focuses on a school's essential tasks such as teaching and learning. It also specifies the school's vision, purpose, and aim. It is also about administering educational programs and establishing a positive school atmosphere. Among the responsibilities include providing the resources required for learning, supervising and assessing teachers, arranging staff development programs, and fostering collegial relationships with and among teachers (Kaparou & Bush, 2015).

Local factors such as school size, structure, and educational level can add another layer of complexity. Secondary schools, in particular, necessitate significant adaptations in instructional leadership because they are larger and more complex organizations (Hallinger, 2020). It is easier for the principal to be personally involved in classroom work in small schools, whereas it is more challenging in large schools or school clusters (Lima, 2011). In Portugal, the responsibility of leading a school cluster – by far the most common style of school organization in the country rather than a group of teachers and pupils in a single building, can severely limit principals' ability to conduct instructional leadership. Similarly, Italy also noted that the fact that certain principals do not have to oversee multiple schools allows them to participate more actively in classroom activities (Rodrigues et al., 2021).

Furthermore, school culture as well as teachers' local, regional, and national professional cultures can work against a principal's more direct participation in educational affairs. (Hallinger, 2020) point out that, understanding the value of this sort of leadership is one thing; being able to lead in this manner in a school setting where established norms and routines run counter to the model's assumptions is quite another. According to the Behavioural Leadership Theory (Bandura, 2023), This theory represents a paradigm shift from a concern of who the leader is to what the leader does (Hughes & et al, 2002). In contrast to the trait theories, the behavioural theory is centred on the recognizable actions that made a person an effective leader. Behavioural Theory advances the idea that an effective leader is discernible by his or her actions (Krumm, 2001).

One of the earliest behavioural studies was conducted by Kurt Lewin in 1939 at the University of Iowa. This study categorized leaders as being either autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire (Kest, 2006). In the autocratic leadership style, the leader decides policy according to work tasks. The leader does not exhibit a hostile manner toward the subordinates but maintains distance from them in order not to participate in decision making process. When the subordinates do a good job, the autocratic leader praises them, but if the productivity slows, he or she punishes them.

The autocratic leadership style offers several advantages, including swiftness of project completion to keep group members from producing alternatives that influence the minority negatively, guarantees the leader is heard and informs members when their conduct is undesirable. The autocratic leadership style is determined by the leader's power. The leader has absolute power in a group or organisation. The leader alone makes decisions and takes responsibility for the conduct, results and achievement of the company. From co-workers, the requires them to exclusively follow his instructions and directives, to respect and implement his decisions and orders. With subordinates the leader communicates formally and in written form. This leadership style can be applied for tasks that need to be urgently completed, with dependent associates in unstable working groups.

In the beginning, this leadership style is effective and gives good results. However, if the researcher apply this type of leaders' behaviour long-term, without considering the level of human resources and the need for independence of associates, it becomes a limiting factor in the development of the organization. This style of leadership, characterized by unidirectional communication channels, confirms that autocratic leaders are mostly not interested in feedback and employees do not have influence

and control over the decision-making process. The autocratic leadership style can be illustrated in the structure of a pyramid, whereby on the top of the hierarchy stands the leader, while employees are below.

The disadvantages of the autocratic leadership style are: dissociates group members, non-development of employees and convenience of use instead of round tabling quandaries. One might use this style of leadership when the group is in danger of not accomplishing a task in a timely manner or in a crisis situation (Murphy, 2005). Alternatively, a democratic leadership style is defined by a leader who involves associates in decision-making and management. The leader encourages associates to participate in setting goals, determining methods, providing ideas and suggestions for solving relevant problems, as well as participating in the decision-making process. This type of leader does not give detailed instructions, nor does he control associates. He gives them the freedom to plan their work activities and is often characterized as encouraging and practicing participative decision-making and teamwork. The democratic leadership style is characterized by a two-way channel of communication, including the exchange of feedback with employees, as well as the delegation of work and authority. On the other hand, democratic leaders consider their subordinates in the process of determining policy. Group discussion and leader's technical suggestions are important to achieving any task in this style. Members have the opportunity to participate in deciding the division of labour. Praise and criticism of the subordinates are given according to objective criteria.

Democratic leadership, also referred to as participative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process, and it dwells on performance and people (Bhargavi &

Yaseen, 2016). Democratic leadership style encourages employees to contribute in the decision-making process of the organization (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2015). According to (Puni, et al,2014), unlike the autocratic leadership style where decision making is unilateral, decision making in democratic leadership style is not centralized and high performance is recognized and rewarded. It is therefore expected that brainstorming of ideas and collective decisions are arrived at by all concerned. Even though the leader is accountable for decisions taken, members of the group are more engaged in the process and creativity is encouraged and rewarded.

Democratic leadership yields a lot of benefits. Subordinates are encouraged to share their thoughts which leads to better ideas and more creative solutions to problems (Sadia & Aman, 2018). Employees also feel more involved and committed to projects, making them more likely to care about the end results. It is perceived that democratic leadership style leads to higher productivity among group members (Sadia & Aman, 2018). However, some challenges of democratic leadership exist. In situations where roles are unclear or time is of the essence, democratic leadership can lead to communication failures and uncompleted projects (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2015). The authors further note that in some cases, group members may not have the necessary knowledge or expertise to make quality contributions to the decision-making process. Also, the democratic leadership style is applicable where there is ample time to allow people to contribute, develop a plan, and then decide on the best course of action. Therefore, this leadership style is ineffective in emergency situations.

Leaders adopt the democratic leadership style differently in organizations. (Adeyemi, 2011) in a research entitled "Leadership Styles of Principals and Vocative Performance of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Ondo Province in Nigeria", it was found that democratic leadership style was the dominant leadership style practiced in the schools than the laissez-faire leadership style. (Mosaddegh Raad, 2005), in research titled "Investigation of Leadership Styles of Principals and the Efficiency of University Hospitals in Isfahan" noted that the democratic leadership style was dominant among the leaders. The findings suggests that the democratic leadership style is preferred among various leaders.

Autocratic leaders (also known as authoritarian leaders) retain the decision-making rights with them (Obiwuru & et al, 2011). This style of leadership is characterized by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members. Al Khajeh (2018) indicates that an autocratic leadership is characterized as being arbitrary, controlling, power-oriented, coercive, legitimate, punitive, and with a closed mind. Such leaders stress loyalty and obedience and are defined as those who make decisions alone and demand strict adherence to rules. The decision-making process is centralized, and autocratic leaders take full responsibility for decisions and control of their followers' performance.

Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their own ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Other characteristics of autocratic leadership include little or no input from group members, group leaders dictate all the work methods and processes, and group members are rarely trusted with decisions or important tasks. An autocratic leader is seen as the one who is very conscious of his position, and has little trust or faith in the subordinates (Luftman, 2004). The author

adds that autocratic leaders are classic and bossy in nature, and they feel that remuneration given to employees for work done is a just reward, which can motivate employees for higher performance. The autocratic leadership is useful in several ways. (Armstrong, 2012) suggests that autocratic leadership may be useful in situations of emergency, in cases where standardized work is involved, and where the leader is more experienced than the followers. The autocratic leadership is required where immediate actions are needed to avert a potential mishap. It is valuable when an organization faces a crisis or when an urgent problem arises that requires an immediate response (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016).

The autocratic leadership is not without demerits. (Iqbal & et al,2015) enumerate the shortcomings of autocratic leadership as the inability of the subordinates to develop pride of accomplishment, denial of personal development or satisfaction from self-actualization, irritates the followers, and deprives the organization of lasting loyalty and co-operation. Even though this approach can give a business a clear direction, however, it may also lead managers to ignore inputs from team members that could be used for better outputs (Obiwuru et al., 2011). (Al Khajeh, 2018) adds that there is no shared vision, little motivation, commitment, creativity, and innovation. In fact, most followers of autocratic leaders can be described waiting for the inevitable failure this leadership produces, and the removal of the leader that follows (Iqbal et al., 2015). In educational settings, (Mwalala, 2008) observes that autocratic leadership produces unfavourable climate which leads to poor performance of students.

Research has shown different application of the autocratic leadership style. In a study carried out by (Huka, 2003), it was discovered that head teachers practiced the autocratic more than the democratic leadership style. Contrary to this finding,

(Ibrahim & Shakya, 2013) noted that the school leaders used the democratic leadership style more than the autocratic leadership. These findings suggests that the autocratic leadership style is prevalent among some leaders than others.

### **2.2.3 Monitoring Students' Progress for School Improvement**

The measuring of student knowledge and abilities regularly, as well as the study of student data to evaluate education, has been defined as frequent and continuing monitoring of students' progress (Luckner & Bowen, 2010). Students' progress toward the essential objectives is routinely examined and checked, according to this correlation. The outcomes of both processes are used to improve individual student behaviour and performance, as well as the overall curriculum (Lezotte, 2024). Progress monitoring is a scientifically validated method of assessing students' academic performance and evaluating the efficacy of teaching and learning. Individual individuals or a whole class can be monitored for progress (National Centre for Student Progress Monitoring (NCSPM), 2012).

This entails more than simply regional or national testing; it also entails a continuous review of student work with quick remedial feedback. Authentic kinds of assessment, it is claimed, can help schools become proactive, learner-centred educational communities, resulting in improved student accomplishment (Lezotte & Pepperl, 1990). Teachers can use student performance data to regularly evaluate the quality of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions by monitoring students' development regularly (Safer & Fleischman, 2005). It varies from traditional evaluation in that it focuses on student performance on a few key abilities using weekly or biweekly repeatable probes (Luckner & Bowen, 2010). According to the above explanation of frequent student progress monitoring, the procedure is used not

only to make summative choices but also to guarantee that the student meets pre-determined goals. This is accomplished through keeping both the student and the teacher informed of progress toward the goal, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to adapt their teaching and students to adjust their learning.

According to Kgothule and Letsie (2014) the tracking of students' progress is done in a variety of methods. In general, it entails determining the students' current levels of performance; identifying learning goals that will occur over time (weekly or monthly); measuring progress toward the goals by comparing expected and actual rates of learning, and adjusting teaching to meet the student/s' needs based on the measurements. Implementation frequently entails a series of processes, including a judgment about the level of implementation (individual student, small group, classroom or grade). These are determined by the student's current performance level on skills that the student will be learning during a specific year; identifying achievement goals that the student must meet by the end of the year; determining the rate of progress to be made to meet the goals, and regularly measuring the student's academic progress using probes that sample the entire range of skills to be learned by the end of the year. The methods outlined above provide valuable information that can be utilized to change training to improve a student's learning if the rate at which skills are being learned appears to be inadequate, as well as to convey progress to the student, parents, and colleagues (Luckner & Brown, 2010; Safer & Fleischman, 2005).

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is another type of progress tracking. It's a way of keeping track of a student's progress by assessing their academic abilities directly. CBM can be used to assess fundamental reading, numeracy, spelling, and

written expression skills. It can also be used to keep track of preparedness. When employing CBM, the teacher gives one- to five-minute tests to the students. The teacher determines the student's grade by calculating the number of correct and incorrect responses given within the time limit. The result is shown on a graph and compared to expected performance on the year's content. The graph allows the teacher, parent, and student to observe how the student is going toward the required performance. If the student's rate of growth is lower than required to accomplish the year's objective, the instructor uses the scores to choose whether to continue teaching in the same manner or to change it (Mc Lane, 2009).

In addition to the aforementioned, the (CCSRI, 2009) suggests implementing through the use of indicators such as attendance rates, course completion rates, grades, and discipline records, which are all considered equally essential in determining student needs and measuring achievement. This group of performance metrics is important for identifying problematic pupils and tailoring treatments to fit their specific needs. Because there are various approaches to track kids' progress, teachers and other stakeholders should be made aware of them so that they can choose what is best for them and their particular school setting. This may demand assistance through professional development programs aimed at raising teacher awareness of the benefits of tracking students' progress (Kgothule & Letsie, 2014).

Students learn more, teacher decision-making improves, and students become more conscious of their performance when teachers constantly check their students' progress, according to (Safer & Fleischman, 2005). Similarly, the (NCSPM, 2012) claims that when progress monitoring is done appropriately, the benefits to all parties involved are clear. Accelerated learning due to more appropriate instruction; more

informed instructional decisions; documentation of student progress for accountability purposes; more efficient communication with families and other professionals about students' progress; and teachers' higher expectations for students are just a few of the advantages. Summary of studies supporting the usefulness of progress monitoring also implies that progress monitoring leads to more efficient and correctly targeted teaching strategies and goals, which, when combined, take students closer to meeting essential achievement benchmarks (Luckner & Bowen, 2010).

Bowen (2010) conducted a study on teachers' opinions of student progress monitoring and concluded that one of the major benefits was to the pupils, according to the teachers polled. Students become involved in documenting and charting their success because progress monitoring is student-centered, and they are thus more motivated to attain their goals and see their improvement. Teachers also stated that progress monitoring assisted them in defining lessons, monitoring the impact of interventions, and 'filling in the gaps' (Kgothule & Letsie, 2014).

In the Yilo Krobo Municipal education directorate, certain monitoring mechanisms have been put in place to help improve academic performance at the Basic Examination Certificate Examination (BECE). Some of these mechanisms are vacation classes organised for JHS 3 students, School Report Card (SRC), Regional Mock Examinations, District Mock Examination and school mock Examinations. Due to insufficient funds, some schools in the municipality conduct about two internal mock examinations before students are made to write the final BECE. With regards to the mocks, questions are bought from exams consortiums. Most of these questions have had issues with validity making it difficult to be used to monitor the level of

learning of the students. All these are aimed at improving pupils' performance in the BECE, yet there is more to be done

#### **2.6.4 Ensuring Safety Environment for School Improvement**

Most adults find the concept of a child being harmed at school abhorrent; nonetheless, school safety remains a hot topic in the media, particularly whenever a serious incident occurs at a school. Fortunately, pupils are safer at school than anywhere else; violent crime in schools decreased by 50% between 1992 and 2003, and school-aged children were more than 100 times more likely to be murdered outside school grounds than on school grounds between 1992 and 2000 (Bosworth et al., 2011).

(Bosworth et al., 2011) suggested that "student victimization, property damage and violence, student dread, and official disciplinary consequences" should all be included in a definition of school violence. In Juvonen's investigations of ethnic diversity and safety perceptions, a sense of "vulnerability" is incorporated into the notion of school safety (Bosworth & et al., 2011). Students' academic performance is lowest when they perceive the school environment as threatening, according to (Godstein & et al., 2008). Confidence, motivation, commitment, attendance, and grades are all on the rise among pupils. Most studies on the orderly and secured environment have identified some three key indicators: physical characteristics and safety features are tangible and visible elements that are found in or around schools and are intended to improve physical safety, orderly environment is characterized by organization and school discipline, and school staffing and relationships promote a sense of caring and community, which increases feelings of safety (Bosworth & et al., 2011).

(Bosworth & etal, 2008) found that physical characteristics that secure school were, for instance, security cameras, fences around the school, and locked doors. The students and faculty also agreed that a safe surrounding neighbourhood helped to keep their school safe (when it was present). Tiny school size was also seen as having a beneficial impact on safety in schools that were thought to be small. They pointed out that security features or equipment (such as cameras, visitor passes, fences, or monitors) were more important to students than faculty's feelings of safety. Climate (e.g., rules, discipline, fear) and personnel (e.g., monitors, faculty control) were the second most important areas for students. Faculty, on the other hand, mentioned relationships with colleagues and pupils, climate, and physical aspects (e.g., small size, proximity to danger) as important factors in making a school safe.

In terms of school discipline and organization, (Bosworth & etal, 2008) found that students felt safer when they saw a clear and regular disciplinary structure. The pupils indicated that they felt comfortable when teachers broke up conflicts and enforced discipline, but that their safety was jeopardized by the lack of a behaviour control structure and accountability. Similarly, faculty ties with one another and with students contribute to a sense of security. Faculty indicated that students feel comfortable talking to them and cited a caring environment, positive relationships, and overall comfort of pupils as factors that permit an orderly and secured environment in schools (Bosworth & etal,2008).

### **2.2.5 Strategies for Creating Learning Opportunities for School Improvement**

The integrity of a planning implementation process, in which deliberately created lessons are framed for students as intellectually difficult and enacted in ways that preserve high rigor, is critical to students' learning opportunities (Kang & etal,2016).

By paying attention to the mediating role of instructional tasks, Stein and colleagues have conceived the process of creating student learning chances (Stein & etal,2. To provide appropriate learning strategies for a group of students, Cooner (2010) suggested small groupings and inquiry-based learning (EBL) activities. This was to enable pupils in small groups to get active contact hours through effective discussions, questions and answers, investigation etc. Intuitively, pupils get enough time to learn in small groups through investigation of concepts they have been thought.

A study by (Matthews et al, 2013), on the impacts of grouping on non-gifted and gifted kids from grades 2 to 6 reveals that ability groupings are used to increase learners' performance. Furthermore, an article by Abdulrazak (2020) on the effects of ability grouping on the performance of basic school pupils in Ghana shows that ability grouping had an advantageous effect on instruction and learning for both high and low ability groups as it enables the teacher to direct his or her teaching towards a particular group of people. Conversely, Kaya (2015) in an article on the effect of the type of achievement grouping on students' question generation in science found that studies have shown students who are considered as weak are discouraged when grouped with like- achieving students. However, they become enthusiastic about learning when grouped with high achievers in mixed groups. Thus, such weak students are only inspired to study harder when mixed with high achieving students. In similar ways, (Kintz, 2011) in his article on ability grouping and how it is affecting American classrooms found that ability groupings rather have negative effect on low ability groups because of the stigma attached to them. As a result of this stereotype, the right environment is not created for the students to learn. Consequently, the purpose for which the group is created is defeated.

Students' cultural and linguistic knowledge should be used as a foundation upon which chances for dialogic interactions can be formed to enhance students' language growth and engagement with relevant content, according to Lee & et al, 2020). Lee et al. also proposed classroom and curricular settings, as well as teaching practices, to encourage dialogic learning opportunities that can guide multilingual learners to critically interact within and outside the classroom to confront sociolinguistic injustice, based on our lessons learned. For English Learners (ELs), small-group conversations can be a significant forum for engaging in scientific sense-making, developing competency with disciplinary methods, and expanding their linguistic repertoires. Creating effective peer interactions, on the other hand, necessitates a firm grasp of what constitutes productive peer contact as well as considerable changes in teacher practice (Lee & et al., 2020).

In a report by (Read, 2015) on Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) in Africa, the researcher examines extensive variety of issues surrounding TLM provision and usage in selected schools in Sub Saharan Africa. The issues cover curriculum, literacy and numeracy, language of instruction policy, procurement and distribution challenges, TLM development, production and their availability in most schools. Again, the report looks at the role of information and communication technology (ICT) based TLMs and their availability. The findings reveal that TLMs are necessary for improving learning outcomes and so there is the need to achieve an affordable and sustainable TLM provision for all students. The researcher argues that affordable and sustainable TLM provision can only be achieved if TLM management systems are improved.

Similarly, (Read & Treffgarne 2011) in their guidance note on learning and teaching materials assert that TLMs are very important in improving learning outcomes and thus reference and library books should be made available to students to encourage further reading and the development of their interests. In an article by (Ibok, 2016), on the challenge of improvisation teaching in and learning, the researcher discovered that easy access to instructional facilities in the classroom is what ensures exceptional academic success and that when a school lacks instructional resources, it becomes very difficult for students to perform well academically. Furthermore, a study by Ekpo (2014) on the impact of instructional material on students' academic performance found that instructional resources facilitate learning and teaching, and that learner-centred instructional material encourage deep learning and make it more enjoyable and lasting while also facilitating teachers' instructional efforts. The researcher reveals further that instructional resources help to improve academic performance in schools. Consequently, the importance of learning materials can never be overemphasized in school improvement. No wonder (Lyons, 2012) cited in Okongo et al. (2015) explains that, learning is a complex process that involves the interaction of the curriculum, instructional resources, physical facilities, and student motivation. Hence the availability of teaching and learning materials improves schools' effectiveness since they are the fundamental resources that result in good academic performance of students.

Presenting their community of inquiry paradigm, Garrison and Anderson (2003) underline the need for using technology in education as more than a means to 'convey knowledge.' They argue that modern communication technologies provide students with more opportunities to engage in learning by allowing them to construct meaning around the subject taught and refine and reconfirm that meaning within a larger

(potentially global) community of learners. In terms of professional education, having access to this larger community via the Internet is critical. (Ballantyne & Knowles, 2007) showed how virtual case studies in a safe learning environment can provide students with unmatched possibilities to participate in this process during their training. They can put their professional knowledge to the test and hone their practice abilities here. When compared to writing case studies, students self-reported that their learning was greatly boosted and that they had a richer and more realistic context for learning.

Bellocchi et al. (2016) investigated one student's learning opportunity experiences with numerous contextual evaluation methods linked with a context-based course in depth. We looked at the student's responses to context-based assessment instruments to see how much she was able to make connections between contexts and concepts through contextual tests, field reports, and extended experimental investigations. Other educators might use this technique to categorize student replies when examining student responses to the contextual assessment. The individualized education program (IEP) is a procedure for ensuring that students with disabilities have access to and success in courses and activities that will prepare them for careers and college. Students participating in numerous opportunities to make informed decisions about their futures benefit from the process of fine-tuning a transition-age student's IEP over the course of their secondary school experience. Work-based learning experiences (WBLEs) are a valuable source of such experiences not only for students with disabilities but also for students who are not disabled (Cease-Cook & et al, 2015).

Study to see if school principals practice this form of leadership and if it has an impact on student results. A sample of top-level school leaders from a Portuguese region participated in the study. The majority of principals' leadership strategies, according to participants, were focused on school administration and management rather than student learning. Many respondents believed that it was not their responsibility to lead in a variety of instructional areas. Furthermore, respondents assessed the influence of the majority of principals' instructional leadership strategies on student achievement as weak.

### **2.3 Summary of the Chapter**

In summary, a headteacher serves as the leader of a school and exercises leadership practices. Engaging in professional learning on effective instructional leadership practices will improve practice and benefit school improvement. Instructional leadership practices are the means to which a headteacher moves towards school improvement, and which school improvement as a primary responsibility of heads, identifying and understanding instructional leadership practices that lead to school improvement in paramount. Additionally, having an understanding of the self-efficacy of headteachers will reveal the degree to which they believed they do their job and accomplish their goals and tasks. School heads, however, are not the only leaders within a school: therefore, viewing heads and assistance as school leaders will capture the influence of individuals in these positions. Investigating the school improvement practices while examining the instructional leadership practices exercised by school leaders may reveal how a school leader's instructional leadership practices predict his/her leadership self-efficacy. In addition, a study of instructional leadership practices and school improvement may identify strength as well as areas of improvement for professional learning for school leaders to develop their skills in

order to attain school improvement. The chapter also reviews literature on conceptual framework and empirical review in line with the objectives of the study and also theory relating to school improvement and instructional leadership. That is, effective school theory by Lezotte. Based on the objectives of the study. The next chapter presents the methodology of the study. It will comprise the research paradigm, approach, design, population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrument, validity, reliability, piloting of instrument, method of datacollection, data analysis procedure, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methods that were employed in the study. It describes in detail the procedures used in conducting the study. The study sought to explore strategies of school improvement practices of Basic school head teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. The chapter is composed of research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, Site and subjects' characteristics, sample and sampling technique, instrumentation, Trustworthiness, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, Ethical considerations as well as summary of the chapter.

#### **3.1 Research Paradigm**

Research paradigm describes the researcher's worldview that guides the research process (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Although there are several paradigms and worldviews that shape research, they are all philosophical in character and their assumptions can be put into three categories namely; ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Ontology is primarily concerned with the nature of a phenomenon's existence. As a result, ontology is based on assumptions about reality's nature. Epistemology is concerned with assumptions about how we know the world, how we get knowledge, and the relationship between the knower and the known. Methodology is concerned with the optimal methods for learning about the world (Lincoln & et al, 2011). The three important research paradigms that guide the conduct of scientific inquiry are positivism, interpretivism, and pragmatism (Lincoln & et al, 2011). In the realm of research, each paradigm has a unique perspective on ontology, epistemology, and methodology. The presupposition of positivists in ontology is that

there is just one reality or truth. They believe that when legitimate and reliable tools are utilized, the single truth or reality can be measured and known, hence they are more likely to apply quantitative methods to assess this reality.

The positivist view of scientific study is opposed by the interpretivism paradigm. Based on their ontology, interpretivists believe that there is no one reality or truth, and that reality must be interpreted epistemologically in order to understand the underlying meaning of things and activities. Interpretivism assumes that social events have subjective meaning, requiring scientists to think that there is no uniform viewpoint or truth (Bryman, 2008). Interpretivists also reject the positivist idea that scientists can objectively find reality. They (interpretivists) however argue that human acts, knowledge, and understanding are socially constructed (Iyamu, 2020). Interpretivists use a qualitative technique to discover those multiple realities.

The pragmatism paradigm takes a liberal approach to the positivist and interpretivism paradigms, allowing the researcher to consider both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the research process, as well as multi-stage/mixed approaches (Maarouf, 2019). Different approaches to explore and understand a phenomenon are assumed by pragmatism, and the researcher can choose the method that is most comfortable to meet the objectives of the study. As a result, a pragmatic viewpoint is an open-door paradigm that allows for various and diverging assumptions, necessitating the use of numerous research methods to gather and analyse data.

It is important to locate research in a particular paradigm as this determines the choice of methodology and the manner in which meaning is constructed from the data gathered. The study adopted the interpretivist paradigm to explore

Understanding from socially constructed multiple realities. This helped to generate subjective understanding of school improvement practices of basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

A research approach outlines the steps to be used in solving a research problem, such as the manner in which the problem is formulated, the definition of terms, the choice of subject for investigation, the validation of data gathering tool, the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and the processes of inference and generalization (Lokesh, 2009). (Creswell, 2014) posits that there are three approaches, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The distinction between qualitative research and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (qualitative) rather than numbers (quantitative), or using closed ended questions (qualitative interview questions) while mixed methods research resides in the middle of the continuum because it incorporates element of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2014). This study adopted the qualitative method approach to solicit from research participants in depth data that enabled light to be shed on strategies to enhance school improvement practices of basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. It gave more comprehensive understanding of the data. The study utilized several data collection practices and evaluation processes that were appropriate for qualitative approach.

Quantitative research approach is preferred when the research questions require numerical data. As posited by (Creswell, 2014), the premise of an empiricist paradigm is maintained in quantitative research rendering it self-contained and unaffected by the researcher's actions. As a result, data is utilized to measure reality objectively. A

major limitation of the quantitative research approach is its inability to adequately explore the phenomenon being studied as a result of the researcher's limited proximity to the problem.

Researchers often choose the qualitative approach for research problems requiring textual data. Qualitative research, according to (Braun & Clarke, 2013), provides the researcher the opportunity to be actively informed in the collection and interpretation of data so as to make informed meanings of the gathered data. It also helps to capture the perspectives of research participants who have adequate information with respect to the phenomenon being studied. Unlike the quantitative technique, qualitative research focuses more on understanding the context of the problem.

Mixed methods research approach requires both numerical and textual data. This research approach allows researchers to combine data collection and analysis methods from quantitative and qualitative research approaches to address the research question(s) defined for a particular research study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Although mixed method research allows the researcher to answer confirmatory and exploratory questions at the same time within the same study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003), it requires a great deal of expertise and effort to study the phenomenon under consideration using two different methods. Mixed method research approach can also be very time consuming especially when both phases are given equal consideration and priority (Terrell, 2012).

Given the research problem and questions, as well as the nature of the issue at hand qualitative research approach was chosen for the study. Again, as qualitative research takes place in a natural setting and allows the researcher to develop a degree of detail by being immersed in the actual experiences (Creswell, 2014), the study adopted a

qualitative research approach to solicit from research participants in-depth data that enabled light to be shed on school improvement practices of basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. It should be mentioned, however, that qualitative research methodologies have their own set of strengths and shortcomings, which the researcher is well aware of.

### **3.3 Research Design**

A research design serves as a plan that guides the researcher on the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data (Burns & Groove, 2009). A research design could be described as a master plan for a research study in which the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing information to be collected are specified. From the definition of the research design, it could be said that it is a blueprint of how to conduct the study, and it guides the researcher in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The choice of appropriate research design is vital because it enables the researcher to meet the aims and objectives of the study (Parahoo, 2006). The choice of a research design is crucial to the attainment of research goals. Parahoo (2006) sustains this claim that to meet the aims and objectives of a study, it is imperative that a researcher selects the most appropriate design for achieving the aims of the study.

According to (Creswell, 2013), research design is a systematic reasoning behind collection and analysis of data. It guides and directs the course of the study. In the view of (Grey, 2014) and (Creswell & et al, 2007), research design deals with the processes involving collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting data; and how all of this is going to answer the research questions. The case study research design was adopted for the study. Case studies collect and study detailed information from a

single or few cases. According to (Yin, 2009), a case study studies present day issues within its real-life context, principally when differences between issues and context are not clearly defined. The design was thus chosen to reveal in great depth the school improvement practices of basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality.

### **3.4 Population**

According to (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2015), population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic. It is a big group of people or items that are the subject of a scientific question. A common, binding characteristic or trait is usually shared by all individuals or objects in a study population (Creswell, 2014). These individuals possess the information being sought and about which the inferences would be made (Birks & Malhotra, 2006). They indicate that a population can be any size and will have at least one (and occasionally multiple) distinguishing qualities that distinguish it from other populations. The population of study was composed of all heads of Basic schools in Yilo Krobo Municipality. There are 133 basic schools in the Municipality. The study population targeted 10 basic schools in the Municipality. A total of 20 (10 headteachers and 10 teachers) purposely selected teachers from 133 Basic schools participated in the whole study. They were invited to complete surveys related to instructional leadership practices exhibited by basic heads, ways of monitoring student's learning progress, and measures heads put in place to create learning opportunities and strategies employed by heads to create learning opportunities for students. The level of response was evidence that in general, participants were keen to provide data to inform the question for the study.

### **3.4 Setting of the Study**

According to Ghana local governance (2020), the Yilo Krobo Municipal is one of the 261 Metropolitan, Municipality and District Assembly (MMDAs) in Ghana and form part of the 32 Districts in the Eastern regions of Ghana. The administrative capital of the district is Somanya. The municipal was carved out of Lower Manya Krobo Municipal Assembly. It was created by legislative instrument in 1988 with Somanya as its capital. The district lies between longitudes 0.01W and latitude 6.100 N and has a total land area of 495.7 square kilometres. The municipal shares boundaries with Lower Manya to the North and Dodowa to the South. The major occupation of the people is farming and trading. The municipal is divided into 13 education circuits. The Municipal currently has Four (4) Senior High schools. The public basic schools are made up of 82 kindergartens, 84 primary schools and 49 junior high schools. The Municipal also has private schools. There are 12 private schools of which 5 are junior high schools.

According to the District, performance in Basic Education Certificate Examination is not encouraging since 2018, the BECE performance keeps decreasing. The district scored 50% in 2019, the scored 37% in 2020 and 36 % in 2021 and repeated the same scored in 2022 and scored 30% in 2023 (EMIS Yilo Krobo Education Directorate, 2024). Looking at the trends of the results one can conclude that, the BECE performance is not encouraging in the municipal. This means from 2019 to 2020 it was decreased by 13% and further decreased by 1% from 2021 to 2022, it again decreased by decreased by 6% in 2023. The choice of the study setting was due to the fact that, in recent years the academic performance of the district has been poor with rural schools being a major contributing factor. Also, the choice of the study area was motivated by seemingly rise in academic performance in some public schools in the

municipality. Since I am a teacher in the municipality, I am of the conviction that investigating into school improvement strategies could expose me to best practices to improve performance in my school as well.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

The study's population included headteachers (HT) and teachers (T), from the Yilo Krobo Municipal in Ghana. The study was conducted in ten schools across two circuits. A total of 10 teachers and 10 headteachers, were included in the study. And in each school, the head teacher and a teacher were purposively sampled, resulting in a total sample size of 20 participants. The chosen sample size was deemed appropriate, following (Boddy's, 2016) justification that even a sample size as small as one could be warranted in a case study. Employing a maximum variation purposive sampling technique, the participants were heterogeneous, enhancing the study's relevance (Crossman, 2023).

### **3.6 Sampling Technique**

A sample in a research context is a subset of elements drawn from a large population for study (Lavrakas, 2008). A sample is those who the researcher selects to actually represent the population and participate in the study. The choice of a sample suggest that it is difficult for researchers to study the entire population, and it is more practical and economical to work with samples rather than with larger target populations. Therefore, conclusions drawn from the sample reflects the population. Qualitative sampling strategies are selective, subjective and purposeful in nature (Damon & Holloway, 2011).

In convenience sampling, the researcher simply uses participants who are available at the moment. Thus, convenience samples require very little planning and they are useful for purposes such as gathering data in an initial pre-test to make certain instruments to be employed in the study (Kusi, 2012).

Purposive sampling is the process of selecting individuals who will best assist the researcher in understanding the topic. According to Campbell (2020), purposive sampling better matches sample to the research's goals and objectives, thus improving the rigor of the study and the reliability of the data and outcomes. As the aim of the study is to gain deeper insight into school improvement practices of basic school heads, it was necessary to select a sample that was information rich. Thus, purposive sampling technique was adopted to select Junior High School heads who have been in office for a minimum of five years.

Participants sampled for the study, 10 head teachers and 10 teachers of the sampled schools were included in the study. Their inclusion was necessary to answer the four research questions (What are the instructional leadership practices employed by Basic head teachers in Yilo Krobo for school improvement? in what ways do the basic school heads monitors students' progress for school improvement? what measures are put in place by the school heads to ensure safe and orderly environment? and what strategies do the basic heads employ to create learning opportunities for learners?).

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

There are several methods of data collection used by researchers. These include; questionnaire, semi structured interview guide, focus group, observation and secondary data (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Instruments for data collection included semi-structured interview guides, separately designed for headteachers and

teachers. These guides, featuring sixteen items for headteachers and five for teachers, were crafted to address research questions one to four on leadership practices, ways of monitoring students' progress, measures Basic heads adopt to ensure safe and orderly environment and strategies adopted by Basic school heads to create learning opportunities for student in schools (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interview guide was considered appropriate for this study due to the element of flexibility which allows researchers to have a better understanding of the perspective of the interviewees (Daymon, & Holloway, 2002). To have the opportunity to refocus the questions, or prompt for more information, especially if something interesting emerged (Baškarada, 2014), the researcher considered semi-structured interview guides to be appropriate.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

All research must be trustworthy in order to be relevant. This implies that research must be recognized as familiar and understood as legitimate by researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and the public. Thus, as stated by (Lincoln & Guba 1985), trustworthiness is a way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention. (Lincoln & Guba 1985), further noted that research is considered trustworthy if it meets the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. To achieve trustworthiness in qualitative research, researchers must conduct data analysis in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive manner through recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible. Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1989) identified "member checking" as a critical technique for ensuring credibility. By engaging in respondent validation of the data or member checking, I endeavored to satisfy the credibility criterion.

Furthermore, as part of measures to ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, researchers provide detailed transcription, systematic plan, and coding (Gunawan, 2015). This principle guided my efforts as I applied a systemic coding procedure guided by Miles and Huberman's (1994). Also, by presenting verbatim responses, I strengthened the satisfied conformability criteria. In

meeting the requirement of transferability, the findings of the study have been clearly presented in such a way that they could be understood or applied in other contexts. Dependability criteria were met by providing a detailed description of the procedures followed in conducting this study in terms of methodology.

### **3.8.1 Credibility**

One of the significant factors in ensuring trustworthiness is credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The question of credibility generally deals with its congruence to reality. The researcher familiarized himself with the institutional culture of the participants by visiting the schools with an introductory letter and subsequently making follow-up visits and spending time with the participants. The purpose of doing this was to build a rapport of trust between the researcher and the participants. As a result, the participants felt more comfortable speaking openly with the researcher. Again, in accordance with Lincoln and Guba's, (1985) admonition, each respondent had the option to decline to participate to assure the objectivity of informants. This ensured a genuine willingness to freely provide honest information. Additionally, they were informed of the right to withdraw at any time without having to give a justification.

Also, the researcher's supervisor, from time to time, asked questions of the researcher to recognize his biases and preferences in order to avoid their influence on the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### **3.8.2 Dependability**

Dependability refers to the accuracy and replicability of the methodology used. This suggests that repeating the study in the same context with the same methods and participants yields a similar result. Thus, to achieve dependability, the researcher's supervisor examined the processes of data collection, data analysis, and results of the study. This was to ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

### **3.8.3 Confirmability**

Confirmability entails establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, which necessitates the researcher demonstrating how these interpretations and conclusions were arrived at (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

To ensure that confirmability was established, the researcher made the effort to achieve credibility, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As recommended by Koch (1994), the researcher also provided reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study.

### **3.8.4 Transferability**

Transferability, according to Tobin and Begley (2004) refers to the generalization of inquiry. Thus, a qualitative data is said to be valid if findings of the study can be applied to other situations. Given that the researcher cannot know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings, Lincoln and Guba (1985) postulate that the researcher must provide detailed descriptions so that those who wish to transfer the findings to their own site can evaluate transferability. Accordingly, the researcher provided finer details to help shed light on the phenomenon of school improvement practices of

heads of basic schools. The researcher interpreted the data in a manner as to provide deeper meaning of her interaction with the participants.

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

Burns and Grove (2009) described data collection as “the precise systematic gathering of information relevant to specific research objectives or questions”. Therefore, data collection entails the use of instruments to gather data so as to provide answers to research questions. (Gall & et al, 2007) advice that researchers take care to follow appropriate channels of authority to gain access into the field. The researcher requested for an introductory letter from the department of Educational Administration and Management of the University of Education, Winneba. A written application was submitted to the Yilo Krobo Municipal Director of Education, Eastern Region. With the letter, the schools were visited personally. During the visits, the introductory letter received from the University and student identity card were shown to prove the validity of the claim of conducting a study for academic purpose. Then, the purpose of the study was explained to the head teachers to seek their consent.

### **3.10 Data Analysis Procedure**

Creswell and Creswell (2018) define data analysis as an ongoing process that involves analysing participant information by employing general analysis steps that are unique to a specific research design. It is the process of organizing a large amount of data into a logical structure that can be interpreted (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Data analysis is an important aspect of qualitative research. In this study, the thematic analysis procedure was undertaken manually, following Miles and Huberman’s (1994) approach, starting on the first day after interviews. This involves listening, transcribing, cleaning, coding, developing categories and patterns, and ultimately

deriving themes. Data, in this study, refers to the direct responses from the participants transcribed from the audio recordings. The themes were illustrated with verbatim examples from the data to enhance trustworthiness. Several steps were taken to ensure the study's trustworthiness, including piloting interview guides in a different district, respondent validation, and adherence to standard ethical practices, encompassing official access, consent-seeking, and pseudonym application. All these efforts collectively contributed to the scholarly rigor of the study.

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

To achieve the objectives of the study, the conduct of the study was in compliance with standard ethical considerations in educational research. Ethical issues which touch on the credibility of the research were considered. The researcher took appropriate steps or measures to protect stakeholders, the participants and the municipality from unethical issues to ensure that the study meets up with internationally accepted standards. In the study, the participants' consent was sought before they were involved in the study. Again, the participants were adequately informed about the study and were aware of the type of information needed from them, why the information was being sought, what purpose it was put to, how the participants were expected to participate in the study and how it would directly and indirectly affect them prior to the study.

The participants were informed of the nature of the study and the fact that participation was voluntary and they had right to opt out if they perceived their participation to be a source of any potential personal harm. To ensure their privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, no space was provided for respondents to write their names and they were also guaranteed that the researcher would adhere to ethical

research procedures and report on the findings in a professional and accountable manner. In summary, information received from respondents in the research process was treated with confidentiality and was used for the purpose of the research work only.

### **3.12 Summary of the Chapter**

The chapter explains the methodological framework and methods that underpinned the study. The chapter examines the various methods and procedures followed in gathering and analysing data. Rationales were also provided for the selection of these methodologies. To achieve the objectives of the study, an interpretivist paradigm was employed with a qualitative research approach and a case study research design. From a population of One hundred and thirty-three (133) basic heads, Twenty (20) participants were purposively sampled and used in the study. Primary data was collected by means of interviews and the data analysed using thematic analysis. The next chapter presents the data analysis and discussion of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter of the study discusses the findings that were drawn from the data collected. Based on interviews, substantial data were drawn respectively from the selected head teachers of Basic school within the Yilo Krobo Municipality. These data are analysed by the researcher in light of extant studies and practicable theories. Initial perusal and analysis of the data brought up about a number of categories for research questions 1-4.

From the analysis of the available data, some crucial themes emerged. These themes are operationalized and discussed thoroughly in view of the data and earlier findings in literature and as well as to provide answers to the research questions. Instead of participants' real names for direct quotes, each of the Twenty (20) of them is identified by an alphanumeric label; (HT1-SCH1) as head teacher 1 school 1 and (T1-SCH1) as teacher 1 school 1. They participants were drawn from two circuits. Somanya-North and Somanya-South circuits. The first five participants (HT1-SCH1) - (HT5-SCH5) and (T1-SCH1) -(T5-SCH5) from the Somanya North while the rest from the Somanya South circuit respectfully.

**Table on coding framework**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Themes</b>
RQ.1	Instructional leadership for school improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional supervision</li> <li>• Regular teacher training and professional development</li> <li>• Strict measures on discipline</li> </ul>
RQ2.	Ways of monitoring students' progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra class</li> <li>• assessment</li> </ul>
RQ3.	Ensuring safety environment for students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• giving clear rules,</li> <li>• class management,</li> <li>• ensuring that school building and grounds are secured, well-maintained and free of hazards.</li> </ul>
RQ4.	Creation of learning opportunity for students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using innovative instruction methods like outdoor and experimental learning.</li> <li>• Student-centred learning.</li> </ul>

From the table above, four major themes emerged with various sub-themes. The themes were generated from the research question one (1) to question four.

Research question one looked at instructional leadership practices of Basic heads. And some of the instructional leadership practices exhibited by Basic heads included: instructional supervision, regular teacher training and professional development and strict measures on discipline.

Research question two highlighted on monitoring students' progress for school improvement. And some of the sub-themes that emerged are, giving extra classes and regular assessment.

Research question three talked of ensuring safety environment for students. And the sub-themes were, giving clear rules, class management and ensuring that school buildings and grounds are well-secured and maintained.

Research question four looked at creation of learning opportunity for learners. And the sub-themes were; using innovative instructional methods like out-door and experimental learning and child-centred learning.

#### **4.1 Instructional Leadership Practices of Basic School Heads**

The research question one sought to investigate the instructional leadership practices Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality exhibit and findings drawn from the data suggest that headteachers employ instructional supervision, strict measures on discipline, regular teacher training and professional development workshops, submission of lesson notes, Implementing student-centered learning strategies, monitoring and evaluation of lesson plans and Organizing periodic staff and managerial and administrative functions.

##### **4.1.1 Instructional Supervision**

Instructional supervision is defined in this study as the proactive effort of inspecting and critically observing the activities of teachers with the aim of providing mentorship, coaching and professional guidance to them so as to enhance the quality of instructional delivery. (Etsey, 2015) is also of the view that effective supervision of instruction can improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Supervision is the process of bringing about improvement in an institution by working with people who work with students. It is a process of stimulating growth, and a means of helping teachers and students to help themselves.

(Etsey, 2015) reports that, effective supervision is necessary for efficient work. It provides a climate in which people have a sense of working for themselves. In government schools in Ghana, internal supervision is normally done by the heads of institutions or their assistants while external supervision is done by supervisors or inspectors from the Ghana Education Service. (Etsey & et al,2015), in a study of 60 schools in Ghana (29 from urban and 31 from rural areas) found that academic performance was better in private schools than public schools because of more effective supervision of work. Of particular concern are the quality and impact of school inspections and the degree of professional independence of the inspectors and circuit supervisors.

The absence of an appropriate performance management framework which sets out clear and relevant accountabilities for monitoring purposes simply compounds the problem. Etsey (2015) is of the view that, supervision and regular visits to the schools would motivate teachers to be more regular and punctual at school. Also, when students realize that supervisors are regular in visiting the schools and teachers are always present, they would be challenged to change their attitudes towards school. This would in turn reflect positively on their academic performance.

From the analysed data, it is evident that the head teachers are actively involved in monitoring and supervising the classroom activities of teachers. According to the study participants, they regularly move around to observe the day-to-day activities that are carried out in their institutions in order to ensure that teachers are being professional and productive. The data also indicate that the heads of schools are also particular in observing how the student body is cooperating with the school system. The excerpts below are derived from the interaction with them and they adequately

reflect these themes:

"Teachers are supposed to prepare the lessons that are needed to teach the various Classes. And then in the course of teaching, I also go round the various classrooms to observe the teaching and learning. Where there is the need to draw the teacher's attention to something that needs to be done, something that needs to be taken out, I do that in a way that will not affect or distract the teaching and learning process. Then from time to time, I take students' exercise books to crosscheck the assignments they are given, how they are marked and all that. And then I ensure that assessment is also done for each child at the end of the year". (HT3-SCH3)

"Beginning of the week, "I usually call for my teachers lesson notes usually on Mondays. I go through the lesson notes and then mark. After marking, I make sure that teachers go to the classroom to teach. Then as teachers teach too, I move around to observe the teaching and learning. If there is anything that I have to draw the attention of the teachers to, I do so immediately. Sometimes, that is if the concern is not a major one. However, major concerns are addressed in my office after the lessons". (HT5-SCH5)

The excerpts above indicate that, although lesson development is largely in the domain of the teachers, the heads invariably concern themselves with the correctness in what is being taught. They do this by professionally and diplomatically drawing the teacher's attention to how teaching and learning should be effectively done when there is a lag.

Reacting to a follow-up question on how teachers react to the role in ensuring instructional effectiveness, HT8-SCH8, commented that:

"In fact, the teachers are aware that one of my roles is supervision, and as the lead teacher, I need to know what actually is going on in the classroom. And I cannot do it if I sit in the office and think that what they have written is what they are teaching because there is a difference between lesson note writing and lesson delivery. So, although the teachers write and submit their notes, I want to find out. I do not interrupt or distract the class. I just pass by and observe. That is the informal one". (HT8-SCH8)

Similarly, HT5-SCH5 indicated that:

"We also have a structured formal observation that I inform them and we have a check list concerning the observation so that they know that this week is observation week. They even come to call for the observation. Again, the observation forms part of our new curriculum. They are even willing to have me there. In any case, each time I go to the class especially for the formal observation, I am introduced as part of them wanting to learn with them and

the children are happy for that. One of the things I sometimes do is to reward the children when they perform very well. Once in a while, a pencil or something will be given to those who do well. It also encourages the children to want me to be there to observe their learning so that those who will do very well can get something. They do not feel intimidated". (HT5-SCH5)

The comments from the headteachers reveal that instructional effectiveness is ensured through strict supervision of teachers, ensuring that teachers prepare adequately before lessons, formal observation of teachers, and ensuring that teachers use contact hours effectively. On the part of the pupils, the headteachers indicated that they observe pupils formally in classroom, reward pupils and ensure pupils do not feel intimidated in their learning environment.

Comment from a teacher on what instructional skills do they practice.

Except from T2-SCH2 "To me there are many relevant instructional skills that I practice. Notable among them are, planning and delivery of lessons, assessing learner's formative, summative, reflect on lessons and take feedback from the learning etc.". T7-SCH7, comments were similar to the previous comments: Lesson planning, communication, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, critical thinking and problem solving are among the many relevant skills that I practice.

HT4-SCH4, also comment on the relevant instructional skills "The relevant instructional skills that I practice is, inculcating teaching learning resources in my lessons to make it real and practical for easy understanding". T6-SCH6, commented on the relevant instructional skills "The relevant instructional skills I practice are planning and preparation, classroom management, instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation, reflection and professional development". (T6-SCH6)

From the foregoing, it's suggest that there is a concerted effort by teachers and headteachers to ensure that supervision is adequately carried out in order for teaching and learning goals to be fully attained. This finding is in consonance with earlier assertions that instructional supervision is a purposeful way of improving teaching through regular monitoring of students and supervision and in-service training of teachers (Clark, 2015) in order to ensure that their performance is in accordance with the school's educational mission and objectives (Quah, 2011).

Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) observed that instructional supervision involves a conscious activity undertaken by head teachers to monitor teachers and provide conducive environments for them to flourish in their teaching activities. The aforementioned scholars added that instructional supervision is a crucial aspect of instructional leadership in schools. This finding is also a reflection of (Lezotte's, 2024), Effective School Theory". According to the Effective School theory, (Lezotte, 2024), the leader of the school is largely involved in superintending and constantly monitoring teaching activities in order to ensure optimal productivity. In view of the theory, the professional growth of teachers is of great concern to the leader and this makes the leader proactive in supervising the teachers' performance as well as impacting on their proficiency.

In amplifying the theory, (Lynch, 2015) pointed out that effective leaders are visible and actively involved in ensuring that teachers are in-tune with the educational missions and objectives of the school and this was clearly evident in the data for this study. This then suggests that the theory of Effective School is being applied by headteachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. In view of these suggestions and gathered data, it is accurate to suggest that headteachers in the Yilo krobo

Municipality exercise instructional supervision as part of their instructional leadership practice.

#### **4.1.2 Strict measures on discipline**

The present research study defines strict measures on discipline as the implementation of strict rules, regulations, and consequences to maintain order, control, and adherence to established standards within a particular setting (school). These measures are designed to promote discipline, accountability, and compliance among staff.

The purpose of strict measures on discipline is to create a structured and organized environment where individuals adhere to established standards and norms, which can lead to increased productivity, efficiency, and overall success. This approach ensures that teachers comply to the codes and ethics of the profession. Findings from the data revealed that there is an appreciable level of collaborative leadership in the selected schools. In essence, the data reveals that headteachers and teachers work in unison in determining how classroom lessons ought to be conducted and how the general school environment must be. In ascertaining the instructional leadership practices that headteachers engage in to improve students' performance, the heads adopt in running the schools and their reasons for employing the selected leadership practices, these comments were elicited; *I conduct classroom observation and providing feedbacks to teachers. I also set clear academic goals and ensuring they align with national education standards.*" (HT7-SCH7)

Additionally, (HT10-SCH10) indicated in a comment that: *"To me, I establish clear goals and expectation and also ensure open communication and make sure teachers use digital tools to facilitate teaching and learning"*. In a very similar response, HT7-

SCH7 stated that *“I ensure that teachers adhere to lesson plans and syllabi and also organizes regular meetings with teachers to discuss challenges and solutions like PLC sessions and that have been very instrumental to the success of the school”*.

A similar response from HT1-SCH1 is stated below:

"For me, I would say that looking at the teachers on my staff, majority of them have attained the rank of Principal Superintendent. Most of the time, I allow them to do their own thing but I come in when it becomes necessary. I don't impose things on them. I ask their views regarding anything concerning the school and particularly on students' progress to ascertain whether they are having problems in the classroom with their teaching. We all come together and take decisions on how to help the school progress. Mostly, I practice the laissez faire but when a teacher is trying to prove difficult, that is when autocratic leadership comes in. It depends on the situation". (HT1-SCH1)

From the responses, it is clear that headteachers in most basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality exhibit democratic leadership style by actively involving their staff members in decision making and school leadership. This finding reverberates suggestions by (Mark & Printy, 2003) that the active involvement of teachers in the development of instructional techniques and other activities in the school is an effective way of ensuring the smooth running of the school based on the fact that this develops a deep sense of responsibility in the teachers.

The finding further corroborates the views of Huong et al. (2020) and (Hallinger & et al, 2020) that a modern approach to management is expressed in McGregor's theory Y as discussed under the Behaviourist theory of Leadership. In line with the theory, (Hallinger et al, 2020) noted that people frequently respond by reducing their effort or interest if they are directed to perform a task without first consulting them. Thus, wherever possible, the staff should be involved in how the job should be done (Sebastian et al., 2019).

When the head teachers were asked why they resorted to the inclusive and democratic style of leadership, they pointed out that their staff members were as qualified as they the heads and were well aware of how effective a school should be run. (Halinger, 2020) opined that this approach is a form of transformational leadership which empowers teachers to give-off their best in ensuring that the goals and the objectives of the school are met. According to the above-mentioned scholars, the inclusivity approach can be referred to as shared instructional leadership where the headteacher is referred to as leader of instructional leaders. The findings therefore suggest that the practice of delegating leadership roles to teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality by headteachers is a way of promoting a good instructional leadership.

Findings based on data derived from the selected heads also revealed that although the democratic leadership style is preferred among basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality, the autocratic style is used in rare and extreme cases. In accordance with the contingency theory, there is no exact leadership or management style that is most appropriate in organizing and managing a structured institution (Shala & et al., 2021; Tsoika, 2020). In essence, a leader adopts a leadership style based on certain factors. A good leader thus must be willing to employ an appreciable dynamism in tackling specific circumstances and addressing particular needs in view of the times and other determining factors.

#### **4.1.3 Regular teacher training and professional development**

The study found that instructional leadership is exhibited by school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality through their evident performance of regular teacher training and professional development. They play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education provided to students and contribute to the overall improvement of the

schools. The primary goal of regular teacher training and professional development is to equip teachers with the necessary tools and resources to effectively address the diverse needs of their students. Headteachers also perform administrative functions in the schools by their active decision making about budgetary and financial issues, exercising proprietary responsibility in soliciting for and providing teaching and learning materials for the school.

Additionally, as an administrator, the headteachers indicated that they provide in-service to teachers when there is the need for them to acquire certain skill, especially after they have been in the service for long. The study also found that heads, in their performance of administrative functions, get to be instrumental in resolving issues that concern their staff members and the school at large. In essence, the heads work to address the concerns and needs of staff members in order to foster their productivity.

The excerpt by HT3-SCH3 below is in-line with this theme;

"The role of a leader such as headteacher in the school is to organize IN-SET for teachers on challenging strands. I organize regular training and professional development workshops for my teachers. I also encourage my teachers to attend professional training workshops been organize by NTC or any accredited institution". (HT3-SCH3)

HT5-SCH5 suggested that;

"Where I need to praise the teacher, I do. Where I need to draw the teacher's attention to something I do that. But most of the time, the motivation is more, although not everything may be perfect. On the other hand, we meet every Wednesday to discuss certain difficult situations, certain things we are struggling as teachers. So, we assign a facilitator to guide us, to take us through. Teachers will bring their struggles and then we go through. If they think they have no struggles, what I have also observed I bring it across and then we all discuss how best we can let it work for each of us in our various classrooms. So, we give in-service training, we offer in-service training once every week to equip us for our instructional learning activities and for leadership as well". (HT5-SCH5)

Additionally, HT9-SCH9, shared his view that:

"My role as a head teacher is to ensure that teaching and learning is moving on well. Aside this, I ensure that everything that concerns the school including the safety of the school children are in place. Punctuality is also another area I check a lot. I make sure both teachers and students come to school on time. Again, I ensure that I have a good relationship between the teachers and myself and so at times when you even come to the staff room, it is difficult for you to identify the head because we have a cordial relationship". (HT9-SCH9)

The comments from the head teachers indicated that the main roles of head teachers at the basic school level were managerial and administrative. The headteachers pointed out that they play the role as a coordinator to coordinate the activities of both teachers and pupils. The activities of teachers involve preparation of lesson notes, lesson delivery, in-service training, and remedial measures for pupils, conducting assessments etc. The activities of pupils were engaging in active learning and extracurricular activities.

Regarding the provision of high academic standards in schools, some of the headteachers indicated that they engaged both teachers and pupils in periodic seminars to pinpoint shortcomings and find solutions to how those issues could be resolved. In addition to that some headteachers suggested they offer remedial measures for struggling pupils to improve their academic performance.

In concordance with the findings of the study, Naidoo and Petersen (2015) hinted that school leaders are therefore expected to show dynamic leadership that matches with the tenets of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skill sets. According to (Bush, 2015), there is a connection between the learning outcome to engagement with classroom practice and

Instructional leadership. Effective schools are seen as the ones that are able to promote a high level of student achievement.

Bush further states that there are effectiveness variables that substantiate the conceptual framework and instructional leadership. The following variables were related to school effectiveness. Strong administrative leadership; especially, in the areas of instruction and curriculum; Safe and orderly environment; Regular and systematic monitoring of student's performance; Systematic and broad-based reward system for students; Strong communicating support and a norm of academic press including a high expectation for student's performance and an emphasis on mastery of basic skills. In support of the study, headteachers of basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality underscored the need for strong leadership which they carry out to ensure academic excellence.

Again, in harmony with the findings of the study, (Sergiovani, 2007) summarizing what supervision entails, maintains that supervision is carried out for good reasons, allowing schools to be better, encouraging and supporting teacher growth. Sergiovani argues that supervision enhances the student's progress throughout their academic and developmental stages of learning experiences. The comments of the headteachers demonstrated that effective instructional leadership could only be attained from effective supervision of the work of teachers and monitoring of the academic progress of pupils.

In addition, (Baffour-Awuah, 2011), suggested that improving school supervision on some support systems needs revision to improve instructional supervision in schools. Baffour- Awuah further suggested that GES should put into consideration separate managerial and administrative duties from instructional supervision. The motivation

behind this approach is to enable headteachers to engage in regular supervision of instruction to promote effective teaching and learning (Baffour-Awuah, 2011). Even though, the findings of the current study show that at the basic level, the headteachers are burdened with administrative and managerial challenges of the school, they are able to handle it at the level which is in sharp contrast to the suggestion of (Baffour-Awuah, 2011). The findings of (Baffour-Awuah, 2011) are more profound in secondary schools where the workloads of the managers and administrators are large and specialized.

Also, in harmony with the findings of the study, (Danso, 2009) indicated the need to pay attention to the supervision of instruction which could be improved by means of regular pre-service and in-service training. Particularly, in-service training of Lead teachers, headteachers and supervisors on pressing issues relating to the best practices of school supervision is not a priority. (Danso, 2009), supports the idea that offering regular in-service training, providing logistics and materials, and payment of allowances to circuit supervisors are great support needed to be given to promote effective supervision. Supervision can be effective only when officers and supervisors are from time to time-oriented with fresh related ideas on the job.

The study further showed that basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality in many ways boost the motivation, commitment, and working conditions of their staff in a bid to improve teaching and learning. This finding is corroborated by (Leithwood & et al, 2008) who viewed the school leader as someone who is capable of motivating and influencing teachers towards the accomplishment of the goals of the institution (cited in Rodrigues et al., 2021).

## **4.2 Ways Basic School Heads Monitor Students' Progress**

Research question two sought to identify ways basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality monitor student's progress. The responses gathered are grouped into two. Constant monitoring of classroom activities and inspection of lesson notes and students' workbooks.

### **4.2.1 Constant monitoring of classroom activities**

The participants indicated that they made regular and sometimes daily visits to classrooms to ensure that teachers were present and actively involved in the teaching process. According to the head teachers, the active presence of teachers in the classroom is an indicator that students are acquiring knowledge and will consequently make progress in their academic performances. The study participants insisted that monitoring the classroom activities of teachers is essential to their overall activity based on arguments that people put in more effort in performing their assigned tasks when they are well aware that there is a watchdog monitoring them. In effect, when classroom activities are constantly monitored, teachers are compelled to ensure that their students also perform creditably.

HT7-SCH 7's statement below corroborates this finding:

"Through the administration of standardized tests and regular quizzes, individual assignments/project portfolios. I know my teachers are doing the work even when I am not there. But as natural human beings, if we are being monitored, it makes our work more efficient. Secondly, monitoring is one of my responsibilities as a head teacher". (HT7-SCH7).

Similarly, HT8-SCH8, commented that:

"Almost every week, I go round the classroom to check the assessment(curriculum-based), assignment completion rates, attendance records, and behavioral observations to see to it teachers are doing their job as expected of them. I do this to ensure teachers are on top of their job". (HT8-SCH8)

Again, HT10-SCH10 stated that:” Like I said earlier, there is the strictly formal one and the informal one. But whatever the case, I go to every class every day”.

HT8-SCH8, also had this to say:

"I monitor whatever is going on in the classroom every day. Sometimes I visit the classes unannounced. At other times, I pre- inform the teachers that I would be visiting their classes. That way, the teachers are not taken by surprise. When I visit a class, I make sure to sit at the back of the classroom to observe the teaching. But you know, monitoring is not only done in the classroom. Outside the classroom too, we do monitoring; going round the compound to make sure that everything is in order. So that is how I do monitor in my school".(HT8-SCH8)

HT5-SCH5, stated that, as a way of monitoring students’ academic progress, she goes to the classrooms to interact with the students. *“I can take a topic from a text book and ask a student to read. I do so because reading has been a major problem for students in my school.”*

The comments show that monitoring of teachers, pupils and other school activities were considered important by basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo municipality. This finding is in line with the tenets of the Effective School theory in which (Lezotte2024) indicated that school leaders ought to ensure that they routinely check classroom activities so as to ensure that happenings in the classroom are tailored to reflect the missions of the school. The finding is validated by (Maponya, 2020) who asserted that being particular and concerned about classroom activities is an essential trait of a good school leader.

The aforementioned scholar indicated that this particular feature is crucial to the development of the teacher, students and the school at large. Findings therefore indicate that headteachers in the Yilo Krob Municipality are concerned about the intellectual development of their students hence the active monitoring of classroom activities.

#### **4.2.2 Inspection of lesson notes and students' workbooks**

Findings also indicate that headteachers regularly inspect teachers' scheme of work and lesson notes by way of indirectly monitoring students' progress. According to the study participants, when they inspect the scheme of work prepared by teachers, they get to find out items that have already been taught and new things that are yet to be taught. Additionally, by inspecting teachers' lesson notes, they ascertain the teachers' methodology of teaching and how they approach a specific subject matter. In essence, teachers' efficacy in the preparation of essential documents for teaching is a determinant and a yardstick for checking students' progress.

The finding also suggests that headteachers inspect the exercise books or workbooks of pupils in determining progress they have made in the teaching and learning process. First of all, the headteachers inspect the workbook of pupils to find out whether or not teacher have given them assignments that are in line with teaching objectives and items on the scheme of work. Secondly, these workbooks are inspected to verify the performance of the pupils; whether they perform good or poorly. In essence, the assessment and scores of students largely determine their progress. The interview excerpts below highlight these themes;

"I monitor the progress of my pupils on a need to do basis. First of all, I check the learners' exercises, projects work, group works, class tests, mid-term exams, end of term exams mocks, oral tests to ensure that they are making progress with their scheme, of work. Occasionally, I ask teachers to submit the books of some random pupils to check their academic progress". (HT6-SCH6)

"Besides, I do take the students' exercise books to see how many exercises they have been given and whether they do corrections when they get some of the questions wrong. So, the exercise books are sometimes collected and looked through to know whatever is going on in the classroom. Apart from the exercise, sometimes I also do call some of the students to interview them about the teachers but without the teacher's knowledge".(HT9-SCH9)

The comments from the headteachers showed that they regularly monitor the academic progress of pupils by checking the weekly lesson notes of teachers as well as randomly checking the marked exercises, class tests of pupils. Where the record and performance of pupils declined overtime, pupils were taken through remedial measures.

Similarly, the headteachers were asked to give some of the benefits of their engagement in the monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress. One of the interviewees noted that:

"It has yielded great benefits. For instance, if I go round and there is a pupil who is not in class, I will find out why he/she is not in class. Sometimes the teacher might have asked the pupil to go out, I will investigate to find out if there is the need to give any support to the child outside the classroom. And learners who have difficulties, through the monitoring I get to know how best to help them. For instance, I have been receiving complaints about students' inability to read effortlessly. Recently, we had to put the pupils into various levels of reading abilities. This is because I receive complaints about students' inability to read and give them support, remediation kind of support, very early in the morning. And through that those who were in the lower level were moved to the higher level".(HT1-SCH1)

In a follow up question on how head teachers benefit from the engagement in monitoring of pupils' achievement and progress. The response was that:

"After a few weeks of putting the pupils into the reading ability groups, we have observed that there is an improvement. The starters and non-readers were getting promoted to „sounds“ and „syllables“ groups. Most of those whose reading ability was at the syllable level were also being moved to the level of reading of simple sentences. So, it is beneficial. It helps us to know who and how to help. Then those who have problems with attitudes and behaviour, we have to let their parents come in. They come and we explain things to them and we discuss how we can handle the children and then support them to move on. If there is the need for the child to sign a bond of good behaviour, we make the child to do so. Some truant pupils who were made to sign bonds of good behaviour are now coming to school regularly".(HT2-SCH2)

The comment above, in a way, summarizes those of other headteachers and touches all aspects of the benefits of monitoring in the schools. Some of the benefits of monitoring the pupils' academic progress were helping struggling pupils to read and also giving them remedial measures through the engagement of parents.

Finally, headteachers were asked to state the extent to which their monitoring contribute to the realization of the goals of the school. One of the participants, following the question asked, commented that:

"In terms of the academic performance of the pupils, the regular monitoring of the pupils' exercises and class test has significantly improved the performance of the school in the BECE. For the past two years, the school has progressively moved from the bottom-ten position to the top-ten position in the municipality. In addition, monitoring creates a good relationship between the students and me. It helps me to know them better. Sometimes I even look at this student and because you know the students very well, I advise them to choose this course instead of the other course. So, it is really helping. Going to the classroom sometimes to take the class myself and teaching them is helping me to know the students very well and also identify the problems they are having".(HT4-SCH4)

The comments by the headteachers reveal that effective and regular monitoring have been very instrumental in achieving their organizational goals. While most of them indicated that the monitoring significantly improved the position of the schools in the Municipal school ranking especially for school who previous were at the bottom of the rankings.

In accordance with the findings of the study, (Lezzotte, 2001) indicated that pupils' progress correlate with routine examination and checks on the learning activities of the pupils. The outcomes of both processes are used to improve individual pupils' behaviour and performance, as well as the overall curriculum (Lezotte, 2001). Progress monitoring is a scientifically validated method of assessing students' academic performance and evaluating the efficacy of teaching and learning.

Individuals or a whole class can be monitored for progress (NCSPM, 2012).

Teachers can use pupils' performance data to regularly evaluate the quality of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions by monitoring students' development regularly (Safer & Fleischman, 2005). This assertion was highlighted clearly by headteachers in their monitoring procedure. According to (Luckner & Bowen, 2010) monitoring varies from traditional evaluation in that it focuses on pupils' academic performance on a few key abilities using weekly or biweekly repeatable probes. According to the above explanation of frequent student progress monitoring, the procedure is used not only to make summative choices but also to guarantee that the student meets pre-determined goals. This is accomplished through keeping both the pupils and the teacher informed of progress toward the goal, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to adapt their teaching and students to adjust their learning.

According to (Kgothule & Letsie, 2014) the tracking of pupils' progress is done in a variety of methods. In general, it entails determining the students' current levels of performance; identifying learning goals that will occur over time (weekly or monthly); measuring progress toward the goals by comparing expected and actual rates of learning, and adjusting teaching to meet the students' needs based on the measurements. Implementation frequently entails a series of processes, including a judgment about the level of implementation (individual student, small group, classroom or grade).

In line with the findings of the study (Bowen, 2010), conducted a study on teachers' opinions of pupils' progress monitoring and concluded that one of the major benefits was to the pupils, according to the teachers polled. Pupils become involved in

documenting and charting their success because progress monitoring is pupil-centered, and they are thus more motivated to attain their goals and see their improvement. Teachers also stated that progress monitoring assisted them in defining lessons, monitoring the impact of interventions, and 'filling in the gaps (Kgothule & et al., 2014). These findings as presented by Kgothule et al., synchronizes with the outcomes of the current study in terms of the importance of monitoring as elucidated by the headteachers.

### **4.3 Measures Basic School Heads put in place to Ensure a Safe Environment for Students**

Research question three sought to find out the measures basic school heads put in place to ensure a safe and orderly environment for students. This section presents the responses of headteachers in Yilo Krobo Municipality on measures they adopt to ensure a safe and orderly environment in their schools.

#### **4.3.1 Mobilizing Support to Undertake Maintenance and Renovation Works**

Another theme generated in view of measures adopted by headteachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality in ensuring the wellbeing of the students is the fact that the headteachers were effortful in trying to mobilize funds to resolve infrastructural challenges in their schools. Although the in-depth analysis of the responses of the headteachers indicated that almost all the headteachers revealed that their school climate was friendly and pupils trusted and approached teachers more frequently for any academic related activities, they also suggested that there are some issues that need to be resolved. Some headteachers pointed out that there are issues of leaking roofs, large class sizes, and cracks in wall.

HT5-SCH5, explained that: *In my school, I ensure that, school buildings and grounds are secured and well-maintained and free from hazards. This to ensure the safety been of the students and staff*".

The above excerpt highlights the need for regular maintenance of the school plant. The headteachers were then asked about the measures they put in place to ensure that these needs are met. They indicated that they were making moves to collaborate with the municipal directorate in dealing with the situation. They also stated that they engaged in community partnerships. The interview data presented below illustrates the above discussion;

"We inform the PTA, the Assembly man, the Municipal Education Director, the Municipal Assembly and individuals. We send letters around but all boils down to money. What they all say is that there is no money. It is only recently that the MP came to our aid to renovate the ICT block we still call on him from time to time. Meanwhile, the other classroom blocks have so many cracks and are still leaking. So, we hope that they will respond to our call sooner than later". (HT7-SCH7)

HT10-SCH10, added that;

"Sometimes when we have problem with our school buildings I discuss with the SMC PA of the school. Sometimes my authorities at Municipal Office and some benevolent individuals from the community. Some do come to our aid, and others don't come at all". (HT10-SCH10)

HT8-SCH8, commented that: The community has in the past helped to construct some school projects.

Additionally, HT10-SCH10, commented that:

"I remember the last time we called for PTA meeting and the problem of our leaking roof came up, the PTA came in and gave us the necessary support. Thanks be to God the problem is solved with their assistance. Teaching and learning are back to normal and the school has taken shape again. But for the PTA, we still would have been facing that issue. So, whenever we have any problem in the school, we discuss it during our PTA meetings". (HT10-SCH10)

From the comments, the headteachers sought to give a vivid description of their schools' environment. Among the plethora of descriptions given by headteachers, some headteachers indicated open space, large class sizes, leaking roofing sheets and cracks in wall. The open spaced school environments and large class sizes were the top of complains from the headteachers. Even though they admitted the impact of the school environment on the academic performance of pupils, the headteachers concerned indicated that they have reported their school situation to the Municipal Education office for appropriate measures to be given to salvage the situation. The participants also mentioned that they are in talks with the Parent Teacher Association and the assembly man in mobilizing support to bring developments to the schools with the aim of ensuring safe and orderly environment for students.

This theme and the finding discussed under it suggest that the leadership of the school, particularly the headteacher is putting in measures to ensure that the school environment become a safe and conducive place for young learners as proposed by (Lezotte,2024) in his theory of Effective School. In view of the theory, it is imperative to create a school environment where students feel emotionally, mentally and physically at ease in order to have an effective school. Therefore, through the lens of the effective school model, it is in place to suggest that headteachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality are proactive in ensuring a calm and orderly learning environment.

#### **4.3.2 Ensuring a School-Parents-Community Partnership**

Findings from the study suggests that the headteachers are nurturing a warm partnership between the school, parents and the community in ensuring that a safe school environment is provided for the students. The headteachers revealed that the

school's collaboration with the parents and the community results in the transmission of a unified orientation and culture to the children. In essence, because of intricate relationship between the school, the parents and the community, there is an agreement between them with regard to the upbringing of the children. In that, there is an effort to ensure that the orientation given to the child in the school is not so different from what is given them in the home and the community. Due to this, the students will feel safe in the school setting because they consider that environment as an extension of the home and community. The research participants indicated that this relationship is a way of ensuring a safe and orderly environment for students. These students tend to see teachers and school leaders as their parents and freely approach them to register their concerns. Accordingly, this partnership is also instrumental in imbuing good moral principles in the children based on the findings. The interview excerpts below corroborate this finding;

"Pupils repose their trust in the teachers. Because of the trust, pupils are able to approach any teachers for extra help in their academic activities. Also, parents are able to share their wards issues with teachers so that they could be of help". (HT7-SCH7)

HT5-SCH5, had this to say;

"Yeah, the community is always a partner to the school. We usually invite opinion leaders to our PTA meetings. In terms of the impact of the community influence on orderly environment in the school, the community helps by sending back recalcitrant pupils from town back to school during school hours". (HT5-SCH5)

Some of the headteachers indicated that the community were involved in a number of projects in the school while others revealed that the community were engaged in disciplining the pupils outside the school. Some of the opinion leaders are regularly invited to the schools' PTA meetings to update them of the current developments in the school. The comments show that most headteachers put in extra effort and time to ensure positive climate in schools. Majority of them indicated that they do so by

encouraging a healthy relationship between themselves, teachers and pupils. Headteachers do so by settling disputes among teachers to create a friendly climate in the school.

The efforts made by headteachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality to ensure a positive school climate for students are in conformation with Lezotte's Effective School theory. These findings reverberate the tenets of the theory which talk about the maintenance of home-school relations. According to (Lezotte , 2024), it is crucial to establish a good relationship between the school and the home in order to have an effective school climate. Based on the theory, if there is a connectedness between parents and the school, morality and disciplinary measures are likely to be entrenched in regards to the upbringing of the child. In this vein, it is in place to suggest that the Effective School theory is closely related to the findings of this study.

Finally, the last question sought to find out from headteachers on the key principles they follow to ensure learning opportunities are accessible to all students, regardless of their learning style or background. HT10-SCH10, indicated that: I ensure inclusive learning environment for all learners; I also seek for mental health support from specialist for my learners. I engage families on how to ensure the well-being of their children.

Additionally, HT5-SCH5, commented that:

"Yeah, the teachers are very supportive when it comes to lesson delivery and participation in extracurricular activities such as sports and debates. In addition to that they are also instrumental when it comes to maintaining discipline in the school. Maintaining discipline in school also involves inviting parents on a need to do basis". (HT5-SCH5)

Again, HT5-SCH5, also stated that: Teachers and parents are very supportive to the transformative agenda of the school. Myself together with the teachers enforce school rules and discipline policies and I also encourage teachers to monitor students"

behaviour. The intuitions of the comments from the headteachers reveal that both parents and teachers have been very supportive in the transformative agenda of the schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. On the part of parents, they offered moral support through PTA meetings and disciplining the pupils in their homes respectively. The teachers' major duty in the transformation agenda is the maintaining of discipline among pupils while in school.

As alluded to in the study, most studies on the orderly and secured environment have identified some three key indicators: physical characteristics and safety features are tangible and visible elements that are found in or around schools and are intended to improve physical safety, orderly environment is characterized by organization and school discipline, and school staffing and relationships promote a sense of caring and community, which increases feelings of safety (Godstein et al., 2008; Bosworth et al., 2011). The findings of the study reveal that headteachers' responses were consistent with the three key indicators of an orderly and secured environment.

Again, in contrast to the findings of the study, Bosworth et al. (2008) found that physical characteristics that secure school were, for instance, security cameras, fences around the school, and locked doors. Tiny school size was also seen as having a beneficial impact on safety in schools that were thought to be small. They pointed out that security features or equipment (such as cameras, visitor passes, fences, or monitors) were more important to students than faculty's feelings of safety. Climate (e.g., rules, discipline, fear) and personnel (e.g., monitors, faculty control) were the second most important areas for students. Faculty, on the other hand, mentioned relationships with colleagues and pupils, climate, and physical aspects (e.g., small size, proximity to danger) as important factors in making a school safe. In the context

of this current study, basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality were open spaces and therefore lack the requisite security that makes an ideal school secure.

In terms of school discipline and organization, Bosworth et al., (2008) found that pupils felt safer when they saw a clear and regular disciplinary structure. The pupils indicated that they felt comfortable when teachers broke up conflicts and enforced discipline, but that their safety was jeopardized by the lack of a behavior control structure and accountability. In consistent with the findings of the study, the headteachers indicated that teachers were crucial in enforcing discipline in school whereas parents were the agents of discipline when the pupils are home.

#### **4.4 Strategies Basic School Heads Employ to Create Learning Opportunities for Students**

This section presents the responses of headteachers in Yilo Krobo on strategies basic school headteachers employ to create learning opportunities for students. The fourth research question discovered the following strategies. They are activity-based learning, project-based learning, mentorship programs, using innovative instructional methods, ability groupings, providing a variety of learning resources, access to learning materials, assessment and organizing extracurricular activities. These are further discussed below;

##### **4.4.1 Activity-Based Learning (ABL)**

Activity-Based Learning involves active participation of students in the learning process thus enabling them to be continuously engaged other than being just listeners. During the interview, majority of the respondents reveal that activity-based learning is one of the strategies they employ in creating opportunities for students to learn. The respondents claimed that they ensure teachers make their lessons so practical for the

purposes of increasing students' participation and competencies.

HT3-SCH3 stated;

When students learn through role play, they tend to easily remember whatever they have learnt. Besides, students become more interested in what the teacher is teaching and so they become eager to learn more. The reason I always tell my teachers to make lessons practical. (HT3-SCH3)

HT5-SCH5, also had this to say;

"I have made the teachers aware that every lesson must be full of activities so, as they teach, they tell the students that whatever they learn will be applied in their daily lives. Even when you look at our rationale for the new curriculum, it talks about application of whatever the child has learnt and so making lessons practical has been one of the strategies that I ensure teachers use to create more opportunities for students to learn".(HT5-SCH5)

HT7-SCH7, declared that: Mostly, my teachers use a variety of learning resources, such as textbook, digital looks, role play etc. They also organize extracurricular activities like clubs. Yeah. Sometimes students are given remedial classes. In response to the same question, HT5-SCH5, revealed that he always told his teachers to use innovative instructional methods like outdoor and experimental learning, collaborative learning and peer interactions, play-based learning and project-based learning.

From the earlier responses, it is clear that head teachers of basic schools in an attempt to create learning opportunities for students insist that teachers make their lessons more practical by including a lot of activities. As averred by (Watson & et al, 2017), engaging in physical activity in the classroom may improve academic outcomes. Consequently, Head teachers believe that activity-based learning will help students who learn better through engaging in activities to remember lessons taught in class. These findings agree with the assertion of( Lee & et al, 2020) which is that group activities are significant in developing competency and expanding learners' capabilities. Churchill (2003) as cited in (Anwer & 2019) also holds a similar view,

promoting the idea that activity-based learning helps students and learners build mental models that enable higher-order performance, including applied problem solving and the transfer of knowledge and skills. It is thought that when students participate actively in class and work well with one another, it fosters creativity and critical thinking, which improve performance (Anwer, 2019). The finding also aligned with the postulation of (Neji & et al, 2014) who state that, activity-based learning facilitates learning by making it more exciting, intriguing and relevant.

#### **4.4.2 Ability groupings**

Ability groupings occur when students are put in groups based on their academic abilities. (Haung, 2009), believes that ability grouping helps to raise academic standards of learners. In fact, it is argued that the most common justification for homogeneous grouping is to enable teachers to effectively fulfil each student's unique or varied learning needs (Ansalone, 2009). Following the views expressed by head teachers during the interview on the strategies they employ to create learning opportunities for students, the researcher gathered that majority of the respondents make use of ability groupings.

For instance, HT10-SCH10, stated;

Through monitoring and observations, I realized that some of the students have high IQs, others have low IQ and the rest are average. So, in my school, I have instituted what is known as remediation activities for those slow learners. Whether you're in the JHS, upper primary or lower primary, as soon as you have been identified as one of those slow learners, I quickly put you in groups and organize what we call remediation activities for you. These activities help students to catch up with the other learners.

HT8-SCH8, expressed that because each child is unique, it is important that children (students) are assessed in order to identify their strengths and weaknesses for necessary interventions. The respondent claimed that for an effective intervention, it will be necessary that students are put into smaller groups based on their academic

capabilities.

"I believe grouping the students based on their intellectual capabilities could improve learning outcomes which could also go a long way to make our schools better. This is because there will be healthy academic competitions which will eventually lead to school improvement. The reason I make sure it is practiced in my school". (HT8-SCH8)

On the same question, HT5-SCH5, commented; the researcher, put the children into various learning ability groups and we dedicate one hour every morning to the ones who are weak in reading so as to improve their reading skills, especially those in JHS1. These findings suggest that ability grouping is one of the strategies basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality are using to create learning opportunities for their students thus corroborating the views of (Cooner & 2010) who suggests that small groupings and inquiry-based learning (EBL) activities should form a major aspect of teaching and learning as they enable pupils to get active contact hours hence making learning effective.

Supporting the views of (Cooner & 2010), Lezotte (1also asserts that students must not be rushed through their academic work but rather given extra time so that they can attain mastery of their tasks. Similarly, the findings of Matthews, Ritchotte, and McBee (2013) on the impacts of grouping on non-gifted and gifted kids in grades 2 through 6 across a three-year span corroborate the assertion that ability groupings are used to increase learners' performance. Furthermore, the finding of the study is supported by the finding of (Abdulrazak, 2020), which confirmed that ability grouping had an advantageous effect on instruction and learning for both high and low ability groups because it enables the teacher to direct his or her teaching towards a particular group of people.

In contrast to the findings above, (Kaya, 2015) claims studies have shown that students who are considered as weak are discouraged when grouped with like-achieving students. However, they become enthusiastic about learning when grouped with high achievers in mixed groups. Thus, such weak students are only inspired to study harder when mixed with high achieving students. (Kintz, 2011) also found that ability groupings rather have negative effect on low ability groups because of the stigma attached to them. As a result of this stereotype, the right environment is not created for the students to learn. Consequently, the purpose for which the group is created is defeated.

#### **4.4.3 Access to learning materials**

Access to learning materials is also a strategy more than half of the respondents stated they employ to create opportunities for students to learn. Basically, access to learning materials implies making sure quality and enough learning materials are made easily available to students to encourage them to learn. The use of instructional materials, according to (Kanwo, 2010), gives students opportunity to hear, see, and discuss relevant activities. Students can readily comprehend what is being taught, and it also helps to make the teaching and learning process more meaningful, efficient, and clear. Besides, (Adele, 2015) makes a point that, encouraging students' learning in the classroom is closely related to accessibility and effective use of instructional materials. In effect, basic school head teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality believe that availability and access to quality learning materials can create learning opportunities for students.

HT-SCH5, revealed that;

"There is a community library that was built for the cluster of schools, so I insisted that there should be library on the school's time table. During library periods, students are asked to go for cards that can make them borrow books from the library to read. Now, I have also tasked the teachers to take summary notes from students on all that they have read or learnt from the various books from time to time. I know this strategy has created an opportunity for students to learn and it is working.

When parents come to see me in my office, I always tell them to try and provide their wards with all the materials they will need to enhance effective learning. Making our school effective should be a collective responsibility and not one sided". (HT5-SCH5)

HT5-SCH5, gave this response when he was asked on the strategies, he employs to create learning opportunities for students. HT5-SCH5, indicated he ensures that the small library the school has is stocked with relevant learning materials which are sometimes books from some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and individuals. The respondent claimed that students now want to visit the library to read, thus creating learning opportunities and improving learning outcomes.

These responses reveal that, access to learning materials by students is a strategy basic school heads use to improve learning outcomes. Lyons (2012) cited in (Okongo & et al, 2015), explains that, learning is a complex process that involves the interaction of the curriculum, instructional resources, physical facilities, and student motivation. Hence the availability of teaching and learning materials improves schools' effectiveness because they are the fundamental resources that result in good academic performance of students. The responses are in line with the studies of Read and Treffgarne (2011) and (Read, 2015) which disclose that when schools invest in reading books and libraries, there is a greater chance of increasing students' learning outcomes. Besides the finding is in line with that of (Ibok, 2016), who discovered that easy access to instructional facilities in the classroom is what ensures exceptional

academic success. The findings are further corroborated by (Ekpo,2014) who posits that instructional resources facilitate learning and teaching, and that learner-centered instructional materials encourage deep learning and make learning more enjoyable and lasting while also facilitating teachers' instructional efforts.

(Ololobon, 2013) concurred with the study, stating that the use of educational resources is the fundamental tools for enhancing quality and effectiveness in the educational system. Again, the findings agree with the views of (Lezotte, 2024) who affirms that teachers and parents must work together to help the assessments of children to get the most out of the educational system.

#### **4.5 Assessment**

Generally, student assessment helps the teacher to identify students who are weak or lagging behind and provide them with swift remedial response. Mostly, head teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality have expressed those regular through class exercises and tests have helped in creating learning opportunities for these students. Some of the responses are stated below: *I make sure that teachers assess students more often so that thosewho are not doing well can be given extra attention.* (HT9-SCH9)

"You see, assessing students on lessons taught is a very good strategy that can create opportunities for students to learn. This strategy helps both the students and the teachers. I mean teachers could adopt new methods of teaching if they realize that old methods are not producing the necessary change in students" performance. Moreover, slow learners can be identified and given the necessary assistance". (HT7-SCH7)

We assess them more often because it helps us to identify learners who are weak, so as to help them. (HT7-SCH7). On the same question, HT-SCH9, stated that assessment helps to identify students" strengths and weaknesses for necessary interventions. He explained further that during instruction, teachers make use of assessment to get feedback from students in order to adjust teaching and learning to

improve performance. Thus, it will be very difficult for teachers to know how well or poorly their students are performing without assessment.

Corroborating the findings above, Safer and Fleischman (2005) reason that teachers can use student performance data to regularly evaluate the quality of their teaching and make more informed instructional decisions by monitoring students' development regularly. Likewise, Lezotte (1990) asserts that authentic kinds of assessment can help schools become proactive and learner-centered educational communities which could result in improved student accomplishment. Supporting these assertions, some researchers also believe that assessment provides valuable information that can be utilized to change teaching to improve a student's learning outcomes if other alternatives fail. Besides, assessment conveys progress to the student, parents, and colleagues (Luckner & Brown, 2010; Safer & Fleischman, 2005).

#### **4.5.1 Extracurricular activities**

Another strategy identified by the researcher during the interview is the introduction of extracurricular activities in the schools. Extracurricular activities are those activities which do not form part of the curriculum but are carried out in schools. They include excursions, talent shows and celebration of career day. Basic school head teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality believe that these activities also create opportunities for students to learn.

HT9-SCH9, said; *the researcher, sometimes take our students on excursions. We have ever visited Cape Coast Castle and Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum. The excursions have helped a lot of the students to know more about these places.*

Another respondent, HT5-SCH5 mentioned that if not for Covid-19, the students would have embarked on another excursion as he had even spoken to the teachers regarding it.

We have put a hold on excursions for now hoping that the Covid will come down. Excursions have always been a strategy we employ to create opportunities for our students to learn but Covid-19 has destroyed everything. We are praying things bounce back to normal soon. (HT5-SCH5)

In addition to excursions, the respondent mentioned career day celebration as another strategy he employs to create opportunities for his students to learn, he stated that;

"Last Friday for instance, we organized a career day for the students, where about four professionals came over to educate them on different careers. The professionals gave students more insight about their stories and how they got to where they are to make students realize that, it takes hard work, determination and dedication to get to the top and despite the struggles students face now, they will eventually get to the top, just as those professionals have also gotten to where they are now. The children had the opportunities to ask very, very intelligent questions, especially on fire, some of them wanted to know whether there are some kinds of chemicals fire professionals use to douse fire. These activities exposed them to the things outside and created opportunities for them to learn. There are also plans underway to form fire safety cadet and then police cadet in the school. The intention is to whip up their interest in some of these professions and also to instill discipline into these students and encourage them to learn to become responsible people". (HT5-SCH5)

When asked on the same question, HT5-SCH5, stated that the school has set aside a day for talent exhibition to encourage students to show their God given talents.

"Some students are not academically good but when it comes to sewing, they do it very well so during these activities the teachers help to identify this and many other talents in the students so as to encourage them to do more. This is also a way of creating an opportunity for students to learn". (HT5-SCH5)

Additionally, HT7-SCH7, commented that:

"What we normally do is that, we invite people from the various professions to come and talk to the students. This is done at least once a year. Again, we do take the students on an excursion so that they can learn new things because it is not everything that can be taught in the classroom so the excursion helps a lot". (HT7-SCH7)

These comments indicate that although extracurricular activities do not form part of the curriculum, basic school head teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality use these activities to help create opportunities for students to engage their minds and learn. It is worthy of note that a few of the respondents indicated they use words of encouragement to create learning opportunities for students and it has worked for them perfectly so they continue to use it to improve learning outcomes.

Although, (Garrison & Anderson, 2003) underline the need for using technology in education as more than a means to 'convey knowledge' and provide students with more opportunities to learn, it appears it was not being used by basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. Again, despite the fact that (Ballantyne & Knowles 2007) made a strong point for how virtual case studies in a safe learning environment provided students with unmatched possibilities to participate in a training session which greatly boosted their learning, it was not mentioned anywhere in the interview by the participant as a strategy that helps to create learning opportunities for students.

#### **4.6 Summary of Chapter**

The chapter discussed the findings that were drawn from the data. The researcher identified and discussed the following themes as school improvement practices of basic school Heads in Yilo Krobo Municipality. They include instructional supervision, strict measures on discipline, regular teacher training and professional development, workshops, submission of lesson notes, implementing student-centered learning strategies, monitoring and evaluation of lessons plans and organizing periodic staff and managerial and administrative functions. Constant monitoring of classroom activities and inspection of lesson notes and students' workbooks are ways head teachers use to monitor students' progress. Furthermore, mobilizing support to

undertake maintenance and renovation works, ensuring a School-Parents-Community partnership are measures the head teachers put in place to ensure safe environment for students to learn. Finally, activity-based learning, ability groupings, access to learning materials, assessment and organizing extracurricular activities are strategies head teachers employ to create learning opportunities for students. The next chapter which is the last chapter presents the summary of the entire research, keys findings of the study and draws conclusion, make recommendations as well as areas for further studies.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter consolidates the principal findings and perspectives derived from the prior chapters in order to provide an exhaustive conclusion to the thesis. The chapter further emphasizes significant recommendations derived from the findings, acknowledges limitations encountered in the conduct of the study, and provides suggestions for subsequent studies.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

The study was conducted to investigate strategies to enhance school improvement practices of basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality. This was guided by four research objectives and four research questions. On a theoretical front, the study was premised on Effective School Theory (EST) put forward by Lezotte (2010) and the Leadership Instructional Theories were composed of the Behavioural theory of Leadership (BTL) and Situational/ Contingency Theory. Whereas the EST gauges educational institutions in terms of the essential characteristics and methods that enhance the effectiveness of learning institutions in relation to the scholastic attainment of students and a general boost in performance of the school. The Instructional leadership theories on the other hand, together give educational administrators an organized strategy for effectively leading and enhancing the overall quality of schooling. In this perspective, the BTL provides some insight into the procedures that are typically used by school heads to decide how schools could improve. The contingency theory, on the other hand, places more of an emphasis on how well the improvement techniques of school heads complement or it appropriate to their specific environment or school, in contrast to the trait theory, which holds

that the personality of school heads is a significant factor in improvement results.

The study utilized a qualitative research approach following an interpretivist philosophy. This aided in exploring understanding from socially construed multiple realities. A case study design was adopted for the study to delve deeper into school improvement practices of the selected schools considered in the study. The population for the study was 20 Basic school heads and teachers as the total number of basic schools in the Municipality under investigation was 10. All 10 heads of basic schools, were targeted for the study bringing the target population to 10 basic school heads. Following (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) recommendation on sample size, 10 Basic heads and 10 teachers were selected as a representative sample of the population. A purposive sampling technique was then employed to select individual participants of the study. Data was collected through a semi-structured interview employing an interview guide as the data collection instrument. Interviews was conducted in person by the researcher at scheduled time periods with the interviewees. The study was conducted in conformity with standard ethical principles relating to access, confidentiality, and transparency. Data analysis was done with thematic analysis using the NVivo as the tool for data analysis. The key findings from the study are as follows;

## **5.2 Key Findings**

On the first research question which sought to investigate the instructional leadership practices basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality exhibit, it was revealed that the basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality:

1. employ instructional supervision,
2. ensures strict measures on discipline,

3. Implementing student-centred learning strategies,
4. Monitoring and evaluation of lesson plans and organizing periodic staff meetings.

School heads achieved instructional supervision by being actively involved in monitoring and supervising of classroom activities of teachers and by moving around regularly to observe the day-to-day activities that were carried out in their institutions. In terms of inclusivity approach, head teachers or school leaders effectively collaborated with teachers and other staff members to run the school. In the management and administrative functions, school heads aided in the coordination of teaching, learning as well as teachers' and students' behaviour to ensure the smooth functioning of the school whilst performing their administrative functions which provides a strategic direction for the school.

On the second research question which addressed ways in which basic school head in the Yilo Krobo Municipality monitor students' progress, two broad themes;

1. Constant monitoring of classroom and
2. Inspection of Lesson notes and Student's workbooks.

Constant monitoring of classroom activities involved school heads making regular visits to classrooms to ensure that teachers were present and actively involved in the teaching process. On the other hand, Inspection involved head teachers; regular inspection of teachers' scheme of work and lesson notes as a means of indirectly monitoring students' progress. Similarly, the examination of students' workbooks provided the administrators with the chance to validate the academic progress of the students.

On the third research question, what measures do basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality adopt to ensure a safe and orderly environment for students? It was revealed that the measures that head teachers in the Yilo Krobo Municipality adopted where:

1. mobilizing support to undertake maintenance and renovation works and
2. ensuring a school-parents-community partnership.

Whilst the school heads mobilized funds to resolve infrastructural challenges such as leaking roofs and crack in walls, they also nurtured a warm partnership between the school, parents and the community in attempts to provide a safe and orderly environment for students.

On the fourth research question which investigated the strategies basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality employ to create learning opportunities for students, findings revealed eight strategies; they are:

1. activity- based learning,
2. project-based learning,
3. mentorship programs,
4. using innovative instructional methods,
5. ability groupings,
6. providing a variety of learning resources,
7. access to learning materials,
8. Assessment and organizing extracurricular activities.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Dwelling on the findings of the research, it is evident that the Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality play active role in the improvement of institutions they head. Based on the findings, the study concludes strategies to improve school

performance requires conscious and continuous effort of teachers and headteachers. The two players do not work in isolation. When headteachers carry out their core mandate such supervising teachers effectively, offering support and run an open administration, the teachers may work efficiently. This would mean that teachers may make all efforts to ensure that learners understand what is taught, and this would make learning the content easy. The end results would be good academic performance and a good image for the school.

From the preceding discussions, the study concludes that;

1. Instructional leadership practices exhibited by Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality, which includes instructional supervision, inclusivity, and management and administrative functions, are aligned with Lezotte Effective School Theory.
2. The specific ways in which Basic school heads in the Yilo Krobo Municipality monitor students' progress are conventional. Nonetheless, it aligns with the contingency theory which explains that schools can use the best means as available to them or within their confines to achieve their objective.
3. The measures implemented by school administrators in the Yilo Krobo municipality to guarantee the safety and organization of pupils were highly successful in acquiring funding for the establishment of a secure educational setting significantly, the aforementioned tactics methods mostly centred around the allocation of financial resources, since it has been demonstrated to be a significant barrier in maintaining a secure environment.
4. The strategies employed by the Basic school heads in creating leaning opportunities for students actually offer opportunities for students by themselves, from their peers, and from instructors. Additionally, the strategies not only offer

opportunity for cognitive development through classroom or mental teaching and learning, but also physical development through extra curriculum activities.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study proffers the following recommendations founded on the findings from the data analysis;

1. It emerged from the study that Basic school heads often take part in school administration by regularly moving around to observe the day-to-day activities that are carried out in their institutions. Being overall heads of the school, it would be more appropriate to have more time for strategic involvement than operational involvement. The study recommends that Basic school heads should have well instituted structures which allow teachers to take operational duties and report to the head. The school head here should occasionally and not regularly move around to monitor students and teachers. Rather teachers in charge should regularly report to the schools' heads. This can be achieved by preparing a schedule for „teachers on duty“ on weekly basis.
2. Also, it emerged from the findings by way of monitoring students' progress; head teachers inspect students' workbooks and also teachers' lesson notes. It is recommended that the Basic schools should incorporate the use of technology in teaching and learning. Particularly on monitoring, Basic schools should develop an internal platform where teachers can upload their lesson notes on weekly basis and schools can assess them intermittently without the presence of the teacher to ensure that the right thing is at all times and not when there is a call for inspection.
3. In ensuring a safe and orderly environment for students, it came out that Basic school heads rely on community support as well as ensuring a warm relationship with parents especially for infrastructure challenges. It is recommended that whilst

school heads continue their partnership with parents, they should put in request for government support through their district education directorate as well as the assembly.

4. Again, on the strategies employed by Basic school heads to create learning opportunities for students, it emerged from the study that basic school heads and teachers solely take responsibility of school improvement. Despite having a critical role to play, school improvement should not only be a responsibility of school heads and teachers. It is recommended that parents through PTA in the municipality are incorporated into school improvement practices. The basic schools periodically organize PTA meetings to meet with parents and involve them in school improvement. Again, Yilo Krobo Municipal Education Directorate can institute policies for parental involvement in school improvement through numerous forms for instance funding.

### **5.5 Implications for Educational, Administration and Management**

The study of school improvement practices offers significant insight into educational management, particularly in enhancing school functionality and performance, with implications extending beyond local contexts to inform international practices. Effective school improvement necessitates strong leadership, clear communication, and a shared commitment to learning. These practices also require administrators and management to implement evidence-based strategies, monitor progress, and adjust plans as needed. Ultimately, successful school improvement effort leads to improved student outcomes and a more positive learning environment.

## **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

In the conduct of the study, the researcher encountered limitations in time and finance. Ideally, such a study should include all basic schools in the district to get a comprehensive and generalizable view of school improvement practices in the district. However, owing to the limited time required to complete the study, selected schools were used as a representation of the entire population. 10 out of 49 basic schools (JHS) were included in this study. Again, including entire population of twenty in the study would impose financial burden on the researcher in terms of logistics and other research expenses. Given the constrained budget for the study, the representative sample of 20 was deemed appropriate for the study. It is prudent to note that despite this limitation all study objectives were achieved.

Further, another limitation was encountered in data collection. Given that schools are not concentrated in a single premise the researcher was required to move around to different locations to and schedule interviews with head teachers. Whilst it was costly moving to schools, it was also difficult in obtaining suitable time for interviews with school heads. Some interviews had to be cancelled as postponed only on the day when the researcher has travelled to the school premise. In some instance, the researcher had to wait for several hours before getting to conduct interviews with some school heads even after scheduling appointment in advance. This was due to the busy schedules of head teachers. Nonetheless, all the interviews were successfully carried out for the purpose of the study.

## **5.7 Suggestions for Future Studies**

The current study looked at school improvement practices of basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality using a qualitative approach. The findings may not be

generalizable to other districts as the physical financial and human resources available may differ. By employing the same or a similar approach, future research can also investigate school improvement practices of basic schools in other districts in order to gain a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the school improvement practices of basic schools in different Districts. Further, this study placed emphasis on the heads of basic schools. Nonetheless, school improvement practices involve the efforts of both school heads and teachers who are at the fore of the teaching activity. On this score, future studies can focus on the role of teachers in the improvement of basic schools.

### **5.8 Contributions to Knowledge**

Strategies to enhance school improvement practices requires a combination of effective strategies. Below are some of them.

1. Professional Development: Continues professional development for teachers and students is a key factor in school improvement. School heads who invest in training and support for educators enhancing instructional quality.
2. Technology integration: Integrating technology into teaching and learning enhances student's engagement access to resources and instructional effectiveness.
3. Continues Improvement and Evaluation of School improvement plans: School Heads who develop and implement school improvement plans based on needs assessments and data analysis are likely to achieve long-term success.
5. Digital Literacy: School Heads who promote digital literacy among teachers and students prepare the school for future educational challenges.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS AND TEACHERS**

##### **UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION-WINNEBA**

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student at the University of Education, Winneba undertaking a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree programme in Educational Administration and Management. My research topic is: *STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRACTICES OF BASIC SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS IN YILO KROBO MUNICIPALITY*. The information obtained from you will help give insight into practical approaches to improving academic performance.

Akugre Azure Peter

0249881781

#### **SECTION A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADTEACHERS**

##### **Instructional Leadership Practices of Headteachers of basic schools**

- (1) What are some of the effective school instructional practices adopted by basic school headteachers in Yilo Krobo?
- (2) What instructional leadership practices do you engage in to improve student's performance?
- (3) How do you improve instructional supervision in your school?
- (4) How does your school incorporate feedback from students and parents in its improvement processes?

##### **Ways of monitoring students' progress**

- (1) What do your teachers use to evaluate the quality of their teaching?
- (2) What metrics do you find most useful in understanding student performance?

(3) What method(s) do you use to track your students' progress?

(4) How do you measure students' needs and achievements in your school?

#### Ensuring a safe environment for students

(1) What measures do you put in place as headteacher to ensure a safe and orderly environment for students?

(2) Identify some key indicators that increase feelings of safety in your school.

(3) How do you create and ensure the sustainability of a positive learning environment in your school?

(4) What steps can you take to support a safe learning environment in your school?

#### Creation of Learning Opportunity for students

(1) What strategies do you implement to generate opportunity for learning?

(2) How do you identify and deal with learners with learning disabilities in your school?

(3) What teaching approaches do your teachers use during teaching and learning?

(4) What are the key principles you follow to ensure learning opportunities are accessible to all students, regardless of their learning style or background?

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS**

(1) What relevant instructional skills do you practice?

(2) What professional development opportunities are available for you in the school?

(3) What is your perception of the duties and responsibilities of an instructional leader?

(4) How can you develop a collaborative culture and the collective responsibility of a professional learning community?

(5) What do you think is the most powerful strategy for improving both teaching and learning?

## APPENDIX B

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION



DEAM/MED/INTRO/VOL.1/120

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2025.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We write to introduce **Akugre Azure Peter** a student pursuing a Master of Education, Administration and Management Programme at the Department of Educational Administration and Management, University of Education, Winneba.

**Akugre Azure Peter** is currently working on a research project titled:

**“SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRACTICE OF BASIC SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS IN YILO KROBO MUNICIPALITY”.**

We should be grateful if you could accord him the needed assistance to aid the completion of his research.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Judith Bampo".

**Dr. Judith Bampo**  
Ag. Head of Department

cc: Graduate School



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