

EVALUATION ROLE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HEADTEACHERS IN GHANA: DOES GENDER AND SCHOOL LOCATION MATTER?

Dr. Vera Rosemary Ankoma-Sey
College of Distance Education,
University of Cape Coast
vankomah-sey@ucc.edu.gh,
verasey@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The evaluation function of Senior High School heads in Ghana has been of grave concern to stakeholders especially in the midst of major transformation in the education system like Free SHS and Double track system. This study examined the evaluative role of SHS headteachers in Ghana. The study further investigated the influence of gender and school location on the performance of the evaluative role of the headteachers. A cross sectional data was taken through the administration of questionnaires to 1,397 teachers in SHS in Ghana. One sample t-test and Two-way analysis of variance (2x2 ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that SHS headteachers were rated high in terms of performing their evaluation function, $t(1396)=70.501$, $p<.001$. Gender [$F(1, 1393)=9.580$, $p=.002$.] and school location [$F(1, 1393)=3.847$, $p=.049$] were found to influence headteachers execution of the evaluative function. No significant interaction effect was found between gender and school location in teachers rating of the evaluation role of their headteachers, $F(1, 1393)=.082$, $p=.775$. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that GES should provide adequate support not only for headteachers but to teachers in the rural schools to ensure the effective running of the school. Again, special training and orientation should be given to male headteachers on their roles as head of schools.

Keywords: Evaluation, headteachers, gender, school location, administrative task.

INTRODUCTION

Effectively managed schools where schools heads are up to their tasks are those schools that produce high academic achievement that persist overtime in at least two consecutive years (Zaidi, 2012). Students would not benefit from a system of education unless there is some form of evaluation aimed at determining students' performance. This is one of the purposes of education. The head of school is the key person in any education system; they take care of the final arrangements for the education of students in a school. Their role cannot be taken for granted if they are expected to give the right kind of direction of education to students. Lydiah and Nasongo (2009) stated that, schools do not become great because of magnificent buildings but because of magnificent heads. Heads of schools play a significant role in determining academic performance in schools due to their tasks and roles. It is therefore important to evaluate the administrative tasks performance of school heads in second cycle schools in Ghana.

Evaluating involves collecting information at regular intervals about on-going programmes within the school and analysing it (Ankoma-Sey, 2014). The functions of the school head in evaluating are to prepare Annual Report of the school, analyse examination results; review the performance of school in all in-class and out-class activities, set new targets for individuals, departments and the school; make new request for better qualified teachers where necessary; and present financial statements and reports to the board of governors.

Evaluation is an indispensable task of central education authorities and serves three different purposes, namely, to comply with administrative demands, to fulfill accountability purposes; and to lead to pedagogical and managerial improvement in many cases, the administrative evaluation takes precedence over the more developmental one. At the same time, in most countries, evaluation has much more concern with the teachers or the students than the schools (Gurr, 2007).

Recently, teacher evaluation has become a major focus in educational policy debates and research efforts. This increased attention to teacher evaluation has raised questions about the relationship between evaluation and student outcomes. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) and others have demonstrated with value-added research that there are sizeable differences among teachers in their ability to help students learn at high levels – not just across schools but within schools. These differences lie at the head of the current approaches to measuring teacher effectiveness through teacher evaluation. Evaluation may be a tool to help teachers improve, but school leaders often lack training in how to use evaluation results to guide teachers towards professional growth.

Evaluation in schools is exclusively focused on processes in primarily intended to monitor compliance with regulations. It is usually concerned with aspects such as the composition of classes, the tasks and workload of teachers, the use of school infrastructure, and the management of human and budgetary resources. In Ghana, for instance, evaluation is centred on human and functional resources administration. Great emphasis is laid on staff management: punctuality of staff, their involvement in school activities, relations between teachers and parents and collaboration between teachers, quality of teaching (Ankoma-Sey, 2014).

Results from school evaluations are used by various stakeholders. For example, for educational authorities and parents, evaluation systems are intended as an accountability tool. For school leaders and administrators, findings from evaluation should provide relevant indicators to support school-laid actions and decision making, internal evaluation benefits are seen as primarily for schools, teachers, and students with the aim of improving learning, teaching, and management within the school (Foubert, 2009).

Gender and SHS Headteachers Evaluation Role

In Ghana, women are acutely under-represented in school headship, especially in rural areas. This is largely attributed to cultural context. Women are considered to be weak and are discouraged from taking up teaching posts in deprived areas. This has wider effects on girls' attitudes to learning. Some girls felt that it was not worth studying hard or even going to school because female role models they encountered in the villages were either farmers, seamstresses or fish mongers and housewives who "give plenty birth" (Oduro and MacBeath, 2003, p. 445).

Smith (2004) observed that the diminishing presence of male teachers was a global issue and that the proportion of men within teaching ranks was declining significantly. He cited many studies whose findings demonstrated the continual decline of males in the teaching profession. He quoted figures from Commonwealth of Australia (2002) and Queensland Catholic Education

Commission (2002) to illustrate the situation of gender imbalance among primary school teachers, especially within Australia. Nelson and Sassi (2005), for instance, was cited to have claimed that in 2002, the proportion of male primary teachers (within Australia) was only 20.9% and only nine percent of American elementary school teachers are men. These findings are consistent with Deem (2003) whose study of women academics in the UK, revealed that most women raised gender issues ranging from inequitable household and motherhood responsibilities to sexist behaviour by some male colleagues and discrimination in promotion. Heads of schools are lead teachers. This connotes that teachers over the years become heads. It has also been speculated in some quarters that teacher's gender affected the performance of the child (Okoro, Ekanem, & Udoh, 2012). What is more is that, they alluded that, results of studies on the influence of teacher's gender on the child's performance, however, appear to be inconclusive. Some authorities cited by Smith (2004) had claimed that there was a strong relationship between the gender of the teacher and the academic achievement of the student. Smith indicated that boys suffered a disadvantage in primary schools due to the paucity of male teachers and went further to campaign along with other protagonists for increase in the number of male teachers in order to cushion the effects of teacher gender imbalance in the schools. Krieg (2005) reported that a number of findings had indicated teacher and student genders were correlated with test outcomes. It can be argued that since heads are lead teachers and continue to be practicing teachers, the discourse by the above authorities have strong and direct bearings on general school administration by heads of SHS.

School Location and SHS Headteachers Evaluation Role

School location (urban, sub-urban, or rural) has been associated with student achievement. Because most schools tend to be neighbourhood schools, they typically reflect larger community level processes (Gottfredson, 2001). Schools in urban, poor, and disorganised communities experience more school problems than schools in rural or sub-urban, affluent, and organised communities (Gottfredson, 2001). It has been found that students attending schools in school districts that are large, urban, or both are often subject to conditions of school violence, high dropout rates, vandalism, inadequate equipment and facilities, greater number of inexperienced teachers, student and teacher alienation, and academic failure. Neighborhood support, neighbourhood youth behaviour, and neighbourhood safety have been associated with school success (Mbuso, 2000).

Neighbourhood context can also influence educational outcomes through the amount and quality of social capital or social networks that exist in a given community. The effects of living in a socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhood can be particularly large when the neighbourhood is relatively isolated from mainstream values of work and education. (Semke & Sheridan, 2012). It has been argued that the active involvement of parents and local communities in the education of children had a positive effect on the performance of schools, as indicated by higher levels of commitment of teachers and better test scores by students (Oosterlynck, 2011). In addition to the mentoring, networking, and mutual support associated with high levels of social capital contribute to success in education, (Onderi & Makori, 2013).. Children who find themselves in environments where education is considered to be a waste of time, and parents displayed a gross disinterest in how their children were getting on at school, were likely to adopt negative attitudes towards school work (Opore, 1999). Opore (1999) further indicated that in communities where parents attach great importance to educational success, academic effort, on the part of children, and reinforcement on the part of parents are a characteristic, hence good academic performance is common.

On the other hand, children who find themselves in environments where education is not valued very much are likely to put in less academic effort hence they invariably become academic losers. These findings tend to support Coleman's (1988) social capital theory which

posits that children who receive social support from both the home and the neighbourhood tend to work hard on their studies and eventually become academic successes (Opore, 1999). Opore and Dramanu (2002) found that children who lived in elite residential areas spend more time studying than those in non-elite residential areas did. Opore and Dramanu (2002) explained that children who lived in neighbourhoods where parents and other adults encouraged and supported education are more likely to expend more effort on their school work. This thinking buttresses the evidence from environmental psychology, which posits that the physical world in which an individual lives is not simply a neutral background for social interaction, but has profound influence in shaping, suggesting, facilitating and sometimes preventing behaviour.

In an attempt to find out how the neighbourhood affects the academic achievement of boys and girls, researchers have reported greater effects of the neighbourhood on boys than girls. The reasons for this difference according to researchers may result from the fact that boys spend more time in the neighbourhood than girls (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). This suggests an interaction of gender and location of school effect in academic achievement. Since gender and location affect students' achievement, schools educational outcome, and teaching and learning, these two variable are likely to affect the administrative (evaluation) role of headteachers in schools.

Oduro (2003) reported that in Ghana it is common practice, especially in rural schools, for headteachers to be left unsupported after appointment. Most headteachers assume duty with little or no knowledge of their job descriptions, and the result is that headteachers tend to depend principally on experiential learning in carrying out their leadership tasks. This suggests that the administrative functions of these heads are left to chance. This indicates that the location of school is also a significant indicator for better performance of administrative tasks of headteachers in Ghana.

Rationale

Evaluation is one of the most essential administrative tasks which headteachers execute in schools. This is because the evaluative role provides an avenue for the assessment of the product of events or activities conducted through the performance of the other administrative tasks (Ankoma-sey, 2014). This makes the evaluative very critical to the successful of educational outcome. There is no doubt that the effective performance of the evaluative role of SHS headteachers in Ghana could contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which aims at quality education. I was worried when National Development Planning Commission, Ghana (NDPC) (2018) in the baseline report on SDG, revealed that Ghana is far from the realisation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Again, Ghana has over few months now has seen transformation in the SHS system of education. Particular among them is the introduction of Free SHS and Double track system of school. I have no doubt in my mind that the introduction of these policies require that SHS headteachers do a lot work in order to cater for the growing population of students. Are teachers in the position to still carry out their evaluative function effectively?

A scan through reveals that leadership in SHSs in Ghana is in jeopardy. Studies have found alarming results showing that little emphasis has been placed on the preparation of teachers for headship positions in schools (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2015; Brown & Owusu, 2014; Donkor, 2016; MacBeath & Swaffield, 2009; Zame et al., 2008). Are these headteachers in a position to effectively perform their administrative? These are mind boggling questions this study needs to answer. Whether headteachers would be able to perform their roles would also depend on the gender of the head and the school location (Drukker et al., 2009; Gottfredson, 2001; Oduro, 2003; Oduro & MacBeath, 2003; Okoro, Ekanem, & Udoh, 2012). There is the

need also to examine the influence of gender and school location in the execution of the evaluative function of SHS headteachers.

Hypotheses

The study was guided by two hypotheses:

1. H_0 : SHS Headteachers in Ghana do not effectively perform their evaluation function
2. H_0 : Gender and school location do not influence SHS headteachers performance of their evaluative function

METHODOLOGY

The cross sectional survey design with quantitative approach was adopted for this study. This research favoured the positivist paradigm. The study covered SHSs in seven selected regions namely, Volta Region, Brong Ahafo Region, Eastern Region, Ashanti Region, Greater Accra Region, Central Region and Western Region. The study selected 66 SHSs selected from these regions. These regions were selected because majority of SHSs were located there. SHS Teachers formed the sampling elements and thus, the target population comprised of teachers within the four selected regions. The total number of teachers were estimated to be 36, 147. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to sample to 1,397 (90.1% return rate) teachers from the selected schools. About 896 teachers were in urban schools and 501 were in rural schools. The urban-rural school categorisation was done based on GES indicators for classifying a school as urban or rural. Respondents were required to indicate the gender of their headteachers. It was found that 905 of the headteachers rated were males and 492 were females.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted on 10-items which measured the extent to which headteachers carried out their evaluation function as part of performing their administrative task. Respondents were required to rate these items on a scale of 1-5 with 1 indicating poor performance of the evaluation function and 5 showing better performance of the function. The indicators for measuring the evaluation function included whether headteachers: (a) evaluated educational programmes, school curriculum and reports from unit heads annually, (b) assessed the performance of all staff, (c) gathered information at regular interval about on-going programmes, (d) set academic targets to evaluate the schools' performances, (e) evaluated whether set targets by Ghana Education Service (GES) has been achieved.

A pilot-testing was conducted to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the instrument and was addressed duly. The reliability estimates of the scale used was estimated using the Cronbach Alpha Reliability Estimate procedure because the items were on a scale. A reliability estimate of .897 was found which was revealed to be acceptable. During data collection, ethical issues were taken into considerations which included informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, protection of vulnerable participants, among others. All these steps were taken to ensure validity and reliability of responses.

The data gathered were processed using SPSS (version 25). The data was screened and cleaned for possible errors and missing values. No missing values were found, however, errors found were data entry errors which were addressed. Hypothesis one was tested using one sample t-test analysis which tested whether the headteachers rating differed significantly from the criterion mean (test value) of 30.0. Hypothesis two was tested using two-way Analysis of Variance (2x2 ANOVA). Assumptions underlying the use of these statistical tools were tested and were all met.

RESULTS

H0: SHS Headteachers in Ghana do not effectively perform their evaluation function
One-sample t-test analysis

As earlier indicated one-sample t-test was used to test this hypothesis. Positive and significant mean difference suggests that headteachers perform their evaluation function effectively and vice versa. Table 1 gives the details of the results.

Table 1: Performance of Evaluation Function of SHS Headteachers in Ghana

	Mean	SD	Mean difference	t-value	df	p-value
Evaluation	40.68	5.66	10.68	70.501	1396	.000*
Confidence Interval	Lower Limits		Upper Limits			
Values	10.382		10.977			

Test Value=30.0, *significant at .05 level

The result revealed that SHS headteachers were rated high in terms of performing their evaluation function in schools, $t(1396)=70.501$, $p<.001$. The test variable ($M=40.68$) was significantly higher than the test value ($M=30.0$). A mean difference of 10.68 was found indicating that SHS teachers performed their evaluation function effectively.

H0: Gender and school location do not influence SHS headteachers performance of their evaluative function

This hypothesis was tested using 2x2 ANOVA. Three issues were expected to emerge out this analysis: (a) gender difference in the rating of SHS headteachers performance of evaluation role of SHS headteachers, (b) difference in SHS headteachers performance of evaluation role with regards to location of school, (c) Do gender and school location interact to influence SHS headteachers performance of their evaluation function.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Independent Variables
 Regarding the Dependent Variable**

Gender	Location of school	Mean	SD	N
Male	Urban	40.5971	5.79852	551
	Rural	39.8390	6.33883	354
	Total	40.3006	6.02358	905
Female	Urban	41.5449	5.17079	345
	Rural	40.9796	4.01106	147
	Total	41.3760	4.85627	492
Total	Urban	40.9621	5.58136	896
	Rural	40.1737	5.77371	501
	Total	40.6793	5.66169	1397

Result in Table 2 showed that male teachers ($M=40.30$, $SD= 6.023$) rated their headteachers high just like the female teachers ($M=41.376$, $SD=4.856$). Teachers in both the rural

($M=40.173$, $SD=5.773$) and urban areas ($M=40.962$, $SD=5.581$) rated their headteachers high on the performance of the evaluation function

Table 3: Test of Between Subjection Effect

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	525.462 ^a	3	175.154	5.517	.001
Intercept	1851763.013	1	1851763.013	58329.681	.000
Gender	304.133	1	304.133	9.580	.002*
Sch. location	122.133	1	122.133	3.847	.049*
Gender * sch. location	2.591	1	2.591	.082	.775
Error	44222.870	1393	31.746		
Total	2356513.000	1397			
Corrected Total	44748.332	1396			

**significant at .05 level*

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference between male and female headteachers in the performance of evaluation function, $F(1, 1393)=9.580$, $p=.002$. Again, significant difference was found in the performance of SHS headteachers evaluation function with regards to the location of the school, $F(1, 1393)=3.847$, $p=.049$. No significant interaction effect was found between gender and school location in teachers rating of the evaluation role of their headteachers, $F(1, 1393)=.082$, $p=.775$. Evidence has been showed in Figure 1 by examining the error bars.

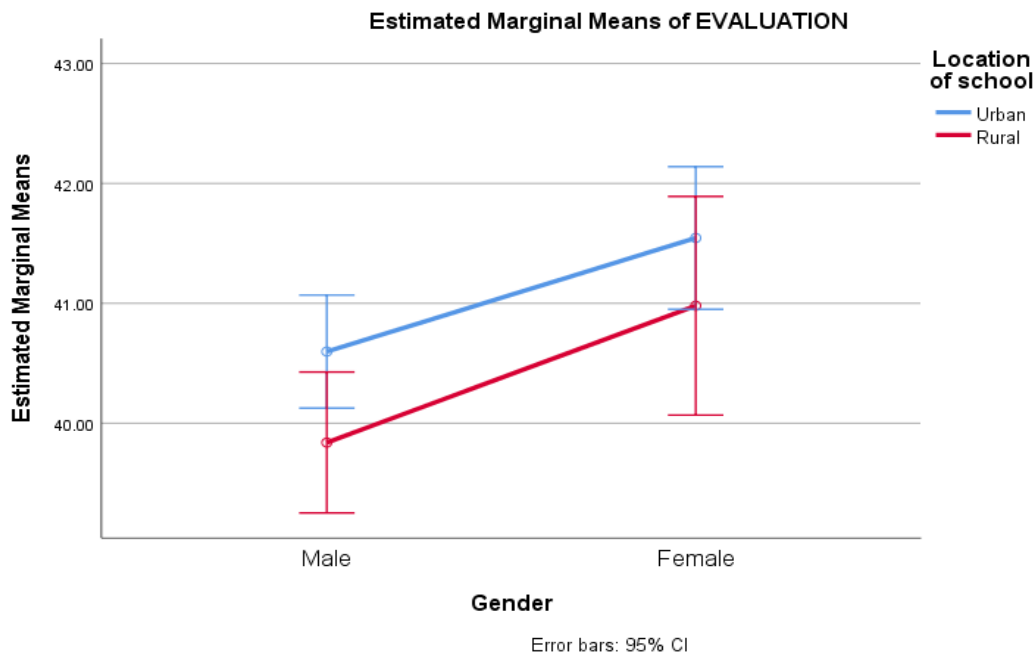


Figure 1: Pictorial Representation of the 2x2 ANOVA with Error Bars

Further analysis of the two main effects showed that female headteachers (irrespective of the

school location) were rated higher than male ones regarding the performance of evaluation function. Again, headteachers in the urban schools (irrespective of their gender) were rated better in the performance of evaluation function than those in the rural schools.

DISCUSSIONS

Results of this study simply confirms the assumptions by a lot of stakeholders in education in Ghana that female heads are very particular with their administrative roles than their male counterparts. Evidence has been provided by Brown (1979) who found that female managers in Ghanaian institutions were dependable and had critical supervisory abilities. Though Brown did not reveal a very wide difference, the underlying factor is that it is possible that a number of workshops and conferences ran to empower women in leadership and heads in Ghana may also be a contributory factor to this outcome. From Oduro and MacBeath's view (2003) women in Ghana are acutely under-represented in school headship and this is largely attributed to cultural context. Women are considered to be weak and are discouraged from taking up headship positions especially in deprived areas. The findings of this study speaks to the notion that this perception do not affect women in executing their roles as heads.

The location of heads (school) is an obvious determinant of a heads performance of his/her administrative tasks. It was found out that, heads who find themselves in urban schools perform better than those in rural schools in performing the evaluative function. This may be the attribution of advantage of social amenities at the disposal of heads in the urban settings. Again, infrastructure in these two categories of schools in many ways differ, since this can be confirmed by how categorisation of SHS in Ghana are done. Schools in categories A and B are usually found in the urban location where the social construct sometimes predefine quality. Non-performance of heads in rural schools can also be attributed to the unattractiveness of rural life which appears to have made working in the rural schools non-competitive. By implication those in the rural areas do not have the necessary amenities such as good treated water, good roads, good classroom blocks with good pieces of furniture, computer laboratories, science and language laboratories, adequate lightening systems, learning materials qualified teachers and many more, that is why they cannot compete academically with their counterparts in the urban areas. Though marginal, in similar findings, Metzler and Woessmann (2012) found differences in performance levels of students due to the location in terms of urban, rural and private. This was also informed by the location teachers and heads. Oduro (2003) reports that, in Ghana it is common practice, especially in rural schools, that heads of schools are left unsupported. Most heads of schools assume duty with little or no knowledge of their job descriptions, and the result is that heads of schools tend to depend principally on experiential learning in carrying out their leadership tasks. This definitely might affect their level of performance of their administrative function.

AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings from my study have made evident the fact that SHS teachers in Ghana carry out their evaluation function well, however, it appears those in the urban schools were more effective in performing their evaluation role than schools in the rural areas. This is so due to the fact that headteachers in the rural schools are mostly not supported. These headteachers have several issues ranging from inadequate infrastructure and funding to poor school climate which usually hinders the performance of the school. Due to the socio-economic status of parents and children in rural schools, it may sometimes difficult for headteachers to smoothly perform their administrative task which includes evaluation. It can concluded that the location of school in which headteachers find themselves can significantly influence their execution of headship roles since the performance of these roles largely depends on the staff, students and parents. It appears getting cooperation from these individuals in the rural areas is a burden

for headteachers. In another case, female headteachers were rated significantly higher in performing their evaluative role than their male counterpart. The implication is that female headteachers were effective in performing their evaluation role. Females by nature seems to be orderly and strict in whatever function they do.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that GES should provide adequate support not only for headteachers but to teachers in the rural schools to ensure the effective running of the school. This support should be in the form of providing finances, infrastructure and training for staff (including the headteachers). Again, special training and orientation should be given to male headteachers on their roles as head of schools for them to also perform just like or better than their female counterpart.

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BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of AUTHORS



Vera Rosemary Ankoma-Sey holds a PhD in Educational Administration and Planning. Currently, she is a Senior lecturer at the College of Distance Education at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. She has held various academic and administrative positions in the university. Currently, she is the Co-ordinator in-charge of Teaching Practice and Project Work at the College of Distance Education at the University of Cape Coast. She has a number of published articles and Distance Education modules to her favour. Her specialisation is in school leadership, teacher development, and educational administration.

Vera Rosemary Ankoma-Sey, PhD
 College of Distance Education
 University of Cape Coast
Verasey@yahoo.com or vankomah-sey@ucc.edu.gh
 +23324457208
<https://orcid.org.0000-0002-3254-0680>