

# Transformational Leadership: An Imperative for Quality Education in Pre-tertiary Schools; Lessons from Ghana

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## Abstract

Presently, majority of countries are working towards achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Apparently, SDG 4, which is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, is critical for human development and the reduction of poverty. Quality education is a significant goal to achieve and a priority for majority of countries. Looking at education UNESCO indicates that it is a human right for all throughout life and access must be matched by quality. Research has indicated that school leaders have an important part to play in ensuring quality education. As noted, leadership style is the second biggest influence on student learning, just behind classroom teaching (Leithwood, Jantzi & McElheron-Hopkins, 2006). Effective school leadership ensures effective use of resources in schools which ultimately improves learning outcomes and quality of education. This paper reviews concepts of quality education, school leadership, leadership's link to quality education and the essence of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership in this context is underpinned by theoretical perspective, of Bass's transformational leadership theory of 1985. Examples of some experiences in Ghanaian basic schools in relation to the importance of leadership to improve learning outcomes are pointed out to bring out lessons that can be applied to other countries such as those in Africa and the Americas. The focus of the paper emphasizes the essence of transformational leadership for quality education as it creates the enabling environment that promotes quality education. The author concludes that transformational leadership is essential for pre-tertiary schools in Ghana and elsewhere as it enables one to build trust by communicating a strong vision, giving selfless service, providing training in line with staff needs, giving and mobilizing resources, preparing to take risk with followers and modelling what is expected of them. Also, school leader preparation and training programmes must be designed in ways that will enable the transmission of knowledge and skills associated with transformational leadership.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, Quality education, Pre-Tertiary schools, School leadership

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## 1. Introduction

Quality education is the priority for majority of countries, and they work at various strategies to achieve this. Looking at education UNESCO indicates that it is a human right for all throughout life and access must be matched by quality. For any country to develop and survive it is essential to build its human capacity through education. According to Adu-Agyem and Osei-Poku (2012) in order to achieve quality education, the individual being educated should be developed intellectually, psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, physically and intuitively to positively contribute towards national development and adapt to technological changes and other innovations. As Ghana aims at achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2023, the SDG 4 which is "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" is one of the important goals for the country. Quality education is critical to ensuring Ghana attains the Sustainable development goals (SDGs) and reduce poverty. The argument we want to drive home here is that the quality of education can improve through school leadership and specifically transformational leadership. The focus is also on pre-tertiary education because that is the foundational level of education. It is important to build and have a strong foundation for education of individuals.

Pre tertiary education in Ghana is the education individuals have before they access tertiary level education or post-secondary level education. Since Ghana's educational reforms introduced in 1987, the education system has had a 6+3+3+4-year structure. This means six years of primary education, followed by two three-year stages of secondary education (junior secondary and senior secondary) and four years of higher education (bachelor's

degree programmes). Presently, the new structure has Kindergarten, primary school, Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) shall all be described as Basic school. Junior High School (JHS) 1,2,3 and Senior High School (SHS) 1 is now be referred as (Basic)BS 7,8,9 and 10 respectively. SHS 1 is now BS 10. All students in JHS 1-SHS 1 run a Common Core Programme (CCP) which comprises nine subjects namely, Mathematics, Languages, Science, Religious and Moral Education (RME), Physical and Health Education (not examinable), Career Technology, Social Studies, Computing and Creative Art and Design. A new examination called National Standard Assessment Test (NSAT) is conducted at Primary 2,4,6 and JHS 2.

Leadership is the process of motivating a group of people towards the realisation of a common objective (Abdullah, Muhammad, & Nasir, 2019). Within the context of this paper the 'common objective' for school leadership is to improve learning outcomes. School leadership plays an important role in promoting quality education. According to research it is perceived that the school leader is second to the teacher in having influence on the learning outcomes of learners. The leader is the pivot around which all activities evolve in a school. According to Day and Sammons (2016), school leaders have a key role to play in setting direction, creating a positive school culture including the proactive school mindset, supporting and enhancing staff motivation and commitment needed to foster improvement and promote success for schools in challenging circumstances. Therefore, effective school leadership and effective use of resources in schools improve quality of education. This shows the essence of their position in schools to transform the culture of schools towards positive outcomes.

### *1.1 Purpose of the Paper*

This paper focuses on the essence of transformational leadership at the pre-tertiary education level in promoting improved learning outcomes to ensure quality education based on literature

## **2. Quality Education - Concepts**

There are the different schools of thought of quality education. Going back to the Dakar framework of action, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, in the year 2000, 164 governments pledged to achieve Education for All (EFA) and identified six goals to be met by 2015. Quality education according to the framework comprised learners who are healthy and motivated, processes made up of competent teachers using active pedagogies, curricula that is content relevant as well as systems that have good governance and equitable resource allocation. When these are in place then there is quality education.

Some educators believe quality education is about having high standards with well trained teachers and good facilities. According to UNESCO (2004) quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. This is looking more at the quality of education from the perspective of how deep, how wide and how far education is able be beneficial. Gueorguiev as cited in Netshifhefhe, Nobongoza, and Maphosa, (2016) defines quality as the degree to which a product or service meets certain expectations. Researchers Adu Agyem and Osei-Poku (2012) look at quality education from the perspective of six key elements. Firstly, it must be holistic whereby it is concerned with the development of every child's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential. Secondly, there is the aspect of having well trained and motivated teachers; thirdly it promotes the use of child-centred teaching approaches or pedagogies in well-managed classrooms and schools. The fourth element is having skillful assessment. The fifth is the effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool for learning. Finally, and most importantly quality education comprises leadership that ensures effective use of time, right attitude towards learning and effective supervision. IIEP (2006), identified ten definitions of quality: providing excellence, being exceptional, providing value for money, conforming to specifications, getting things right the first time, meeting customers' needs, having zero defects, providing added value, exhibiting fitness of purpose, and exhibiting fitness for purpose. It can be deduced here that the focus is on achieving excellence or high standards. One will be measuring outputs or outcomes according to an acceptable or agreed 'yardstick'.

Slade (2021), in explaining quality education, mentions that in order to have quality education it is based on three pillars. These are namely Leaders who ensure learners get access to quality teachers; the use of quality learning tools and professional development; and the establishment of safe and supportive quality learning environments. The learning environment must be safe to take risks, safe to ask questions and safe to find things out. These learning activities being done in a safe space promote improved learning outcomes.

Quality education is perceived differently by different stakeholders. Achieving quality education can be challenging for varied reasons. One may be that it is because it is difficult to conceptualize as it is dependent on

how one perceives or interprets it. As quality education is seen differently between and among stakeholders, different countries or communities it cannot be standardized in the same manner everywhere and with everyone. As rightly put by UNESCO (2005) quality education must be locally relevant and culturally appropriate, so quality education will take many forms around the world. Barrett, et al. (2006) on the other hand acknowledged that quality has five key dimensions: - effectiveness, efficiency, equality, relevance and sustainability. They also emphasized that these five dimensions can serve as a basis for analyzing the quality of education innovations aimed at any aspect of the education system (e.g. policy changes, national administration, local administration, classroom interventions). According to Gola, as cited in Bikas and Martin (2006) the definition of quality, as applied to higher education by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), could be 'specifying worthwhile learning goals and enabling students to achieve them'. Specifying worthwhile learning goals would involve articulating academic standards to meet: (i) society's expectations; (ii) students' aspirations; (iii) the demands of the government, business and industry; and (iv) the requirements of professional institutions. One can observe that the key stakeholders of quality education in this instance are the beneficiaries of education, the community, students, industry, and educational institutions.

Laurie et al (2016) identified three key models of quality education that are predominant in education literature. These models emphasize the point that the characterization of quality education varies. One model is the economic model of education which measures quality in relation to inputs and outputs. Quality education will therefore be attained if maximum output is derived from the inputs. The next is the humanist tradition model that emphasizes education as a process, with the student at the centre of that process. With this model quality education is seen from the lens of being learner centred, participative and democratic. The third model Laurie et al (2016) mentioned is the 'learning as connection' model of quality. This model is underpinned by the constructivist perspective of education and therefore views quality education from the perspective of emphasizing the importance of connecting existing learner knowledge of local context to the process of learning abstract concepts.

Literature has also looked at quality education from the standpoint of "Fitness for purpose" or "Fitness of purpose. Fitness for purpose focuses on the relationship between the purpose of the product or services and its quality. What then will be the purpose of education? In the long term it will be to obtain knowledge and skills to be able to fit in the world of work and function effectively in the community in which one finds his or herself. So once learners are able to do this when they complete schooling it is assumed the education is fit for purpose and quality is obtained. Quality therefore is measured by the consumer who in this case is the learner who has been through schooling. 'Fitness of purpose' is more the extent to which the educational goals are appropriate. Bikas and Martin (2006) differentiate fitness of purpose as being the extent to which the objectives of education/educational institutions are relevant to the stakeholders whilst fitness for purpose is the extent to which the educational institutions can fulfil their objectives. Laurie, Nonoyama-Tarumi, McKeown, and Hopkins, (2016) noted therefore that providing quality education is a complex undertaking partially because the concept of quality in education is continuously evolving.

To sum up when explaining quality education, it is primarily education that is fit for purpose. As noted by Laurie et al. (2016), quality education is based on the premise that educational aims are met and purposes fulfilled. This means the learning outcomes are beneficial and relevant to the learner. This occurs when education is pedagogically and developmentally sound in relation to local context. With quality education the learner is developed to become an active and productive member of society. The indicators of quality education comprise among others; Quality leadership and management, Quality of teaching and learning, High standard of academic achievement, Quality academic, Physical, Sanitation and Recreational Facilities, values emphasized and taught and School/ Community Relationships and involvement.

### **3. Promoting Quality Education in Ghana**

Ghana is committed to improving its education system to achieve SDG4. The education Act (2008)778 which is the backbone to Ghana's education system indicates that its focus is to provide an educational system intended to produce well balanced individuals with requisite knowledge, skills, values aptitudes and attitudes to become functional and productive citizens for the total development and the democratic advancement for the nation. Ghana has set for itself very high standards for education.

Ghana has several reforms, programmes and policies that focus on improving the quality of education (MOE, UNESCO). The goal of the Ministry of Education (MOE) is to formulate and implement policies that ensure the provision of quality and accessible education to all Ghanaians to meet the needs of the labour market, and to

accelerate the acquisition of requisite skills to achieve human development, good health, poverty reduction, national integration, and international recognition, as well as to create an honest, creative, and responsible citizenship. (MOE, ESP 2018-2030). In Ghana, the measurement of the quality of education has focused principally on resource inputs and outcomes. Hence, the quality of education is measured against stated curriculum goals and objectives, and a range of elements including the level of student achievement, the qualification of teachers, pupil-teacher ratio, the availability of textbooks, school facilities and equipment, and cognitive achievement (Ghartey-Ampiah n.d).

The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service, with USAID's assistance, established a task force in June 2006 to develop the National Literacy Acceleration Program (NALAP) for example. It was rolled out in 2010 in schools. NALAP is a comprehensive and well-structured mother-tongue literacy program. It emphasizes the use of Ghanaian language to improve the reading ability of children. The NALAP instructional approach is supported by research evidence which indicates that children from multilingual society learn best when instruction, during the early years of schooling, is provided in the home language. The Ghana Accountability for Learning Outcomes Project (GALOP- 2020) is a five-year project with the objective to improve the quality of education in low-performing basic education schools and strengthen education sector equity and accountability in Ghana. The free Senior High School (SHS) policy aims at empowering and providing opportunities to the youth to help drive Ghana's development, and in the process create jobs. Its ultimate aim is to give all Ghanaian children the opportunity to access quality education. So as a nation our goal is to provide quality education for all learners. This can be seen with Ghana's Education Strategic Plan (ESP) – 2018 -2030 which revolves around the ambition to improve the quality of education for all.

#### 4. Leadership's Link to Quality Education

Educational leadership refers to all school leadership activities that affect learning (learning for and of students, teachers and the school in itself) both directly and indirectly. Leadership therefore has an important role to play in promoting quality education. According to Leithwood, and Jantzi (2006), almost a third of the changes in learning were attributed to leadership – making it second only to classroom teaching in its impact on education outcomes. The school leader for instance plays the role of ensuring resources are available and accessible to guarantee quality and lifelong learning. School leaders also encourage, direct and support their schools to become effective and efficient learning communities that promote quality education. Leadership therefore is at the heart of quality education, (Lozano, 2024). This implies that in order to promote and achieve quality education there must be effective leaders in schools to make this happen. School leaders are linked closely to quality education as they can be said to be the change agent and the pivot around which all school activities evolve. Supporting this view Robinson (2006) indicated that school leaders do not only run efficient, safe and caring learning environments but they also be leaders of teaching and learning. Fuentes, Sanchez and Ruiz, (2024) mention that in today's educational context, leadership goes beyond the simple transmission of knowledge and facilitation of learning; it includes the holistic development of students and teachers, organisational restructuring and curriculum management in educational institutions. All these school related activities are essential for improving learning outcomes and promoting quality education and it is the school leader who drives them to ensure they happen effectively.

Wilhoit, Pittenger, and Rickabaugh, (2016) also agree that leadership has important effects on school organisation, culture and on teachers; this in turn has effect on student outcomes indirectly operating mainly through direct effects on the organisation, culture and teaching and learning environment. Lozano (2024) in reporting the conclusions of the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (2010), research commissioned by the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance (VVOB) of 2018 emphasis the fact that school leadership matters for quality education because: 1) school leaders who develop, support, and evaluate the quality of teaching, influence learning outcomes; 2) the impact of school leadership on learning outcomes is second only to the quality of teaching and learning; 3) effective school leadership is critical for raising learners' achievement; 4) effective school leadership is particularly important in improving poorly performing and disadvantaged schools; and 5) successful school leadership has a positive impact on the entire school. Elaborating on these conclusions it is observed that as school leaders carry out their duties of supervising, monitoring, coaching and supporting teachers they are ensuring acceptable standards that guarantee improved learning outcomes are maintained ultimately leading to quality education. These activities of the school leaders also build the capacity of teachers who are critical for building up students and improving their learning outcomes which then leads to quality education.

It must be noted that leadership does not only lie in the hands of the school principal, school head, headmaster or

headmistress, it can be distributive or shared. Leadership being shared means leadership activities are not limited to formal leaders but also to informal leaders who are committed and share organizational values. Other stakeholders can therefore take up leadership roles depending on the need or situation. Leithwood et al., as cited in Fuentes (2024) indicates that leadership is a function that can be exercised even without a formal designation, and its development depends on the availability of resources and the skills of the leader and his or her team. Within this context a leader refers to an individual who purposely influences others to achieve set goals. Shared leadership gives the opportunity to consult, have consensus building, participate in decision making activities, and teamwork which in turn would lead to good learning outcomes. The designated school head should be able to lead other leaders towards the common goal of achieving quality education.

School leaders' practices are consequently critical for working towards quality education. In a project report by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom, (2004) it is indicated that leadership practices such as setting directions, developing people and making the organization work do have a direct link to ensuring quality education. When a leader sets directions, there is a clear vision that is communicated and understood by all. This also involves having high expectations of staff and learners and most importantly using data to track progress and performance. When the school head monitors and evaluates teachers then builds up their capacity based on their needs, learning outcomes improve and ultimately leads to quality education. These practices contribute to the school leader being effective and transformative, whereby there is an emphasis on change to improve learning. Learning by the learners or pupils, learning by teachers and learning within the organization that is the school.

## 5. Essence of Transformational Leadership

In order to bring out the essence of transformational leadership it is important to first understand what transformational leadership means or is. According to Litz and Blaik- Hourani (2020), transformational leadership was initially conceived of as a process whereby leaders strategically transform the system or organization to a higher level by increasing the achievement and motivation of their followers. Transformational leadership increases employees' knowledge about a particular goal that has to be achieved, causes followers to move beyond their own personal desires in favour of the organisation and finally elevates the followers' present needs to higher order needs (Northouse, 2016). This definition is related to the fact that transformational leaders are able to give their followers direction. This is ensured for example by the school principal being able to identify and share the school's vision, lead and inspire others by example, create a culture of learning, and encourage staff members to undertake professional development (Cruickshank, 2017). If one knows where one is going and how one is going to get there, then one is better able to achieve that goal and achieving the goal benefits both the individual and institution. Northouse highlighting higher order needs means we have needs that are satisfied internally, such as social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Transformational leaders have the ability to inspire individuals, develop trust, and encourage creativity and personal growth. Individuals who go beyond their own self-interests and develop a sense of purpose to benefit the group, organisation or society.

From the theoretical perspective, Bass transformational leadership theory of 1985 indicates that transformational leadership has four distinct elements. The first element is intellectual stimulation whereby a transformational leader promotes innovation and questions the status quo. The leader encourages followers to assess situations by asking questions that make followers think. - what is it, what if, why is it, how can we, where can we, or when can. In order to do things differently one would need to collect data of what the situation is. Record keeping is therefore essential, then based on available information, challenge, question and be innovative. The second element according to Bass is individualized consideration whereby the transformational leader extends assistance and support to followers as needed. This is characterized by considering individual differences such as the issue of equity, being tactful in guiding others, showing genuine concern and building trust. In this way the transformational leader coaches, mentors and makes use of growth opportunities. The next element is inspirational motivation whereby leaders are able to communicate their strong vision to followers. A school leader having this characteristic is able to ensure teamwork in schools. Others are inspired so that they have a sense of belonging and therefore great outcomes are achieved. The last element of transformational leadership Bass's theory mentions is idealized influence whereby the leaders are role models who are purpose driven and followers imitate and adopt their principles.

So then how is this translated into school leadership? It is expected that transformational leaders will transform the school environment and the individuals within it. In order to take initiatives, they need to be observant, creative to come up with solutions for any challenges faced. They can stimulate teachers to have a sense of belonging and are more eager to work. These teachers are motivated and willing to try new strategies because they trust their school leaders to support them. The transformational school leader is also able to identify needs

and interests by being observant, critical and keeping relevant records. Working together with stakeholders' transformational school leaders forge strong collaborations and collegial work ethics with their teachers setting high attainable standards. This issue is also accentuated by Ahmed and Kiran (2024) in their study on the impact of transformational leadership on educational institutions in Pakistan where they found out that transformational leadership fosters cooperation and continuous development by positively influencing institutional culture. They also noted that teachers working under positive transformational leadership have greater job satisfaction, motivation, and dedication to the achievement of their students. This further emphasizes the essence or significance of as Ahmed and Kiran (2024) put it "positive transformational leadership" to ensure improved learning outcomes and quality education.

Leadership does play an important role in promoting quality education because the school leader is second to the teacher in having influence on the learning outcomes of learners. Leithwood, Jantzi and McElheron-Hopkins, (2006) have also indicated that leadership style is the second biggest influence on student learning, just behind classroom teaching. The leader therefore becomes the pivot around which all activities evolve in a school. Transformational leaders are essential for promoting quality education as they lead the way for change to achieve high standards. This is because school leadership gives direction, determines the climate of the school, ensures there is a conducive environment that promotes learning and improvement in staff performance. Instructional and transformational leadership differ in several key ways. Primarily instructional leadership uses a top-down approach where leaders are the predominant decision makers (Hallinger, 2003), while transformational leadership offers a more distributed or bottom-up approach.

Many researchers have reinforced the benefits of transformational leadership. Shatzer et al., (2013) for instance indicated that transformational leaders focus on establishing a school culture and vision to enhance the quality of school teaching and learning, develop people, and improve schools. Kim and Shin, (2019) also mentioned that transformational leadership leads more to higher performance and satisfaction than groups led by other leadership styles. Similarly, Bans-Akutey, and Tiimub (2021) state that transformational leaders impact positively on the creativity of a workforce. It can be said therefore that the essence of transformational leadership is to develop people so that school activities can go on when the leader is not physically present. This is because the leader has ensured that the individual and the institution/school grows. This is done because of the ability to convey a clear picture of the strong vision, which is desirable, feasible, realistic and attainable. Also, when change is needed, it is not "business as usual" but things are done differently. The transformational leader has the key to unlock "what is" in order to discover "What can be."

The essence of transformational leadership comes from the fact that as Litz and Blaik-Hourani (2020) put it; a leader has the ability to positively transform the attitudes, norms, institutions, behaviors, and actions that structure our daily lives. In this context it means that when a school leader predominantly practices transformational leadership it is most likely to lead to the positive change of attitudes and actions of teachers and students that relate to teaching and learning. This ultimately drives towards improved learning outcomes and quality education.

## **6. Transformational Leadership Support for Quality Education**

Bearing in mind the essence and benefits of transformational leadership, it can be seen that leadership can support schools to ensure quality education. As learning is the critical activity taking place in schools, the school leaders' priority is to lead and encourage learning. In ensuring the school has a positive climate of high expectations, the role of the school leader is to remove barriers to success. Success here is quality education. Literature reviewed by Menon (2024) concludes that available evidence indicates that transformational leadership is more likely to have a direct impact on organisational processes associated with teacher practices, motivation, self-efficacy and job satisfaction, which in turn are linked to the quality of the service offered and the performance of the organisation and its members. School leaders therefore need to make the right decisions, and this can be ensured when the decisions are driven by relevant, accurate and timely data. Data-driven decision making (DDDM) has been found by researchers to be a significant process that promotes quality education. Data can be derived from creative questioning: from teachers, students, school heads. Answers to "The What? Who? Why? When? Where? And How?" lead to divergent thinking that brings out creative strategies to solve challenges that may occur.

Figure 1 shows that the characteristics and activities of the transformational leader affect what happens in pre-tertiary schools and this ultimately leads to quality education. For instance, having and communicating a strong vision, creating collaborative structures and using data to make decisions leads to schools with motivated teachers, open communication and a focus on learning among others eventually leads to quality education.

Motivated teachers are an important factor that ensures teacher retention and supports student learning, as high teacher turn over can have a negative impact on student learning outcomes. Lochmiller, Perrone, and Finley, (2024) found out from their study that focused on how school leaders influence teacher retention that school leaders' recognition and praise of their teachers contributed to increased retention they also indicated that school leaders' actions were the most pressing factor in creating, maintaining, or changing working conditions. A study by Kareem et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership had a significant impact on teachers' commitment towards the institution, student development, and self-development. These are essential elements that improve learning outcomes and ultimately quality education. Once teachers are motivated it leads to their commitment to ensuring learning improvement.

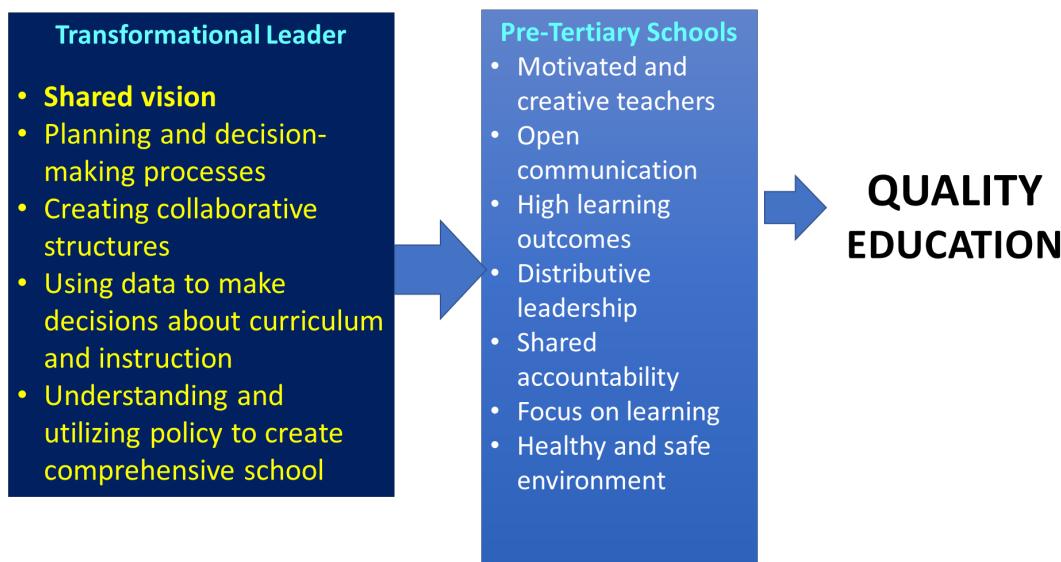


Figure 1 How Transformational Leadership Relates to Quality Education.

7.

Transformational leaders work from bottom up, building up the capacity of followers. This also involves participatory decision making. When faced with challenges the school team (School leaders, teachers, learners, community members and parents) work together, build a culture of trust so that in this way they are able to nurture partnership strategies for effective learning outcomes and quality education. As noted by Leithwood et al (2004) empowering others to make significant decisions is a key goal for leaders when accountability mechanisms include giving a greater voice to community stakeholders, as in the case of parent-controlled school councils and encouraging data-informed decision-making to be part of the school culture. Research has suggested that data-based decision-making (data use) can contribute to increased student learning and achievement (Schildkamp, 2019). School leaders building the culture of accurate record keeping and being data literate are key to ensuring that school leaders use data-based decision-making to promote quality education. It is characteristic for transformative leaders to use data to make critical decisions as well as learn to unlearn the perceptions or issues that promote or hinder the use of data-based decision-making. School leaders building the culture of accurate record keeping and being data literate are key to ensuring that they use data to promote quality education (Bosu, 2019). Quality education will entail improved student performance and school effectiveness. According to Litz and Blaik-Hourani (2020), transformational leaders work toward influencing shared beliefs and values to create a comprehensive level of change and innovation and aim to nurture a school culture that is oriented toward a learning ethos, whereby such leaders seek to expand the capacities of each employee, enhance their ways of thinking, and promote individual ambition so learning and growth becomes a shared responsibility.

## 7. Experiences in Ghanaian schools – Lessons from Ghana

Several research on leadership in pre tertiary level education have pointed out the importance of and relevance of leadership to improving learning outcomes and quality education. MacBeath, Swaffield, Oduro and Bosu's (2010) study on action research for school leaders gave prominence to the promotion of management efficiency through monitoring and evaluation. The key finding being that the leadership of the headteacher can make a positive

difference in the implementation of quality education initiatives in Ghana. The education system therefore needs to create an environment that enables school leadership to take initiatives for change. The transformative leader is one who takes initiatives to bring about change to improve learning in schools.

Amakyi and Ampah-Mensah's (2013) research examined the preparation of school heads in Ghana. They indicated that leadership is not confined to school heads, however, they play a key role in improvement. The key finding was that the appointment of school heads in Ghana is based on their teaching record rather than their leadership potential. They recommend that school leaders should be required to take training in educational administration prior to appointment. Kyei and Abogye (2015) conducted a study that assessed the challenges that school leaders faced in the wake of carrying out their roles as school leaders. They found out that among the challenges that contributed to school failures school leadership was a significant factor. Although they wanted to bring about change in their schools. Kyei and Aboagye recommended that a national policy needs to be in place to ensure school leaders obtain support to improve school activities and learning outcomes. The fact that leadership roles are distributive supports the essence of transformative leadership that promotes the notion of shared leadership. Atakorah (2019)'s study on leadership practices and their influence on job satisfaction found out that although most leaders embraced visionary leadership, they rarely put it to practice. He recommended that more training programmes need to be organized for school leaders to build up their competencies as school leaders. Atakorah (2019) also recommended that teachers should be motivated enough to improve the academic performance of students. As indicated earlier, motivating teachers is one of the practices of transformational leaders.

Adu Gyimah's (2016) study was in private schools, and he found that leaders use idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation to enhance employee performance for the sustainability of the schools. The findings indicate school leaders can enhance employee performance when they adopt transformational leadership, particularly when leaders articulate a clear vision, encourage teamwork, and involve followers in decision-making. These reflect transformational leadership characteristics as articulated by the Bass Transformative Leadership Theory. Adu Gyimah (2016) recommended that School leaders should mentor their followers to learn the new leadership skills such as (a) idealized influence (b) inspirational motivation, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) individualized consideration. The key lesson here is that in order to help improve student learning and school effectiveness leaders not only should have acquired the skills of transformational leadership before taking the positions of school leadership, but they ought to practice these skills and mentor their followers to also have and practice transformation leadership skills.

The key lesson from the Ghanaian experiences discussed is that by embracing visionary leadership, building trust, promoting learning, and empowering stakeholders, school leaders can pave the way for transformative change and organizational excellence in education. Another lesson is that school leadership should not be taken for granted and should be professionalized. School leaders need support in the form of training before they are appointed. They also need support in the form of coaching and mentoring whilst they are in service. Ghana is focusing on the provision of professional leadership training by universities that is aligned with Ghana's new National Professional Education Leadership Qualification Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, n.d.c).

## **8. Conclusions and Recommendations**

It can be concluded that evidence from research suggests that improving teaching in classrooms has the greatest impact on learning and this is brought about by enduring transformative changes brought on by leadership. Secondly, transformational leadership is essential for pre-tertiary schools in Ghana and elsewhere as it enables one to build trust by communicating a strong vision, giving selfless service, providing training in line with staff needs, giving and mobilizing resources, preparing to take risk with followers and modelling what is expected of them. Therefore, transformational leadership is more likely to create an environment that will help promote and sustain quality delivery in Ghanaian pre-tertiary school.

These recommendations include being able to first identify what must change in schools in relation to the competencies of school leaders and provide professional training both in pre-service and in service training. Within our schools we need 'learn to unlearn' attitudes that pull us back. School leaders must be encouraged to demonstrate open communication and enthusiasm for teaching and learning. They must be led by example and focus on learning. It is important to promote the use of relevant data for decision making to help effective change. School leaders need to be encouraged to describe their visions to others in a way that elicits excitement. This will enlist them to participate in new opportunities and engage them in collaborative activities, creating a sense of trust and empowerment. The conclusion by Menon (2024) is that given that transformational leadership has a significant effect on educational outcomes, school leaders must be encouraged to adopt such practices. Menon's

(2024) realisation that for this to be possible, school leader preparation and training programmes must be designed in ways that will enable the transmission of knowledge and skills associated with transformational leadership is a recommendation which is imperative to be adopted by the Ghanaian education system as well to ensure quality education specifically at the pre-tertiary level.

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