

Assessing the Challenges Heads of Department Encounter in Instructional Supervision in Ghana. A Case of Selected Senior High Schools in Kwabre East District

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess the challenges HoDs in Senior High Schools face during instructional supervision. In so doing, the study employed case study and used mixed method approach. In all a total of 92 questionnaires were administered with a response rate of 75.40%. The population consisted of School Heads /Assistant Heads, HoDs and Teachers drawn from the three study areas. 45.55% of HoDs “agreed” or “strongly agreed” as against 44.82% either “disagreeing” or “strongly disagreeing” that HoDs face a myriad of challenges that are hindering their efforts. The opinion of the 45.55% was confirmed by 60% school heads/ assistants and nearly 60% teachers as against a little over 25% teachers and similar percentage of school heads /assistant heads disagreeing and apparently supporting the views of the 44.82% HoDs above. HoDs employed varied strategies to overcome some of their challenges. Majority of the respondents believed that HoDs are not adequately empowered to perform creditably and for which over 50% of them think that they are performing to some extent. Resultantly, the study recorded the satisfaction level of HoDs with their condition of service as 35% “moderate”, 35% to a “small” extent and 30% to a “great” or “very great” extent. The study concludes that HoDs must be empowered enough to perform their roles successfully for better results.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, Heads of department, Empowerment, Challenges, Satisfaction

1. Introduction and Rationale

Supervision is the key to propelling school improvement effort and facilitates improvement in teacher quality and students learning (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Ghamrawi, 2010). It is considered as one of the major factors that contribute to the effective delivery of quality Senior High School Education therefore, in a school setting where teaching and learning take place, effective supervision plays a pivotal role in ensuring quality education by improving students’ academic performance. Igwe (2001) was of the view that supervision involves employing expert knowledge and experience to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning in schools. Supervision of teaching in schools, according to Mankoe (2006), is supposed to be a daily function of the Circuit Supervisor (CS).

However at the second cycle schools due to the increased complexity of the role of the School Heads culminating in a shift in focus from being the ‘Head’ to a Chief Executive Officer model, the day- to- day instruction oversight now rest with the HoDs as instructional leaders. The senior management team of Secondary Schools is charged with the overall functioning of the school and the HoDs as middle managers responsible and accountable for managing teaching and learning. This entails managing staff and subject curriculum as well (Fitzgerald, Gunter & Eaton 2006).

Bush (2003) pinpointed that effective leadership of HoDs is key to school improvement, and hence greater demands are made on them as intellectual resource or catalysts for teaching and learning issues with the view to achieving quality education (Beerens, 2007). By virtue of their formal leadership position in the school hierarchy, they are judged by their efficiency and effectiveness of service through positive learner outcomes.

In order to sustain teaching and learning processes, Dick (1996) observed that the HoDs should ensure that there is quality curricula supervision. According to (Okumbe, 1999), setting high standards of work in their subject areas and to ensure that the department is working to those standards and holding departmental staff meetings among others are also part of HoDs’ role. Diglo (2003) suggested that the quality of HoDs is a relevant pointer of quality schools and that underscores their importance. In the case of Ghana, some of their responsibilities as indicated by Sekyere (2006/7) are attending academic board meetings to discuss academic issues, and performing any other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the headmaster and the like. However, HoDs have not been very effective due to certain mitigating factors, some of which are lack of professional development to increase their competence in pedagogy and subject matter (Jaca, 2013), inadequate training facilities to develop teachers for professional growth and increased productivity including lack of commitment to supervision by many school heads (Ayeni & Akinda, 2008; Zobaida, 2008) tend to work against their roles.

This study’s prime concern was the challenges HoDs encounter in their role as instructional supervisors

of which no publication has been done on that so far in Ghana. In doing so the study sought the opinions of the stakeholders such as teachers, assistant heads/heads of schools and the HODs themselves as to the challenges confronting them (HoDs) since they are the key to successful instructional delivery in the study areas. Again the issues of HoDs empowerment and the strategies adopted to curb challenges as well as whether HoDs are satisfied with their conditions of service were dealt with. The result will create awareness, inform policy makers and add to the body of knowledge.

2. Definition of Terms / Abbreviations

HoDs- Head of Department; KASHTS- Kofi Agyei Senior Secondary Technical School; SSHCS -Simms Senior High Secondary Commercial School; GPSHS- Gyaman Pensa Senior High School; CSSPS- Computer School Selection and Placement System; WASSCE- West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination

3. Background

Challenges tend to impede HoDs effort which in effect affects the success of their role. Some of the challenges include role ambiguity and tension, No or insufficient professional development, lack of support from the school head (Zepeda & Kruskamp, 2007; Rosenfeld et. al., 2008), lack of understanding of their role (Kydd, Anderson & Newton, 2003), lack of sufficient time to attend to both instructional and non-instructional issues (Kruger, 2003), no pre-service preparation (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003), lack of trust from colleague teachers resulting in resistance by teachers (Acheson & Gall, 2010), interpersonal relations challenges, disrespect and indiscipline by colleague teachers, rigid educational framework, uneven distribution of power, insufficient and inappropriate training (Bambi, 2012), lack of pedagogical content knowledge, lack of teaching resources, heavy workload, overcrowding of classrooms, demotivation of teachers, teachers absenteeism, and too much paperwork (Jaca, 2013) and the like. In an attempt to address such challenges some resort to; engaging in discussion with colleague teachers for collective solution, substituting absenteeism teachers, taking work home, delegate powers to teachers in their department, and leading by example (Jaca, 2013).

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Study Areas

Kwabre East district is one of the many districts in the Ashanti region of Ghana carved out from the former Kwabre Sekyere District in 1988 and is located almost in the central portion of the Ashanti Region covering a land area of 356km² with the district capital being Mampong. It has six (6) public and one (1) private SHS namely: Adventist Girls, Gyaman Pensa, Antoa, Kofi Agyei and Simms with a student population of 1600, 980, 1400, 2200 and 2456 respectively. The only private SHS among them is Our Lady of Grace SHS. The three study areas are: KASHTS, GPSHS, and SSHCS all category C schools in the Kwabre East district of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. KASHTS can be located at Bampenase left of Fawodi station on the Tafo- Mampong road. GPSHS is also situated left of the Tafo- Ashanti Mampong highway near Aboaso whilst SSHCS is found on the right of Fawodi also on the Tafo-Ashanti Mampong Highway.

KASHTS was established in 1991 with a student population of 50 and currently the population have raised to 2200 students with staff strength of 102 and eight (8) departments. The departments are: Home Economics, Technical, Visual Arts, General Arts, Agric, ICT, Business and Science. With each department having HoD the total number of HoDs could be counted as eight (8). SSHCS was also established in 1977 with a present population of 2456 students and staff strength of 105 with ten (10) HoDs. The school offers these programmes: Home Economics, Visual Arts, ICT, Business, Mathematics, P.E., Science, Agriculture Science, English, and Social Studies. GPSHS also established in 1995 has five (5) departments namely: Home Economics, Visual Arts, Business, Science and Mathematics with a student population of 980 and staff strength of about 85.

The study was conducted in three schools: KASHTS, SSHCS, and GPSHS all in the Kwabre East District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. These areas were selected among five public and one private SHS in the district because of their proximity, accessibility and the number of programs run in the schools also the large population. Against this background they have a semblance of the other schools in the regions and the nation as a whole and therefore methods used for the study could be replicated in other similar areas

4.2 Research Design

Descriptive research method was used because the human nature in educational research is critical to the result. Educational environments and experiences characteristically hold many extraneous variables difficult to be controlled in a realistic situation and usually require careful observation of specific life situation and can require collection of data from a large number of people spread throughout a wide geographic region (Knupfer and McLellan, 2001). The study basically in its approach used mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) research to record the processes and procedures through questionnaire (Frankael and Wallen, 2003) and unstructured interview because these research instruments are the most common collection techniques used in a study like this (Borg &

Gall, 1989) and the response rate was 75.4%. For the purpose of a credible data the procedure for data collection were as follows:

4.3. Data Collection Procedure.

The study mainly used questionnaires to collect the data and occasionally employed the use of unstructured interview for the purpose of seeking clarification of given responses. The questionnaires were designed based on thorough review of related literature on the responsibilities, qualities and challenges of HoD's in secondary schools in Africa and around the globe. They were structured in accordance with the objectives of the study as well as the research questions and were pretested in different SHS with the view to establishing their validity and reliability in terms of their ability to elicit the required data for the findings and the conclusions to be drawn. Their strengths and weaknesses were revealed during the trials and were noted and the necessary amendments were effected before finally administered in the study areas. Data was collected as follows:

In the case of the HoD's the structure of the questionnaire consisted of the:

- (1) Bio-data and personal records (e.g. gender, age, qualification, school, teaching experience, years at present position etc.);
- (2) Information about department (e.g. teachers in departments, students in departments, type of students, gender, etc.);
- (3) Challenges of HODs';
- (4) Ranking of their challenges;
- (5) Strategies to find solutions to challenges faced; and
- (6) Confirmation of given statements.

The questionnaire for Heads / assistant academic heads also comprised:

- (1) Bio-data / personal records (e.g. gender, age, highest qualification, years taught etc.);
- (2) Challenges encountered by HoD's in the course of their duties.

That of the teachers was structured in similar manner as the Heads / assistant heads above.

In these categories of respondents (HoD's, Head/Assistant heads and Teachers) appropriate Likert scales were employed to collect information from the respondents. For instance, for HoD's questionnaire, "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used for the confirmation of their challenges "greatest" to "Not a Challenge" for the rankings of their challenges, "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for solutions to challenges and "to no extent" to "a very great extent" for confirmation of statements. Again teachers and Heads/Assistant heads of schools' questionnaire also constituted Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to strongly agree" for confirmation of their HoDs' challenges. Both teachers and Heads of School / Assistant heads were also required to register their suggestions to the study by supplying answers.

A preamble preceded the list of questions forming the questionnaire indicating the rationale for the study and as well assuring respondents of the confidentiality of information and anonymity of identity (Frankael & Wallen, 2003). Statistical analysis was carried out with the use of SPSS for windows (Version 16.0). Descriptive statistics and frequency analysis was employed to evaluate most of the data. Cross-tabulations were also used to analyse the other tables (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Tables, charts and texts were used in the presentation of the results.

5. Results

5.1 Sample Characteristics

The study's exploration of the sample characteristics of the respondents was to enable the readers know the spread of the respondents and the credibility of the data as well as enabling a better understanding of the situation. In so doing variables like gender, age bracket, qualification, the name of the school, years of teaching or experience of respondents, and their departments were considered. In the case of the HoD's and school heads/ assistants, there was the need to find out the number of years they thought before given the position and the number of years on present position as well, and whether they were given any pre- service training prior to their appointment.

It emerged from the study that the respondents comprised 71.11% male and 28.88% female. 47.78% were aged between 31 and 40 years followed by 21.11% (41-50 years), 18.89% (51 \geq) with the least age percentage being 14.44% (21-30 years). Majority of the respondents (77.78%) holds bachelor certificates with 22.22% being master's degree holders. The percentage participation of the schools is: KASHTS (44.94%) SSHCS (30.34%) with the rest (24.72%) being GPSHS. Majority of the respondents 32.22% have taught for between (14 and 19 years), 18.88% (2 and 7 years), 16.67% (20 and 25 years), 15.56% (8 and 13 years), 7.78% (26 and 31 years); 5.56% (1 or less than 1 year), and another 5.56%, (32 years and above). It can also be seen from the table that about 40% of the HoDs have taught for between 8 and 13 years, followed by over 22% (20-25 years) and (26-31 years) in each case whilst close to 17% have taught for between 2 and 7 years. Again 40% of the School heads / Assistants have taught between 26 and 31 years, whilst 60% have either taught for over 32 years, 14 to 19 years and 20 to 25 years. As regards the teachers, about 10% of them have taught for 1 year or less and close to 30% have a teaching

experience of between 2 and 7 years, 20% (8 and 13 years) 27.5% (14 and 19 years), nearly 12% (20-25years) with the least percentage experience being 2. Before their appointment as HoDs, 11.11% of them had a teaching experience ranging from 8 to 13 years, 5.56% from 26 to 31 years and 5.56 % from 2 to 7 years whilst 22.22% have done so from 20 to 25 years with majority (44.44%) having between 14 and 19 teaching experience (Table 4.1.1).

Table 4.1.1: Sample Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Respondents							
	Heads of departments		Heads/ Assist heads of schools		Teachers		Total	
	Freq	% freq	Freq	% freq	Freq	% freq	Freq	% freq
Gender								
Male	26	72.22	4	80	34	66.7	64	69.57
Female	10	27.78	1	20	17	33.3	28	30.43
Total	36	100	5	100	51	100	92	100
Age								
≤20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21-30	-	-	-	-	13	25.5	13	14.13
31-40	16	44.44	-	-	27	52.9	43	46.74
41-50	8	22.22	3	60	10	19.6	21	22.83
51≥	12	33.33	2	40	1	2	15	16.30
Total	36	100	5	100	51	100	92	100
Qualification								
Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bachelor	26	72.22	-	-	44	86.3	70	76.09
Masters	10	27.78	5	100	7	16.7	22	23.91
PhD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	36	100	5	100	51	100	92	100
School								
KASHTS	16	44.45	2	40	24	26	42	46.15
SSHCS	12	33.33	2	40	13	13	27	29.67
GPSHS	8	22.22	1	20	13	13	22	24.18
Total	36	100	5	100	50	50	91	100
Years of teaching								
≤1	-	-	-	-	5	9.8	5	5.43
2-7	2	5.56	-	-	15	29.4	17	18.48
8-13	4	11.11	-	-	10	19.6	14	15.22
14-19	16	44.44	1	20	14	27.5	31	33.70
20-25	8	22.22	1	20	6	11.8	15	16.30
26-31	2	5.56	2	40	1	2	7	7.60
32≥	4	11.11	1	20	-	-	5	5.43
Total	36	100	5	100	51	100	92	100
Years taught prior to position								
≤1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2-7	6	16.67	-	-	-	-	6	16.67
8-13	14	38.89	-	-	-	-	14	38.89
14-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20-25	8	22.22	-	-	-	-	8	22.22
26-31	8	22.22	-	-	-	-	8	22.22
Total	36	100	-	-	-	-	36	100

At their current positions as HoDs, majority 58.8% have 2 to 7 years' experience followed by 29.4% 8 to 13 years' experience whereas only 11.5% have only 1 or less than 1 year experience. As to whether they were given any pre- service training prior to their appointment as HoDs, majority 65.85% indicated that they never had that experience with 29.4% indicating that in affirmative. With respect to the School Heads/Assistant heads, 80% of them were "to some extent" provided with pre-service training while the rest did not have that chance.

In all ten departments participated in the study with English and PE departments having the highest percentage representation of 17.6% in each case. The least represented departments with 5.9% in each case were Social Studies, Mathematics, Technical, ICT and Home Economics with the rest Visual Arts, Science and Agriculture Science recording 11.8% each. This may be probably due to the fact that they were either not interested in the study and therefore did not return their questionnaires or they were not present when the study was being conducted (Table 4.1.2)

Table 4.1. 1: Respondents' Experience and their Departments

Variables	Respondents							
	HoDs		School heads / Assist heads		Teachers		Total	
	Freq	% freq	Freq	% freq	Freq	% freq	Freq	% freq
Years at present position								
≤1	6	16.67	-	-	-	-	6	14.63
2-7	20	55.55	-	-	-	-	20	48.78
8-13	10	27.78	3	60	-	-	13	31.71
14-19	-	-	1	20	-	-	1	2.44
20-25	-	-	1	20	-	-	1	2.44
26-31	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	36	100	5	100	-	-	41	100
Any pre- service training?								
Yes	8	22.22	2	40	-	-	10	24.39
Yes to some extent	2	5.56	2	40	-	-	4	9.76
No	26	72.22	1	20	-	-	27	65.85
Total	36	100	5	100	-	-	41	100
Departments								
English	6	17.6	-	-	-	-	6	17.6
Social studies	2	5.9	-	-	-	-	2	5.9
Mathematics	2	5.9	-	-	-	-	2	5.9
Visual arts	4	11.8	-	-	-	-	4	11.8
Science	4	11.8	-	-	-	-	4	11.8
Technical	2	5.9	-	-	-	-	2	5.9
Physical education	6	17.6	-	-	-	-	6	17.6
ICT	2	5.9	-	-	-	-	2	5.9
Agriculture science	4	11.8	-	-	-	-	4	11.8
Home economics	2	5.9	-	-	-	-	2	5.9
Total	34	100	-	-	-	-	34	100

In table 4.1.3, the sample shows that at least ten departments in each school participated in the study with a percentage of (41.2%) KASHTS, (35.3%) SSHCS and (23.5%) GPSHS. The sample further shows that English and PE departments recorded 17.6% each followed by 11.8% each for Visual Art, Science and Agriculture Science whilst the least participating department were Mathematics, Technical, ICT, Home Economics and Social Studies.

Furthermore, the sample displays the staff strength for the Departments as follows; Two teaches only; (11.8%), three teachers only; (5.9), five teachers (11.8%), with more than six teachers in a department forming the highest percentage (70.6%). From the sample all the three participating schools are co-educational. Department with students strength greater than 151 is over 80% with 91 to100 being 11.8% while the rest represented 131 to 150 students. The student population of over 151 in a class suggests overcrowding since an ideal class size should not be more than 40 students therefore over 80% of the departments are overcrowded which does not auger well for effective teaching and learning. Though there are enough teachers, that is (70.6%) accounting for departments having more than six teachers in the elective areas, the reason for the overcrowding may probably be as a result of the lack of the needed structures to house the rest of the students hence affecting studies (table 4.1.3).

Table 4.1. 2: Information about the Participated School/Departments Expressed in Percentages

	Name of School			Total
	KASHTS	SSHCS	GPSHS	
Departments				
English	5.9	5.9	5.9	17.6
Mathematics	5.9	0	0	5.9
Visual Arts	5.9	5.9	0	11.8
Science	0	0	11.8	11.8
Technical	5.9	0	0	5.9
Physical Education	5.9	5.9	5.9	17.6
ICT	0	5.9	0	5.9
Agriculture Science	11.8	0	0	11.8
Home Economics	0	5.9	0	5.9
Social Studies	0	5.9	0	5.9
Total	41.2	35.3	23.5	100
Number of Teachers in Departments				
2	5.9	0	5.9	11.8
3	0	5.9	0	5.9
5	11.8	0	0	11.8
6≥	23.5	29.4	17.6	70.6
Total	41.2	35.3	23.5	100
Type of Students in Department				
Mixed	33.3	33.3	33.3	100
Boarding only	0	0	0	0
Day only	0	0	0	0
Total	33.3	33.3	33.3	100
Student Gender				
Co- Education	33.3	33.3	33.3	100
Number of Students in Departments/ School				
91-110	11.8	0	0	11.8
131-150	5.9	0	0	5.9
151≥	28.6	42.1	28.6	82.4
Total	41.2	35.3	23.5	100

Note: Percentages for missing values are not included because they represent unanswered questions.

5.2 Challenges Inherent in the Role of HoDs as Instructional Supervisors as confirmed by respondents

HoDs' capability to execute their mandated role successfully largely hinges on the degree of challenges they may meet in line with their duties. Since challenges are inevitable in the performance of a function, the study wanted to know if the school head / assistant heads as well as their teachers and the HoDs themselves recognize the challenges associated with HoDs' performance of their responsibilities and if such challenges have any effect on teaching and learning in the department. Knowledge of such challenges may also bring about focus and cooperation among the members of the department which in effect will result in an improved performance of members, the department and the school as a whole. Presented in tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 are the result of the study based on the respondents' views.

It was important and essential to explore the challenges faced by HoDs in their bid to execute their roles as department's instructional supervisors and leaders. The existence of such challenges can be to a very large extent hamper their function. It was therefore appropriate to explore so that solutions can be found for them for an ultimate successful teaching and learning. The sample in table 4.2 revealed the inherent challenges of HoDs with their respective degree of agreement or otherwise. It can be seen that an average of 45.55% of the respondents "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that HoDs face myriad of challenges such as those above that can stifle their progress whereas another percentage average of 44.82% "strongly disagreed" or "disagreed" to that with the remaining 8.91% being neutral. Different conditions existing in different schools under different administration may account for that result.

Table 4. 2: Challenges Inherent in the Role of HoDs as Instructional Supervisors as confirmed by HoDs

Challenges	% Level of Confirmation					Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Role ambiguity and tension	11.1	33.3	33.3	11.1	5.6	94.4
No pre-service training for the position	5.6	38.9	-	44.4	11.1	100
No or insufficient professional development	-	33.3	5.6	22.2	38.9	100
Lack of support from the school head	5.6	22.2	-	50.0	16.7	94.4
Less time for instructional issues	22.2	38.9	16.6	16.6	5.6	100
Lack of Interpersonal relations	5.6	55.6	5.6	22.2	11.1	100
Indiscipline and disrespect	27.8	50.0	5.6	11.1	5.6	100
Lack of pedagogical content knowledge	16.7	55.6	5.6	11.1	11.1	100
Lack of teaching resources	5.6	27.8	5.6	38.9	22.2	100
Overcrowding of classrooms	11.1	16.7	-	55.6	16.7	100
De-motivation of teachers	-	27.8	5.6	22.2	44.4	100
Lack of funds for the department	-	5.6	22.2	33.3	38.9	100
Teacher absenteeism	16.7	27.8	22.2	16.7	16.7	100
Inefficiency and ineffectiveness of form masters	27.8	27.8	5.6	27.8	11.1	100
Human relations issues	33.3	22.2	-	33.3	11.1	100
% Average	12.6	32.22	8.91	27.77	17.78	99.28

Note: Percentage missing values are not included because they represent unanswered questions

Exploring the challenges faced by HoDs as instructional supervisors was very essential. This study therefore sought to ask the respondents to rank the perceived challenges plaguing their work. The ranking of the challenges such as in the table 4.3 revealed that an average of 58.52% ranked the challenges as their “greatest”, “greater” or “great” whereas the remaining 40.71% ranked them as either “less” or “no challenge at all”. Challenges such as: no pre-service training for the post; indiscipline and disrespect from members of the department (Staff and students); Lack of pedagogical content knowledge; interpersonal relations; lack of teaching resources; no pre-service training for the post and lack of support from the school heads were considered as “not a challenge at all”. Conversely lack of support from the school head, lack of funds to run the department, no or insufficient professional development, over-crowding and de-motivation of teachers were the first six challenges ranked as the greatest suggesting how crucial it is to address them.

Table 4. 3: Ranking of Challenges of HoDs as Instructional Supervisors

Challenges	% Rankings					Total
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10	
Role ambiguity and role tension	11.1	33.3	33.3	11.1	5.6	94.3
No pre-service training for the post	5.6	44.4	-	16.7	33.3	100
No or insufficient professional development	22.2	33.3	27.8	11.1	5.6	100
Lack of support from the school head	61.1	-	11.1	11.1	16.7	100
Less time to attend to instructional issues due to too much administrative work	11.1	11.1	44.4	27.8	5.6	100
Interpersonal relations	5.6	11.1	11.1	44.4	27.8	100
Indiscipline and disrespect from members of the department (staff)	11.1	11.1	16.7	27.8	33.3	100
Lack of pedagogical content knowledge	5.6	11.1	16.7	33.3	33.3	100
Lack of teaching resources	5.6	16.7	22.2	33.3	22.2	100
Overcrowding of classrooms	22.2	33.3	16.7	16.7	11.1	100
De-motivation of teachers	16.7	38.9	16.7	22.2	5.6	100
Lack of funds for running the department	27.8	33.3	22.2	11.1	5.6	100
Unwarranted teacher absenteeism	5.6	27.8	33.3	27.8	5.6	100
Inefficiency and ineffectiveness of form masters	5.6	22.2	22.2	33.3	11.1	94.4
Human relations issues	11.1	-	27.8	44.4	16.7	100
Total % average rankings	15.2	21.84	21.48	24.81	15.94	99.27

Legend [0]: Greatest challenge ; [1-3]: Greater challenge [4-6] Great challenge [7-9] Less challenge [10] Not a challenge

Note: Percentages for missing values are excluded because they represent unanswered questions

According to the heads/assistant heads of the study area, nearly 60% of the sample were in agreement to the fact that the challenges of HoDs may affect their supervisory role and eventually would influence negatively the performance of their department whilst 14.67% “neither agreed” nor “disagreed”, 26.66% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” to the fact that such challenges may affect negatively the performance of the department. Perhaps those

respondents do not appreciate such challenges and therefore do not know their repercussions on teaching and learning in the department. Higher proportions of the respondents agreed that such challenges as in the table may affect the supervisory role of HoDs and ultimately affect the department (table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Challenges Inherent in the Role of HoDs as Instructional Supervisors as Confirmed by the School Heads

Challenges	Strongly disagree	% confirmation				Strongly Agree	Total
		Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree		
Role ambiguity and tension	-	20	40	40	-	100	
No pre-service training for the position	-	60	40	-	-	100	
No or insufficient professional development	20	-	-	80	-	100	
Lack of support from the school head	20	-	-	80	-	100	
Less time to attend to instructional issues	20	-	-	80	-	100	
Lack of Interpersonal relations	-	-	20	80	-	100	
Indiscipline and disrespect from members	-	60	40	-	-	100	
Lack of pedagogical content knowledge	-	80	-	20	-	100	
Lack of teaching resources	20	-	20	60	-	100	
Overcrowding of classrooms	-	-	-	100	-	100	
De-motivation of teachers	-	40	40	20	-	100	
Lack of funds for running the department	-	20	-	80	-	100	
Teacher absenteeism	-	20	-	80	-	100	
Inefficiency and ineffectiveness of form masters	-	-	-	100	-	100	
Human relations issues	-	-	20	80	-	100	
% Average	5.33	21.33	14.67	58.67	-	100	

There was the need to explore the extent to which the challenges of HoDs may affect their supervisory role and which in effect would affect negatively their performance and that of their department. In so doing teachers who are the subordinates of HoDs views were sought. As per the sample, it could be established that greater percentage average of the respondents (58.97%), either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the stated challenges in question can influence negatively the performance of HoDs. Whereas 14.78% “neither agreed” nor “disagreed” to the effect of the afore stated challenges as they can impact negatively on HoDs performance, the rest “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” to the issue (table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Challenges Inherent in the Role of HoDs as Instructional Supervisors as confirmed by Teachers

Challenges	Strongly disagree	% Level of Confirmation				Strongly Agree	Total
		Disagree	Neither disagree agree nor	Agree	Agree		
Role ambiguity and tension	5.9	17.6	15.7	37.3	19.6	96.1	
No pre-service training for the position	5.9	13.7	13.7	51.0	15.7	100	
No or insufficient professional development	5.9	11.8	25.5	41.2	15.7	100	
Lack of support from the school head.	5.9	21.6	9.8	41.2	21.6	100	
Less time for instructional issues	5.9	29.4	13.7	41.2	9.8	100	
Lack of Interpersonal relations	-	15.7	21.6	39.2	23.5	100	
Indiscipline and disrespect	15.7	19.6	11.8	31.4	21.6	100	
Lack of pedagogical content knowledge	9.8	31.4	9.8	27.5	17.6	96.1	
Lack of teaching resources	3.9	19.6	9.8	52.9	13.7	100	
Overcrowding of classrooms	7.8	19.6	21.6	37.3	13.7	100	
De-motivation of teachers	3.9	17.6	13.7	41.2	23.5	100	
Lack of funds for the department	2.0	7.8	15.7	45.1	29.4	100	
Teacher absenteeism	9.8	17.6	11.8	47.1	11.8	98	
Inefficiency and ineffectiveness of form masters	13.7	29.4	11.8	35.3	9.8	100	
Human relations issues	2	11.8	15.7	47.1	21.6	98	
% Average	6.54	18.94	14.78	41.07	17.91	99.24	

Note: Percentage missing values are not included because they represent unanswered questions

Figure 4.1 displays the result of teachers opinion about whether their HODs are empowered enough to carry out their roles properly. The sample indicates that 15.70% think that HoDs are empowered sufficiently to execute their mandate whereas 17.60% registered their opinion as “no”, the rest 56.90% said “to some extent” whilst the

others gave “no response” at all. This can imply that though HoDs are empowered to carry out their mandate, the level of empowerment needs to be stepped up so as to work better for teaching and learning.

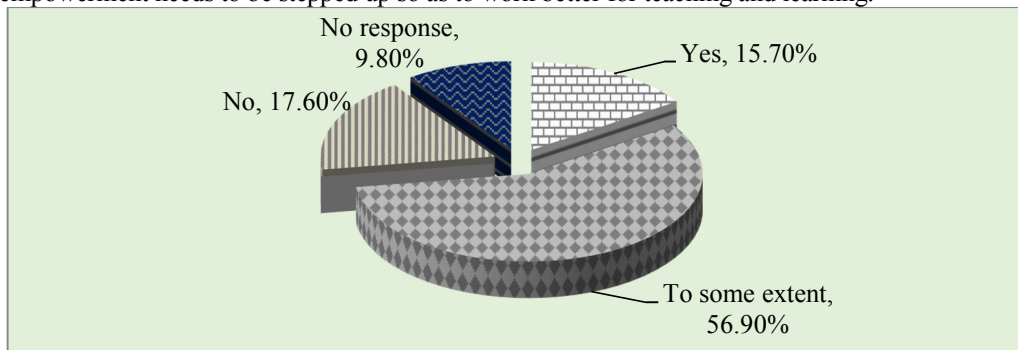


Figure 4.1: Teachers’ opinion about the empowerment of their HoDs

Figure 4.2 exhibits the results on teachers view as to the extent of their HoDs’ performance in their various departments. It emerged that 37.30%, 52.90%, 5.90%, and 3.90% of the respondents indicated “Yes”, “Yes to some extent”, “No” and “No response” respectively that their HoDs are performing up to scratch. The sample shows that 88.2% either believed the statement or does so “to some extent”. While only 5.90% also believed that their performance is not good enough.

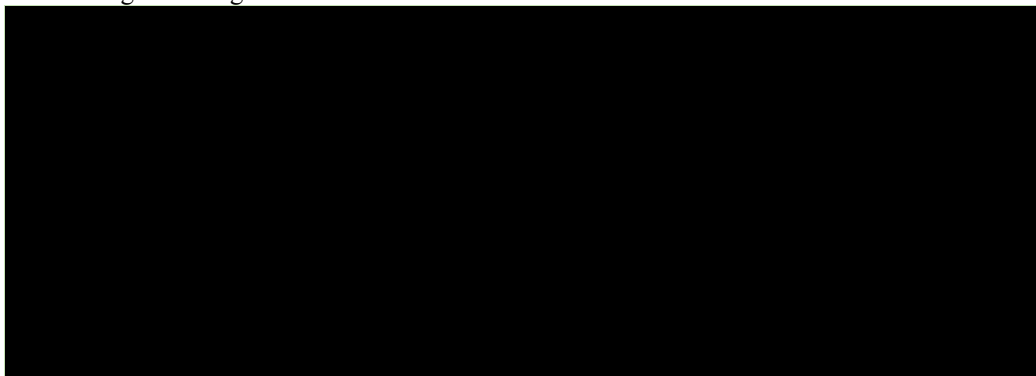


Figure 4.2: Teachers’ Opinion about their HoDs Performance

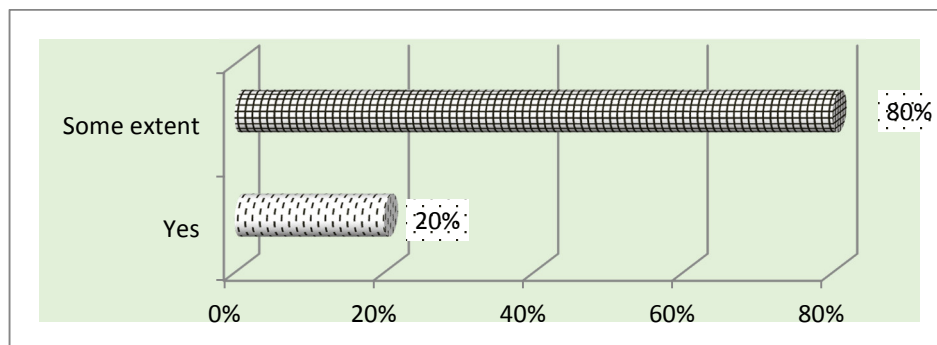


Figure 4.3: Heads / Assistant Heads View on their HoDs Empowerment

On the view of the HoDs empowerment, $\frac{4}{5}$ of the Heads/Assistant Heads of schools feel the empowerment is “to some extent” however the remaining fraction were totally convinced that their HoDs have been empowered greatly to perform their function and that there should be no excuse whatsoever for poor performance (Figure 4. 3).

Figure 4.4 depicts the results of the respondents’ view about the fact that challenges affect HoDs performance and ultimately the department. The result presents that those who indicated that such statements are “to a moderate extent” were (47.1%), “great” or “to a very great extent” (35.3%) whilst 17.6% thinks that the extent of the effect is “small”.

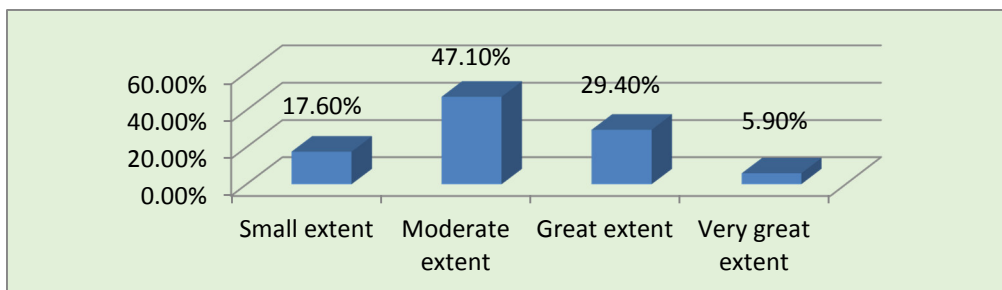


Figure 4.4: HoDs' Challenges affect their Performance and that of their Departments

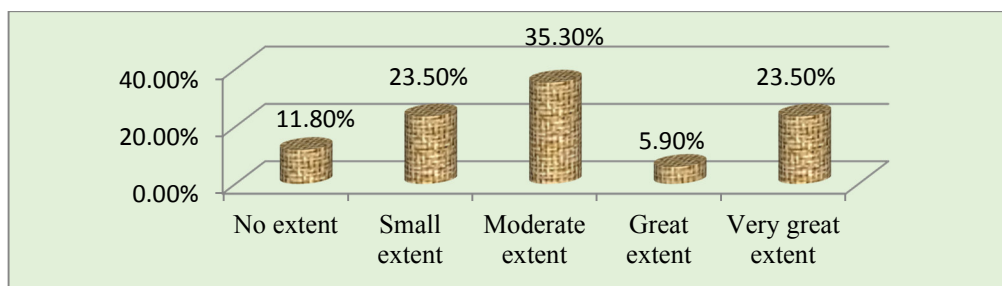


Figure 4.5: HoDs Degree of Satisfaction with Conditions of Work

Above all in fig 4.5, the respondents indicated that irrespective of their condition of work and the challenges confronting them close to 30% are satisfied with their work condition to either “great” or “very great extent”, 35% “moderate”, and a little over 35% either to “no” or a “small extent”.

6. Discussions

6.1 Challenges of HoDs Inherent in their Roles as Instructional Supervisors/ Leaders

The result of the issue of the challenges forming the core purpose of this study was presented in tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.10, and 4.4. HoDs responses confirming the list of challenges in table 4.8 revealed that 44.82% either “strongly disagreed” or “disagreed” to the challenges whereas 45.55% “either agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the rest sitting on the fence probably due to lack of knowledge. In the view of the School heads /Assistant School heads, 58.67% agreed, 26.66% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” whilst the remaining 14.67% “neither “agreed” nor “disagreed” that such challenges can hamper the function of HoDs. For teachers, while 58.98% of them either “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that indeed those challenges exist and are hindering the HoDs’ progress regarding teaching and learning in the district, 25.48% of them “disagreed” that though those challenges exist, they cannot stifle the progress of HoDs in their attempt to ensure successful teaching and learning in their departments with the rest (14.78%) taking the mid position. Looking at the closeness of the percentage responses that is 45.09% “agreeing” and 44.82% “disagreeing” to the fact that the challenges under consideration can hinder the instructional supervision in the department, it could be explained that because different conditions exist in the study areas such as different administrative set up, infrastructure base and the like, the schools which are ‘less endowed’ are bound to face more challenges than the others that are ‘better endowed’. Again the degree of the challenges may also depend on the readiness of the school head to respond to the needs of the department. Better still it may also be due to the qualities HoDs possess. Some may have the qualities/ competencies/ skills of good leadership whilst others might lack. With good interpersonal skills, technical skills, communication skills, skills to manage and bring about change among others, the existence of such challenges and others may not stifle the performance of the department though they may pose some threats. Against this backdrop the 44.82% of the respondents who “disagreed” to the assertion that the challenges of HoDs can hinder the delivery of instructional supervision may be inferred to be having the qualities of good leadership who can turn things round to make progress even in the face of difficulties whereas the 45.55% may not be able to do so and will always wait for others to come and fix their challenges for them. With the confirmation of the heads/assistant heads (58.67%) and teachers (58.98%) of the existence of such challenges and their negative influence on teaching and learning in the department, there is the urgent need to address them. Issues like lack of funds to run the department, insufficient resources, and uncompromising nature of some of the teachers in the department, lack of pre-service and in-service training for HoDs to sharpen their competencies, overcrowding of students in the classrooms, and others should be urgently addressed to forestall bad performance in the departments and the school as a whole.

6.2 Rankings of the Challenges of HoDs by the HoDs in the Study Areas

In respect of the rankings of the challenges required by the respondents (HoDs), the sample revealed that about

59% of the respondents face challenges of varied degrees ranging from “great to greatest” making it undoubtedly clear that majority of the respondents encounter challenges in the delivery of their responsibilities as department heads lack of support from the school head, lack of funds to run the department, no or insufficient professional development, over-crowding and de-motivation of teachers were the first six challenges ranked as the greatest suggesting how crucial it is to address them.

6.3 Empowerment of HoDs in the Study Areas

Issues concerning the empowerment of HoDs were deemed vital to the study because their level of empowerment may be used as a yard stick to measure their performance and that can also influence the challenges they may encounter and how they can go round such challenges in the performance of their task. With only a few (15.7%) of the teachers saying that they believe HoDs are empowered enough to perform their jobs well as compared to 56.9% saying that though HoDs are empowered their level of empowerment is “to some extent” and close to 20% that is (17.6%) being of the opinion that HoDs are not empowered enough to do what is expected of them, then there must be a cause to worry about (Fig 4.1). From (Fig 4. 3), 80% of the school heads / assistants are also of the view that their HoDs are “to some extent” empowered as against the remaining who thinks their HoDs are sufficiently empowered. Lack of or insufficient empowerment may translate into poor performance as a result of poor quality of work, poor employee satisfaction, lack of collaboration, low productivity and increased cost (Saylor Foundation). Again the teachers’ views as to the performance of their HoDs shows 37.3% said their HoDs are performing up to scratch whereas 52.9% said that their performance is “to some extent” and only a few (5.9%) said they are performing poorly (Fig 4. 2). It can readily be seen from the result that the 5.9% may be insignificant as compared to the percentage who indicated that HoDs are either performing up to scratch or to some extent. According to the school heads/ assistant school heads HoDs are “to some extent” performing. However the study cannot discount the effect of the about 6% respondents. Again with over 50% registering their opinion that they see the performance of HoDs as not totally good then it will be important to look at the matter of HoDs empowerment since they go hand in hand. Empowerment may mean regular in-service training, pre-service training, enough funds to run the department, the power to sanction recalcitrant and non-performing teachers, personal development among others. This is supported by Elnaga & Imram, (2014)’s summary of empowerment as “it occurs when the employees are well trained, provided with all the appropriate and relevant information and the best possible tools, fully involved in key decisions, and are fairly rewarded”. Empowerment given “to some extent” presupposes that there are certain things that are needed to be added to make it complete if HoDs are to work well in respect of their task. From figures 4.1 and 4.3 though HoDs are empowered their degree of empowerment is not good enough to curb the numerous challenges some are facing and which resultantly have translated into their bad performances (fig 4. 2) where it could be found that only 37.3% of teachers feel their HoDs are performing well. With more than half 52.9% seeing it as not completely well implies that HoDs could do better if the full complements of their resources and supports are given to them. Juxtaposing this result and that of tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, it stands to reason that because HoDs are less empowered they face numerous challenges that tend to frustrate their performance. The study further realized that 35.3% of the respondents are of the view that though there are some challenges in their departments none the less, those challenges to a “great” or “very great extent” cannot affect their performance and that of the department. This result may mean that such departments’ heads have been resourceful enough to better the lot of their students and the teachers irrespective of the challenges they may be facing. 47.1% indicating that such challenges can affect their performance and that of the department “to a moderate extent” may also imply that even in the face of such challenges, they can go round them and perform to a certain degree whilst 17.6% said that such challenges can affect them insignificantly. With the result in view the existence of such challenges and their potential to influence negatively the performance of the department cannot be underestimated and therefore should be addressed.

6.4 Strategies Used as Solutions to the Challenges of HoDs in the Study Areas

In view of the challenges discussed above the respondents showed the strategies used as solutions they employ in the advent of such challenges. The sample revealed that a “little less” than 80% discuss with staff members in the department for collective solution when the HoD is challenged. More so, absentee teachers are substituted with colleague teachers and in case of meeting deadlines works are taking home. The result further indicates that respondents provide leadership by example, solicit funds from NGOs and other agencies and mostly use IGF in their bid to solve some of the financial challenges they get faced with. This confirms what Jaca (2013) found in his study in South Africa concerning some of the perceived solutions HoDs use when they faced challenges. Though the above stated solutions have the potential of helping the progress of the HoDs and their departments, it is not all the HoDs who have been using them. It is only those who are innovative and committed to the course of their departments who stand to gain from these solutions. Those HoDs who are bossy and have parochial interest and not wanting to learn from their staff members are bound to fail and eventually affect the work of their departments. This means that the issue of good quality leadership of would-be- HoDs as postulated by Gold (1998)

must take the center stage when they are being appointed as departments' heads, especially against the background of insufficient resources for teaching and learning and for which there is the need for teaching and learning in the department to succeed. It is therefore imperative for the challenged HoDs to learn from what their colleagues do so as to improve their departments. Some HoDs may be ignorant of the right ways to go when challenges rear up their heads. There are others who because of their selfish interest keep vital information from their department members which later on create confusion in the department. This may be solved through training of the HoDs. Sharpening the leadership skills of HoDs may mean empowering them to be effective and efficient a recommended by Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014). Government and the school have the responsibility of providing the needed logistical support for the upkeep of the department and failing to do so can aggravate the woes of the department. It is also important for the HoDs to emulate the shining examples of their colleagues who resort to using the perceived strategies presented above when facing difficulties as instructional supervisors and leaders of their departments.

6.5 Satisfaction of HoDs with their Conditions of Work

With less than 30% being satisfied with their condition of work to a "great" or "very great extent", 35.3% to a "moderate extent" and the same percentage to "no" or "small extent", it will be no gainsaying of the fact that the conditions of work of HoDs must be greatly improved to boost their motivation for better performance. This may be in the form of empowering them through pre-service training, in-service training, equipping them with the requisite resources and the like gearing towards improving their lot and that of the department as has been concluded by Kinzl *et al.*, (2005) that job satisfaction has a positive relationship with opportunities provided to employees by the organization. Good working environment brings about an increase in employee loyalty, commitment level, efficiency and effectiveness, productivity and develops a sense of ownership among employees as well which in effect augment organizational effectiveness and also minimize 'cost prohibitive' emerging as a result dissatisfied employees (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2014).

7. Conclusion

With a Little over 6 out of 10 HoDs being either to a "great" or "very great extent", or "moderate extent" satisfied with their condition of work means that more should be done to better the lot of instructional leaders. Challenges associated with finances/funds, administrative, teacher attendance, overcrowding of classroom, insufficient logistical support, favoritism of heads among others have plagued some of the HoDs roles thus causing them not to perform as anticipated. Although some of them admitted that the challenges exist, but they claimed that those challenges to "a great" or "very great extent" cannot impede their progress. The study conversely sees those challenges as very essential and can considerably affect the performances of the HoDs and the school as a whole. Perhaps those respondents who believe that such challenges cannot have negative impact on them have very good leadership quality, have contacts outside the school and thus can lobby for their departments things needed. But we cannot discount the enormous effect that it will have on the school and the department if the government fails to supply the needs of the school for onward distribution to the various departments. If the government fails to institute regular training programs for the HoDs with respect to administrative work, book-keeping, evaluation of assessment, curriculum development and the like so as to equip them adequately for mitigating the probable challenges inherent in their jobs then teaching and learning will be greatly affected. There would be more failures, more street people and ultimately making 'nonsense' the essence of education in the country. The issue of some heads/assistants adopting some departments as their favorites and providing them what they need as against the others because the HoDs in that department may have issues with them and therefore deny them request must be brought to halt. Like the human body the departments are the very essential parts of the school and if any of them under perform it will undoubtedly affect the performance of the school in its entirety. The HoDs themselves must be committed to their work and be prepared to learn from the colleagues in the department. Running one man administration cannot bring success since they are neither the embodiment of knowledge nor a repository of wisdom. The question of the quality of students admitted into the department also needs to be considered. If bad quality students are brought in the department and the resources are woefully inadequate then it will be a daunting task bringing them to a level of that of the well-endowed schools such that they can compete favorably with them.

8. Implications for Policy Makers

Various challenges facing HoDs have been discussed and the foregoing intends to make suggestions to stakeholders and policy planners:

It is recommend that GES recognise HoDs' role as important and reduce the number of periods they teach to 12, so that the HoDs can have ample time to supervise teaching and learning.

A well-structured pre-service training be organised for HoDs before assuming the position and regular in-service training such as the one organised for heads and senior housemasters / mistresses in Ashanti Region while on the job especially in the area of financial administration' book keeping, supervision among others .

The classification of schools into categories is discriminatory and makes it difficult for those who receive the weak students in their schools. It is thus recommended that the CSSPS will give a fair distribution of students to schools so that all schools become grade A and B schools.

The Heads should also recognise all HoDs as supporting staff and stop favouritism, which hinders the work of competent HoDs.

Selection of HoDs should be based on qualities of good leader, competency and not favouritism, since it will result in putting “square pegs in round holes”.

Since challenges differ from school to school it is recommend that the government must ensure equity in the sharing of the infrastructure and logistics to all schools for an improved performance.

Again because some schools experience situations where the day students are more than the borders, which resultantly encourages absenteeism and making work difficult for HoDs, unlike schools that are able to accommodate all students into the boarding house owing to their infrastructural base. Therefore there must be adequate housing drive in the schools especially the less endowed ones to curb the accommodation issues.

9. Limitations and Future Research

The study targeted 116 participants and only 92 responded and returned their questionnaires. Close to 95% of the returned questionnaires in respect of the opened ended questions which were expected to elicit more information from the respondents except the HoDs to augment the closed ones (such as suggestions from respondents as to how best HoDs can overcome their challenges and how best they can facilitate their HoDs performance in the department) were not answered. Even some of the closed ended questions were also not completely answered and that affected the study to the extent that no new findings were realized except for confirmation of the old ones since participants did not indicate their own ideas. This study has provided some insight into the issues concerning the challenges HoDs of SHS in the Kwabre East district get faced with in the delivery of instructional supervision in a particular study area and therefore looking at the sample size, the findings cannot present the total picture of the situation nationwide. Future research should look at the extension of similar studies to the other areas including the Technical Schools for confirmation or otherwise.

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