ARE BASIC SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS? VIEWS OF TEACHERS

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Abstract
Transformational leadership practice is associated with improved school functioning and quality education delivery through teacher commitment and willingness to exceed targets or educational benchmarks (Balyer, 2012; Nedelcu, 2013). The establishment of the Leadership for Learning (LFL) program in Ghana in 2009 aimed at improving the effectiveness of basic school head teachers to better lead schools to promote student learning. In this study, the perceptions of basic school teachers as to the transformational leadership conduct of head teachers who had received training under the LFL model were collected and reviewed. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to determine from teachers' perceptions how the conduct of head teachers related to transformational leadership. From the study results, the findings indicated that while teachers largely perceived their head teachers as transformational leaders, more than the influence of head teachers is required to motivate teachers to give of themselves to improve education outcomes. Recommendations and implications of the study for practice and research were considered.
Keywords: Ghana Basic Schools, education leadership, education, Ghana head teachers, transformational leadership.

Introduction
All organizations, no matter their focus, formation, or nature, benefit from effective leadership (Morris & Austin, 2014). Leaders are individuals entrusted with the responsibility of making sure that things are accomplished according to plan. Since leaders lead others, they do not usually perform the specific activities meant to achieve stated objectives alone or on their own. Instead they work through other people – who are variously called followers, employees, or subordinates – to achieve set objectives. Therefore, leadership pertains to what leaders do to influence followers to act or perform activities in ways necessary for improving performance to support the achievement of set objectives (Juntrasook, 2014).

In Ghana, head teachers are appointed to lead formal education delivery efforts in K-9 schools, i.e., kindergarten to junior high school. What the head teachers do and how effectively they

perform their role expectations hold implications for the extent to which teaching and learning activities occur in the schools and influence the quality of education delivery and outcomes. Leadership for learning principles including focus on learning, creating environment conducive for learning, dialoguing, shared leadership, and shared responsibility are vital to guide head teachers to play their roles effectively (MacBeath & Dempster, 2008).

With increased responsibilities, demands for accountability, and rapid changes in education in response to changes in society, head teachers are expected to go the extra mile to be effective. Since they cannot undertake the numerous school activities all by themselves, head teachers necessarily need to work in partnership with teachers, parents, community members, and education authorities for improved education delivery and student learning (Nedelcu, 2013). In fact, leaders of educational institutions must show exemplary leadership through what they do as collaborators, effective and open communicators, critical thinkers, problem solvers, and change agents to bring about desired changes, which are qualities that transformational leaders exhibit (Hauserman & Stick, 2013; Lowrey, 2014; Nash & Bangert, 2014).

Transformational leaders explore new ways of doing things and look for opportunities to change the status quo to bring about needed improvements at the workplace. Instead of being people who merely respond to circumstantial demands, transformational leaders take the initiative to cause change, shape the resulting situations, and create better circumstances to drive organizational interests (Chi, Lan, & Dorjgotov, 2012; Onorato, 2013). As they take the bold initiative to bring about needed changes in how things are accomplished, transformational leaders are able to influence followers who also aspire to be change agents. Hence, transformational leadership relates to the ability of leaders to get followers to learn from their leaders, to identify what has to change, and then willingly act to exceed their expectations to bring about needed changes (McCleskey, 2014; Washington, Sutton, & Saucer, 2014).

To make it easier for followers to support the chosen path and for them to become willing change agents, transformational leaders exemplify proper ways of doing things. They value followers as important members of the organization whose contributions are vital to improving organizational performance. Thus, these leaders make the effort to identify and satisfy the needs of followers, and as well, solicit and incorporate employee opinions into making workplace decisions (Nash & Bangert, 2014; Washington et al., 2014). Through such means, the leader may win the commitment of employees, improve their capacity, and increase their willingness to put in sufficient effort to bring about institutional improvement (Lowrey, 2014; Nedelcu, 2013). Specifically, transformational leaders pursue four main dimensions of transformational leadership. Dubbed the "Four I's" of transformational leadership, these dimensions include: idealized influence; individualized consideration; inspirational motivation; and intellectual stimulation (Chi, Lan, & Dorjgotov, 2012; Onorato, 2013; McCleskey, 2014). Through these dimensions, school leaders who practice transformational leadership are able to exert both direct and indirect influences on the attitude and behavior of teachers so that they (i.e., teachers) willingly do things to improve school performance and education outcomes (Lowrey, 2014; Nedelcu, 2013). For example, transformational leadership results in consensus building, teacher recognition, improved teacher morale and commitment, effective communication, and supportive and healthy school climate that make it possible for teachers to perform activities and behave in ways that exceed their own expectations (Chi, Lan, & Dorjgotov, 2012; Nedelcu, 2013).

Noteworthy are the key tenets of transformational leadership that include:

- Transformational leaders become a source of inspiration to others through their commitment to those who work with them, their perseverance to a mission, their willingness to take risks, and their strong desire to achieve.
- Transformational leaders diagnose, meet, and elevate the needs of each of their associates through individualized consideration. They believe in promoting continuous people improvement.
- Transformational leaders stimulate their associates to view the world from new perspectives, angles, and informational sources. They question even the most successful strategies to improve them over time.
- Associates trust their transformational leaders to overcome any obstacle, because of their hard work, their willingness to sacrifice their self-interest, and their prior successes. (Avolio & Bass, 2004 cited in Onorato, 2013, p. 40)

It is decipherable from the above exposition that transformational school leaders need to walk their talk to be able to exert positive influence on teachers for them to offer willing support and conduct themselves in ways that would advance institutional agenda. This requires that the attitude of transformational leaders must directly relate to their behavior. Also, in the spirit of leadership being an interaction between head teachers and teachers to assure that teacher conduct drives change efforts, there is the need for head teachers to forge strong collaboration and collegial work ethics with teachers to engender communal contribution to advancing student performance and school effectiveness (Yukl, 2005).

In this regard, head teachers would need to focus on sharpening their own leadership knowledge and experiences as well as building the capacity of teachers to improve their skills and ability to bring about the transformed school they desire (Nedelcu, 2013). This necessitates that transformational school leaders must build and communicate a school vision that aligns with set goals, mentally stimulate teachers, identify needs and interests of teachers, and provide support that meets their individual needs and circumstances (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; MacBeath & Dempster, 2008). Also, head teachers must model best practices and school values by exemplifying the proper ways of doing things, together with teachers setting high but attainable educational standards, promoting a healthy school climate and organizational culture, as well as involving teachers and other partners in decision making (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000).

Therefore, it seems suggestible that to assure that their schools achieve improved student performance and school effectiveness, the leadership behaviors of head teachers of basic schools in Ghana must be geared towards transforming school functioning by empowering teachers, promoting active teacher participation in school decisions, and modeling proper ways of advancing institutional agenda (Chi, Lan, & Dorjgotov, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Nedelcu, 2013). Through leadership for learning workshops and conferences, basic school head teachers dubbed school transformational leaders, discussed ways by which they could lead schools to become transformed and effective. How head teachers implement the knowledge and skills they have gained from the LFL program, it can be argued, would impact on the attitude and actions of teachers in the schools (MacBeath & Dempster, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

What school leaders do and how they conduct themselves in the schools they lead influence teacher attitude and behavior that impact on the teaching and learning enterprise (Hauserman & Stick, 2013). To improve upon the effectiveness of basic school head teachers in Ghana so as to achieve a strong connection between leadership and learning, the Leadership for Learning Network of the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, with sponsorship from the Center for Commonwealth Education, partnered with the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the University of Cape Coast and the Ghana Education Service to roll out a head teacher leadership capacity building program under the Leadership for Learning (LFL) framework. The selected head teachers identified themselves as School Transformational Leaders (STLs) at the 2009 initial LFL training session at Ajumako, Central Region, Ghana. How the STLs are leading basic schools to promote student learning following the initial and subsequent training sessions is worth investigating.

Hence, the problem investigated in this study was how the STLs led their schools and to what degree they exhibited transformational leadership behaviors in the schools. Specifically, the study focused on teachers' perceptions on the STLs' transformational leadership practices. The purpose of the study was to examine STLs leadership behaviors and to identify the extent to which they modeled transformational leadership characteristics. Additionally, the study was designed to determine measures that are necessary to assure that basic school head teachers in Ghana actually lead or are able to lead basic schools to bring about desired changes.

The Research Method

To gain in-depth knowledge and contextual insights into the experiences of basic school teachers regarding their perceptions of the leadership behaviors of their head teachers, the researcher adopted a qualitative research methodology design for the study. In qualitative studies, researchers gather data from identified persons on a phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research involves data collection on the attitude, feelings, and thoughts of individuals that cannot be observed or obtained through quantitative means (Creswell, 2014). In this study, data collection, description, analysis, and interpretation were based on the observed shared patterns in teacher perceptions and beliefs as conveyed in their narrated stories.

The study site was the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. Selected basic school head teachers in the Brong Ahafo Region had the opportunity to participate in different LFL workshops at Ajumako in August and September of 2009, in Sunyani in July 2011, and in Tamale in November of 2011. It could be expected that teachers who worked with these school leaders would have over the years observed, experienced, and formed their subjective opinions on the leadership behaviors of the head teachers and thus could give first-hand accounts of their head teachers' leadership practices.

Participants

Participants for the study were all basic school teachers whose head teachers had participated in the LFL workshops. At a British Council sponsored workshop on LFL for head teachers and other education officers facilitated by the author and another expert from the University of Cape Coast in July 2011, some of the head teachers who attended were also part of the initial LFL

program held at Ajumako in 2009. Based on the narrated experiences and discussions with these head teachers, the author suggested to the head teachers that he would visit them to observe any LFL program impact. Based on verbal discussions and phone conversations with the head teachers, six of them agreed to a request to visit their schools. Hence, the author visited the six schools in May 2012 to find out how the head teachers have been working with teachers to transform the schools. During the visit, the author indicated to the head teachers that he would like to have independent views of the teachers about how the head teachers were leading the schools. After consenting to this request, the researcher, with permission from the head teachers, met with all the teachers in each school and briefed them about the proposed study and subsequently invited them to participate in it. At the time of data collection in July 2012, after informing the teachers of their right to freely participate in the study or to withdraw from it at will, 30 teachers provided data for the study. The composition of the participants for the study is presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Composition of Participants

School Label (n=6)	Type of School	Number of Teachers	Teachers Who Provided Data for the Study	% of Teachers Involved in the Study
A	Primary	8	5	62.5
B	Primary	6	3	50.0
C	Primary	6	6	100.0
D	Primary	8	6	75.0
E	Junior High	14	6	42.9
F	Junior High	10	4	40.0
Total		52	30	57.7

Source: Field Data (July 2012).

Instrumentation

The researcher gathered data for the study using a semi-structured interview protocol in July 2012. The interview guide was informed by the researcher's interactions with teachers in the schools as well as review of literature on transformational leadership. Following a review of literature on the four primary dimensions of transformational leadership, consultations with the teachers, and discussions with other faculty members of the University of Cape Coast, the interview guide centered around the following items:

How does your head teacher conduct himself/herself to:
- Influence your attitude and behavior?
- Show that s/he is interested in your personal and professional development?
- Motivate you to give your best to improve your school?
- Challenge your beliefs, interests, and values to bring about school improvement?

The researcher personally collected the study data. It involved face-to-face interviewing of participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher sought permission from gatekeepers, that is the six head teachers or STLs of the schools in May 2011 at Sunyani and in November 2011 at Tamale. In order that the head teachers would not know which teachers participated in the study, the researcher consented to a location proposed by each participant. Before conducting each

interview, he briefed the teachers on the purpose and processes of the study, sought their consent, and assured them of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their information. With participant permission, each interview lasted approximately one hour and was electronically recorded. Following the interviews, in line with the suggestion by Moustakas (1994) and van Manen (2014), the researcher manually transcribed the recorded data to be immersed in the data and to facilitate data analysis and reporting of the study results.

Data Analysis
Data analysis consisted of content analysis. It involved analyzing data based on the similarity of participants' responses (Creswell, 2014). To do this the investigator first organized the collected data after he had read all the transcribed data multiple times and grouped similar responses together. Following a constant comparative approach (Glaser, 1992; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2014), the researcher undertook a continual analysis that involved constant cross-checking of categories with participant responses to ensure that descriptions of the themes accurately reflected data provided by participants.

Credibility and Validity
The instrument and the purpose of the study were reviewed by a professor of educational leadership at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana whose research activities involve qualitative methodologies. Specifically, the professor made suggestions to simplify the form and content of the items to make them easy to understand and to properly align them with the problem and purpose statements. Through this expert opinion, the author established both face and content validity of the instrument. Also, the researcher piloted (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012) the instrument with seven teachers from the Berekum District (at the time of the study this district was part of the Brong Ahafo Region). It shares similar cultural and geographical characteristics with the rest of the Brong Ahafo. Those seven teachers were not included in the main study. The purpose of the field test was to ensure that the participants would understand the items. The similarity of the responses of the seven field experts indicated that the items were easy to understand and could be used to obtain consistent results.

Additionally, the researcher adopted member checking (Harvey, 2015) by sending the transcribed data to the participants for them to verify and validate the content. Further, he requested the services of a colleague faculty member (whose doctoral research involved qualitative investigation) to serve as a secondary reader following which he discussed the secondary reader's observations with her to make sure that the description and presentation of the study results aligned with participants' narratives.

The researcher also sought participants' informed consent before undertaking each interview. He used coined identities (pseudonyms) in place of the real identities of the research participants as a means to maintain the anonymity of the participants as well as the schools where they worked.

Validity Concerns
Some issues hold implications for the generalizability of the study results. One, the study sample might not be representative of all head teachers and teachers due to differences in school and geographical contexts. Two, the opinions of the small number of teachers (n=30) involved in the

study might not be representative of all teachers whose head teachers had received training in the LFL program in the study site. Also, the fact that the STL head teachers were informed of the study could influence the teachers to report on half-true facts. The research methodology could be improved by the researcher if multiple means for collecting data were adopted for the purpose of triangulation. By assuring the anonymity of the participants and using pseudonyms to de-identify them from their responses (as presented in the results), the researcher sought to ensure that the findings are a true reflection of the participant perspectives.

Another issue related to the researcher as an instrument of data analysis. The description and interpretation of the results of the study were facilitated by the researcher's knowledge about and familiarity with basic school leadership in Ghana, the LFL program, and the social dynamics of the study site. While the researcher as an instrument of data analysis could result in rich descriptions that would enrich the study, the danger is that if such knowledge and familiarity are not bracketed, they could bias the study and affect the objectivity of the results (Moustakas, 1994). To handle this situation and to reduce the effect of researcher knowledge and experiences on the results, the investigator included direct quotations of participants' responses in the presentation and discussion of the results as means of improving the reliability of the findings (Creswell, 2014; Moustakas; Patton, 2002; van Manen, 2014).

Results and Findings
The effect of the transformational leadership practices on the attitude and actions of teachers as employees is widely acknowledged. For example, Nedelcu (2013) reported that the transformational leadership behaviors of school leaders improved teacher commitment, teacher performance, and school culture and education outcomes. Therefore, this study was set out with the purpose of finding out what teachers consider as the transformational leadership behaviors that STLs head teachers, who underwent the LFL training program, exhibit as they lead their schools.

Despite the briefings and explanation of the study, some teachers asked questions to be clear on what they were expected to say. For example, one teacher asked, "Do you want me to indicate whether my head teacher is good or bad?" (P7). Another teacher retorted, "Hmm! this depends on how I see her, right?" (P12). The researcher used the concerns of these teachers as basis to further clarify the intent for embarking on the study. This was a first-hand observation that the offering of explanations on a study to permit participants to provide responses that align with the study focus must be an on-going process (Shamim & Qureshi, 2013). For example, if I assumed that the first briefing session was adequate because the teachers appropriately could tell what the items meant, their responses would or could have differed from those reported on in this study if further explanations were not given.

The study involved data collection from six schools. Four were K-6 primary schools, while the remaining two were grades 7 - 9 junior high schools. There were 30 data producing participants for the study comprising 16 female and 14 male teachers. At the time of the study, 20 of the teachers taught in primary schools and 10 taught in junior high schools as reflected in Table 1.1 above. In the study the researcher adopted a unique descriptor for assuring the anonymity of participating teachers. Primary school teachers are designated as P1 to P20 while junior high school teachers are referred to as J1 to J10. In the sections that follow the results and findings of

the study are presented under the four dimensions of transformational leadership namely idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Drawing from the four themes or Four I's, this study focused attention on lessons learned from the views expressed by the teachers. In line with the perspective of Tunheim and McLean (2014), the lessons are briefly but clearly reported with sample participant quotes to illustrate the teachers' self-reported data. Since the instrument was a semi-structured interview guide, the study results include details of the interviews that extend beyond the items of the instrument.

Idealized Influence Behaviors Displayed by Basic School Head Teachers
Under the dimension of idealized influence, transformational leaders act in ways that help others to see them as persons who have their interest at heart (McCleskey, 2014; Nedelcu, 2013). Thus, transformational leaders consult with their followers, identify their needs, try to help them deal with challenges, use their position to benefit the institution, and assign followers roles to play (McCleskey; Nash & Bangert, 2014). Through such approach and conduct, followers develop trust and respect for their leaders and emulate their behaviors in what they do. This makes it less difficult for the followers to commit to their institutions and work harder to exceed their expectations (McCleskey; Nash & Bangert; Nedelcu). Teachers in this study appeared to appreciate what their head teachers did and agreed that the head teachers exerted meaningful influence on them. In this connection, one teacher stated:

> My head teacher is polite. He is respectful. If he sees any issue you are involved with, he calls you and talk it out with you at the office. Nobody gets to know what transpired between us. (J4)

For participant P20, his head teacher is the epitome of leadership by example. He stated:

> I wish all head teachers behaved as my head. While some women leaders are seen as bossy and arrogant, my head teacher is down to earth. She is not an office madam. She walks around the school, checks on teachers in the classroom, solicits opinions from teachers and include those in school decisions. When I see that my suggestion is applied, and other teachers indicate that that was my idea at work, I become happy and willing to do as my head teacher does. (P20)

As supported by earlier studies (Nedelcu, 2013; Nash & Bangert, 2014; Onorato, 2013), communication is a sine qua non in the practice of transformational leadership. In this vein, one teacher's comment was insightful:

> Communication matters. My head teacher communicates with us often by passing on information from the office to us and by seeking information from us. If he doesn't get feedback on time, he calls or texts to remind you. On one day he texted me that I know you are busy with your work that is why I have not received feedback from you yet. However, kindly find time and let me know your opinion please. I was elated and felt humbled. It is something I am already practicing in my personal life. (J1)

Referencing what transpired between the head teacher and teachers of her school as basis for giving her response, one teacher had this to say:

> The next Monday after my head teacher returned from the LFL workshop, he called a meeting and briefed us about how things are going to be now. I couldn't imagine him doing this at earlier times when he either gave us his notes or asked us to read the workshop letter and that's all. Now though, my head teacher is shaping us by the proposed school vision, team approach to dealing with issues, and assigning teachers to other teachers to meet and discuss issues and present our thoughts to him. (J10)

Another teacher from the same school as teacher J10 indicated that the school climate is a different kind of feeling. He stated that:

> If I report personal problems to my head teacher, he invites and discusses them with me and offers alternative approaches I could pursue. This makes me feel as human. His approach to doing things now has shaped the way we relate among ourselves in the school. And, everyone seems to be working and not sitting on the fence. Even the community members have noticed that. Personally, it has affected how I deal with my family members and others. I thank my head teacher. (J9)

This other teacher was more specific. Accordingly, he stated:

> My head teacher believes in everybody and tells us we can succeed despite challenges. Before long, he will call you and discuss progress and obstacles with you. That makes me think that he has my interest at heart and genuinely wants teachers to improve school standards. (P18)

From a similar but a bit detailed perspective, another teacher commented:

> My head teacher is the epitome of what democracy means. He proposes high standards to be achieved to improve students' performance and invites views from us as to how that can be achieved. While we raise problems that wouldn't make it possible to achieve his standards, he offers to help and provide needed resources. On one occasion, he taught me a whole lesson at his office so I could teach it to students with confidence and promised that it should be a matter just for the two of us. I trust and respect my head for his efforts at helping teachers to develop a can-do spirit to improve student learning and to advance the effectiveness of our school (J4).

One teacher expressed, "The fact that there are no quarrels among us and everyone does what he or she is supposed to do means that she is leading well, I guess" (P11). Although this viewpoint lacks much detail, it portrays a fact of leadership that leaders must ensure that things are performed the way they are supposed to be in the school (Nedelcu, 2013). As such it is

gratifying to observe that teachers are doing what they are supposed to in these schools. This is an indication that the head teacher of the school is modeling good leadership.

However, one teacher's comments gave different perception of idealized influence. It appears that the connotation of idealized influence assumes a voluntary-compulsion dimension, as stated by this teacher:

> Well, there actually is no choice. I have to do as my head requests or risk being punished. Since I am not prepared to leave now, I have to behave as if I am following his lead. In reality though I have my reservations. I wish I have a level-playing field to air my sentiments or an open-minded person to discuss any differences with. Now though I am afraid that any attempt to advance my different views would lead to my transfer. (P19)

From the comments above, it is observed that basic school head teachers exhibit different behaviors that influence the attitude and behaviors of the teachers in their school. The attitudes and behaviors head teachers exhibit are associated with what they do to identify with and show consideration for the needs of teachers, respect teachers, model proper ways of doing things, make resources available for use, help teachers to solve problems, and communicate freely with teachers. Following from this, it is noted that the teachers trust and respect the head teachers and apply their suggestions.

However, not all the teachers were satisfied with the leadership behaviors of STLs as one teacher lamented that teachers have had to pretend that things are well to protect their jobs. This observation is worrying. This is because any observed gains achieved from coercing people to do things are transient in nature and wane over time (McCleskey, 2014). Hence, it is important that attempts are made to allow teachers to freely, but respectfully and professionally advance their divergent opinions in order to identify the most effective way to address teacher concerns and to advance school effectiveness.

Individualized Consideration Behaviors of Basic School Head Teachers
The transformational leadership dimension of individualized consideration relates to what transformational leaders do to regard but importantly treat each employee as an important person who has contributions to make to advance institutional interests (McCleskey, 2014). This requires transformational leaders to identify the needs and interests of the followers as well as their challenges with the purpose of helping them to overcome any difficulties they might have and to satisfy their interest (McCleskey, 2014; Nedelcu, 2013). Also, the transformational leader attempts to do things that would enable the followers to develop their potentials so that they can make improved contributions to support institutional efforts. Hence, the leader becomes a coach and a mentor so as to encourage and help followers to recognize and polish their potentials for improved performance to reach their own expectations and to attain organizational goals (McCleskey, 2014; Washington, Sutton, & Saucer, 2014).

As to whether basic school head teachers behaved in conformity with the aforementioned points to boost teacher morale and improve teachers' competency, one participant had this to say:

My head teacher is encouraging. She gives commendation and when you seem not to be doing your work as expected, she would call you to the office and privately discuss issues with you. By that means, I am able to tell her what might be wrong with me and she offers guidance as to how best to handle matters. (J8)

In line with previous research outcomes (Chi et. al., 2012), the teachers in this study agreed that transformational leaders support their teachers to enable them to develop their potentials to be able to play roles that advance institutional agenda. This role expectation is connected to the diligence of head teachers, as the comments of the following teachers revealed:

My head teacher works very hard to apply rules by the books. So he is supportive to make sure that we the teachers do things according to GES requirements so that when the circuit supervisor or other officers visit the school, no teacher will be found wanting. (P14)

For participant J5, his head teacher taught him what real teaching involves. In his words, he said:

I learned principles of teaching and did teaching practice while in training. However, my head teacher is the one who has helped me to find joy in teaching and to teach students to love learning. Whenever students misbehaved or performed poorly in tests, I would be downhearted. My head teacher noticed this and came to my aid. He would give scenarios of teaching episodes and how different teachers would respond and discuss how I would have responded with me. His suggestions and private tutoring in the office have enabled me to become a competent teacher. I am grateful to him for the personal interest he has shown in me. However, I am a privileged teacher due to the fact that he does not always have the time to do with other teachers as he does to me. Perhaps it is because I am newly qualified teacher and the other teachers do not need as much help as I do. (J5)

Another teacher simply remarked that, "My head teacher is a mentor as she does things I'd love doing if I were the head teacher. It is like being my secret admirer" (P12). It is implied from this teacher's comment that the head teacher does not know the impact she is making on her teachers by modeling proper ways of doing things and doing them right. Another teacher's comments reveal another perspective of the import of being a living example as a transformational leader. Accordingly, this teacher commented:

My head teacher models how to do things right in the school. He walks his talks. He knows what it means by if the prince does not fight the war, then the slaves will run away. He is punctual and regular at school, he identifies exemplary teachers and give them prizes, and also finds out from teachers who fail to do things right so as to be able to help them. I know he had issues with some teachers because they would not do what we have agreed upon at staff meetings neither would they explain their stance. Appropriately, in my opinion, he had to request for those teachers to leave the school. Other than that incident, my six years of

working with him has been cordial, supportive, and professionally enlightening. I wish I can be like him if I become a head teacher in future. (J9)

Additionally, the comment by one teacher is insightful. This teacher explained:

Being a responsible leader, my head teacher wants to know what goes on in the classrooms. He is visible and friendly. He interacts with teachers before the morning assembly and with students as well. He asks questions to understand why we do what we do and asks thought-provoking questions to make us think about how we can do things in different ways to improve on what we do. After that he follows up on us to see if the outcomes are different or the same. And because he is lively and collegial, even though teachers may be doing things wrong, we never feel that he is a faultfinder. He rather helps us to look at ways to improve what we do. With so much work to do in attending to teacher issues, students' academics, and external pressures, I sometimes wonder how he is able to do all these effectively with all teachers. (P13)

From the participant narratives presented above, it is noted that the head teachers of the schools the study participants work in show personal interest in the teachers. Also, they were able to identify things that might not go right with the teachers and take the initiative to invite and discuss how they can better handle their challenges. The observation is that those head teachers conduct themselves as leaders who demonstrate the individualized consideration of transformational leadership. They do not focus only on paper work and other administrative duties but show interest in what the teachers do. It seems suggestive that the focus of the head teachers, according to the participants, is to help their teachers to teach well to improve the schools' effectiveness and student learning by helping the teachers, "to find joy in teaching and to teach students to love learning" (J5) and to support teacher professional development. Therefore, as supported by earlier studies (Balyer, 2012; Lowrey, 2014), basic school head teachers strived to identify the needs and interests of their teachers. However, their heavy workload limited the extent to which they could help teachers.

Inspirational Motivation Behaviors of Basic School Head Teachers
Under inspirational motivation, transformational leaders strive to encourage and inspire their followers to commit to organizational ideals. They do this by communicating very high expectations to followers, involving them in devising effective ways of doing things to advance organizational interests, and through team approach to undertaking activities (Balyer, 2012; Onorato, 2013). Eighteen of the 30 teachers commented at length about what basic school head teachers do to demonstrate inspirational motivation. The teachers described what their head teachers did to maintain teacher commitment in advancing school interests, as observed from one teacher's comment, "My head teacher verbally encourages us and inspires us to do everything possible to achieve the targets we set for ourselves" (P17). Another teacher remarked:

Our head teacher tries to get us to do things through committees. So there are committees for sport, environment, student and discipline, and examinations among others. These committees meet and report to the entire teachers for further

deliberations or questioning. By this means I guess teachers feel empowered and try and do things that align with agreed upon targets. (P16)

Participant J2 recollected what her head teacher did after he returned from the LFL workshop as follows:

My head teacher met the staff. He spelt out plans to advance the way things are done in the school. This means we must know what we want to achieve and then plan to achieve it. My head teacher indicated that the first thing is for us to create a vision and work towards it. Collectively, we formed teams to work on how to improve particular facets of the school. In fact, everybody was brought on board and we worked as never before. We critiqued group reports and offered suggestions for improvement. As our head teacher indicated, we became critical friends to each other. (J2)

For another teacher, there is an active support from his head teacher. However, in this teacher's words, more is required beyond head teacher's support. He said that:

My head teacher has been imploring all teachers to actively support school activities. The problem however is that my head teacher wants us to work but there is no incentive package. And, you know, talks alone do not motivate enough. Teachers expect to receive financial rewards for putting in extra efforts. You see, in other organizations, people attend meetings and take sitting allowance. Why not the teacher? Because there is no monetary reward, teachers do not have the interest to exert themselves too much for nothing. Hence, the plan to involve all teachers to help improve school functioning has not worked as was expected. (J1)

It is noted from the comments by teacher participants that basic school head teachers are making efforts to inspire teachers to commit to school improvement drives by four principal means. These are involvement of teachers in decision making processes, the adoption of team approach to getting teachers to debate and strategize how to improve school functioning, the development and implementation of school vision, and communicating with teachers on what must be accomplished. However, it is implied from these interviews that the issue of inspiring teachers goes beyond what head teachers can do. It involves a broader issue of compensation. Thus, despite head teachers' efforts to encourage teachers to give of their best, their best intentions can be described as not enough as, according to participant J1, "teacher enthusiasm wanes when they do not anticipate immediate monetary rewards."

Intellectual Stimulation Behaviors of Basic School Head Teachers
The transformational leader pursues intellectual stimulation by what s/he does to make followers be creative and innovative in what they do. This leader helps followers to challenge their own beliefs, interests, and values and those of the leader to ensure that they do things differently to bring about needed changes in the organization (Onorato, 2013; Washington et al., 2014). The transformational leader uses questions to help followers to evaluate the rationale for doing things, to stimulate reflective practices, and to solve problems to improve individual and

organizational performance. S/he also makes needed resources available for employee use, supports them, and works in collaboration with them to make sure that they are resourced and have the morale to work at extending institutional effectiveness (Balyer, 2012; Onorato, 2013). In this current study, the head teachers were perceived by many teachers as leaders who adopt different approaches to apply the intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership. Commenting on what head teachers do to encourage intellectual stimulation, the view of one teacher encapsulated participants' opinions. He stated:

> My head teacher does not simply say well done when you have completed a task and reported to him. After carefully considering the report, she would ask, why did you do this or that but not another. To challenge teachers, she would usually come out with a problem and solicit different approaches to addressing it. (P16)

The comment by another teacher is intriguing and stimulates reflective practice. He said, "There is nothing more satisfying than a sense of self-accomplishment" (J4). To this teacher, intrinsic motivation constitutes an indispensable part of any attempt to stimulate teachers to be creative and innovative. Participant J4 added that:

> My head teacher tells us that we must exercise self-initiative and try and solve problems as and when we encounter them. So the first question she asks when you present an issue to her is what did you do about it? When we are unable to solve a problem, my head teacher requires that we contact our immediate team leader. All of these are attempts to make us creative and innovative teachers and problem solvers. (J4)

Another teacher described the problem-solving approach adopted by head teachers, "My head teacher is a problem solver. He is observant and takes the initiative to identify challenges teachers might be grappling with and offers suggestions for dealing with them even though teachers might not have approached him for help" (P6). P6 further described his head teacher as:

> She is a learner herself. She goes to teachers to teach her how to do things so she could do them on her own. For example, she does not feel shy to ask teachers to teach her how to use the computer to do something. Her mantra is be a servant to learn how to do things so that you can later become the boss of the knowledge you gain. By this attitude, my head teacher expects us as teachers to consult with other teachers in thinking about and finding innovative ways of dealing with challenges. (P6)

From the opinions of the participants, as reflected by the quotes above, the finding is that the behavior of head teachers as learners, as model problem solvers, and as people who require teachers to problem solve challenges in the classroom instills in teachers the need to be reflective practitioners, innovators, and creative problem solvers in advancing institutional interests. It is observed that teachers perceived basic school head who they work with as open to a variety of ways to do things. Also, the head teachers encouraged teachers to take the initiative to personally attend to issues or team up with colleagues for that purpose. Additionally, to stimulate teachers

to be reflective practitioners, basic school head teachers created mock problems and solicited input from teachers as to how best to solve them.

Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perceptions of school teachers regarding the transformational leadership behaviors of basic school head teachers in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This purpose stems from the fact that transformational leadership practices are known to influence teachers to want to willingly work to change organizational functioning and improve institutional performance towards achieving institutional effectiveness (Balyer, 2012; Hauserman & Stick, 2013; Lowrey, 2014; Nash & Bangert, 2014; Nedelcu, 2013).

From the results of the study, several findings were identified. First, under the dimension of idealized influence, basic school head teachers lead by example. For example, they are punctual and regular at school and interacted with teachers and students as to how best to improve school effectiveness. In addition, the head teachers showed interest in the personal and professional needs of their teachers. Also, from the narratives by teachers, it was implied that there exists mutual respect between teachers and head teachers. This observation is healthy because transformational leadership thrives on respect and trust that engenders in followers the need to work to exceed their personal expectations to advance institutional interests (McCleskey, 2014). Thus, it can be expected that teachers whose head teachers have received training in the LFL program would collaborate with their head teachers to improve teaching and overall functioning of the schools to improve school performance.

One core responsibility that leaders of educational institutions have is to ensure that teachers, students, and others contribute to enriching educational experiences to assure quality education delivery (Sime & Sheridan, 2014). This requires that head teachers influence what is done in the education enterprise. In transformational leadership, one of the qualities that head teachers must pursue is the ability to motivate or inspire teachers to willingly exert consistent effort to improve education delivery (Balyer, 2012; Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

In this study, it was observed that teachers perceive their school heads as making efforts to motivate them to work hard to improve education outcomes. However, the efforts by the head teachers were viewed as inadequate to motivate teachers to fully commit to and work tirelessly to exceed expectations. Teachers expect to receive monetary incentives for any extra efforts they might have to put into improving school functioning and education outcomes.

The importance of individual differences to the personal and professional learning, growth of workers, and improvements in individual performance and organizational functioning cannot be over-emphasized (Chi et al., 2012; McCleskey, 2014; Nedelcu, 2013). The concept of individual differences relates to the uniqueness of people. This implies that what is implemented to address the individual needs of teachers must directly be based on their unique interests and circumstances (Hauserman & Stick, 2013).

From the findings of this study, head teachers of basic schools catered to the individual needs of teachers. They engage in open communication with teachers to identify challenges to their effectiveness and discuss how teachers can deal with them. They also suggested steps teachers

might take to overcome their difficulties and to become competent teachers. Head teachers' adoption of management by walking about to not find fault, but to see what support is necessary and how best to assist teachers to effectively overcome barriers that threaten their competencies was noteworthy. This is because the first-hand information they gathered enabled them to determine the most effective strategy as well as how to proceed to reap optimal results (Hauserman & Stick, 2013; Lowrey, 2014).

Problems unsolved threaten institutional success. This is because unresolved problems prevent effective implementation of planned activities and require that time and other resources that could be used to advance institutional interests be channeled to dealing with them (McCleskey, 2014; Washington et al., 2014). Therefore, it is imperative that workers are able to identify and swiftly address workplace problems. The intellectual stimulation dimension of transformational leadership is meant to help employees to be creative, innovative problem solvers (Chi et al., 2012; McCleskey).

In this study, it was observed that basic school head teachers influenced their teachers to creatively solve problems by showing a desire to learn, posed mock problems to teachers to try to come out with effective ways of addressing them, and modeled problem-solving strategies. Also, the head teachers questioned the reasons for teachers' adoption of particular approaches to addressing challenges. All of these prompts instilled in teachers the need to be creative and to find innovative ways to dealing with school-related challenges.

However, the observation that teachers must compulsorily do as requested by their head teachers does not support transformational leadership tenets. This is because, in transformational leadership, the positive and collaborative leadership approach results in the willingness of followers to work to exceed their expectations to advance institutional interests (Chi et al., 2012; McCleskey, 2014). It therefore behooves education authorities and the organizers of the leadership for learning program to pursue measures to properly educate head teachers to focus on relationship and consensus building as means to winning over dissenting voices rather than adopting voluntary yet compulsory means to make them do as head teachers say. This assertion is vital because forced submission is known to at best result in transient gains, but followed by follower resentment and waned employee commitment to organizational ideals (McCleskey).

Further, some teachers reported similar leadership behaviors that their head teachers exhibited under different transformational leadership dimensions. For example, the issue of management by walking around, asking questions to understand teachers and to be able to help them, and modeling proper ways to do things were given by different teachers under different dimensions in this study. This observation appears to agree with critics who argue that one criticism against transformational leadership is the lack of clear-cut distinction between or overlap of the various dimensions of the theory of transformational leadership (McCleskey, 2014; Washington et al., 2014).

Conclusions and Recommendations
The observed influence of transformational leadership practices on teacher commitment, performance, and school functioning impact education outcomes. Four transformational leadership dimensions were examined. They are idealized influence, individualized

consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. Specifically, how teachers perceived the transformational leadership behaviors of head teachers who had attended the leadership for learning workshop in the Sunyani metropolis of Ghana were explored. From the views expressed by the research participants, it was concluded that basic school teachers in the Sunyani metropolis have positive perceptions of the transformational leadership behaviors of their head teachers. However, there were some observations that were not very pleasant. One comment alleged that the leadership behaviors of the head teachers were more of voluntary-compulsion as dissenting views could result in expulsion from the school. As such teachers had no choice, but to do as the head teachers demands. Another observation was that whereas head teachers try to motivate their teachers to give their best, teachers are seeking monetary rewards as basis to inspire them to go the extra mile to improve education outcomes.

Perhaps the time is ripe for education authorities to debate and pursue measures for running schools as business entities whereby calls for accountability are met with financial rewards. The payment of bonuses and sitting allowances could arguably motivate teachers to rise to the occasion or face the reality of being fired in the face of poor performance.

Future Research
The present study underscores the need for collaborative efforts between head teachers and teachers to improve school functioning and education outcomes. However, how the perceived collaboration translates to actual school improvement merits investigation. This would provide first-hand data as to the impact of the leadership for learning program in transforming leadership practices in the study site and elsewhere. The qualifications of the head teachers were not sought in this study. It will be interesting to find out how the academic and professional qualifications of basic school head teachers influence their transformational leadership behaviors. Finally, attempts to investigate how to deal with the overlaps observed in the transformational leadership dimensions would be laudable to provide insights on the clarity and distinctiveness of the dimensions and to forestall any confusions emanating from the observed overlaps.

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