PERSPECTIVES OF STAFF OF COLLEGES OF EDUCATION ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF THEIR PRINCIPALS IN THE VOLTA REGION OF GHANA

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Abstract:

The gig economy has revolutionized traditional employment structures, emphasizing This study examined the perspectives of staff of Colleges of Education about the leadership styles of their principals in the Volta Region of Ghana. The study employed an embedded mixed methods design, integrating quantitative data from questionnaires administered to 234 respondents with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews of 30 purposively selected participants. Findings revealed that principals adopt a combination of leadership styles, with a predominance of autocratic and transformational approaches. While some principals involve staff in decision-making and motivate them toward institutional goals, others maintain strict adherence to procedures and hierarchical control. Staff perceptions indicated that principals were generally supportive, participatory, and motivating, reflecting elements of transformational and democratic leadership, although authoritarian tendencies persisted. The study recommends that principals receive continuous professional development in adaptive and participatory leadership approaches and that Colleges of Education implement structures that encourage staff involvement in decision-making. These measures would foster a positive organizational culture, improve staff satisfaction, and enhance the overall effectiveness of teacher education in the Volta Region.

JEL: I21 – Analysis of Education (Education and Research Institutions); I28 – Government Policy; Provision and Effects of Welfare Programs (Education); M12 – Personnel Management; Executive Compensation; Executive Incentives; M54 – Labor Management; Industrial Relations: Personnel Management; D23 – Organizational Behavior

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

In every educational institution, leadership plays a vital role in determining the success and direction of the organization. Across the world, the effectiveness of a school or college is often linked to the kind of leadership exhibited by its head (McCaffery, 2018). For instance, when a principal adopts a participatory or transformational leadership approach, staff morale, teamwork and performance tend to improve. Conversely, autocratic or inconsistent leadership often results in tension, low productivity and staff dissatisfaction. The leadership style adopted by a principal, therefore, not only shapes the institutional culture but also influences the attitudes and motivation of staff members (Northouse, 2021). Globally, research has demonstrated that leadership is the second most influential school-related factor affecting student achievement, after classroom teaching (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). School leadership is therefore essential in establishing vision, promoting teacher effectiveness, and creating a culture that supports learning and institutional growth (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Scholars have identified several leadership styles adopted by educational administrators, including transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire approaches (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Shkurina, 2018). Transformational leaders are known for inspiring and motivating staff toward shared institutional goals, while transactional leaders focus on structure, accountability, and reward systems (Chitiga, 2018). Democratic leaders encourage participation and inclusiveness in decision-making, whereas autocratic leaders rely on authority and directive control. The effectiveness of these leadership styles often depends on the educational context, institutional culture, and the personalities of both leaders and followers (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). Educational institutions that embrace participatory and transformational leadership tend to record higher staff morale, better collaboration, and improved performance (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015).

African educational institutions often face challenges such as limited resources, policy inconsistencies, and inadequate professional development opportunities, all of which require adaptive and responsive leadership (Oyetunyi, 2006). Studies conducted in Tanzania by Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen (2006) revealed that transformational leadership practices significantly improved teacher commitment and job satisfaction. Similarly, research in Nigeria and South Africa suggests that democratic and participatory leadership styles foster collaboration and enhance institutional effectiveness, while authoritarian approaches tend to suppress innovation and demotivate staff (Edoho, 2015; Oyetunyi, 2006). These findings highlight the need for educational leaders across Africa to adopt flexible leadership practices that reflect both institutional needs and socio-cultural realities.

In Ghana, the leadership styles of heads of educational institutions, particularly principals of Colleges of Education, have attracted growing scholarly attention. Colleges of Education play a crucial role in preparing teachers for the basic school system, and the

effectiveness of these institutions is largely dependent on the leadership of their principals. According to Agyemang (2019), the leadership approach adopted by a principal directly influences tutors' job satisfaction, teamwork, and institutional performance. Studies by Asamani and Mensah (2017) also observed that while some principals in Ghana adopt participatory and transformational styles that enhance motivation and institutional cohesion, others rely on autocratic and transactional approaches that hinder communication and innovation. The Ministry of Education (2022) has therefore emphasized the need for leadership development initiatives that promote collaboration, accountability, and responsiveness among educational leaders.

In the Volta Region of Ghana, variations in leadership practices among principals of Colleges of Education are evident. Some principals are reported to adopt inclusive leadership styles that encourage staff participation, while others are perceived as rigid and autocratic, which can negatively affect morale and productivity. Administrative staff and tutors play crucial roles in the daily operations of these colleges, and their perceptions of leadership have a direct bearing on institutional effectiveness. Understanding how these staff members view the leadership styles of their principals is, therefore, essential for identifying best practices that foster effective leadership and a positive working environment.

Against this background, this study sought to examine the perspectives of staff of Colleges of Education regarding the leadership styles of principals in selected colleges in the Volta region of Ghana.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Contingency or Situational Leadership Theory, which posits that there is no single best way to lead; rather, effective leadership depends on the context, including the nature of tasks, characteristics of followers, and the organizational environment (Khan, Nawaz & Khan, 2016). This theory is particularly suitable for the current study because it provides a framework to examine both the leadership styles adopted by principals and the perceptions of administrative staff and tutors regarding these styles.

According to the theory, leaders may adopt different approaches depending on situational factors. A directive leadership style involves providing specific instructions and closely supervising subordinates, and it is most effective when tasks are complex or staff lack sufficient experience (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). In contrast, a supportive leadership style emphasizes concern for staff well-being and the creation of a positive work environment, which is beneficial when tasks are stressful or when employees require motivation and encouragement (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). The participative leadership style, on the other hand, encourages subordinates' involvement in decision-making, fostering collaboration, shared responsibility, and greater satisfaction among staff (Vroom & Jago, 1988). Importantly, the theory underscores the need for situational adaptability, whereby

effective leaders adjust their style based on factors such as staff experience, task complexity, and organizational objectives (Fiedler, 1967; Vroom & Jago, 1988).

In the context of this study, the Contingency Theory provides a dual lens for analysis. First, it enables the identification of whether principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region adopt directive, supportive, or participative leadership styles in response to specific institutional needs. Second, by recognizing the interaction between leadership behavior, employee characteristics, and task requirements, the theory offers a means to understand how administrative staff and tutors perceive these leadership styles and the influence they have on staff motivation, satisfaction, and overall institutional performance.

The Contingency Theory offers a comprehensive perspective for understanding leadership effectiveness in educational settings. It not only captures the behaviors and decisions of principals but also explains how these behaviors are perceived by staff, thereby linking leadership style to institutional outcomes and providing insight into how principals' approaches can enhance or hinder organizational performance.

2.1 Statement of the Problem

In the context of Colleges of Education in Ghana, it has been observed that many principals are inflexible in their leadership approaches. Interactions with colleagues from Colleges of Education in the Greater Accra Region and the researcher's personal experience as an administrator reveal that most principals struggle to adapt their leadership style to the dynamic demands of the educational environment. This inflexibility often results in limited staff participation in decision-making, decreased motivation, and suboptimal institutional outcomes.

This was a problem because leadership that does not consider the needs of staff or the situational demands of the institution can negatively impact employee morale, engagement, and productivity. Principals who are unable to adjust their leadership style may foster environments where staff feel undervalued or excluded, which in turn can affect the quality of teaching and learning and compromise the development of future educators trained in these colleges. Consequently, investigating principals' leadership styles and understanding staff perspectives is crucial for improving leadership practices and promoting effective educational management.

Globally, research has shown the importance of leadership adaptability in enhancing organizational performance. For instance, Yukl (2013) noted that situational and transformational leadership styles positively influence employee motivation and institutional effectiveness across various sectors. In Africa, studies by Awuah and Ahiawodzi (2019) in Ghana and Mavunga (2018) in Zimbabwe have emphasized that principals' leadership approaches directly affect staff satisfaction and institutional outcomes. Specifically, in Ghana, research by Shkurina (2018) and Loder and Spillane (2005) has indicated that inflexible leadership among school administrators can lead to professional isolation, reduced collaboration, and increased staff turnover.

However, most of these studies have either focused on basic or secondary schools or explored leadership styles in general organizational contexts. Few studies have specifically examined the leadership styles of principals within Colleges of Education in the Volta Region, particularly in relation to the perceptions of staff. There is a gap in understanding how staff perceive these leadership styles, how they affect their job satisfaction and the extent to which situational factors influence principals' leadership approaches in these institutions.

This study, therefore, sought to explore both the leadership styles adopted by principals in selected Colleges of Education in the Volta Region and the perspectives of staff regarding these styles.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to:
1) Find out the leadership styles adopted by principals of the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana.
2) Examine the views of staff regarding the leadership styles of principals in colleges of education in the Volta Region of Ghana.
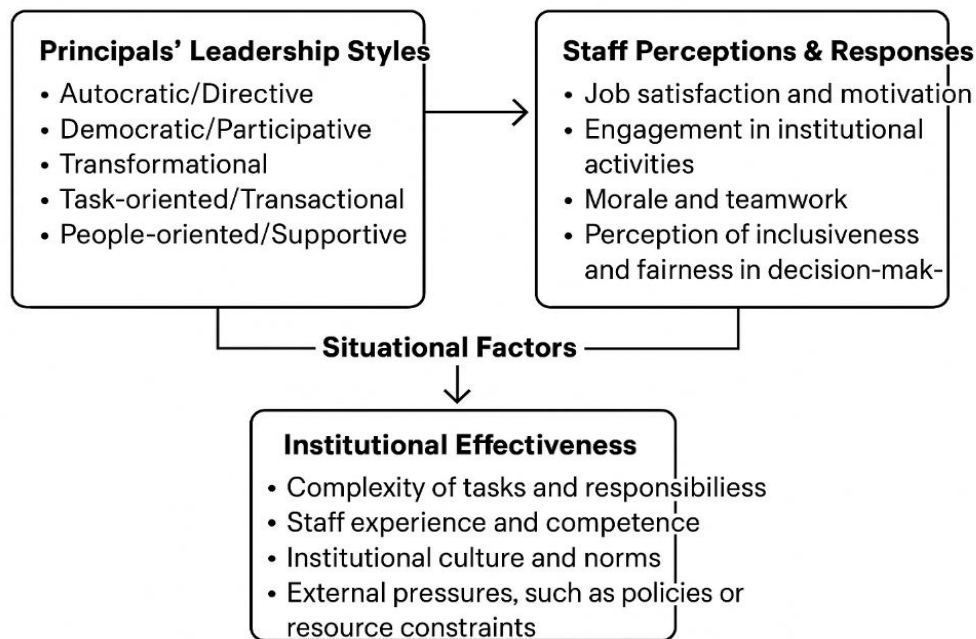
2.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:
1) What leadership styles are adopted by principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana?
2) What are the views of staff regarding the leadership styles of principals in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana?

2.4 Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to administrators and tutors in Colleges of Education within the Volta Region of Ghana. It focused specifically on exploring their perspectives regarding the leadership styles adopted by their principals. The scope of the study was confined to data collected through a semi-structured interview guide and a questionnaire designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative insights from participants.

3. Conceptual Framework

Principals' Leadership Styles
- Autocratic/Directive
- Democratic/Participative
- Transformational
- Task-oriented/Transactional
- People-oriented/Supportive

Staff Perceptions & Responses
- Job satisfaction and motivation
- Engagement in institutional activities
- Morale and teamwork
- Perception of inclusiveness and fairness in decision-mak-

Situational Factors

Institutional Effectiveness
- Complexity of tasks and responsibiliess
- Staff experience and competence
- Institutional culture and norms
- External pressures, such as policies or resource constraints

Source: Researcher's Construct, 2020.

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the leadership styles of principals in Colleges of Education and the perceptions and responses of staff, which together influence institutional effectiveness. Principals may adopt various leadership styles, each with distinct characteristics and implications. Autocratic or directive leaders make decisions independently and closely supervise staff, while democratic or participative leaders involve staff in decision-making, promoting collaboration. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate staff toward achieving shared goals, whereas task-oriented or transactional leaders emphasize structure, accountability, and performance-based rewards. People-oriented or supportive leaders prioritize staff well-being and foster a positive work environment.

The leadership style adopted by the principal significantly shapes how staff perceive their work environment and how they respond. These responses can manifest in levels of job satisfaction and motivation, engagement in institutional activities, morale and teamwork, and perceptions of fairness and inclusiveness in decision-making processes.

However, the effect of leadership styles on staff responses is mediated by situational factors. These include the complexity of tasks and responsibilities, the experience and competence of staff, the prevailing institutional culture and norms, and external pressures such as policy directives or limited resources.

The interplay between leadership styles, staff perceptions and responses, and situational factors determines institutional effectiveness. This effectiveness is reflected in the overall performance, productivity, and ability of the college to achieve its goals and fulfill its mandate.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was the embedded mixed methods design. This design integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single study, allowing one type of data to provide a supportive, complementary role to the other (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, the quantitative component, consisting of data collected through questionnaires, formed the core of the investigation, while the qualitative component, gathered through semi-structured interviews, served to enrich and deepen the understanding of the quantitative findings.

The embedded mixed methods design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of staff perspectives regarding the leadership styles of principals in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana. The quantitative data provided measurable patterns and general trends across a large sample of respondents, whereas the qualitative data offered contextual insights and explanations for those trends.

According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), mixed methods research enhances the validity and interpretive power of findings by combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This design was particularly relevant to the present study because leadership and perception studies often involve both measurable attitudes and subjective experiences that cannot be fully captured through numerical data alone.

4.2 Instrumentation

Two main instruments were used for data collection: a semi-structured interview guide and a questionnaire. These instruments were designed to complement each other, with the interview guide providing qualitative depth and the questionnaire offering quantitative breadth.

4.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Both administrators and tutors participated in the semi-structured interviews. Their inclusion provided diverse perspectives on the leadership practices of principals from both administrative and instructional standpoints. Administrators shared views grounded in policy implementation and institutional management, while tutors offered insights based on day-to-day academic interactions and staff relations. This mix of participants enriched the qualitative data and allowed the researcher to capture a balanced understanding of leadership dynamics within the Colleges of Education.

According to Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick (2008), semi-structured interviews are valuable in social research because they provide flexibility, allowing the researcher to probe for clarification and follow up on emerging themes. This approach ensured that rich and contextualized data were gathered to complement the quantitative findings.

4.2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to both administrators and tutors who voluntarily responded to all items. This ensured that data were collected from individuals directly involved in the teaching and administrative operations of the colleges. The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale, a well-established method for measuring attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions in social and educational research (Kumar, 2019). The response options included:

- Strongly Disagree (SD) – 4,
- Disagree (D) – 3,
- Agree (A) – 2,
- Strongly Agree (SA) – 1.

Responses were analyzed directly based on the four-point scale without further grouping, allowing for a more detailed interpretation of the degree of agreement or disagreement expressed by respondents. This format encouraged more nuanced feedback and avoided the neutrality often associated with mid-point options.

The use of a questionnaire was appropriate because all respondents' tutors and administrative staff were literate and capable of reading and responding independently. Questionnaires are particularly useful in large-scale studies as they allow for data collection from a broad sample within a relatively short period (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the standardized format ensured consistency in responses, minimized interviewer bias, and enhanced the reliability of the data collected (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

4.3 Population

The population of a study refers to the entire group of individuals or elements about whom the researcher intends to draw conclusions. According to Babbie and Mouton (2007), a population is the group from which a researcher collects data and makes generalizations. Similarly, Polit and Hungler (1999) define population as the complete aggregation of cases that conform to a set of specific criteria established for a study.

In this study, the target population comprised administrative staff and tutors working in the Colleges of Education within the Volta Region of Ghana. The accessible population focused specifically on 280 administrative staff, averaging about 35 per college, and 320 tutors, averaging 40 per college, giving an overall total of approximately 600 employees across the five Colleges of Education. These institutions include St. Francis College of Education (Hohoe), Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education (Amedzofe), Peki College of Education (Peki), Jasikan College of Education (Jasikan), and St. Teresa's College of Education (Hohoe).

This population was considered suitable for the study because it consists of individuals who interact directly with the principals and are therefore in a position to assess and reflect on their leadership styles. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) note, defining a clear and accessible population is crucial in ensuring that the data collected

are representative and that the study's findings are valid and generalizable to the broader context of educational leadership in Colleges of Education.

4.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study consisted of 264 administrators and tutors across the five Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana.

For the quantitative phase, the total population of administrators and tutors across the five Colleges of Education was 600. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table, a sample of 234 respondents was deemed adequate and representative of the population. As noted by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018), determining an appropriate sample size is crucial to ensure that findings are generalizable while maintaining feasibility and cost-effectiveness. The use of the Krejcie and Morgan table provided a statistically sound basis for selecting a reliable sample.

The simple random sampling technique was employed for the quantitative phase. This method ensured that each member of the population had an equal and independent chance of selection, thereby minimizing bias and enhancing representativeness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Simple random sampling is widely recommended in educational research when generalizing findings from a representative sample to a larger population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

The sampled respondents were distributed among the five Colleges of Education as follows: 47 from St. Francis College of Education, Hohoe; 47 from Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education, Amedzofe; 47 from Peki College of Education, Peki; 47 from Jasikan College of Education, Jasikan; and 46 from St. Teresa's College of Education, Hohoe. This proportional distribution ensured fair representation across institutions and reflected the diverse staff composition within the Volta Region.

For the qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich and detailed insights into leadership practices. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to deliberately select individuals with the knowledge, experience, and perspectives necessary to address the research objectives (Patton, 2015). In this study, three administrators and three tutors were selected from each college, resulting in a total of 30 participants. This sample size was considered appropriate, as qualitative research emphasizes depth of understanding rather than breadth of representation (Mason, 2010). Participants for the qualitative phase were selected based on specific criteria to ensure they could provide relevant information. These criteria included: having at least ten years of working experience in the College of Education system; holding a substantive administrative or teaching role; demonstrating knowledge of institutional leadership practices and the operations of the principal's office; actively participating in decision-making processes such as committees, staff meetings, or academic boards; possessing a good understanding of the college's organizational culture and history; and maintaining a record of consistent service and professional integrity, as confirmed through administrative documentation or departmental recommendations.

5. Results

5.1 Research Question One: What leadership styles are adopted by principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana?

Table 4.1: Respondents' Views on Leadership Styles Adopted
by Principals in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Democratic leadership	35.9	45.3	12.8	6.0	2.05	0.86
Autocratic leadership	28.2	39.3	20.5	12.0	2.16	0.92
Laissez-faire leadership	14.1	25.6	38.5	21.8	2.68	1.01
Bureaucratic leadership	26.1	43.6	20.9	9.4	2.14	0.89
Servant leadership	24.8	48.7	18.0	8.5	2.10	0.91
Charismatic leadership	31.2	42.7	17.9	8.2	2.03	0.85
Task-oriented leadership	28.6	44.9	18.8	7.7	2.06	0.88
Transformational leadership	34.6	46.2	13.7	5.5	1.98	0.83
Transactional leadership	25.2	40.1	23.5	11.2	2.21	0.95
People-oriented leadership	36.8	43.6	13.7	5.9	1.96	0.82
Mean of Means / Std. Dev.					**2.14**	**0.89**

Source: Field Data, 2020.

Table 4.1 presents respondents' views on the types of leadership styles exhibited by principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region. The analysis was based on the mean and standard deviation scores derived from the four-point Likert scale responses. The mean values ranged from 1.96 to 2.68, while the standard deviations varied between 0.82 and 1.01, indicating moderate variability in respondents' opinions across the different leadership styles.

Among the leadership styles, people-oriented leadership recorded the lowest mean score of 1.96 (SD = 0.82), suggesting that this was the most widely perceived leadership style among principals. This was closely followed by transformational leadership (Mean = 1.98, SD = 0.83) and charismatic leadership (Mean = 2.03, SD = 0.85). These low mean values indicate a high level of agreement among respondents that principals frequently demonstrate attributes such as empathy, motivation, collaboration, and effective communication—qualities typically associated with people-oriented and transformational leaders.

Democratic (Mean = 2.05, SD = 0.86) and task-oriented leadership (Mean = 2.06, SD = 0.88) also ranked high in respondents' agreement, implying that principals often adopt participatory and goal-driven approaches to leadership. This reflects a tendency among principals to involve staff in decision-making and ensure that institutional objectives are pursued efficiently.

Conversely, laissez-faire leadership recorded the highest mean score of 2.68 (SD = 1.01), indicating strong disagreement among respondents that this style is commonly practiced. This suggests that principals are generally not passive or disengaged from the

administrative and instructional affairs of their institutions. Similarly, transactional leadership (Mean = 2.21, SD = 0.95) and autocratic leadership (Mean = 2.16, SD = 0.92) were rated relatively higher, implying that while such styles may occasionally appear, they are not dominant in the leadership behaviour of principals.

The mean of means (2.14) and overall standard deviation (0.89) show that, on average, staff moderately agreed that their principals adopt diverse leadership styles, with a greater inclination towards transformational, people-oriented, and democratic styles. The relatively low standard deviations across most items suggest a fair level of consistency in respondents' perceptions.

In summary, the results indicate that the principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region predominantly exhibit transformational, people-oriented, democratic, and task-oriented leadership styles, while autocratic and laissez-faire styles are less evident. This pattern reflects a leadership approach that balances structure with participation, emphasizing collaboration, motivation, and shared responsibility within the colleges.

5.1.1 Qualitative Data

To complement the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrators and tutors across the selected Colleges of Education.

- **Theme 1: Transformational and People-Oriented Leadership**

A tutor shared:

> *"Our principal encourages innovation and always motivates us to try new teaching methods. He believes in developing our potential rather than just enforcing rules."* (PT3)

Another tutor echoed similar sentiments:

> *"She supports our professional growth and often recognizes individual achievements, which makes us feel valued."* (PT19)

An administrator reported:

> *"The principal has a good relationship with both academic and non-academic staff. He listens to our ideas and gives room for participation in decisions."* (PT6)

Similarly, another administrator said:

> *"Staff feel inspired to work hard because the principal leads by example and shows concern for everyone's welfare."* (PT1)

The responses imply that many principals demonstrate transformational and people-oriented leadership traits, characterized by empathy, recognition, teamwork and

shared decision-making. Such leadership appears to foster a positive work environment and enhance staff morale and productivity.

- **Theme 2: Democratic Leadership**

An administrator shared:

"Most major decisions are taken after consulting staff through committees or general meetings. Everyone's opinion is respected." (PT30)

A tutor echoed similar sentiments:

"Our principal believes in collective responsibility. We are usually consulted before new policies are implemented." (PT8)

An administrator reported:

"The principal is open to suggestions and often delegates responsibilities to staff members who are capable." (PT9)

Similarly, a tutor said:

"We feel part of the management process, which makes us more committed to our work." (PT21)

The responses indicated that principals in the colleges of Education in the Volta Region adopt democratic leadership styles, promoting inclusiveness, consultation, and teamwork. This participatory approach enhances trust and commitment among staff, leading to a collaborative institutional culture.

- **Theme 3: Autocratic Leadership**

A tutor shared:

"Sometimes the principal makes decisions without consulting us, especially when deadlines are tight, or directives come from higher authorities." (PT17)

Another tutor echoed similar sentiments:

"There are occasions when instructions are given without room for discussion. You just have to comply." (PT8)

An administrator reported:

"In matters concerning discipline and finances, the principal rarely tolerates dissent." (PT15)

Similarly, another administrator said:

"Although he is approachable, he sometimes prefers to act unilaterally to maintain control." (PT24)

The responses indicated that some principals still exhibit autocratic leadership, particularly in administrative situations. While this approach ensures efficiency and compliance, it may also limit creativity and open communication among staff.

- **Theme 4: Bureaucratic Leadership**

A tutor shared:

"The principal is very particular about following official procedures and documentation. Nothing is done outside laid-down rules." (PT29)

Another tutor echoed similar sentiments:

"She insists that all actions go through proper channels, which sometimes delays decision-making." (PT15)

An administrator reported:

"The management style is systematic and structured. Every staff member knows what is expected and is monitored closely." (PT25)

Similarly, another administrator said:

"The principal emphasizes accountability and adherence to college policies at all times." (PT13)

The responses imply that some principals operate within a bureaucratic leadership framework, emphasizing structure, rules, and accountability. While this ensures order and institutional discipline, excessive bureaucracy can slow innovation and reduce flexibility.

5.2 Research Question Two: What are the views of staff regarding the leadership styles of principals in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana?

Table 4.2: Staff Views on Leadership Styles of
Principals in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region

Statements	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Principals involve staff in decision-making	33.3	44.4	15.0	7.3	2.00	0.87
Principals are often authoritative in their approach	28.6	39.3	20.9	11.2	2.15	0.93
Principals motivate staff to perform better	30.3	46.6	16.2	6.9	1.99	0.85
Principals allow flexibility and independence	16.7	28.6	36.3	18.4	2.56	1.00
Principals insist on following laid-down procedures	24.8	49.6	18.4	7.3	2.09	0.88
Principals provide supportive supervision	34.2	45.7	13.2	6.9	1.93	0.82
Principals show concern for staff welfare	31.6	47.0	14.1	7.3	1.98	0.83
Principals reward good performance	27.4	40.6	22.2	9.8	2.15	0.91
Principals focus on task accomplishment	29.9	46.6	16.7	6.8	2.01	0.86
Principals inspire and influence staff positively	35.9	44.4	13.7	6.0	1.93	0.81
Mean of Means / Std. Dev.					**2.08**	**0.87**

Source: Field data (2020).

The results presented in Table 4.2 show the views of staff regarding the leadership styles of principals in Colleges of Education in the Volta Region. The mean scores of the items range from 1.93 to 2.56, with an overall mean of 2.08 and a standard deviation of 0.87. These results indicate that, in general, staff members moderately agreed that their principals exhibit positive leadership behaviours.

Items such as "Principals inspire and influence staff positively" (Mean = 1.93, SD = 0.81) and "Principals provide supportive supervision" (Mean = 1.93, SD = 0.82) recorded the lowest mean scores, suggesting strong agreement that principals often demonstrate motivational and supportive leadership traits. Similarly, the statements "Principals show concern for staff welfare" (Mean = 1.98, SD = 0.83) and "Principals motivate staff to perform better" (Mean = 1.99, SD = 0.85) also received low mean ratings, indicating that principals are generally viewed as caring, encouraging, and people-oriented leaders.

In contrast, the item "Principals allow flexibility and independence" had the highest mean score of 2.56 (SD = 1.00), showing relatively less agreement among respondents. This suggests that while principals engage their staff and encourage participation, they still maintain a level of control over school operations.

The moderate mean scores for "Principals insist on following laid-down procedures" (Mean = 2.09, SD = 0.88) and "Principals are often authoritative in their approach" (Mean = 2.15, SD = 0.93) indicate that some elements of bureaucratic and autocratic leadership are also present, though not dominant.

The findings indicated that staff perceive their principals as mainly democratic, transformational, and supportive in their leadership approaches, with occasional use of bureaucratic or directive methods to maintain institutional order and accountability. The

relatively small standard deviations across all items further show that respondents' views were fairly consistent.

5.2.1 Qualitative Data

Interviews with administrators and tutors from the selected Colleges of Education in the Volta Region revealed varied views on how principals exercise leadership.

- **Theme 1: Principals Are Generally Supportive and Motivating**

Many respondents described their principals as approachable, encouraging, and committed to staff professional growth.

A tutor shared:

"Our principal motivates us to perform better and supports us with teaching resources whenever possible." (PT3)

Another tutor remarked:

"She appreciates our efforts and always reminds us that teamwork is key to success." (PT14)

An administrator added:

"The principal supervises us closely but always offers guidance instead of intimidation." (PT9)

These views show that staff appreciate principals who motivate, encourage, and provide direction in a supportive way. Respondents generally viewed such leadership as inspiring and conducive to effective performance.

- **Theme 2: Principals Value Participation but Still Retain Control**

Staff widely acknowledged that most principals involve them in discussions and decisions, although the final say often rests with the principal.

An administrator shared:

"Before major decisions are made, the principal calls for a meeting to gather opinions from all departments." (PT4)

A tutor confirmed:

"Our ideas are considered, but ultimately, the principal decides what to implement." (PT7)

These views indicated that staff see their principals as partly democratic, allowing consultation and inclusion but also centralizing authority when necessary. This balance was generally accepted by respondents as practical for maintaining order and efficiency.

- **Theme 3: Leadership Is Structured but Sometimes Too Formal**

Respondents also viewed their principals as disciplined leaders who adhere strictly to rules and procedures. While many respected this, some felt it slowed down work.

A tutor noted:

"The principal insists that everything follows due process, which is good, but sometimes it delays urgent tasks." (PT13)

An administrator added:

"He believes in accountability and proper documentation, which keeps things organized." (PT12)

These views show that staff appreciate procedural discipline but would prefer more flexibility in certain situations.

- **Theme 4: Principals Are Firm but Fair**

Several participants acknowledged that their principals can be firm and authoritative when enforcing institutional rules, though they also described this as necessary for maintaining standards.

A tutor commented:

"He is strict about punctuality and reporting, but fair when issues are explained properly." (PT2)

An administrator shared:

"He takes final decisions on disciplinary matters, and most of us agree it keeps the college in order." (PT8)

These views suggest that staff respect firmness when it is exercised fairly and consistently. Principals who balance authority with empathy were seen as effective and respected leaders.

6. Discussion

6.1 Research Question One: What leadership styles are adopted by principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana?

The findings revealed that principals in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region employ a combination of leadership styles, with a stronger inclination toward autocratic and transformational tendencies. The data showed that while some principals involve staff in decision-making and motivate them to perform better, a significant number still exhibit authoritative behaviours by insisting on laid-down procedures and maintaining control over decision processes. This suggests a mixed leadership orientation in which principals alternate between directive and participatory approaches depending on the situation.

This finding aligns with Agyeman (2020), who found that most principals in Ghanaian Colleges of Education adopt an autocratic or transactional leadership style, often due to the structured nature of the institutions and the need to comply with educational policies. Similarly, Owusu and Addo (2018) discovered that while some principals encourage teamwork and open communication, many rely on top-down management to ensure administrative order and accountability.

However, the presence of motivational and supportive behaviours among principals in this study indicates traces of transformational leadership. This style emphasizes inspiration, vision, and concern for staff welfare, which agrees with Mensah and Frimpong (2021), who observed that transformational leadership in educational institutions leads to improved teacher morale and institutional performance. The current findings also corroborate Asare and Nti (2019), who noted that effective principals in teacher training institutions combine transformational and democratic practices to create a supportive working environment.

On the other hand, the persistent use of authoritarian tendencies such as strict adherence to procedures and limited staff autonomy suggests the continued influence of traditional hierarchical structures. Boateng (2017) observed a similar pattern in Ghana's Colleges of Education, where principals often adopt a blend of autocratic and transactional leadership due to administrative pressures and accountability demands from the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). This blend ensures control and compliance but can limit creativity and staff involvement in decision-making.

The findings indicate that while principals in the Volta Region are gradually adopting transformational and participatory leadership practices, autocratic and task-oriented leadership styles remain dominant. This reflects the transitional state of leadership culture in Colleges of Education, where principals must balance institutional control with efforts to motivate and engage staff.

6.2 Research Question Two: What are the views of administrative staff and tutors regarding the leadership styles of principals in Colleges of Education?

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative data reveal that administrative staff and tutors generally perceive their principals as supportive, participatory, and motivating leaders. The overall mean score of 2.08 (SD = 0.87) suggests that respondents moderately agreed that their principals exhibit positive leadership behaviours. Staff indicated that their principals motivate them, provide supportive supervision, show concern for their welfare, and inspire them to perform better. These perceptions reflect strong elements of transformational and democratic leadership among principals in the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region.

This finding aligns with the study by Afayori (2019), who found that tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education perceived their principals as transformational leaders who inspire and motivate staff to achieve institutional goals. Afayori further noted that transformational leadership significantly enhances tutors' self-efficacy and commitment to teaching. The present study's results, particularly the low mean scores for "Principals inspire and influence staff positively" (Mean = 1.93) and "Principals provide supportive supervision" (Mean = 1.93), confirm that tutors appreciate leadership that fosters motivation, guidance, and empowerment.

Similarly, Esia-Donkoh (2020) in his study "Principals' Leadership Style and Tutor Job Satisfaction" reported that tutors were most satisfied when their principals practiced transformational and democratic leadership styles that promoted open communication, recognition, and involvement in decision-making. The current study supports this view, as many participants highlighted that their principals value their input, encourage teamwork, and promote participatory decision-making. Staff perceived these practices as enhancing collaboration and commitment.

Furthermore, the study by Esia-Donkoh and Quansah (2021), which examined leadership styles across public Colleges of Education in Ghana, found that principals often adopt democratic and transformational approaches that create an enabling and cooperative atmosphere. The present findings echo this, as respondents acknowledged that principals frequently consult them in major decisions, though final authority remains with the principal. This indicates a participatory but guided form of leadership that balances inclusion with institutional control.

The findings also reflect elements of bureaucratic and authoritative leadership. Staff responses such as "Principals insist on following laid-down procedures" (Mean = 2.09) and "Principals are often authoritative in their approach" (Mean = 2.15) reveal that principals maintain order and adherence to institutional policies. This aligns with Agyeman-Nyarko (2019), who observed that instructional leadership in Colleges of Education often combines transformational and procedural elements to ensure accountability and compliance with educational standards. According to her, even when principals are democratic in approach, they remain firm in enforcing institutional norms, particularly in areas of supervision and discipline.

Additionally, Esia-Donkoh (2018), in his study on differences in leadership styles of principals based on their personal characteristics, found that most principals exhibit a blend of leadership behaviours rather than a single dominant style. This reflects situational leadership, where principals adjust their style depending on context and staff needs. The current study's qualitative results similarly suggest that while staff appreciate participatory and supportive leadership, they also respect firmness and structure as necessary for institutional efficiency.

Overall, these findings suggest that administrative staff and tutors in the Volta Region perceive their principals' leadership as multidimensional—mainly democratic and transformational, with elements of bureaucracy and authority where institutional discipline demands it. This hybrid leadership style aligns with the contextual realities of teacher education institutions in Ghana, where principals are expected to balance participation with control to ensure quality and accountability. The convergence of findings across these studies reinforces that effective leadership in Colleges of Education depends on principals' ability to inspire, guide, and involve staff while maintaining professional and administrative order.

7. Conclusion

The study concludes that principals of Colleges of Education in the Volta Region employ multiple leadership styles, reflecting a blend of transformational, democratic, and autocratic orientations. The findings revealed that while transformational and people-oriented leadership styles are the most dominant, characterized by motivation, collaboration, and concern for staff welfare, autocratic and bureaucratic traits remain evident in administrative decision-making processes. This hybrid leadership approach suggests that principals strive to balance participatory management with institutional control to ensure efficiency and compliance with established policies.

From the views of administrative staff and tutors, principals are largely seen as supportive, approachable, and motivating leaders who foster teamwork, consultation, and professional growth. Staff acknowledged that principals often involve them in decision-making, provide guidance and supervision, and maintain fairness and discipline in managing the colleges. However, some degree of centralized control persists, especially in areas requiring strict adherence to regulations and accountability standards.

7.1 Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to the Colleges of Education in the Volta Region of Ghana:
1) Principals should place greater emphasis on transformational and democratic leadership practices that encourage teamwork, communication, and shared decision-making. These approaches foster motivation, creativity, and a positive institutional climate. Training and capacity-building programmes should be

organized by the Educational Directorate of the Volta Region to equip principals with the necessary leadership competencies to balance authority with participation.

2) Principals should build stronger professional relationships with tutors and administrative staff by promoting inclusiveness and recognizing their contributions. Regular consultation, motivation, and fair supervision should be prioritized to enhance trust, job satisfaction, and institutional performance. The Educational Directorate should also monitor and support principals in maintaining effective staff engagement practices.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no conflicts of interest nor competing interest in the study.

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