

Induction Programme in the Basic Schools of the Awutu Senya District and the Ghana Education Service

Monica Assifuah-Nunoo

PhD Candidate, University of Education, Winneba

Corresponding author: Monica Assifuah-Nunoo. E-mail: monicagedeon2@gmail.com

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to assess the Induction Programme in the Basic Schools of the Awutu Senya District and the Ghana Education Service, with particular reference to the Awutu Senya West District. It is to create more awareness of the importance of induction, recommend to the Ghana Education Service that it formulate policy on it, and make it mandatory for anyone who takes an appointment in the education sector. The researcher used a qualitative study underpinned by the interpretive paradigm. The findings showed that the programmes organized for the heads were all generally related to educational issues, with little attention paid to their own realities. This means the induction programme as organized in the Awutu Senya district was not context-specific. The result is that they tend to depend principally on experiential learning in carrying out their leadership tasks, and because they are often not officially inducted, they lack both in-depth knowledge and experience of induction in educational organizations, and since induction and support are usually limited, they have to adopt a pragmatic approach. However, the study recommended that a comprehensive training on leadership be organized within a year or two for newly appointed headteachers in the district. This will call for follow-ups with the newly appointed headteachers to ascertain whether they are practicing according to expectations.

Keywords: headteacher, induction programme, leadership tasks, Awutu Senya West District, Ghana

1. INTRODUCTION

There is more emphasis on headmaster leadership in the basic school as the landscape of Ghana's educational system changes. The need for headteachers to participate in an induction programme both before and after they take office is strengthened by this. The process and assistance offered by an organization to assist a new employee in getting to know the new organization and its members as well as the expectations and duties of the job is known as induction (Ghanney, 2020). Anyone who is new to a job will have some gaps in his/her knowledge and skills, which need to be identified and action taken. In educational organization it is a process of initiating new teachers into their new roles, both as teachers and as members of the school organization. This also applies to newly appointed headteachers as well as any educational personnel assuming new office. (Chekole & Mohammed Ahmed, 2023)

In general, inexperienced headteachers frequently feel constrained in their ability to carry out their responsibilities more successfully. After being in a phase of transition that needed significant adjusting, they find themselves in a new working environment where they are faced with some difficult duties. Newly appointed headteachers may benefit from an induction programme to help them quickly adjust to their new surroundings? It is a component of professional development and, in the end, strives to create a system of educational assistance in which all teachers are successful in assisting students to do well (Ghanney, 2021). The climate and culture of a school are significantly correlated with an induction programme's performance, claim (Justice Bain-Doodu, 2008).

Every Induction programme is supposed to be designed to have objectives that reflects the needs of the employee and the philosophy and objectives of the institution (Dsane-Aidoo et al., 2022). It is a means to getting adapted to a new situation, position or

environment. Thus induction gives new entrants the opportunity to learn and appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses. It also offers them the opportunity to recognize from the start the talents, skills and experiences that their job roles require. It is very necessary and crucial for anyone taking new office. It is indeed part of headteacher development so it must be an ongoing process which begins upon appointment and continues throughout the teaching profession (Inkoom et al., 2022)

New headteachers actually require particular types of support in order to establish themselves and function as effective leaders in their schools. Induction programmes provide the structure and support needed to maximize the effectiveness of new leaders as they confront the many challenges facing schools. (Amponsah et al., 2023) opined that it is important to support new headteachers through the process of organizational socialization when they attempt to take charge of the school and learn about being a head in their particular organization but Davis, Darling-Hammond, have adduced that principal candidates and current principals are not prepared or supported enough for instructional leadership and managing the various demands of the job. Their findings are very relevant in the Awutu Senya West District Basic Schools with regard to headteachers assuming their new role. In other words headteachers in the Awutu Senya West District are not exempted from the deficiency Davies et al. had pointed out. This is one of the major contributing factors to teaching and learning related problems in the district. (Boateng et al., 2022)

Induction programmes can assist headteachers to read the culture of the school and overcome the isolation commonly reported by new headteachers as a result the programmes should focus on the role of the headteacher as a change agent and transformational leader (Mensah & Yeboah, 2022). It is very necessary therefore to put measures in place in educational organization to induct newly appointed educators so as to have an educator workforce with training and skills needed to deliver high-quality teaching and learning to students (Mensah & Yeboah, 2022).

Induction programmes if conducted well can assist headteachers to be effective. An effective headteacher can create an environment in the school which is conducive to learning and teaching. He can provide services that assist new teachers to develop and sustain

skills for successful classroom instruction. The induction Literature emphasizes that an effective principal is prerequisite to school improvement. The same can be said of headteachers in the basic schools. Their role in leading and managing schools is consequential for the transformation and improvement of schools. Effective headteachers set the direction for their school through developing and articulating shared values and promoting a culture in which teachers act as a professional learning community and strive towards common goals. Secondly, they share the responsibility of leading the school with others to build capacity and promote greater ownership by others for school improvement and lastly act as instructional leaders who relentlessly focus on student learning and effective teaching (Addo, 2022).

Evidence suggests that, second only to the influence of classroom instruction, school leadership powerfully impacts student achievement (Colley 2002). Headteacher leadership is a key component in creating a collaborative learning environment that contributes not only to the retention of new teachers but also to nurturing teachers who can meet the expectations of working in a complex milieu of diversity and change (Malang & Yogyakarta, 2020.). He/she has the responsibility of cultivating a positive relationship with the teaching staff (Johnson & Birkeland 2003). In doing so, it is necessary that he/she be readily available to support and empower teachers (Angelle 2006; Renwick 2007; Richards 2004; Ruder 2005). Strong arguments support the assertion that the headteacher plays the most important role in establishing a culture for learning and overall school change (Adu Ankrah et al., 2023).

(Anasori et al., 2021) in a study to examine the challenges facing new principals in Africa, proposed an induction model for principals in Africa. They found in their study that, school principals in Africa face a daunting challenge. They often work in poorly equipped buildings with inadequately trained staff. They also found further that, there is rarely any formal leadership training and that principals are appointed on the basis of their teaching record rather than their leadership potential. Induction and support were found to be usually limited. Their findings in their study for principals in Africa are applicable to headteachers in Africa as well. Kitavi and van der Westhuizen (Fuseini, 2022). Have also stated in their work that headteachers are often appointed on the basis of a successful record as teachers with an implicit assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point

for school leadership. All these findings are equally applicable to headteachers in the basic schools in the Awutu Senya West District.

Throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for headteachers to be trained as managers. (Adu Ankrah et al., 2023) corroborated this point by asserting that the appointment of headteachers in Ghana is largely based on a teacher's seniority in "rank" and "teaching experience". He said further that, in Ghana training for headteachers is "in service" and usually provided by international agencies for selected schools, mostly drawn from urban and semi-urban areas. These agencies, including the World Bank, UNESCO, DFID, USAID and CIDA, often determine the number and category of schools to be involved. (Cole et al., 2007) claimed that the training programmes cease once the project is accomplished because the Ghana Education Service complains of lack of money to sustain them.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research approach

A qualitative approach offers researchers opportunities to explore the world of human experience. The researcher was interested in assessing the induction programme of newly appointed headteachers in the Awutu Senya District. An exploratory case study was employed due to the qualitative nature of the study. Semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion, observation, and field notes were used as methods of data collection. This enabled the researcher to gather holistic and rich data for the study. The ability to triangulate data by using different methods of data collection places the researcher in an advantageous position to gather the quality and rich information required for the study (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005) and can enhance the credibility of a study (Tatipang et al., 2022). Qualitative methods are used to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions of people regarding a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2010) described qualitative research as collecting data from a variety of resources, evaluating the data, analyzing evaluations to produce findings, and presenting the findings.

Research design

Research design, according to (Tatipang et al., 2022), refers to the overall strategy that one chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring that the

researcher will effectively address the problem. Research design guides the whole process of data collection, instrumentation, and data analysis. The researcher also perceives research design as the overall approach, including procedures and methods used in the study. This is due to the fact that the research design controls and offers specific guidelines required for the study. A case study was adopted in the study. According to (Iqbal et al., 2022), a "case study" is an in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. Denscombe (2003) and Yin (2003) hold that a case study approach requires the use of multiple methods to collect data, enabling the data to be validated through triangulation. (Nushi et al., 2022) also assert that the approach is action-oriented and, therefore, the findings are useful for improving practice. The researcher chose the case study approach to help her achieve the purpose of the study, which is to explore the induction programme for newly appointed headteachers in the Awutu Senya District. The case study approach permitted the use of multiple instruments for data collection to achieve the study objectives.

The study adopted a case study in line with the researcher's theoretical and philosophical positions. Ontologically, the researcher subscribed to the nominalist view of reality, which states that social reality has no external existence but is rather the result of human thinking. Epistemologically, the study is influenced by the constructivist view of knowledge, which states that meaning or knowledge is constructed but not discovered (Tatipang et al., 2022). With these theoretical positions, the study was also guided by the interpretive paradigm, which states that social reality is created jointly through meaningful interaction between the researcher and the participants (Hagenauer et al., 2022) holds that the basis of the interpretive paradigm is constructivism. The interpretivist paradigm originates from the work of Max Weber (1864–1930), who argued that our understanding of the social world can be deepened when we make an effort to understand it from the perspectives of the people studied rather than explaining their behavior through cause and effect (Weber, 1949). Kusi adds that the interpretive paradigm requires that data be collected verbally because it acknowledges the feelings, experiences, and viewpoints of participants. This is the reason why a qualitative approach was adopted in this study since the interviews conducted really acknowledged the feelings, experiences, and viewpoints of the participants, as

opined by Kusi. A case study was employed in the study due to its flexibility, applicability, and ease of use in a wide variety of fields.

A case study as a systematic design can be prescriptive. (Hagenauer et al., 2022) defines a case study as an empirical research method used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon, focusing on the dynamics of the case within its real-life context. A case study could be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. According to (Hagenauer et al., 2022), case studies are appropriate when asking “how,” “why,” “what,” and “who” questions. In the exploratory case study, the questions answered are “how” and “what.” Exploratory case studies are also appropriate when a researcher wishes to gain an extensive and in-depth description of a social phenomenon. The exploratory case study is used to assess the induction programme for newly appointed headteachers in the Awutu Senya District.

The setting of the Research

This setting was chosen for the study because of the difference in academic performance between public and private basic schools in the Awutu Senya District. Private schools in the district outperform public schools in the district. The reasons given by educational stakeholders in the district have to do with intensive supervision, proper preparation, and the monitoring of the activities of headteachers in private schools. The intensive supervision that the private schools in the district enjoy is a far cry from that of the public schools, and this caught the attention of the researcher, who decided to look into it, hence the decision to conduct the study in the Awutu Senya District. A preliminary interaction with some head teachers and district education officers informed the researcher of the existence of management deficiencies in the public schools in the district. A number of the contacted officers and headteachers blamed the poor performance of students in the district on the poor preparation of newly appointed headteachers in the district. It is a popular opinion among scholars that management efficiency is closely linked to students' academic achievement. It was on this basis that Awutu Senya district became the site for this study. This is because the recommendations in this study would be used to address the challenge of poor headteacher preparation in the district.

Population

According to (Thornberg et al., 2022), “population” is the group of people the researcher wants to draw conclusions about once the study is completed. The population of the study comprised the 117 headteachers of public basic schools, 8 circuit supervisors, and the training officer in the Awutu Senya district. However, the study focused on the newly appointed headteachers of public basic schools in the Awutu Senya district. The accessible population for the research was the headteachers of selected public elementary schools in the district.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

(Martin, 2019) defines a sample as a fraction of the population that has been selected to represent the population. Sampling is the process of selecting a sample. Purposive sampling was utilized for the selection of participants for the interview and the selection of schools. Cohen (2007) defines purposive sampling as a type of sampling where researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought. The purposive sampling technique was employed due to the qualitative nature of the study, and this is in consonance with the views of Fraenkel and Wallen (2003), who stipulate that in almost all qualitative research, the sampling is purposive. The population of the participants in the district is 124. A sample size of 25 participants, comprising 16 headteachers, 8 circuit supervisors, and the (1) training officer of the district, was employed in the study. The 8 circuit supervisors were selected for the focus group discussion (FGD).

Instruments

The researcher used semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion as research instruments for the study. Observation was also used in some parts of the research process. These are appropriate instruments for qualitative studies. Coleman et al. (2002) have stated that it is useful to use interviews when studying factors influencing the outcomes of teaching and learning. Wragg (2002) noted that this instrument allows the interviewer to ask initial questions, followed by probes meant to seek clarification of issues raised. Probes are either stated in advance or posed in the course of the interview, making the interview process flexible. According to Kusi (2012), semi-structured interview guides are flexible to a greater extent, they offer interviewees the opportunity to express their views,

feelings, and experiences freely, and they give the interviewer the freedom to divert from the items in the schedule to seek clarifications. Flick (2006) indicated that the psychologists Brigitte Scheele and Norbert Groeben developed the technique for "studying subjective theories relating to school and other professional fields." The term "subjective theories" refers to the fact that interviewees have a complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study (p. 155). A semi-structured interview provided the rich data required for the study (Gillham, 2000). Shenton (2004) suggests that data contributed by those responsible for service delivery can help enhance the contextual data relating to the area of research, and therefore it was imperative to conduct an interview with the respondents. A semi-structured interview offered participants the freedom to discuss their views from their own perspective on the induction programme for headteachers. The semi-structured interview guides were developed in line with the five research objectives of the study. Three separate interview guides were developed for the headteachers, circuit supervisors, and training officers in the district.

The interview guides for the headteachers contained 25 items, those for the circuit supervisors contained 17 items, and those for the training officer contained 15 items, which are found in the appendix. Focus group discussion is a technique where a researcher assembles a group of individuals to discuss a specific topic, aiming to draw from the complex personal experiences, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of the participants through a moderated interaction (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick, & Mukherjee, 2018). They added that focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues.

The method aims to obtain data from a purposefully selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population. Kusi (2012) observed that the focus group discussion is useful when research participants are dispersed, so the best option is to bring them together at a convenient location. In line with this, the eight circuit supervisors were interviewed after a scheduled meeting with the district education director. The focus group discussion lasted for an hour. The focus group provided a forum for participants to share their experiences and ideas about the induction programme organized for them. (Kruger & Casey, 2000). Focus groups can capitalize on communication between participants in order to generate data and are often used within

exploratory research projects (Barbour, 2007). People make meanings of situations and experiences, and meanings are usually formed in interactions with others (Creswell, 2003).

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher visited the research site with an introductory letter for approval from the Department of Educational Administration and Management of the University of Education, Winneba, as stipulated, and sought permission from the district director and the human resources manager, as well as from the AD supervisor from the district, to gather data on the induction programme of newly appointed headteachers. The researcher briefed selected participants on the purpose of the research. Respondents were educated on the task to be completed for a successful result. Interviews were conducted on scheduled days to gather data. The researcher gathered field data through interviews, observation, and focused group discussion among headteachers and selected circuit supervisors in the research area. The researcher gained access to the headteachers, circuit supervisors, and training officer of the district and interviewed them, as well as engaging some in group discussion. Data related to the induction programme for headteachers were derived from the responses of heads and educational officers, including circuit supervisors and the training officer in the district. Eight weeks were dedicated to the interviews. 8 weeks were spent on the interviews of the 16 headteachers, with every two headteachers being interviewed in a day. Each interview lasted an hour. The interviews for the headteachers were conducted between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., a time almost all the headteachers agreed was appropriate for the interviews. The ninth and tenth weeks were used for the focus group discussions with the circuit supervisors and the training officer. The focus group discussion took place after a scheduled meeting involving the district education director and circuit supervisors in the district. The interview with the training officer took place on Friday of the tenth week of data collection between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Interviews were both manually and audio-recorded after seeking the prior permission of respondents.

Data Analysis Procedure

As the selected design required a qualitative approach, the researcher employed qualitative analysis procedures. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher deciphered the meaning underlying all the data gathered. Coding and thematic analyses,

interpretation, and discussions were used to analyze the data gathered. Braun and Clarke (2006) present thematic analysis as a method used to identify, analyze, and report themes and patterns within a data set. They explain thematic analysis as the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. In addition, they suggest that it is the first qualitative method that should be learned as "it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of analysis" (p. 78). Thematic analysis helped the researcher identify themes, which are patterns in the data that are relevant to the topic under study, and use these themes to address issues related to the research to analyze, interpret, and make meaning to improve practice. Data was gathered by the researcher through interactive means. The researcher was able to immerse herself in the data to the extent that she became familiar with the depth and breadth of the content.

This was done through "repeated reading" of the data such that she could derive meaning and pattern and mark ideas for codes. This was followed by the transcription of verbal data from the interview and focus group discussion into written form. Bird (2005) considers transcription "a key phase of data analysis with interpretive qualitative methodology." (Bird, 2005:227) and recognizes interpretation as an act where meanings are created. The researcher ensured that the transcript reflected the data recorded and information gathered from the verbal account in a true reflection of its original nature. Coding was done manually. The researcher assigned codes to the data using highlights to represent features of the data and to enable the researcher to organize the data into meaningful categories. (Tuckett, 2005). The researcher sorted different codes and categorized them into themes. The themes that emerged described relevant data in line with research questions. Braun & Clarke (2006) explain that there are no hard-and-fast rules about what makes a theme. Themes are categorized by their significance. The researcher, after coding, categorizes codes into themes that are predominantly descriptive. The findings were analyzed under major themes that emerged from the data in relation to the literature review.

3. RESULT

Induction as orientation, workshops, and handing-over

Generally, headteachers depict their induction as a form of capacity-building workshop. Others call it orientation.

The majority of them admitted that there was no comprehensive induction organized for them but agreed that a two-day capacity-building workshop was organized for them where they were trained on relevant issues bothering management. For example, a headteacher described the whole process like this:

I will say there was a kind of induction for us because the authorities organized a general meeting for all headteachers after our interview. During our time together, I can remember they discussed issues such as GES rules and regulations, the roles and responsibilities of the headteacher, his office work, how to file documents, and record keeping. We were also briefed on the content of the headteacher's handbook, school records such as registers and assessment books, staff and student movement books, log books, inventory books, account books, exams books, attendance books, etc. (Headteacher 1)

This response clearly demonstrates that the respondent does not have an adequate understanding of what goes into headteacher induction. He is replacing induction with a mere meeting with headteachers to brief them on their responsibilities. Other headteachers described these meetings as a form of capacity-building. One headteacher made the following comment to that effect:

After my appointment, I was given a letter directing me to attend a capacity building workshop, which was mandatory for all newly appointed headteachers at the time. I remember there were series of presentations on how to manage the day-to-day affairs of a school and things that were professional and unprofessional. I must confess that a comprehensive induction programme was not done. These were done solely to enable us to effectively contribute towards achieving and realizing the vision of our school. (Headteacher 2).

Offering his contribution on this issue, a headteacher postulated:

No induction programme was organized for us, but we had a meeting with the district director of education. He spoke to us about the roles and responsibilities of a headteacher, including

administration, human relations, record-keeping, attendance, punctuality, and regularity. Personally, I did not consider this enough preparation for us because being a headteacher entails a lot. There is rarely any formal leadership training. We are surviving out of our own experiences, but I think more can be done for the incoming ones (Headteacher 7).

A headteacher also said:

To me I think induction programme if done properly can assist the newly appointed headteachers to adapt rapidly to their new working environment. Through induction new headteachers learn from experienced mentor administrators and are better able to support teachers in their efforts to improve student learning. What I went through is not induction to my estimation

One of the Circuit Supervisors who was part of the focused group interviewed claimed:

I have not witnessed any comprehensive induction programme for headteachers. What I know is that newly appointed headteachers meet and are given orientation. They meet with the district director and go over professional ethics, rules and regulations, and district policies. GNAT and NAGRAT occasionally hold similar seminars for them. (FGD Speaker 1)

Another also said:

What I know is that induction is done in the form of orientation and workshops sponsored by GNAT and sometimes GES. This is now always done, but only as and when needed, and it normally takes a day or two. The programme is done within two or three days. As mentioned earlier by my colleagues, I am supported by teacher unions and sometimes the district assembly. (FGD Speaker 5)

The Training Officer interviewed also made the following remarks:

As far as I know, there is no comprehensive induction programme. What we do here is provide orientation and workshops. Teachers who apply for the position of headship are invited

for an interview, and those who meet expectations are given appointment letters. After they assume office, they are given orientation and a workshop on school management. There is also the handover of notes from the previous headteacher to the new head, supervised by the internal auditor and the circuit supervisor. Induction, in the form of an orientation and workshop, takes two days and sometimes a maximum of three days. Those who facilitate the programme include the human resource manager, finance and administration officer, head of supervision, head of statistics, and sometimes GNAT to take them through the professional code of conduct. (Training Officer)

The data above indicate that a comprehensive induction programme for headteachers is replaced with capacity-building workshops and interaction with the director. However, there is more to achieving effective school management than capacity-building workshops. What seems to be a problem with this practice in the district is that even these capacity-building workshops are not frequently organized to tackle contemporary trends in school management. Induction is indeed a means of getting adapted to a new situation, position, or environment. It gives the new headteachers the opportunity to learn about and appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses. It also offers them the opportunity to recognize from the start the talents, skills, and experiences that their job roles require; however, many of the headteachers interviewed did not have such experience, and they acknowledged this has affected their administrative style and thus the achievement of the students in their schools. There is therefore a need for comprehensive training on leadership within a year or two. This will call for follow-ups with the newly appointed headteachers to ascertain whether they are practicing according to expectations.

Induction Programme

When asked if the newly appointed headteachers in the district underwent an induction programme after their appointment, the majority responded in the negative. They said they preferred to call what they went through a capacity-building and handing-over ceremony rather than an induction programme.

To this a headteacher retorted:

I did not undergo an induction programme in this district after my appointment. I don't think

the district has a plan for a comprehensive induction programme for head teachers. Such a programme should be well planned and conducted more comprehensively. (Headteacher 2)

Almost all the headteachers in the district interviewed, reported there was handing over ceremony for them. Some of them had this to say:

The outgoing headteacher was on pension, so she met me in school for the handover, which was witnessed by the internal auditor. She took me around the school compound, showed me the resources available, and introduced me to the PTA and SMC executives and the teachers in the school. I don't know if this is also part of the induction you are talking about (Headteacher 6).

After my appointment as a headteacher, I participated in a three-day workshop on capacity building. There was a brief visit to the school for familiarization, with expectations clearly communicated. I must say there were not frequent follow-ups as expected because monitoring and supervision team members, as well as circuit supervisors, do come to the school for supervision but not to check on our leadership practice (Headteacher 4).

It will be very helpful that as Headteachers, we go through induction programme. This will help us to be conversant with the policies of Ghana Education Service and equip us with the knowledge and skill to be effective in the utilization of resources. It can also be a form of career development for us. (Headteacher 5)

Facilitators for the induction programme

With regard to the kind of people who organized these capacity-building programmes in the district, a headteacher interjected:

The frontline officers like the district director, human resources manager, monitoring and supervision team, and training officer usually organize our capacity-building workshops. The human resources manager, for instance, spoke to us about how to relate to our staff, the community, and other stakeholders of the school. The AD Sup. (Assistant Director

Supervision) briefed us on effective supervision of our teachers' and students' work, school environment, classroom management, and effective use of instructional hours (Headteacher 2).

This response means that the district does not have well-trained people to take the newly appointed headteachers through induction. The capacity-building workshops and handover appear as an improvised activity initiated by these frontline officers for the newly appointed headteachers. A comprehensive induction programme for headteachers does not appear to be on the agenda of the district.

Headteachers expectation before induction programme

Headteachers expressed their views on their expectation before the induction programme. One of them had this to say:

I was expecting a formal programme with a comprehensive outline. In my experience with our capacity-building workshop, many issues were not addressed. My expectations were not met. The programme was conducted within a short period of time and was not intensive (Headteacher 1).

Another headteacher also said:

My expectation was to learn something new and acquire new skills. I also expected that the programme would help improve output and performance. This was not fully met, but I learned something new (Headteacher 3).

The responses above mean that headteachers' expectations were not fully met before the induction. They felt the programme was too short and did not tackle a lot of issues. This means the induction programme for headteachers in the Awutu Senya district was not comprehensive enough to address the leadership needs of newly appointed headteachers in the district.

Induction as context specific

The headteachers were given the chance to comment on whether the programme they went through reflected their context. This had to do with whether the induction programme was tailored to the specific issues related to the schools in the Awutu Senya district. One of them interjected:

I will say part of it was captured. During workshops we discuss educational needs, cultural perception, the school environment and how to collaborate with stakeholders of education (Headteacher 1).

A headteacher stated:

Not really; basically the professional aspect was what they considered. As for the context, condition, and situation of the district, we did not dwell much on them. The needs of the school and target audience of the district were not comprehensively discussed (Headteacher 2).

Similarly, another headteacher had this say:

Not completely in relation to the context, yet we are expected to yield good results. We talked about technology without computers and an ICT laboratory in our schools. Basic Design Technology without a Home Science Center and workshop for pre-technical skills there is also no furniture or other relevant teaching materials (Headteacher 3).

The responses of these headteachers mean that the induction programme they went through was not tailored to the specific situations of the schools in the Awutu Senya district. To them, the talks were conceptual and not based on the actual needs of the district. For instance, the resource persons talked about ICT, but the school does not have any computers. They also concentrated on basic design technology, whereas the school does not have a home science center or workshop for pre-technical skills. Thus, headteachers were not fully impressed because the induction programme was unfortunately not context-specific.

Headteachers indicated that induction as organized in the district needs serious improvement. The need for its improvement stems from the relevance of induction. Their position was that induction is relevant and so must be improved in the district. The Circuit Supervisors in Awutu Senya District also corroborated the point made by the headteachers with regard to the shortfall in the induction programme in the district.

They acknowledged the fact that the induction programme entails more than what is being done in the district. They eulogized the important contribution of

headteachers to the Ghana Education Service and education delivery. They also pointed out the significance of induction in helping the headteacher elevate academic achievement in the schools and thus its necessity for the district.

One of them has the following to say:

I think the headteacher has a very important role and a big responsibility in the management of a school or in dealing with the day-to-day affairs of the school. Induction equips the headteacher to deliver well and maintain good standards in all aspects, which will eventually result in realizing the vision of the school. (FGD Speaker 1)

If the induction programme is ongoing, I would recommend it for every member of staff. Every one of them is a potential leader and must be prepared for leadership. Also, awareness of what headship entails and, if possible, school leadership in general will be of great help (FGD Speaker 2).

4. DISCUSSION

Headteachers depicted their induction as a form of capacity-building workshop. Others call it orientation. The majority of them admitted that there was no comprehensive induction organized for them but agreed that a two-day capacity-building workshop was organized for them where they were trained on relevant issues bothering management. In this study, induction is considered very necessary and crucial for anyone taking up a new office. The finding that induction in the Awutu Senya district was incomprehensible in the sense of being just a two-day capacity-building workshop is contrary to the position of Enrich et al. (2004), who argue that induction is part of headteachers' continuous professional development and must be an ongoing process beginning on appointment and continuing throughout the teaching profession.

The process of induction is consequential because it gives the new headteachers an opportunity to reflect on what they know from training and what they are expected to do in practice. Though novice headteachers often feel limited in their capacity to discharge their duties more effectively, an induction programme can assist the newly appointed headteachers in adapting rapidly to their new working environment. Through induction, new headteachers learn from experienced mentor

administrators and are better able to support teachers in their efforts to improve student learning. Induction as part of professional development ultimately aims at creating an educational support system where all educators succeed at helping students perform well (Ansah, 2017). Where an induction programme exists and is well planned, structured, and monitored, newly appointed headteachers' feelings of fear and insecurity are alleviated. The programme should therefore cover all activities that will develop the headteacher's skills, knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics. It normally provides the structure and support needed to maximize the effectiveness of new headteachers as they confront the many challenges facing their schools.

Respondents' opinions on the nature of induction programmes were discussed, and it emerged from the data gathered that a comprehensive induction programme for headteachers is replaced with capacity-building workshops, orientation, and handover. However, there is more to achieving effective school management than capacity-building workshops. Almost all headteachers admitted that there was no comprehensive induction organized for them but agreed that a two-day capacity-building workshop was organized for them where they were trained on relevant issues bothering management. This confirms studies conducted by Bush and Oduro (2006), during which they examined the challenges facing new principals in Africa and proposed an induction model for principals in Africa. They found in their study that school principals in Africa face a daunting challenge. They often work in poorly equipped buildings with inadequately trained staff. They also found that there is rarely any formal leadership training and that principals are appointed on the basis of their teaching record rather than their leadership potential. Induction and support were usually limited. Their findings in their study for principals in Africa are applicable to headteachers in Africa as well. The in-depth interviews with respondents confirm their findings.

The findings of the present study confirm the study conducted by Kitavi and van der Westhuizen, who have also stated in their work that headteachers are often appointed on the basis of a successful teaching record with an implicit assumption that this provides a sufficient starting point for school leadership (Ansah, 2017). Teachers in the district apply for headship; they are interviewed and appointed. The fact is that if induction is properly implemented, educators will improve their teaching skills and practices that were not learned during

their training (Dominic et al., n.d.). According to (Ansah, 2017), it is very necessary that the induction programme be designed to have objectives that reflect the needs of the employee and the philosophy and objectives of the institution. The truth is that an induction programme for headteachers in their first three years must be carefully constructed: effective programmes should be long-term, carefully planned, embedded in the job, and focused on student achievement (Peterson, 2002, p. 214).

What seems to be a problem with this practice in the district is that even these capacity-building workshops organized for them after their appointment are not frequently organized to tackle contemporary trends in school management. Induction is indeed a means of getting adapted to a new situation, position, or environment. It gives the new headteachers the opportunity to learn about and appreciate their own strengths and weaknesses. It also offers them the opportunity to recognize from the start the talents, skills, and experiences that their job roles require; however, many of the headteachers interviewed did not have such experience, and they acknowledged this has affected their administrative style and thus the achievement of the students in their schools. Findings of the present study reveal that the majority of the head teachers of Awutu Senya District Basic Schools do not undergo a comprehensive induction programme. They said they preferred to call what they went through a capacity-building and handing-over ceremony rather than an induction programme. Almost all the headteachers in the district interviewed reported there was a handover ceremony for them after their appointment.

The picture created by this finding is that newly appointed headteachers in Awutu Senya and Ghana as a whole do not receive adequate preparation before they resume their duties. This finding coheres with the findings of Donkoh (2015) and Amezu-Kpeglo (1990) that, in Ghana, school leaders in the basic schools are appointed without any formal preparatory training. The result is that they tend to depend principally on experiential learning in carrying out their leadership tasks, and because they are often not officially inducted, they lack both in-depth knowledge and experience of induction in educational organizations, and since induction and support are usually limited, they have to adopt a pragmatic approach.

Headteachers new to a district or a school need to understand the context of their school within the district

and possess an understanding of operations within the district. Simultaneously, headteachers in their first years in the role need further development as leaders. A comprehensive induction programme for headteachers does not appear to be on the agenda of the district. Kitavi and van der Westhuizen (1997) in their study unveiled that there is limited literature on the induction of principals/headteacher in Africa. This is because there is little evidence of formal induction occurring in almost all African countries with regard to assuming leadership position in the educational sector. The same finding confirms a study conducted by Oduro (2009) on examining the challenges facing principals in Africa, which found that most headteachers in Ghanaian basic schools gain awareness of their work through observing the activities and experiences of serving headteachers and through personal experiences. Oduro (2003) postulated that the appointment of headteachers in Ghana is largely based on a teacher's seniority in "rank" and "teaching experience." He also claimed that in Ghana, training for headteachers is "in service" and usually provided by international agencies for selected schools, mostly drawn from urban and semi-urban areas.

These agencies, including the World Bank, UNESCO, DFID, USAID, and CIDA, often determine the number and category of schools to be involved. He said that the training programmes cease once the project is accomplished because the Ghana Education Service often complains of a lack of purchasing power to sustain them (2003). Actually, there are many reasons for this unsatisfactory situation. Below are some of them: Most countries have very limited educational budgets, and teacher preparation is seen as a low priority. No wonder this study's finding is that the district has replaced comprehensive induction with mere handing over and orientation. The absence of a comprehensive and incomplete induction process for personnel under the Ghana Education Service renders induction limited and ineffective in the service; this is the reason why Amezu-Kpeglo (1990) has enunciated that the Ghana Education Service seems to be working on the assumption that a successful classroom teacher necessarily makes an effective school administrator. There is therefore a need for comprehensive training on leadership within a year or two. This will call for follow-ups with the newly appointed headteachers to ascertain whether they are practicing according to expectations.

Literature has identified the pivotal role that principals

and headteachers play in developing and retaining teachers, creating a culture of learning within the school by establishing a clear school vision, and leading reform initiatives that improve student teaching (Leithwood et al., 2004). Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) found that the data also portrayed that some respondents did not have an adequate understanding of what goes into headteacher induction. They considered it a mere meeting of new headteachers with old headteachers to brief them on their responsibilities. Other headteachers described these meetings as a form of capacity-building. There is more to achieving effective school management than capacity-building workshops. The fact is that if induction is properly implemented, educators will improve their teaching skills and practices that were not learned during their training (Dowding 1998: 18; San 1999: 19). According to Addo, K. O. (2022), it is very necessary that the induction programme be designed to have objectives that reflect the needs of the employee and the philosophy and objectives of the institution. The truth is that an induction programme for headteachers in their first three years must be carefully constructed: effective programmes should be long-term, carefully planned, embedded in the job, and focused on student achievement. This view of Peterson is again contradictory to the study's finding that induction was found to be just capacity building over a period of two or three days, which is not enough to give the newly appointed headteachers the training they need to discharge their duties efficiently. If Peterson suggests a whole three years for induction, then headteachers in the Awutu Senya district are ill-prepared for their leadership position in the district. There is a growing consensus on the characteristics of effective school leaders: successful school leaders influence student achievement through both their support and development of effective teachers and the implementation of masterful organizational processes. The increasing demand for school headteachers to demonstrate strong instructional leadership and build a school culture that is data-driven with high expectations for all learners requires preparation in a range of competencies and skills that bridge the theoretical and the practical (Erotocritou Stavrou & Chinaza Adaobi, n.d.). This calls for an improved, comprehensive induction programme for the headteachers.

Furthermore, the findings showed that the programmes organized for the heads were all generally related to educational issues, with little attention paid to their own realities. This means the induction programme as

organized in the Awutu Senya district was not context-specific. This finding is in a way reflected in the views of Mullen and Shrunk (2010), who argue that principals who are inspired to nurture their communities and achieve goals that are otherwise unattainable as individuals are better positioned to exercise contextually relevant leadership. Again, the finding on a non-contextual induction programme coheres with the views of (Erotocritou Stavrou & Chinaza Adaobi, 2020.) that the nature of the induction process and the mechanisms to use in supporting the educators are determined by the characteristics of individual educators, the school context, and the national education context. A well-planned and comprehensive induction programme requires a thorough needs assessment.

5. CONCLUSION

The study looked into how headteacher induction programmes operate. Induction as a whole did not exist in the district. Others believed they needed capacity building when they only know orientation. Long tenure in the classroom or in the teaching profession was sufficient for some of them. Most of the head teachers acknowledged that they do go through a thorough induction programme. They said they preferred to call what they went through a capacity-building and hand-over ceremony rather than an induction programme. Almost all the headteachers in the district interviewed reported there was a handover ceremony for them. The newly appointed headteachers seem to have some understanding of what goes into headteacher induction. Induction is considered a mere meeting with headteachers to brief them on their responsibilities. Other headteachers described these meetings as a form of capacity-building. Some have also heard of induction but thought it was meant for certain disciplines such as the armed forces, tertiary institutions, and experts in certain fields. There are also other respondents who recognized that induction is very important and worthwhile. To the view of the researcher, some heads who were newly appointed have little or no idea about the induction programme. For the seasoned headteachers, since induction is ongoing, the experience of the old headteachers is not different from the experience of the new headteachers.

6. RECOMMENDATION

It is advised that within a year or two, a thorough leadership training be provided for newly appointed headteachers in the area in light of the fact that induction is insufficient in the Awutu Senya district. Following up

with the newly appointed headteachers will be necessary to make sure they are practicing in accordance with expectations. A thorough introduction programme should be given to all educators, including basic school leaders, circuit supervisors, and teachers.

Author Contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and approved it for publication.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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