

# Students Performance and Leadership Styles in Ghana Education Service : The Case of Mampong Municipal Assembly in Ashanti Region

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of leadership styles on academic performance in Junior High Schools (JHS) in Mampong in the Mampong Municipal Assembly of Ashanti Region in Ghana. The design for the study was a mixed study using both the qualitative and quantitative analyzes. It was a correlation survey designed to establish the relationship between leadership styles and academic performance in schools in Mampong in the Mampong Municipal Assembly. Data collected on the leadership styles of the school leaders were the independent variables and the academic performance as dependent variables. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 and Epi-Info, a data capturing and analysis software. The study noted that unless the headmasters are well equipped with knowledge and skills in leadership they would not know if they have any influence on their schools and on academic work. The study also established that even though respondents agreed that a leadership style can affect academic performance, the headmasters do not gain the confidence of the stakeholders enough in order to build terms that can enhance quality of teaching and learning. Based on these establishments, it was recommended that teacher training institutions should incorporate in their curriculum, training in the art and science of leadership in order to groom leaders' right from school. Again, it is recommended that compulsory continuous professional development in leadership should be institutionalized in Ghana Education Service (GES) for headmasters.

**Keywords :** Education, Schools, Leadership Style, Students, Performance.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Just as in other parts of the country, the unsatisfactory academic outputs of students in Mampong has for years been of concern to the Municipal Assembly and the Municipal Directorate of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The schools' performance in public

examinations, especially, at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) level has been below standard in nearly half-decade. The Mampong Municipal Assembly is located in the North-Western part of the Ashanti Region with Mampong as its capital. The key economic activities of its people are farming, small scale processing of agricultural produce,

thus; cottage industries as well as trades in kente weaving, masonry, hairdressing, carpentry and the like. Due to urbanization, there are various government departments and agencies in the locality whose workers enroll their children in various schools in the area. Regardless of the mix of children from different economic backgrounds in the schools, students' performance in the BECE has never been impressive.

Academic performance remains an important issue when mention is made of educational delivery in Ghana. Stakeholders such as parents, teachers, students, policymakers and society as a whole are anxious to see learners excel in their academic work. Even with the current state of resources and framework, there is an expectation that the standard of performance should continuously be impressive. The head of a school is answerable for students' academic performance. As put by (NSUBUGA, 2008), education is a critical strategy for the advancement of society. This strategy involves detailed planning at every stage of its development especially in the development of the human capital. In the view of (NSUBUGA, 2008), economic and social development of a country becomes high, if the human resources is powered by a better education system. Education enhances the productiveness of people and does not only make them fit properly in the social and economic settings of a country. It presents the only way to impart "values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations important for natural development" (NSUBUGA, 2008).

Leaders are often seen as persons who directs a group of people; however, a leader is one who unifies, embodies and co-ordinates the opinion(s) of different people into a single goal. Leadership is paramount in improving the state of any organization including schools. A functional educational setup producing outstanding performance is recognized as the by-product of an effective leadership style. In view of the aforementioned discussion, this study aims to find the

correlation between leadership styles and their respective impact on academic performance in schools, particularly; Junior High Schools (JHS) in Mampong in the Mampong Municipal Assembly of Ashanti region in Ghana.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is dedicated to the available literature on the origins of leadership, leadership and some fundamental theories and styles; leadership and management; as well as educational leadership styles in schools.

### 2.1 Origins of Leadership

In considering the above discussion, there is the need for a study into the leadership styles of various leaders in Ghanaian schools. Leadership styles, we mean; what leaders do, say and how they conduct themselves in an instance. This encompasses the leader's approach to the use of authority and the subsequent involvement of others in decision-making. In order to induce decision making, the leader takes cognizance of the stakeholders, thus; those he wants to influence, the purpose and the possible effect of executing his decision. (Rosenbach & Taylor, 1989) identifies leadership theories as Trait (Behavioral) and Contingency (transformation), Consensus and Charismatic leadership. (Snowden & Gorton, 1998) also elaborated transformational and situational leadership and the various benefits they come with. In (Afful-Broni & Nanyele, 2012), they explored motivational leadership as well as motivational theories of Abraham Maslow hierarchy of need, Clayto Alderfer's ERG Theory, George McGregor's Theory X and Y and others. (Afful-Broni & Nanyele, 2012) further introduced legal and traditional leadership. In the educational setups, there are leadership styles that are common and come with various effects. Common amongst them are: Autocratic leadership, Charismatic, Laissez-faire, Bureaucratic and also Democratic leadership.

Additionally, leadership styles such as Servant leadership, Distribution leadership, Christian leadership, Leadership teams, Instructional leadership, Community leadership and Visionary leadership exist but are not common amongst educational institutions in Ghana.

It is worth mentioning that, leadership is a key skill to achieving a successful group and this must be nurtured. A leader is said to be on top of his game if he is able to inspire his group and to merge their various ideas into a common vision. Similarly, in the field of education, headteachers are expected to be acquainted with the leadership responsibilities and the expectations of them in the discharge of their duties so that teachers and learners specifically, would be much inspired to achieve set goals. In view of the various leadership styles aforementioned, Autocratic, Democratic, Distribution and Laissez-Faire leadership modes will be the focus of this study. The differences in academic accomplishment among students and schools are not just reflections but also the effect of professionals; especially the leadership in those schools (T. J. Waters & Marzano, 2006).

## **2.2 Leadership styles and effective management in school.**

The concept of leadership is a much broader one compared to management. Management is a kind of leadership in which attainment of organizational visions become a focal point. Leadership occurs when a person endeavors to influence and coordinate the behavior of an individual or a group towards a goal. It could be for one's personal goals or the goal of others and these goals may not be congruent with organizational goals (Paul, Blanchard, & Johnson Dewey, 2001). Efficacy is making the right choices about goals (Paul et al., 2001). A leader is expected to exhibit certain qualities including; qualities of originality, people-centered, taking the challenge, inspiration and most importantly efficient and effective in carrying out his responsibilities. The

Pareto principle or "80-20 rule" states that 80% of unfocused effort produces only 20% of results. Hence, a leader is expected to be visionary, thus focus on the set goal. According to (AFFUL-BRONI, 2013) successful leaders in our various schools had to experiment with many ideas, policies or leadership principles in order to emerge as successful as we see them today. These people have overcome the mistakes (due to ignorance), immaturity as well as inexperience. In effect, in any organization (including schools), there comes the necessity for authorities to have a significant impact on the excellence of performance. As put by (Dinham, 2007), there can be a slight doubt about the impact of leadership on education innovation and quality delivery. Notwithstanding the fact that, some research works have concluded that school leaders have an indirect and minimal impact on the accomplishment of students, there is a sure trace of better educational systems that facilitate these achievements by school leaders. The art of leadership (school leadership) is characterized by a variety of traits such as the personality of the leader, goals, and collective efficacy of all others involved (J. T. Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004; T. Waters & Cameron, 2007)

## **2.3 Democratic Leadership Style**

This style of leadership has its basis on the theory that, the organization is the obligation of all, despite the fact that, the leader is obliged to provide initiatives to ensure that organizational goals are met. In this regard, leaders are considered "primus intra pares", thus; first among equals (Afful-Broni, 2004). Considering the present organizational style practiced by headmasters/headteachers, the transformational or facilitative leader has become a very effective leadership style especially in public education systems. Many researchers were of the view that, moving towards transformational leadership presents the most sustainable approach for an educational system (school) restructuring and reform (Lin, 1999). A transformational leader encourages his subjects to be

innovative and causes changes that will contribute to the attainment of the ultimate goal. Such a leader is flexible, unbiased and welcomes the views of all, thus; he stands for all-inclusive decision-making and highly tolerant of diversity” (Lin, 1999).

## 2.4 Distributed Leadership Style

The concept of distributed leadership seeks to create an understanding of how the duties of a leader are carried out amongst other players in an organization. This recognizes that successful schools adopt a style that involves various leaders such as assistant heads and teachers who partake in the management of the school (Chen, 2007). Distributed leadership assumes that, the leader endeavors to off-load some shared responsibilities to his colleagues in the running of a school. It allows openness of boundaries in leadership by acknowledging other peoples’ efforts. Proponents of this concept maintains that, acquisition of knowledge is an intensive initiative. Hence, in teaching and learning, there is no means of effectively performing these duties than to share them with other key players (Chen, 2007). One could read clearly from the existing literature discussed above that, there has not been a vivid description of a leadership style and its correlation with the performance of students. Earlier researchers did not give a direct relationship between a principal’s leadership style and the academic achievement of students. Literature from (Lin, 1999), suggests that a school’s leader has a major effect on job satisfaction and the effectiveness of teachers leading to an impact on students.

In measuring the efficacy of a leadership style, annual B.E.C.E results of students have emerged as the best yardstick by educationists and researchers. (Lin, 1999) indicated that, headteachers are being held responsible for students’ learning outcomes in academic performance. It is a fact that, educational centers and systems continue to encounter uncertainties in this dynamic environment. It will

require leaders with vision and a good understanding of these fundamental principles in order to identify situations and implement necessary policies in that regard.

In analyzing the current-sinking trend of students’ B.E.C.E performances in the country, especially in the municipal under this study, it is a clear indication that, the government and parents are not having a good return on their investment (monetary and non-monetary). The common view of many stakeholders in the country’s basic education sector is that; supervision is ineffective, thus; headteachers and various authorities are not performing. The need to create the necessary environment and conditions at this level to ensure that students attain better performances is paramount. Knowing that school authorities (Headmasters) impact either/both directly and indirectly to the student’s success, the headmaster is not only expected to involve other key players (teachers) but is importantly expected to play an oversight role in streamlining the entire learning process towards the final goal. He is also expected to carry on various programs that will upgrade the knowledge of the teachers. This will in turn motivate teachers and make them contribute to the overall goal.

The quality of oversight practices and system as created by headmasters is key to a progressive academic attainment of learners. As leaders, headmasters are expected to adopt a leadership style full of initiatives to cater for the professional need of the teaching force and liaise with parents and other stakeholders to ensure that the ultimate goal is reached. As seen from the above literature, the leadership style adopted by an educational institution has an impact on the performance of students. It therefore remains the onus of the headmaster to adopt the best strategy to involve teachers and all stakeholders and channel all efforts towards a bright students’ performance especially during the B.E.C.E.

## 2.5 Research Questions

To properly address the findings, the following research questions were outlined

- ✓ What do Ghana government do to motivate education leaders for better performance?
- ✓ What kind of support does Ghana government gives to the education leaders and students?
- ✓ How does the involvement of the government influence the leaders and students in Ghana?

## 2.6 Research Methodology

This study adopts the mixed study approach using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches in gathering data. It is a correlation survey designed to investigate whether leadership style affects the academic performance of students in the Mampong Municipal Assembly. A triangulation method is used combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods so as to reduce any deficiency that may come from any single of these methods. It is expected that the survey questionnaire would provide a range of coverage that could be reliable to be applied to a wider study population from which the sample of the study was drawn. Data gathered on the leadership styles of headmasters acted as independent whilst the academic performance of students as dependent variables of the study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 and Epi-Info software were used due to their flexibility in data managing and processing.

## III. STUDY POPULATION

The study found that 60 out of the 63 JHS in the Mampong Municipal Assembly partakes in the B.E.C.E. Hence, the research acted only on these 60 schools. The study population consisted of headmasters, teachers, students, circuit supervisors, examination officers, parents, municipal statisticians

as well as municipal director of education. The view of officers of the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) and Ministry of Education (MOE) was also sought for the study. Questionnaires, interviews and an observational visit to selected schools were employed for data gathering. The accuracy and reliability of a research data gathering instrument are highly critical in enhancing its acceptability. An instrument that has reliabilities above 60% is considered good (Aiken, 1997). The questionnaire was drawn using a descriptive survey research design.

## 3.1. Methods of Data Analysis

By the use of the named software, the aggregate response and other processing of the data gathered was made, analyzed and interpreted as below. The results from the software and statistical information from the data were presented in tables and figures for further discussion. The data was generally cross-sectional which eased it processing with SPSS. The data was foremost captured into spreadsheet format with the aid of Epi-Info. This software comes with an interface just like capturing of data as they appear on the questionnaires and is much convenient and exact. The statistical approaches included the descriptive statistics, thus; mean and standard deviation for describing and summarizing the feature of the data. Variables were categorized based on their mean and median. Cross tabulations were applied to show the results in relation to leadership styles, thus the independent variable for this study was mostly personal and professional profiles of the respondents. In order to allow for flow and a more in-depth response, an open-ended type of questionnaire was written with an accompanying interview guide.

## 3.2 Results and discussion.

This section presents an analysis and interpretation of the data with graphs and charts to ascertain the findings.

### 3.2.1 What do Ghana government do to motivate education leaders for better performance?

Table 1. Sets achievable goals

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	10	2.4
Seldom	41	9.6
Often	81	19.1
Frequently	83	19.5
Always	210	49.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019

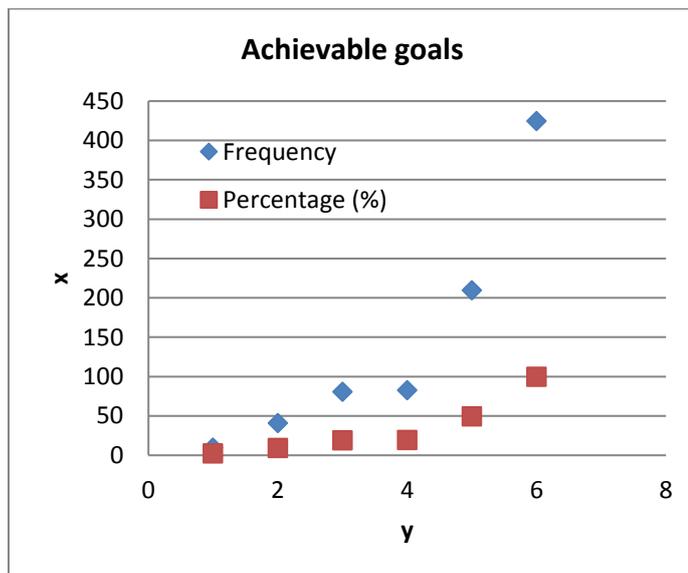


Figure : 1 Achievable goals by the government

From Table 1, 210 representing 49.4% of the respondents agree that the headmaster’s behavior “always” sets attainable goals whilst 83, thus 19.5% also pointed that the headmaster’s behavior “frequently” sets attainable goals. Also, 19.1% thus 81 of the respondents, indicated that the headmaster’s behavior “often” sets achievable targets. Further, 41 representing 9.6% opines that the headmaster’s

“seldom” sets achievable goals. The remaining, 10 making 2.4% of the respondents also believe that the headmaster’s “never” sets realizable goals.

Table: 2. Decisions by the government

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	88	20.7
Seldom	90	21.2
Often	97	22.8
Frequently	70	16.5
Always	80	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019

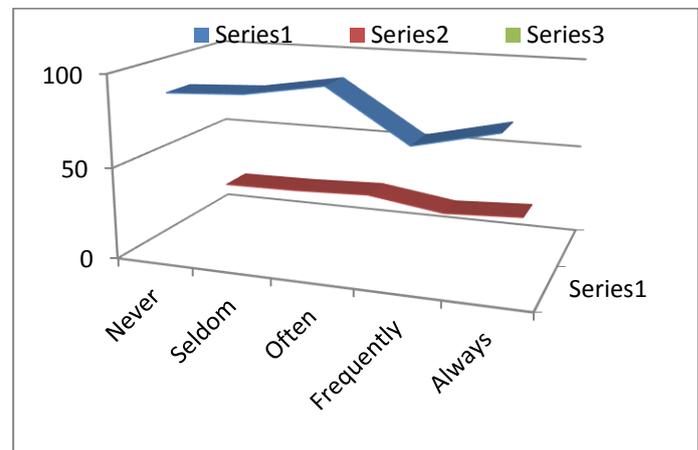


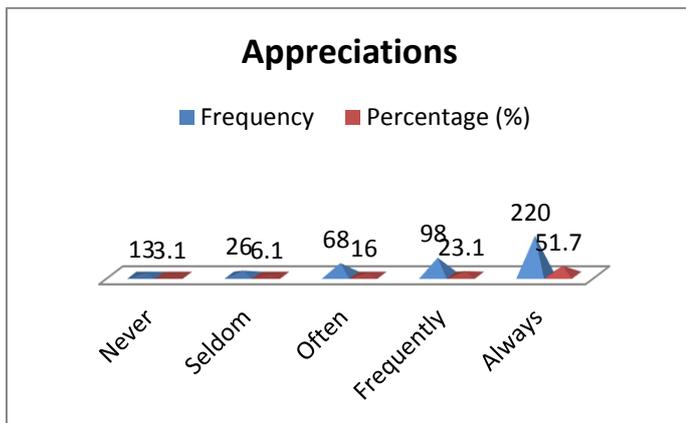
Figure : 2 Freedom in decision making

From table 2, 97, thus 22.8% of the respondents said that the headmasters “often” permit others to take their own decisions when they are assigned work. Again, 21.2%, thus; 90 respondents also believe that the headmasters “seldom” allow others to make their own decisions. A further 88 (20.7% of the respondents) reported that headmasters “never” give way for people to be decisive. 80 representing 18.8% reported that headmasters “always” recognize the decisions of individuals. The remaining 70 respondents, thus; 16.5% indicated that headmasters “frequently” give room for others to make decisions.

**Table 3.** Appreciations by the government

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	13	3.1
Seldom	26	6.1
Often	68	16.0
Frequently	98	23.1
Always	220	51.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019



**Figure : 3** Appreciation of government officer

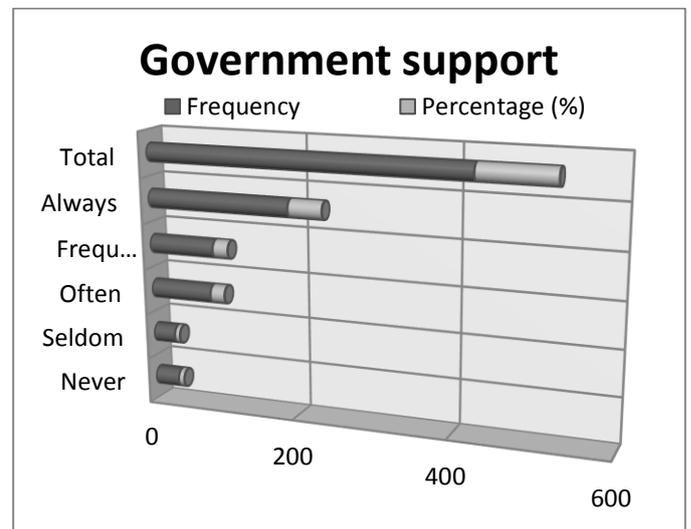
From the data, 220 (51.7%) out of the 425 respondents believe that the headmasters “always” appreciates the effort of others. 98 (23.1%) of them also said headmaster’s “frequently” appreciates the work of his subordinates. Moreover, 68 (16.0%) of the respondents also agreed that headmasters “often” value the contribution of others. Additionally, 26 (6.1%) were also of the view that the headmasters “seldom” appreciates the effort of other workers whilst the remaining 13 respondents (3.1%) also stated that headmasters “never” appreciates the work of others.

### 3.2.2 What kind of support does Ghana government gives to the education leaders and students?

**Table. 4** Support of the teachers and students who are weak

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	33	7.8
Seldom	30	7.1
Often	83	19.5
Frequently	88	20.7
Always	191	44.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019



**Figure: 4** Support from Ghana government

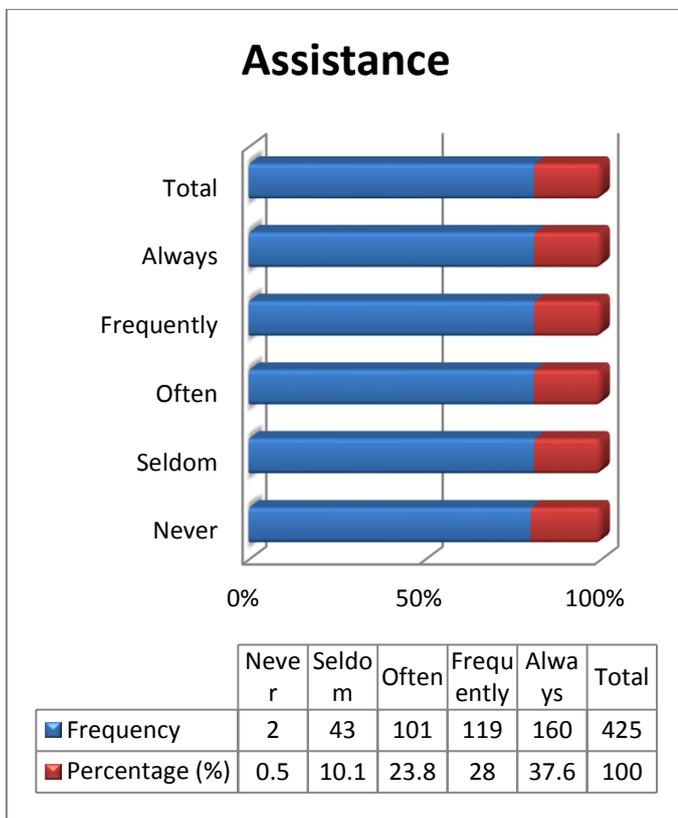
It is found from the table that 191 (44.9%) of the respondents agree that the headmasters’ attitude “always” supports the teachers and students who are weak. 88 respondents representing 20.7% indicated that, headteachers “frequently” support the teachers and students who are weak. Also, 83 respondents, representing 19.5% pointed out that, school heads “often” support the teachers and students who are weak. Another 83 (19.5%) indicated that, school heads “often” support the teachers and students who are weak. Moreover, 33, thus 7.8% were of the opinion that, headteachers “never” supports the teachers and students who are weak. The final 30 respondents (7.1%) stated that, the school heads

“seldom” support the teachers and students who are weak.

**Table: 5** Assists others to achieve results

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	2	0.5
Seldom	43	10.1
Often	101	23.8
Frequently	119	28.0
Always	160	37.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019



**Figure: 5** Government Assistance

From the 425 respondents used for the study, table 5 shows that 160 (37.6%) of the respondents strongly believe that headmasters “always” assist others in accomplishing results. 119 (28.0%) of them are also of the opinion that headmasters “frequently” support the effort others to reach their goals. 101, thus; 23.8% further agreed that headteachers “often” support others in achieving results. The next 10.1%, thus; 43

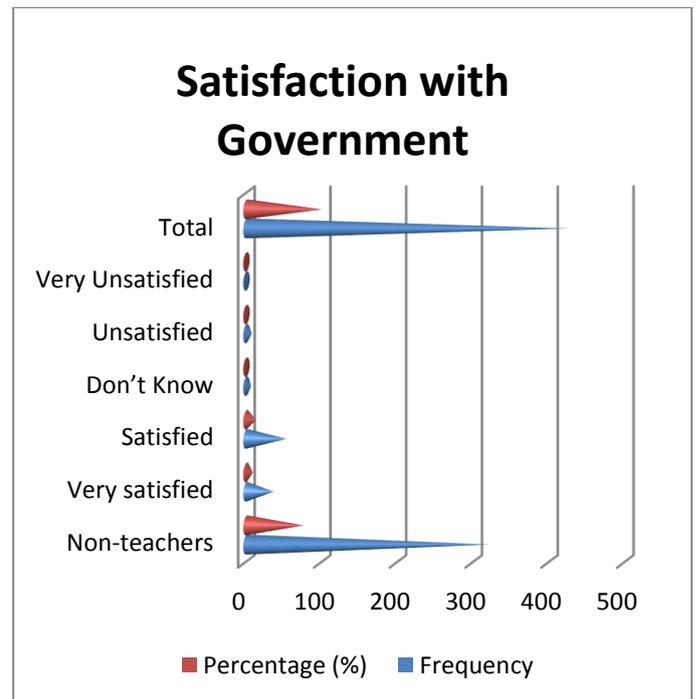
of the respondents pointed out that the various headmasters “seldom” assist others in realizing their goals. Lastly, 2 respondents (0.5%) also stated that headteachers “never” back others to succeed.

### 3.2.3 How does the involvement of the government influence the leaders and students in Ghana?

**Table: 6.** Satisfaction by leaders

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Non-teachers	321	75.5
Very satisfied	36	8.5
Satisfied	53	12.5
Don't Know	6	1.4
Unsatisfied	7	1.6
Very Unsatisfied	2	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019



**Figure: 6** Satisfaction with Government Assistance

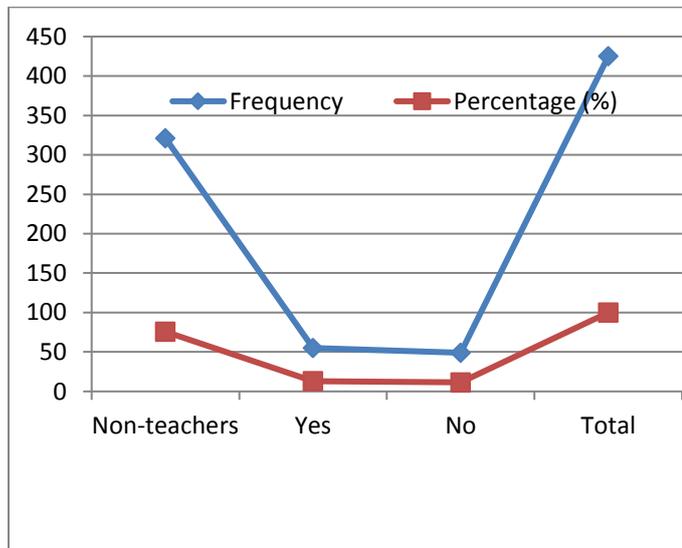
From table 6, 51.0% representing 53 out of the 104 teachers interviewed pointed that they are “satisfied” with their headteachers’ leadership style. 36 teachers representing 34.6% of them indicated “very satisfied” with the leadership style of their headmasters.

Another 7, thus; 6.7% also indicated that they are “unsatisfied” with their headteachers’ leadership. 6 respondents making 5.8% did not answer this question the remaining 2 representing 1.9% of the respondents stated that they are “very unsatisfied” with their headmaster’s model of leadership.

**Table : 7** Do you have all the textbooks you need for your studies?

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Non-teachers	321	75.5
Yes	55	13.0
No	49	11.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Survey 2019



**Figure: 7** Government donation

On the issue of textbooks, 55 representing 13.0% of the respondents revealed that they have all the essential textbooks whilst 49 representing 11.5% of them stated they do not have the necessary textbooks to facilitate teaching and learning.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found that unless the headmasters are well abreast with the know-how and skills in leadership, it would seemly be impossible for them to know if their activities impact academic performance of students in

their various schools. The study again established that, despite the fact that the various respondents agreed that the leadership style of headteachers is paramount and a key influencing factor to academic excellence, heads of various schools do not gain the confidence of the stakeholders in discharging their duties. The B.E.C.E results in the Mampong Municipal for the year 2019 was a low 47% pass. It was however a major concern to investigate the matter in an attempt to find a lasting solution. This study can conclude that, any leadership style of headmasters/headteachers which involve the various key players will go a long way to better the academic performance of students. The study suggested that, teacher training institutions in the country should integrate the art and science of leadership into the curriculum in order to prepare students for the challenging task of leadership. Another recommendation went to the Ghana Education Service (GES), at the national, regional, metropolitan, municipal and district levels, to periodically organize professional development trainings for teachers.

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