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Leadership Styles of Women in Educational Leadership Positions in the Tano North Municipality, Ahafo Region of Ghana

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Abstract:

The study assessed leadership styles of women in educational leadership positions in Ghana's Ahafo Region in the Tano North Municipality. This was a qualitative study that adopted a case study design. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 15 females in positions of educational leadership. Ten of the Female Head teachers were interviewed while 5 were engaged in the focus group discussion. The data was analysed under emergent themes. This study found that women in educational leadership positions assume the democratic leadership style in their administration even though they make use of autocratic leadership style at times. This study established that situations under which these leadership styles were demonstrated were mainly driven by need for collaboration, consensus building and urgent decision-making. Also, it emerged from the study that the kind of leadership style adopted by women in leadership positions were influenced by factors which include their personality traits, organizational structure of the school, level of experience in leadership and personal determination. The study recommends that female heads should actively combine leadership styles for effective leadership. Again, the Ghana Education Service should institute mentorship scheme tailored towards female leaders in education to hone their capabilities and enhance their leadership development.

1. Introduction

Globally, the Beijing conference discussions on women held in 1995 have propelled attention and policymaking to increase the publicity of women in leadership positions and granted them much influence and importance. The conference arrays tactical objective engagements for the evolution of women and the attainment of gender equality. The focal point of women development in education and other sectors of the economy in this contemporary period have placed much importance on the necessary

factor of women involvement in the educational leadership [1]. A study argued that the fact that human development is difficult to improve due to the traditions of isolating women in social, cultural, economic and political positions justifies the need for immediate action by national and international policy actors or players to involve women in various aspects of development including leadership [2]. One of the most difficult theories to describe is leadership [3]. The search for a singular definition of leadership, has been unsuccessful because the precise definition of leadership varies depending on the relevance and type of problem or situation being researched.

Leadership as a concept is one of the discussed issues in the social, political and economic environment. Several studies on leadership have been done previously by a number of scholars. In 2003, a search for the word "Leadership" revealed more than 11 thousand results on articles published from 1970- 2002 [6]. Previous research articles revealed that the answer to the change in the global environment is held by leaders, who are responsible not just for individual achievement but also the success of businesses, regions, nations and sectors [7]. Leadership, like power, tends to be a highly debated topic [7]. A leader's true responsibility is to advance, to produce a transformation that demonstrates progress. Leaders that are successful start with the end in mind [8]. Leaders who are mostly successful make sure that the targets and aspirations are usually achieved. Working relationship is the functional modular of leadership, and it exists among leadership and other working parties or persons [5]. Individuals inherit specific qualities and attributes that eventually lead to leadership [9]. Leaders generally share certain personality or behavioural traits, according to trait theories. Leaders are those who are able to properly articulate themselves, understand what they want, why they want it, and how to convey it to others in order to obtain their collaboration and support, as well as how to achieve their objectives [10]. There are some key qualities or attributes that those who exhibit these qualities would be good or effective leaders in any organization. These attributes include physical energy, intelligence and action-oriented judgment, task competence, readiness to accept responsibility, need for achievement, boldness and the ability to motivate others, ability to deal with people, trustworthiness and self-assurance [11].

For decades, leadership was viewed primarily as a personal characteristic. Plato, known as the "Father of Philosophy," thought that the leader should be intelligent [12]. Carlyle's concept of the "remarkable leader" synthesized the reoccurring beliefs about leadership in the nineteenth century [13]. Leaders, in his opinion, were outstanding individuals or protagonists who were competent to wield power and influence over others via their charm, wit, astuteness, and political skill. Despite the fact that Carlyle's theories remained prevalent, Spencer noted that great persons were products of their cultures or contexts, foreshadowing discussion about leadership [12]. Regardless of the fact that leadership was still viewed as a personality trait after World War II, a new trend emerged being leadership as a procedure. Influence characterizes the leadership process, not just the leader's effect on followers, as many writers have suggested, but also the interaction impact between the leader and followers [5,7]. A process is a sequence of acts that generate something and then result in a specific outcome. The mentoring procedure takes place in a certain environment. If the situation arises, effective mentoring will evolve as well [14]. Spencer (2013) predicted the relevance of context in the nineteenth century.

Leadership is the ability to influence the behaviour of an organized group in their efforts to deliver the promised service. This was arguably the first attempt to emphasize that leadership is a process of influencing people rather than an individual

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quality. He further opined that leadership is distinct as the relational effect exercised in a condition and steered toward the attainment of a specified objective or purposes using effective communication [15]. A researcher underlined the importance of influence in leadership, stating, leadership necessitates the use of ability to influence other people's choices, views and behaviours. People or followers must recognize someone as their leader as part of the leadership process [12]. The leader could be eagerly recognised by followers as a mentor is the best person who can guide them in a specific setting [12,16]. The effective leadership may come to an end if the followers decide not to follow their leader anymore, as happened in England after World War II. The goal of the effective headship is for leaders and followers to achieve common goals [7]. If followers believe the leader is not operating in their best interests, the headship process may fail. Basically, well-defined headship as the course of controlling a group of persons (or groups) in a specific way using largely non-coercive techniques, he introduced a fresh perspective. The employment of forceful measures is not similar to leadership, according to this definition, followership should be voluntary [14]. This concept is not shared by all scholars; for example, the use of aggression is also considered headship [16].

Headship theorists begun emphasizing the relevance of followers in the leadership procedure in the 1990s. A study made a significant contribution to this field by noting that headship was more than just a procedure of the leader's effect on others; it was also a process of communication that could be subjective by anybody involved [17]. It further describes headship as a meeting between two or more persons that includes the structuring or remodelling of the situation, as well as the members' perspectives and aspirations. Headship occurs when one team member has an impact on the motivation or ability of others in the group. Any member of the team can demonstrate some level of leadership abilities [17]. A leader shapes and shares a revelation that supports the activity of others emphasizing the necessity of the leader defining a vision and communicating it with others [7].

Leadership was a relationship-based procedure aimed at achieving some shared objectives. Headship is a relationship of power among leaders and followers who want to see tangible results that represent their common aims [14]. leadership is the capacity to create a compelling vision and to translate vision into organizational realities. In a nutshell, their definition of leadership focused the ability to turn ideas into reality [15]. A researcher argued that the only definition of headship is someone who has followers and summed up the views of the late twentieth century [14]. Despite the fact that most contemporary thinkers have avoided defining leadership, researchers stated that leadership is an equatorial orbit with three sides: the leader, followers, and context [16,18]. headship is the practise of persuading others to achieve a goal and guiding an organization in a way that makes it trustworthy and logical [19]. Headship as the process through which one person motivates a group of people to achieve a common goal. This process is carried out by leaders using their leadership knowledge, attributes, and talents [20]. However, it is clear that some people possess characteristics that can influence behaviour. This is referred to as trait leadership because it was believed that leaders were born rather than developed [7]. While management can be learnt, the abilities and knowledge that a leader possesses can be impacted by his or her attributes or traits, such as way of life, ideals, beliefs, and moral fibre. Knowledge and abilities immediately contribute to the leadership process, whereas the other aspects provide the leader certain characteristics that distinguish him or her from others. A leader's advancement is linked to his or her

exclusivity. Taking on a leadership role is a stage in a person's development where they integrate their character through experiences and reactions [21].

Furthermore, a leader's identity is founded on a sense of purpose, which means that a leader is more effective when pursuing goals that are aligned with their principles and based on collective good [22]. He went on to argue that since they have a strong sense of direction, leaders are more prepared to question the status quo. Woman are expected to be nice, caring, and selfless, whereas men are expected to be influential, self-confident, and self-determining [23]. As a result, gender biases block the advancement of women's leadership and cause men to assist individuals who are linked to them, resulting in the sponsorship of other males [24]. Consequently, the headship identity that is developed turn out to be male dominated, forcing women to shy away from leadership positions. Studies show that there are few women in educational leadership positions in Tano North Municipality and this study examines their leadership styles amidst this context.

1.1. Gender Differences and Similarities in Leadership Styles

In headship study, gender has been distinguished from sex, with the former being understood as a culturally created set of qualities labelled masculine or feminine and the latter as a set of features resulting from biological characteristics [12]. Male gender traits of leadership style are described as hostile, self-determining, objective, coherent, balanced, logical, influential, positive, self-assured, ambitious, opportunistic, and impersonal, as opposed to female gender traits of leadership style which are described as expressive, receptive, communicative, supportive, perceptive, lukewarm, diplomatic, open to ideas, articulate, calm, compassionate, and impersonal [7]. Arhin further added that gender plays a significant role behavioural characteristic that determine headship style [7]. Another linked task-oriented leadership to masculinity and relationship-oriented leadership to femaleness [25]. The masculinity/femininity component determines the significance of labour in community relationships [26]. While males continue to control leadership positions, research reveals that when women do take the helm, they employ various leadership styles than men. Female employees tended to be more representative of the people in their leadership styles than male employees [27]. They added that a meta-analysis of 45 researches looking into gender differences in transformational leader behaviours found that female leaders utilized a more transformational approach than male leaders [27].

Most women in educational leadership were democratic who encouraged participative style of administration where views of all members of staff are considered; since they are also members of the school without which the leader cannot lead. In general, this leadership style has been recognized as the best and most effective for schools [28]. Democratic leaders motivate team members to contribute while preserving final decision-making authority. Team members feel more involved in the process, and they are more supportive, motivated, and innovative [7]. In a related study from other researchers found that most female heads or administrators of senior high schools used democratic leadership style to impact positively on their subordinates and the school as a whole [29]. A study postulate that at certain times female heads switched to other leadership styles although that may not be the type of leadership style, they commonly used to run the affairs of their school [30].

The distinction between male and female gender character traits facilitates the assertion that male gender traits tend to be more unempathetic, conducting, or

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transaction-based model of leadership, while female gender traits tend to a more nurturing, relationship-oriented headship approach, which undergirds the idealized influence [31]. Men usually employ autocratic leadership style, whereas women are characterised with democratic leadership style [32, 33]. A similar study found that in both the result of economies of scale and education, women prefer democratic and participatory leadership approaches. Furthermore, it appears that female executives seek transformative leadership [32]. Female principles created through social engagements such as relationship development, communication, consensus building, and power to influence, and collaboration for a common purpose characterize transformational headship. Shane supported these views and added that in the past, femininity was associated with revolutionary headship [35]. Numerous studies on transformational leadership, in detailed, specified that women are professed to employ transformational leadership more than men, and that women believe they use transformational headship styles more than men [36].

On the other hand, claim that there are no substantial variations in leadership behaviour between males and females [38]. In a study involving several exploratory studies, discovered that male and female leaders had similar task-oriented and people-oriented leadership styles [38]. A study emphasized that there is little or no difference and no proof of any variations in men's and women's leadership styles, leadership efficiency, and talents, citing a number of academic research [31]. Notably, men and women have far more parallels in their headship behaviours than differences, and both are extremely beneficial [12].

No gender differences in executive self-efficacy, self-monitoring, management commitments, or managing effectiveness when it came to wage promotion, performance evaluations, or hierarchy progression. Women managers give fewer tasks than men, but their directive, consultative, and participative leadership styles are similar. Notwithstanding previous research that found substantial differences between the sexes in leadership styles and behaviour, their study found more similarities than differences in managers' headship styles and behaviour. Furthermore, the gender reform approach, which is predominantly characterized by liberal feminism, holds that gender differences are not based on nature and that men and women have a common humanity. As a result, biological distinctions should be overlooked in the pursuit of gender equality in the workplace. There was no headship style that is best in all situations and for that matter leaders should consider and assess prevailing situations and conditions before they apply leadership styles. Structure and operational procedures of a company may influence the type of headship style that supervisors must use. Several organizations place a strong accent on fostering member inputs or philosophies, necessitating an open leadership style in which members have a big say in deciding their own positions and duties. Other organizations have a "my way or the highway" culture, in which leaders set the agenda and discourage dissent or creativity. Similarly, authors believe that a leader's experience and the type of organization may impact leadership style, with a more effective manager being more at ease adopting his/her own understanding of laws and regulations. A long-time member of an organization will generally have a better awareness of the organization's subtleties than a newcomer, therefore he/she may feel more at ease while making decisions. The paper argues that despite the distinction between male and female character traits and variations in leadership styles that extant literature espouse, context is integral in gender leadership discourse.

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1.2. Theoretical Underpinning

1.2.1. Behavioural theory (Theory Y)

Behavioural theories of leadership are based upon the belief that great leaders are made, not born. This theory was propounded. Rooted in behaviourism, identified with McGregor's Theory Y, focuses on the actions of leaders not on mental qualities or internal states. According to this school of thought, instead of the traits of the leader, it is rather the manner in which the leader behaves within the environment that determines his or her level of effectiveness. The theory developed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard is based on "readiness" level of the people the leader is attempting to influence. Readiness is the extent to which followers have the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task. Ability is the knowledge, experience and skill that an individual possesses to do the job and is called job readiness. Willingness is the motivation and commitment required to accomplish a given task. The leader is expected to interact with followers in a way that will encourage them to do their best in every situation.

1.2.2. Trait theory

Thomas Carlyle propounded the trait theory. This theory assumes that some individuals are born with certain traits and physical, social and personal characteristics that differentiate them from non-leaders. Kirkpatrick and Locke argued that key leadership traits include: drive, leadership, motivation and cognitive development. Northouse added other traits such as emotional maturity, charisma and creativity. A researcher argued that height and physical attractiveness have significant and instead, charisma is needed to be a successful leader. However, it is important that some traits can make a leader more successful but no traits can guarantee success.

2. Materials and Methods

The study utilized a case study design based on the qualitative approach. Fifteen (15) women in educational leadership positions in Tano North Municipality were selected for the study. To this end, 10 Female Head teachers were interviewed while the focus group discussion employed 5 teachers. Teachers were chosen for the study because they are directly involved in the day- to- day administration of the school, thus knowing the leadership styles of their superiors. This research made use of the purposive sampling method to select the women. The most important feature underlying the use of the purposive sampling is sampling with a purpose. It is critical to select persons from whom one can learn a lot about the topic central to the study's objective, hence the phrase "purposeful sampling." Individuals who could contribute valuable information on the topic were chosen to better understand the leadership style of females in educational headship positions in the Tano North Municipality. The most crucial goal was to find people who were accessible and eager to share important information related to leadership. The data was gathered using a semi-structured interview guide and focus group discussion guide. Interviews were done at the convenience of the participants. Participants consents were sought before the study was conducted and real names of study subjects were changed to pseudonyms. The questions were linked to the study's research question. Each interview lasted roughly an hour while the focus group discussion lasted for two hours. During the interviews, field notes were made on significant issues. The field notes made it easier to keep track of the questions asked and provide details of other relevant information

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such as verbal cues, demeanours etc. Issues that needed to be followed-up on or investigated further were also noted. Finally, data obtained were analysed as emergent themes through open coding, axial coding and selective coding manually.

3. Results and Discussion

For the purpose of analysis, HT-Head teacher and T-Teacher were used to represent the various categories of the participants.

3.1. Leadership Styles of Women in Educational Leadership Positions

The study's objective was to examine the leadership styles of females in educational headship positions in Tano North Municipality. The primary intent of this objective was to establish and apprehend characteristics of leadership styles applied by women in educational leadership positions in Tano North Municipality. Based on the research question, three major themes emerged from the data gathered; these were commonly used leadership styles by women in leadership positions, situations under which these leadership styles were used as well as factors that influence choice of leadership style.

3.1.1. Commonly used leadership styles by women in leadership positions

The finding revealed that the commonly used leadership style of women in leadership positions was democratic style. However, there were exceptional situations where other leadership styles were used. In the view of HT-3, she indicated:

For this 21st century, everything is done based on democratic principles so you cannot do anything without using that leadership style… I can say we are practicing the democratic leadership style; but, sometimes, other types of leadership styles may have to come in because of the nature of people we are working with. I can say 80% of the leadership style is democratic leadership style, and 20% autocratic leadership style [Field interview data, 2019].

During the focus group discussion T-5 commented:

As teachers we can easily approach the head and share our ideas and concerns with her because she welcomes each subordinate and offers her best guidance and advice. We like and appreciate her because of her style of leadership which make teachers feel part of the administrative system [Focus group discussion data, 2019].

Similarly, HT-1 expressed her view and said:

You know, knowledge is not in one person's head, so I believe if you allow others to bring their views and you are ready to take advice from other people it can help to achieve your target. Sometimes, based on how you want to achieve your set goals and objectives, you may be tempted to deny your subordinates some freedom if you put so much pressure or fear in them. You can sometimes mess up but if you are able to involve subordinates, they will at least be able to express themselves, and exercise some amount of freedom to carry out their daily duties. When you relate with them in a cordial way, they will be able to carry out their work successfully [Field interview data, 2019].

The views expressed by participants indicated that the commonly used leadership style of female heads were democratic. This finding supports an earlier study that most women in educational leadership were democratic leaders. The participants encouraged participative style of administration where views of all members of staff are considered; since they are also members of the school without which the leader cannot lead [28]. Generally, this style of leadership has been described as ideal and most effective leadership style for schools. Democratic leaders, empower group members to participate but preserve final authority over decision-making. Members of the group feel more involved and actively engaged, and they are more sympathetic, motivated, and innovative. In a related study from Omeke and Onah, they found that most female heads or administrators of senior high schools used democratic leadership style to impact positively on their subordinates and the school as a whole [29].

On other views expressed by participants on leadership style used by female heads, autocratic leadership was cited, however, it was indicated that this style was not often used. In the view of HT- 6, she has been using autocratic leadership style and said:

> *"I have been applying autocratic style of leadership at certain times.*
> *I'm very careful when I use this style. I use it moderately."*

In the focus group discussion, some of the subordinates who participated in the study also stated that female head teachers use autocratic style to adhere to rules and regulations governing the office while others were of the opinion that they use that style to safeguard the laws in order to succeed in their administration. For instance T-3 indicated that:

> *My head teacher is not the type who normally uses the autocratic leadership*
> *style. Sometimes, she exhibits this style especially when she has to take*
> *immediate decisions. However, she does well to inform the staff about such*
> *decisions she took without their involvement [Focus group discussion data,*
> *2019]*

The finding shows that there were times some female leaders applied autocratic leadership style to take immediate decisions although they later informed their staff members. Such leaders used their power in measurable levels and at certain times apologized for their actions. This was confirmed by previous study that at certain times female heads switched to other leadership styles although that may not be the type of leadership style they commonly used to run the affairs of their school [30].

3.1.2. Situations under which these leadership styles were used

Based on the second theme, it was indicated that there were certain situations and conditions that necessitated the use of various types of leadership styles. Justifying their use of democratic leadership style for example, HT-3 mentioned:

> *"the democratic leadership style makes everybody feel part of the*
> *administration of the institution and everybody participates in the*
> *administration of the school."*

Democratic leadership style creates avenues for healthy communication, consensus building and development of good interpersonal relationship. During the focus group discussion T-2, stated:

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The reason why some female heads preferred to be democratic was that the work is a collaborative one which they needed to think through issues with their subordinates. They are at the helm of affairs but the actual workers are there, so they need to seek their views on issues, listen to their problems, their suggestions, and blend all these together so that success can be achieved [Focus group discussion data, 2019].

This implied that female heads adopted the democratic leadership style because it embraces everybody's views, and makes their subordinates feel part of their administration.

On other views that were gathered, the participants indicated that sometimes the Board of Directors of the school and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) influenced female heads to adopt other leadership styles. For example, HT-4 shared her experience and said:

Sometimes, there is strong pressure from the Parents and Teachers Association (P.T.A) and Old Students Associations that influence my leadership styles. The pressure from these associations are so strong that sometimes ones job is at stake. For the purpose of protecting my job, I succumb to their pressure and act accordingly. This affects my style of leadership at some point in time in the school [Field interview data, 2019].

One female head (HT-4) also remarked:

"Autocratic leadership is adopted when an issue comes with emergency and there is no time for deliberations, then the head is left with no option than to decide for the staff or work on behalf of the entire staff".

However, during the focus group discussion, T-4 was quick to respond that,
"When autocratic leadership style is used frequently it does not promote success in the administration of the school because when the leader is absent nobody works"

Despite the fact that most of the participants who were engaged in the Focus Group Discussion were not happy when female Head teachers use autocratic style, few teachers were in support of that style because of the urgency needed to resolve certain issues for instance, T-1 stated:

Autocratic style of leadership is used to curtail lengthy discussions and take instant measures towards solving problems. At certain times, I have supported her administration when she took unilateral decisions because for some teachers if care is not taken, they can prolong matters such that no consensus could be reached [Focus group discussion data, 2019].

T-2 expressed similar sentiment and said:

She has been always described as strict but that is not the situation. The head teacher wants to ensure each teacher does what are expected of him/her at any given time. Teachers must be well supervised such that they do what is expected of them. She hates excuses for non-performance of one's work and will compel you to work when the need be [Focus group data, 2019].

In support of the use of autocratic style of leadership T-5 also indicated that

"At certain times, force must be used to put some teachers in line so that sanity prevails and rules are obeyed".

HT-1 justified her reason for using autocratic leadership style and said:

At certain times, I apply autocratic leadership styles because by nature some teachers and other staff of the school become very difficult to deal with. Based on their actions and reactions I can become autocratic mainly to keep them in check and allow smooth running of the school.

HT-5 shared her views and stated:

I don't apply a specific leadership style in my school, however, I have always applied the best style of leadership depending on prevailing conditions in the school, the time, the nature and type of subordinates or followers in order to achieve success [Field interview data, 2019].

The views expressed by female headteachers and their subordinates indicated that female heads had to switch to other leadership styles as there is no one style of leadership that can be applied throughout one's working life. The study finding is in tune with McGregor's Theory Y contention emphasising that actions of leaders and not their innate qualities are paramount in dire situations hence the manner within which leaders act within the prevailing conditions ultimately influence their results achieved. This finding was supported by a similar study that there was no leadership style that is best in all situations and for that matter leaders should consider and assess prevailing situations and conditions before they apply leadership styles. On his view on factors to characterize type of leadership style of heads, a researcher indicated that prevailing situation was the strongest factor that influenced leadership style of female heads.

3.1.3. Factors that influenced style of leadership used by female headteachers

Based on the third theme that emerged from the objective, it was indicated that the kind of leadership adopted by female head teachers were influenced by certain factors. The findings indicated that factors such as personal determination, organizational structure of the school, level of experience of leaders, and personal traits of a leader influenced female heads leadership styles.

3.1.3.1. Personal determination

It was expressed by participants that a leader's personal determination to achieve certain goals and targets motivated them to adopt a particular leadership style. For instance, HT-9 mentioned:

I am determined to achieve certain self-made aims and objectives for this school and that has led me to lead the way I do. I have attended several leadership seminars or programmes which has given me much experience on how to act as a leader. Sometimes, I assess myself and I realize these seminars on leadership have been very beneficial to me in terms of providing leadership to achieve goal oriented results. [Field interview data, 2019]

This assertion supports the behavioural approach to leadership, which views that leadership style is not the trait of leader but the way in which the leader actually

behaves towards followers that determine effectiveness. The concept that exceptional leaders are made, not born, underpins behavioural theories of leadership. This theory, which is based on behaviourism and is associated with McGregor's Theory Y, focuses on the behaviours of leaders rather than mental traits or internal feelings [47]. According to that school of thought, instead of the traits of the leader, it is rather the manner in which the leader behaves within the environment that determines the level of effectiveness.

The "readiness" level of the individuals the leader is aiming to influence is the basis of Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's theory. The preparedness of followers to execute a task determines their competence and willingness to do so. Work preparation involves a person's ability to do a task based on their knowledge, experience, and skill. Willingness is the drive and commitment required to finish a task. Therefore, leadership style is determined by the followers' level of preparation.

3.1.3.2. Organisational structure

On the fact of female leaders who were influenced by the organization structure of their school, HT-3 indicated:

> We have rules and regulations guiding the conduct of each stakeholder of this institution that must be strictly adhered to. As a head in this school, I must ensure that the school achieves it goals and objectives and for that matter rules and regulations were made. Living by these rules and regulations alone will be helpful in achieving goals and objectives set for the school [Field interview data, 2019].

Another Head teacher HT-8 also remarked:

> As an educational institution we have guiding philosophies that helps me to work with my subordinates to attain the desirable results. [Field interview data, 2019].

This finding supports the submissions of McShane and Von Glinow (2000) that the structure and operational procedures of an organization may influence the type of leadership style that managers must use. Some institutions increasingly focus on fostering member participation or ideas, necessitating an open leadership style in which members have a big say in deciding their own positions and duties.

3.1.3.3. Level of experience

The study revealed that level of experience of the teacher can influence the leadership style she employed. Sharing her experience, participant HT-4 had this to say:

> I served as a leader in other institutions before coming to this school. I have definitely gathered much experience on how people especially teachers should be led as well as how subordinates expect a leader to lead. My level of experience helps me to know how to act at every circumstance. My years of service as a leader help in leading [Field interview data, 2019].

This was supported by a previous study that a leader's experience level, both as a leader and with a particular organization, might influence his leadership style. A new leader may be more motivated to lead "by the book" in order to avoid potential mistakes, whereas a seasoned leader may feel more at ease following his own

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interpretation of rules and regulations. A long-time member of an organization will generally be more aware of the organization's complexities than a novice, making her more at ease while making judgments.

3.1.3.4. Personality traits

It emerged from the interviews that leadership style was used based on personality traits. Two of the heads were specific that it was natural they lead their subordinates the way they did and still do. This was evidenced by the following statement from HT- 10:

> It is my nature that I welcome each person's views either a child or an adult. This does not mean I am soft and that I make use of every suggestion given me. My dad was a teacher and though I did not spend much time with him, the little I observe about him was exactly what I'm practising. I think I inherited my leadership style from my dad that is why I do things the way he did [Field interview data, 2019].

T-2, expressed similar views during the focus group discussion and said:

> I have often confessed to my colleagues that I see my head to be someone born as a leader. Although, there are always challenging situations coming up daily in the school she has been very effective in handling the situation. The staff are obedient and cooperative because of her leadership styles. However, there are always some stubborn ones. Generally, my head does her best [Focus group discussion data, 2019].

This result confirms a notion that people are born with certain qualities and attributes that make them successful leaders [9]. Trait theories usually identify leaders as having particular personality or behavioural characteristics in common. Leaders are those who are able to properly articulate themselves, know what they want, why they want it, and how to convey it to others in order to obtain their collaboration and support, as well as how to achieve their objectives [10]. The realization that there are some important qualities or features that those who possess them will be good or effective leaders in any business. Physical energy, intelligence and action-oriented judgment, task competence, enthusiasm to embrace responsibility, need for achievement, boldness and resolution, capacity to motivate people, people skills, trustworthiness and self-confidence are only a few of these attributes [11].

The views expressed by the participants on leadership style of women in key educational headship positions in the Tano North Municipality suggest that the leadership style commonly used by these women was democratic style even though they use autocratic leadership styles on few occasions. The finding revealed that certain factors influenced the leadership styles of these female leaders. For instance, it was indicated that there were some situations that required female heads to be autocratic because some subordinates at certain times tend to abuse the freedom they enjoy and when this happens, the women in educational leadership positions adopt the autocratic leadership style in order to control these recalcitrant teachers which at times tend to result in confrontations. However, the three most important factors that influenced the leadership styles of females in educational headship positions were the type or nature of the subordinate (follower), the prevailing situation and the personality traits of the leader. This implies that there were various times that female leader's used different leadership styles based on their context.

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4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concludes that the type of leadership style women in educational leadership position apply may affect their effectiveness. For the best results in teaching and learning outcomes in schools, female heads must blend multiple leadership styles based on their context or the issues at hand.

Women in educational leadership positions mostly adopt the democratic leadership style in their administration even though they make use of autocratic leadership style at times. This creates the sense of belongingness among the staff. The implication of this finding is that leadership styles are not mutually exclusive, and that leaders can choose from a variety of styles depending on the context. Females in educational leadership are very competent in the discharge of their duties even though some of them are autocratic and rigid.

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

Female heads should make use of combination of leadership styles. In this regard they would be effective in the work where they apply leadership styles that suit particular situations and moments. Hence, the application of a particular style should depend on the situation and the issue at stake.

Female heads need to assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of their leadership styles as well as the needs of leaders. In this regard, female heads can satisfy the needs of their subordinate, enhance the achievement of organizational goals, and remove impediments that are likely to affect their leadership style negatively.

The Tano North Municipal Education Service and other gender-based organizations should periodically organize leadership training programmes for female heads to be abreast with diverse leadership styles and thought patterns that enhance their capabilities and equip them with relevant administrative skills.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

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