

## Original Research Article

### **Senior High School heads' Perception on Predominant forms of Continuous Professional Development in Ghana**

#### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to find out the predominant forms of Continuous Professional Development for senior high school heads of public Senior High School/Technical and Vocational Educational and Training(SHS/TVET) in Greater Accra Region of Ghana and their perception of Continuous Professional Development. A descriptive survey method was used, where a questionnaire was administered to the Heads (Headmaster, Assistant Head-Administration and Assistant Head-Academic) of SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region. The accessible population for this study comprised all heads of SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region. The target population consisted of all heads of public all SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region. A census was used to select all heads of public all SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region. A self-designed questionnaire with a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.85 was used for the data collection. Means and Standard Deviations were used to analyse data for the study. It was found that Conferences, workshops and academic programs are the predominant form CPD undertaken by the heads of public SHS/TVET and that the heads expressed that the performance of the Head is dependent on the perception of professional development. It was therefore recommended that the Ministry of Education to make policies as to enhancing sponsorships continuous Professional Development for senior high school heads in the management of the SHS/TVET.

**Keywords:** *perception, predominant, continuous Professional Development, forms*

#### **Introduction**

The goal of Continuous Professional Development therefore is to empowerment superiors in administration, as well as helping them improve the system of education broadly to generally benefit their students in academic and social excellence. However, the imperative nature of Continuous Professional Development limits its participation by many institutions. Collin, Van der Heijden and Lewis (2012) stated that it is cost intensive and time-consuming for an effective Continuous Professional Development session implementation. The couple impacts might limit the target of productivity attainment for the year of an institution. More so, most new ideas

challenge their implementation; participants create series of mistakes before perfection because of the limited time used for training and practice of activities. These have been the headaches of many administrators though the benefits of Continuous Professional Development are immeasurable. The beneficial aspect of Continuous Professional Development is a matter of urgency irrespective of the challenges it posed. Abakah, Widin and Ameyaw (2022) noted that governments and other stakeholders have remounted interest in CPD especially for educational institutions and their administrators (headteachers) in high schools where the future of every nation exists.

The need to learn for effective administration and managing of senior high schools in Ghana could be achieved with manpower development. Hence, the need for Continuous Professional Development for senior high school heads. However, there are limited follow ups on heads to assess the available form of CPDs in their managerial capability of these of senior high schools. Ideally, the higher one goes in academia the better the influence on the field of operation as one develops personal and professional effectiveness and increases job satisfaction (Kusi, 2017). Continuous Professional Development of administrators is perceived by Erasmus and Westhuizen (1994) and Kennedy (2005), to have greater influence on administrators in managing educational institutions as their training and education are aimed at enabling them carry out their duties effectively.

These statements have motivated a lot of senior high school heads in Greater Accra to undergo Continuous Professional Development in administration and management (Abakah, Widin & Ameyaw, 2022; Armah, 2017). Also, determining whether the facts for the purpose of CPD for heads of senior schools have been established and issue for which research reported on as follow-up action and evaluation systems of CPD used in schools are insufficient and are tied to considering planned outcomes, identifying specific criteria and considering value for money (Pedder, Storey & Opfer, 2008). The mix-perception about the influence of Continuous Professional Development on administrators and managing senior high schools needs much to be desired. There is a perception that even though people have upgraded themselves professionally in administration, they have not brought any tremendous changes in managing senior high schools. Other school of thought (Erasmus & Westhuizen, 1994; Kusi, 2017) is that Continuous Professional Development of administrators has a lot of positive influence on their job description performance. The purpose of the study was therefore to find out the predominant

forms of Continuous Professional Development for senior high school heads of public Senior High School/Technical and Vocational Educational and Training(SHS/TVET) in Greater Accra Region of Ghana and their perception of Continuous Professional Development.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region?
2. What is the perception of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Meaning and Nature of Continuous Professional Development**

After planting, a farmer's most crucial task is to maintain ongoing cultural activities that will boost yields. This is known as ongoing professional development in the employment sector. According to Ememe, Ezeh, and Ekemezie (2013), continual professional development (CPD) is a method through which employees maintain the current knowledge necessary for job success by continuously building on previously acquired knowledge and understanding. a carefully thought-out, lifetime, ongoing research that continues for the duration of the person's employment. Only if there is an exit from the job does this process come to an end. According to Guskey (2000), despite the fact that CPD is a set of practices aimed at enhancing the professional knowledge, abilities, and attitudes of workers purposely such that there is a polish up in the learning of students. The continuous education process that is necessary after the initial on-the-job training. It allegedly improves the procedure for evaluating work performance quality (DSD, 2007).

Day (1999) used his definition to see Continuous Professional Growth from a natural perspective. Constant Professional Development, in his opinion, includes "all-natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned actions that are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group, or school, and which contribute, through these, to the quality of education" (p. 4). It is required that one takes part in a program for continuous professional development, but some participants may find the time and financial resources to be problematic. According to Easaw (2021), continuous professional development is the idea that instructors should work to increase their professional competence and knowledge above and above the minimum requirements for performing their jobs (p.1). CPD is also understood to be the process of redacting information and looking for proof to support the skills, knowledge, and

experience needed to portray expertise that have been obtained both formally and informally after the first on-the-job training. It details the event, how it was learned, and how it should be put into practice. The phrase "continuous professional development" typically refers to a portfolio or folder used to track one's professional growth.

Learning experts are involved in Continuous Professional Development to strengthen their skills. The process uses various methods including seminars, conferences, workshops, training courses. The face-to-face sessions of meeting are mostly employed except in special cases where the e-learning might be necessary. A session of Continuous Professional Development program focuses on its aim of upgrading and updating individual participants create knowledge banks, skills and competencies to enhance expertise on job performance.

The ability to apply new information, skills, and talents is what is meant by a participant's competence in a program for continuous professional development. It encompasses the individual characteristics of the individuals needed for effective task completion at work. This also pertains to success-related qualities that are emotional, social, cognitive, intellectual, and psychomotor (Day, 1999). Evidently, when a large number of administrators participate in Continuous Professional Development programs, institutional performance improves (Boam&Weindling, 2006). Regular participation in CPD programs involves more of the following: (a) developing a documentary process independently without the employer's input; (b) concentrating primarily on knowledge acquisition that is reflective, reviewed, and experience-based; (c) setting goals and objectives for oneself, (d) subsuming both formal and informal learning processes

Learning can become conscious and proactive rather than unconscious and reactive thanks to Continuous Professional Development. It is the all-encompassing dedication of professionals to the development of their own abilities and competence during the course of their careers. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) incorporates several learning strategies, including training workshops, conferences and events, e-learning courses, best practice techniques, and idea sharing, all geared toward helping a person advance and experience successful professional growth. Participating in CPD prevents academic and practical qualifications from becoming outdated or obsolete, enabling people to continuously "up skill" or "re-skill" regardless of their occupation, age, or educational level.

### **Forms/Types of Continuous Professional Development**

The kinds of activities of a planned or unplanned program for Continuous Professional Development contribute towards meeting Institutional requirements. The activities involved in the Continuous Professional Development program tends to identify the type of CPD it should be. Adagiri (2014) pointed out the following types of Continuous Professional Development.

- 1. Formal Education and Training:** This subsumes the structured formal face-to-face education, short courses, further studies, formal on-the-job training and distance learning. The formal type of CPD contributes half of the training or education required for on-the-job performance. The exclusion occurs when the individual is undertaking higher degree or post-graduate course. Such programs usually involve a form of assessment.
- 2. Informal Learning of Education and Training:** The activities subsume reading of books, journals, manuals, among others and familiarization with the operation of technological aids, computer programme, equipment, and other tangible resources needed for on-the-job performance. The training deals with on-the-job learning necessary for workplace requirements, and private study to execute complete discretion. Usually, informal learning becomes necessary for a new project or job to be undertaken and a required extend for competency base. Private study is an opportunity for a member to direct the way in which their professional career develops. Mostly, informal learning ends up with three-quarters development of the individual for effective execution of desired duties.
- 3. Conferences and Meetings:** These include conference, in-service training, workshops, seminars, symposia and technical meetings, at vantage venues where papers are presented. The programs are usually run by an institution purportedly to meet the Continuous Professional Development requirements of their staffs' professional career. Usually, half of the on-the-job requirements are met in such programs.
- 4. Presentations and Papers:** The preparation and presentation of material for courses, conferences, workshops, seminars and symposia can be claimed if these activities contribute towards the advancement of the expertise related competencies of others. This program also adds up to half of the knowledge require for employees.
- 5. Institutional Activities:** Usually, these programs may count towards Continuous Professional Development where they contribute to the development of others. The activities subsume membership of Institution setting committees and groups for professional review interviews, acting as mentors, accessory for course accreditation, refereeing of technical

papers before publication, co-coordinating conferences and the technical aspects of work undertaken on or for other national or institution committees and bodies.

6. **Industry Involvement (per academia):** This program ensures the use of academic position to foster links with institution to the benefit of education, research and practice. This requirement also ensures that such employees are exposed to developments in expertise and management practice outside of academia. The Continuous Professional Development programs are achieved through a range of activities, including consultancy services and the supervision of institutional sponsored research and design projects.

### **Headteacher Continuous Professional Development**

The concept of Continuous Professional Development is universally accepted and practiced effectively in the labour market not excluding the educational institutions. In view of this headteachers' participation in Continuous Professional Development is crucial to emanating improvement in running schools under their care. Continuous Professional Development designed for heads of educational institutions could be contend that, a contested and variously conceptualized policy, research process and a component of headteachers' duties in leading and managing an educational institution (Hardy, 2012). It is an embedded professional practice of the headteacher. As noted by Friedman and Phillips (2004),

Continuous Professional Development for headteachers is characterised by being a "lifelong learning for professionals, personal development, assuring a wary public that professionals are indeed up to date, given the rapid pace of technological advancement, individual professionals to ensure a measure of control and security in the often precarious modern workplace, professional associations to verify that the standards of their professionals are being upheld, and employers to garner a competent, adaptable workforce" (p. 362).

Headteachers Continuous Professional Development is a continuous process and only ends on a reason of not leading and managing an educational institution throughout a person's working life. The content is usually related to concepts of education, management, leadership, communication among others that the headteachers should acquire and frequently be updated on to ascertain the attainment of educational goals. Guskey (2000) stressed on these contents and activities of headteachers' Continuous Professional Development that, such content related activities are "designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators

so that they might in turn, improve the learning of students” (p. 3). A crucial reason for headteachers participation in Continuous Professional Development is a necessity in educational institutions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study employed the descriptive survey with the quantitative approach. The method involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of quantitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). As explained by Creswell (2013), descriptive survey design is purported to observe, describe and present the situation of an issue as a natural phenomenon. That is to point out, from the collected data what is happening at only a point in time. Considering the nature of the study, the researcher selected this condition for the analysis of the influence of Continuous Professional Development that already exists.

### **Population of the Study**

The population for the study comprises all professional employees of the senior high schools in the Greater Accra Region. The accessible population was all administrative staffs of the public senior high/technical schools out of which the heads of the schools formed the target population. Senior high schools are managed by heads and their two assistants in charge of academic and administration. For the purpose of this study the accessible population was the headmasters/mistresses and their two assistants in charge of academic and administration in each senior high school. The accessible population was 222.

### **Sampling Procedure and Sampling Size**

A census survey procedure was used to select heads and their assistant; academics and administration in all senior high schools of the Greater Accra Region for the study. According to Cooper and Schindler (2009), census survey involves the use of all members in any population of interest. Data collected through is more reliable and accurate because every individual forming part of the population is studied for in depth understanding of the influence of Continuous Professional Development for heads of senior high schools (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2005). In addition, census sampling limits biasness in the sampling process therefore using census study results for generalization is more credible. Besides the strengths of census sampling lies the high demands of time, fiscal and other resources to access data from every member of the population (Ary, Jacob, & Sorensen, 2010).

## **Instrumentation**

The instrument for the study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The four-point Likert scaled questionnaire was mainly used and have various score values. Statements was scored as Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) =1. The questionnaire made up of three parts. The first part elicited information on the bio-data on the heads selected for the study. The second part elicited information of the types of Continuous Professional Development the heads undertook, and the third part sought information on the perception of the heads on Continuous Professional Development. The internal consistency of the instrument was established using Cronbach's coefficient alpha and a reliability value of 0.85 was attained.

## **Data Collection Procedure**

The primary researcher sought permission from the heads of the school for support and collaboration. For those heads selected for the interview, an appointment was booked for the interviewee on a convenient time to be interviewed. This ensured the interference of activities during the interview process.

Two research assistants were trained and used in the quantitative data collection. This enabled the researcher to use two weeks to distribute and retrieved the questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher himself with the help of the two assistants. The data was collected from heads and the assistants of the senior high schools. The questionnaires were administered to respondents and were given two days for their completion and collection.

From the 222 questionnaires that was sent out, 100% were retrieved and therefore the number that participated in the study. The researcher edited the questionnaire and all were acceptable for the data analysis because the questionnaires had all their items responded to accordingly.

## **Data Analysis**

Items of questionnaires were scored accordingly, coded and was analysed using the appropriate statistical tools and SPSS version 23. The analysis employed the computation of descriptive statistics specifically, frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations to answer the research questions.

## **RESULTS**

Table 1- Distribution of the sample by gender, experience and status

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	115	73.7
	Female	41	26.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Experience	1-4 years	123	78.8
	5-8 years	33	21.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Status	Head	64	41.0
	Assist. Admin	45	28.9
	Assist. Acad.	47	30.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows the distribution of the sample by gender, experience and status. The Table shows 115 of the respondents representing 73.7% of the school administrators are male while 41 representing 26.3% are female. The study, therefore, revealed that majority of the administrators of SHS/TVET schools in the Greater Accra Region are males. The Table again shows that for 123 out of the 156 administrators representing 78.8% are serving their first term of four-year tenure of office, that have 1-4 years of experience while the remaining 33 representing 21.2% are serving their second term of four-year tenure of office, that is 5-8 years of experience. The study, therefore, revealed that majority of the administrator are in office for less than five years (0-4 years), which is for the first term of office. Also, the Table shows that 64 of the respondents representing 41.0% are Heads, 45 of the respondents representing 28.9% are assistant Heads in charge of administration while the remaining 47 out of the 156 representing 30.1% are assistant heads in charge of academics.

### Research question one

The purpose of the research question was to find out from the administrators the kind of CPD they engage in. The descriptive statistics of the results on the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region is presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the results on the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region (N = 156)

Item	Mean	Std. Dev
1 Conferences	2.98	1.082

2	seminars	1.92	1.107
3	observations of the work of other teachers in schools	2.32	1.004
4	numerous courses	1.66	.945
5	presentation of ready-made solutions	2.04	1.053
6	workshops	3.51	1.134
7	coaching	2.40	1.363
8	research	1.89	1.171
9	academic programs	2.97	1.087
Mean of Means		2.41	
Mean of Standard Deviation			1.121

Source: Field survey (2022)

Table 2 shows the results on the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region. The results show that generally, the administrators disagree with the statements concerning the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region. It was realized that the mean of means;  $M = 2.41$ ;  $SD = 1.121$  is less than the cut-off means of 2.50 indicating that the administrators disagree to the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region. The results revealed that the administrators the predominant form of Continuous Professional Development undertaken by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region is below average. However, the administrators reported that Conferences ( $M = 2.98$ ,  $SD = 1.082$ ), workshops ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 1.134$ ) and academic programs ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = 1.087$ ) are the predominant form CPD undertaken by the administrators of public SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region.

### **Research question two**

The purpose of the research question was to find out from the administrators their perception of implementing CPD in their schools. The descriptive statistics of the results on the perception of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the results on the perception of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region (N = 156)

Item	Mean	Std. Dev
1 Do you think the performance of teachers is dependent on professional development?	2.98	.993
2 Do you think the performance of teachers is dependent on the perception of professional development?	3.43	.899
3 Do you think the performance of teachers is dependent on understanding the importance of professional development?	3.34	.435
4 Do you think professional development is a job motivator	2.98	.930
5 Do you think professional development is linked with job performance?	3.18	.757
6 Do you think professional development can be a stress factor?	2.38	1.042
7 Do your perception of professional development is a job motivator?	3.80	.402
8 Do you think the perception of professional development is linked with job performance?	2.77	.697
9 Do you think the performance of professional development can be a stress factor?	3.00	.780
Mean of Means	3.22	
Mean of Standard Deviations		0.876

Table 3 shows the results of perception of heads of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region. The results show that generally, the administrator agree to the statements concerning perception of heads of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads. It was realized that the mean of means;  $M = 3.22$ ;  $SD = 0.876$  is greater than the cut-off mean of 2.50 indicating that the administrators agreed to the statement on perception of heads of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads. The results revealed that the administrators believed that CPD has positive perception on the performance of heads of public SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region.

It is observed that all the 12 items on of perception of heads of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region had means greater than the

average mean of 2.50 meaning that the heads agree to all the statements on the of perception of heads of Continuous Professional Development by senior high school heads in Greater Accra Region of Ghana. the Heads expressed the most popular effect of CPD in statements with the means were greater than the mean of means of 3.22. The heads expressed that the performance of the Head is dependent on the perception of professional development ( $M = 3.43, SD = .899$ ), performance of head is dependent on understanding the importance of professional development ( $M = 3.34, SD = .435$ ), professional development is a job motivator ( $M = 3.80, SD = .402$ ).

## **DISCUSSIONS**

### **Forms of CPD administrators engage in**

The study found the predominant form of CPD administrators of public SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region engage are Conferences, workshops and academic programs. The result of this study confirms the findings of Lonyian and Kuranchie (2018) which indicated that the heads of schools have a few, none or participation in Continuous Professional Development programs annually. This study found the heads participate in only three forms of CPD as was revealed by Lonyian and Kuranchie (2018) that the heads have few or none participation in CPD. These convergent results indicate that the issues of CPD for heads not limited to Ghana but global.

Similarly, Abakah (2019) study revealed that in-service training, workshops and engagement in further studies dominated Continuous Professional Development practices of staffs in educational instructions. The finding of Abakah (2019) is not far from the finding of this study as it revealed that the heads of the public SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Regions predominantly participate in only are Conferences, workshops and academic programs. This study as a confirmatory study of Abakah (2019) reveals a worrisome situation in Ghana that CPD for heads has not been enough attention. To the heads CPD is associated with further studies, workshop, in-service training and conference. It must be noted that CPD goes beyond these activities.

### **Perception of administrators on CPD**

From this study, the administrators expressed their positive perception on CPD that the CPD change existing administration habits, change thinking about administration methods, improve administration competence and develop whole school growth (general development.

The result specifically revealed that the administrators of the public SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra region have positive perception about CPD. In the study of Saleem, Gul and Dogar (2021) the heads showed positive attitude towards Continuous Professional Development program. It could be inferred from the positive attitudes of CPD program that, the heads had a positive perception which translated into their attitude towards CPD.

An observation of the findings of this study and that of Saleem, Gul and Dogar (2021) shows that both studies move in the same direction with regard perception of heads of CPD programs. It is therefore true that positive perceptions of heads are likely to translate into positive attitude even though this study did not directly look at attitudes of heads towards CPD program unlike Saleem, Gul and Dogar (2021).

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

It was found that CPD for heads (Headmaster, Assistant Head-Administration and Assistant Head-Academic) of SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region is limited to workshop, conferences and academic programs. Other CPD forms such coaching and research are very useful for performance which need to be considered. It was also found the administrators have better perception about CPD. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education to make policies as to (a) enhancing sponsorships continuous Professional Development for senior high school heads and (b) increase the frequency of Continuous Professional Development to be developed for senior high school heads in Ghana. This would help unearth the benefits of CPD in the management of the SHS/TVET in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

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