

The Quality of Management Development Training for Ghanaian Public Senior High Schools Heads and Its Impact on Teacher Performance

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Abstract

This study examined the quality of management development training (MDT) provided to public senior high school (SHS) heads and its impact on teacher performance in Ghana. The study is anchored on transformational leadership and human capital theories. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were obtained from 280 public SHS teachers through structured questionnaires using simple random sampling. Qualitative data were collected via semi-structured interviews with seven purposively selected school heads and three district training officers. Additionally, document analysis was used to complement the data. Using SPSS (24.0), descriptive and inferential statistics were applied in analysing the quantitative data, while qualitative data were thematically analysed. The results indicated that the nature of MDT in Ghana was generally associated more with in-service training programmes, and was not fully in line with some of the best MDT practices around the world. It was also found that MDT programmes helped to improve school heads' competence, and teachers developed effective classroom management skills and improved performance. The study concludes that an MDT for school heads is positively associated with teachers' performance. It recommends that the ministry of education collaborate with tertiary education institutions to implement MDT for new and experienced heads, and use on-and off-the-job training methods to improve heads' performance.

Keywords: management development training, mixed-methods, leadership training, school heads, senior high schools, teacher performance

1. Introduction

Human resource development is crucial for the sustainability of any institution. Despite ongoing efforts, a gap remains between leadership training and improved teacher outcomes in Ghana's public senior high schools (SHSs). The quality of education in any country is strongly linked to the effectiveness of school leadership, especially the role of school heads in resource management, instructional supervision, and teacher support (Hallinger, 2018). In Ghana's public Senior High Schools (SHSs), the leadership of heads significantly influences teacher motivation, classroom practices, and student performance (Amakye & Ampah-Mensah, 2020; Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Nyarko, 2021). Over the past two decades, the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) have increasingly recognised that effective instructional leadership is crucial for improving educational outcomes throughout the country's school system. Consequently, significant investments have been made in the professional development of school heads through management development training (MDT) programmes (GES, 2023).

Investing in the development of the management cohort helps organisations to achieve their goals and objectives by growing the former's abilities to meet the organisation's current and future needs (Armstrong, 2016). Management is central to every organisation as it helps to attain institutional goals; improve effectiveness and efficiency; and creates an entity which is dynamic. Management development training aims to build competencies in areas such as strategic planning, instructional supervision, data-driven decision-making, emotional intelligence, and teacher evaluation

(Simittchieva, 2013). These skills are essential for school heads to function effectively in complex educational environments where they must lead change, support teaching staff, and respond to stakeholder demands (UNESCO, 2023; Owusu-Mensah & Frimpong, 2023). Several training initiatives such as those offered by the National Education Leadership Institute (NELI) have been introduced to strengthen the leadership pipeline and enhance managerial capacity in the Ghanaian education sector.

Despite ongoing efforts, a gap remains between leadership training and improved teacher performance in Ghana's public SHSs. While trained school heads report increased confidence and leadership capacity, they often face challenges such as limited resources, lack of autonomy, and inadequate follow-up, which hinder effective teacher support and supervision (Teye & Adu, 2022). Many managements' development training (MDT) programmes are overly theoretical and disconnected from the practical realities of SHSs (Antwi & Osei, 2023). Additionally, these trainings often occur as one-off workshops without sustained mentoring or school-based application, limiting their impact (Mensah & Oppong, 2021). There is also limited empirical evidence linking MDT to teacher motivation, classroom performance, and professional development (Adjei & Danso, 2022; Boakye, 2022). Context-specific challenges further impede instructional leadership. Moreover, no mixed-methods study has comprehensively examined this issue. Because the relationship between MDT and teacher performance involves both measurable patterns across schools and the lived leadership experiences behind them, a mixed methods approach was warranted to capture statistical associations while explaining, through participants' own accounts, why those associations take the form they do.

This study contributes to theory and policy by enhancing understanding of MDT and its impact on teacher performance. It informs the planning and design of MDT for SHS heads in Ghana, guiding stakeholders like MoE, GES, universities, and development partners (e.g., USAID, DfID) to strengthen leadership training and improve teacher outcomes in education. This study also situates Ghana's experience within the broader international discourse on leadership development. The purpose of this study was to examine the quality of management development training provided to public SHS heads and its impact on teacher performance in Ghana. The study attempted to address the following research questions:

1. What is the nature and quality of management development training (MDT) provided to public senior high schools (SHSs) heads?
2. What is the perceived impact of MDT on the effectiveness of SHS heads' performance in core managerial roles?
3. How do teachers and school heads describe the relationship between school heads' management practices shaped by MDT and teachers' performance?

2. Related Studies

2.1 Nature and Quality of MDT Programmes for Public SHS Heads in Ghana

Leadership training is crucial to educational reform in Sub-Saharan Africa, where strong school leadership enhances teaching and learning (Bush, 2020). In Ghana, programmes like SEIP and NELI support structured leadership development for SHS heads, focusing on instructional leadership, planning, and school improvement (GES, 2023). Management Development Training (MDT) builds skills in finance, supervision, conflict resolution, and stakeholder engagement, while NELI also promotes ICT, inclusion, and transformative leadership. MDT is delivered through workshops, seminars, and in-service programmes, often with partners like UNESCO and GIZ. Despite recent blended learning approaches (Boakye, 2022), inconsistent delivery and limited mentoring hinder sustained impact.

Human resource development is essential for the success and sustainability of educational institutions. For school heads, MDT equips them with vital skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for effective leadership and daily school management (Rao, 2010). Continuous training helps heads remain committed and competent in their roles (Adentwi, as cited in Gabriel-Wetey, 2015). In Ghana, MDT aligns with Continuous Professional Development (CPD), lifelong learning, INSET, and the Pre-tertiary Teachers' Professional Development and Management (PTPDM) policy (MoE, 2012). It sharpens conceptual and analytical skills and fosters effective leadership. Yadav (2014) sees MDT as a structured, long-term self-development process, while Mizell (2010) highlights the value of experiences like case studies, seminars, and on-the-job training in improving school management.

MDT in Ghana takes the nature/form of in-service education and training (INSET), often supported by international agencies and focused on a few urban schools (Oduro, 2003). These short-term programmes, including courses, workshops, seminars, retreats, and symposia (Adentwi, 2005), often lack sustainability without external support. INSET is intended as a continuous process for professional and personal development. According to the MoE (2010), MDT may be internally or externally delivered, commonly through Cluster-Based (CBI), School-Based (SBI), and District-Based INSET (DBI). However, Ghana's MDT model partially deviates from international best practices, signalling the need for reform to enhance teacher performance.

2.2 Management Development Training (MDT): Lessons from Asia and Latin America for Ghana

The success of MDT for school leaders is a global priority, but its design is highly contextualised. A comparison of Ghanaian, Asian, and Latin American models demonstrates disparate approaches, providing a critical framework for improving Ghana's SHS-specific research. In Ghana, MDT quality is sometimes impeded by its erratic, ad hoc nature and an overzealous emphasis on administrative compliance. Programmes are frequently considered as low quality due to obsolete information, overly theoretical delivery, and insufficiently qualified teachers. A fundamental problem is the lack of ongoing mentorship, which creates a huge "transfer of training" gap in which abilities do not translate into practice (Ofori, 2020). This is in stark contrast to Asian systems that function well.

In contrast, high-performance Asian systems use stringent, sequential MDT. Singapore's Leaders in Education Programme (LEP) cultivates strategic, instructional leaders through problem-based learning (Ng, 2019), whereas Shanghai's tiered approach trains principals to lead teaching research, tying leadership development to classroom practice (Jensen et al., 2016). These models indicate a continuous, well-funded process that is aligned with national excellence objectives (Hallinger & Wang, 2015; Walker & Qian, 2015). MDT in Latin America focuses on skills that promote decentralisation and equity, including as data-driven decision-making and resource mobilisation. However, a chronic "implementation gap" persists, in which centralised training fails to address diverse school realities (Vaillant, 2015), a problem shared by Ghana. This comparative research demonstrates that high-quality MDT has universal characteristics: it is continuous, practical, instructional leadership-focused, and accompanied by ongoing mentorship. While Asian systems demonstrate this norm, Ghanaian and many Latin American programmes struggle with quality due to fragmentation and contextual irrelevance.

2.3 Role of MDT for School Heads' Effective Performance

Management Development Training (MDT) equips school heads with essential knowledge and skills to improve both personal performance and institutional effectiveness. It targets both aspiring and current leaders, helping prospective heads understand core management principles and their roles within the educational system (Chiemeka-Unogu, 2018). MDT contributes significantly to the development of individuals, teams, organisations, and society (Maurer et al., 2003). By fostering commitment, expertise, and job performance, it supports human capital development. Strategically, MDT engages individuals in leadership-building activities that strengthen organisational capacity. According to Cole (as cited in DeGraft-Otoo, 2012), institutions have a duty to design and offer training opportunities that develop both current and future managers, thereby ensuring sustainable leadership and long-term organisational growth.

Further, MDT offers significant benefits for school leadership and teacher performance. It enhances instructional supervision, enabling school heads to provide stronger pedagogical guidance and classroom oversight. Adjei and Danso (2022) found that heads with formal MDT led schools with improved lesson preparation and teacher engagement. MDT also boosts teacher motivation through better appraisal systems, recognition, and emotional intelligence, fostering a positive school climate (Nyarko, 2021). It promotes accountability via data-driven performance monitoring (Ampofo et al., 2023) and equips leaders to manage change, implement reforms, and support curriculum innovations (Teye & Adu, 2022). By aligning school and staff goals, MDT increases productivity (Athar & Shah, 2015) and supports competency development (Kassie, 2017; Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Mbanasor (2014) further noted its impact on leadership attitudes in craft centres. MDT is vital for school heads, as leadership quality directly impacts teacher effectiveness and school performance. Pashiardis (1998) emphasises that "quality starts at the top," portraying the head as the driving force of the institution. Effective leadership enhances staff performance, while poor leadership hinders progress. Zing Ziegler, cited in Khan et al. (2015), argues that not training leaders is worse than training and losing them. MDT equips heads with skills to manage challenges, promote continuous learning, and improve both administrative and pedagogical capacities. It boosts morale, nurtures future leaders, and supports sustained improvements in schools.

2.4 Relationship Between School Heads' MDT and Teacher Performance

Research consistently shows that transformational leadership has a positive impact on teacher motivation, lowers turnover intentions, and enhances classroom effectiveness (Nyarko, 2021; Ampofo et al., 2023). School heads who exhibit strong emotional intelligence, offer constructive feedback, and actively support professional development are more likely to cultivate high-performing teaching staff (Adjei & Danso, 2022). Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) define employee performance as the ability to deliver quality service and fulfil job responsibilities effectively. There is a strong link between MDT and employee performance: when school heads receive proper training, they become more committed, satisfied, and productive, which enhances overall school effectiveness (Champathes, 2006). However, some staff feel that training does not always provide relevant skills. In education, well-trained heads positively influence teacher performance, while poorly trained ones may hinder it. Amir and Amen (as cited in Ayalew, 2017) also note that MDT improves instructional leadership, ultimately boosting school efficiency and effectiveness.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory [TLT] (Bass & Riggio, 2006) and Human Capital Theory [HCT] (Becker, 1993). TLT emphasises how leaders motivate subordinates to exceed expectations through four components: idealized influence (serving as role models), inspirational motivation (articulating a clear vision), intellectual stimulation (encouraging creativity and critical thinking), and individualised consideration (addressing individual needs). In education, transformational school heads are expected to enhance teacher motivation, support pedagogical innovation, and create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning. MDT is a vehicle for equipping heads with these transformational capacities. The study is also grounded in HCT, which posits that investing in individuals' knowledge and skills through education and training enhances their productivity and overall effectiveness. In the context of this study, when SHS heads undergo leadership training, they acquire managerial and pedagogical leadership skills which, when effectively deployed, lead to improved teacher performance and student achievement. This study therefore conceptualises MDT quality as an antecedent that, through the mechanisms specified by TLT and HCT, shapes school heads' leadership practice and, in turn, teachers' lesson preparation, classroom management, and overall performance.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed methods approach, and specifically an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to effectively explore the complex nature and quality of Management Development Training (MDT) for school heads and its impact on teacher performance. This methodology was chosen to ensure a comprehensive understanding and provide a well-rounded chain of evidence (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used, beginning with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. This approach provided a more comprehensive understanding and validation of how MDT affects teacher performance in public Senior High Schools in Ghana (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design allows the quantitative phase to first establish the extent and direction of the relationship between management development training and teacher performance across a broad sample of public senior high schools, after which qualitative interviews with headteachers are used to probe and account for any statistical results that prove weak, unexpected, or difficult to interpret on their own (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A convergent design would have required merging two data strands collected at the same time, risking premature integration of results that had not yet been fully understood; a purely quantitative approach, meanwhile, would have left the numerical patterns unexplained, without access to headteachers' own interpretations of how training shapes their management practice.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

The accessible population comprised 680 SHS heads, teachers, and GES staff drawn from three Central Region districts (Effutu Municipality, Awutu-Senya West, and Gomoa East districts), from which a sample of 290 participants was selected: 280 teachers, 7 heads, and 3 District Training Officers (DTOs). Teachers were selected through simple random sampling (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016), giving each member of this large, fairly homogeneous group an equal chance of inclusion and supporting generalisation of results across the districts. School heads, as direct recipients of MDT, were purposively selected (Alvi, 2016) for their capacity to speak in depth about its design and delivery; interviews continued until the seventh head, by which point responses had grown repetitive and no new themes emerged, signaling saturation. All three DTOs were included through census sampling (Lavrakas, 2008), given their limited number and central role in overseeing training delivery.

3.3 Data Collection, Instrumentation, Validity and Reliability

Data were collected from 280 SHS teachers using a structured questionnaire with closed-ended items grouped thematically around perceptions of management development training and classroom performance. The instrument was piloted in the Awutu-Senya East Municipality, chosen for its similarity to the main study areas, and refined before deployment. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). Semi-structured interviews were held with three DTOs and seven SHS heads, selected purposively, using open-ended questions allowing probing where depth was needed. Documentary evidence, including training records, performance appraisals, and school administrative documents, was reviewed to validate what the questionnaire and interviews revealed, checking responses against one another and the wider literature. Trustworthiness of the qualitative data was established through Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, supported by member-checking and an audit trail of coding decisions. Given their prior familiarity with the Ghana Education Service, the researchers maintained reflexive awareness of this positionality throughout, using bracketing to limit its influence on interpretation.

3.4 Statistics and Data Analysis

The two datasets were later integrated for a comprehensive interpretation. Quantitative data from SHS teacher questionnaires were processed in three stages: initially entered into Microsoft Excel, then analysed using SPSS (24.0), and finally presented through charts, frequency distributions, and percentage tables. Inferential statistics including correlation tests were employed to explore relationships between variables (MDT and Teacher Performance). Descriptive statistics further helped the researchers interpret and make sense of the numerical data. In the qualitative phase, interview data from SHS heads (SH1–SH7) and District Training Officers (DTO1–DTO3) were transcribed and analysed thematically. Following the Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase qualitative framework, which involved: data familiarisation, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up, the researchers condensed and organised the data into themes consistent with the MDT literature, providing methodological rigor. These themes were then compared with patterns from the quantitative data for triangulation and consistency. To achieve external reliability, detailed explanation about the researchers' position and the participants were included in the study. The integrity and the consistency of the data were reviewed to ensure internal validity, and copious explanations regarding processes such as preparing the interview guide, collecting and analysing the data were included to attain external validity.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study received ethical approval from the University of South Africa, College of Education Ethics Review Committee (number: 2020/06/10/63468859/37/AM), and permission from the Ghana Education Service (GES). Participants informed consent was also obtained.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Results

4.1.1 Demographic Data

Demographic data revealed that 54% (n = 151) of the respondents were male, while 46% (n = 129) were female. In terms of educational qualifications, 28.6% (n = 80) held a Master's degree, 58% (n = 161) had a first degree, 11.8% (n = 33) possessed a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), and 2.1% (n = 6) held a Higher National Diploma (HND). In terms of teaching experience, 8% (n = 23) had worked between 1- 5 years, 26% (n = 73) between 6- 10 years, 36% (n = 101) between 11- 15 years, and 30% (n = 83) had over 15 years of experience.

RQ 1: What is the nature and quality of management development training (MDT) provided to public senior high schools (SHSs) heads?

Table 1. Summary Statistics on the Nature of MDT (n = 280)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Nature of MDT	On-the-job training	70	25
	Off-the-job training	34	12.1
	In-service training	155	55.4
	Further studies	21	7.5
	Total	280	100
Forms of MDT	Seminars & workshops	122	43.6
	School-based INSET	113	40.4
	Training on personal/career development	41	14.6
	Coaching/mentoring	4	1.4
	Total	280	100

As presented in Table 1 above with regard to training type, 25% (n = 70) of respondents had received on-the-job training (OJT), 12% (n = 34) off-the-job training (OFJT), 55% (n = 155) had received in-service training, and 8% (n = 21) had pursued further studies. This indicates that Management Development Training (MDT) in Ghana is primarily delivered through in-service training. Specifically, 44% (n = 122) of respondents had attended seminars and workshops, 40% (n = 113) had participated in school-based in-service education and training (INSET), 15% (n = 41) had received personal career development training, and only 1% (n = 4) had benefited from coaching and mentoring. Therefore, seminars, workshops, and school-based INSET emerged as the most common forms of MDT accessed by teachers. Table 2 provides a detailed statistical summary of the impact of MDT programmes on teachers' performance in Ghana.

RQ 2: What is the perceived impact of MDT on the effectiveness of SHS heads' performance in core managerial roles?

Table 2. Summary Statistics of the Role of MDT for School Heads' on SHS Teachers' Performance (n = 280)

Variable	Mean	SD
Through SHS heads' management development training (MDT), teachers have become highly motivated and committed hence, improves work output.	4.25	0.81
Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have developed effective classroom management and enhance their performances in the class.	4.28	0.74
Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have developed effective lesson planning and delivery strategies, hence high students' performance.	4.27	0.69
Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers learn how to supervise students, hence improve students' discipline and performance.	4.26	0.72
Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have improved their time management skills, which helps to improve their performance.	4.24	0.82

Table 2 presents the average statistics summarising participants' levels of agreement regarding the role of Management Development Training (MDT) for school heads and its impact on teacher performance. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with scores closer to 5 indicating stronger agreement and confirming the perceived importance of each MDT role. All items recorded relatively high mean scores, reflecting a strong consensus that MDT positively influences various aspects of teacher performance. The highest-rated item was: "Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have developed effective classroom management skills and enhanced their performance in class" (Mean = 4.28; SD = 0.74). This suggests that MDT plays a vital role in strengthening classroom control and teacher effectiveness. The next most supported statement was: "Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have developed effective lesson planning and delivery strategies, hence high student performance" (Mean = 4.27; SD = 0.69), highlighting MDT's influence on instructional preparation. Although still highly rated, the lowest mean score was for: "Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have improved their time management skills, which helps to improve their performance" (Mean = 4.24; SD = 0.82). Overall, the results confirmed MDT's positive impact on teachers' classroom management, planning, and instructional outcomes. Figure 1 visually presents these results.

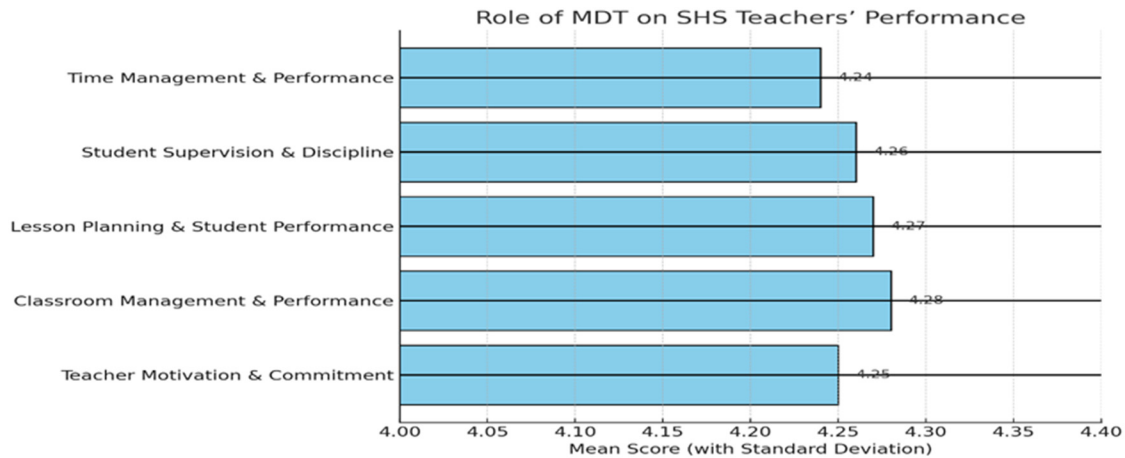


Figure 1. Role of MDT for school heads' on SHS teachers' performance

Figure 1 presents a graph of teachers' mean ratings on the role of MDT for SHS heads, with error bars indicating standard deviations. Classroom management and performance received the highest rating (M = 4.28), reflecting strong agreement on MDT's impact in this area. Lesson planning and student performance (M = 4.27) and student supervision and discipline (M = 4.26) also scored highly, showing MDT's influence on instructional delivery and behaviour. Teacher motivation and commitment (M = 4.25) and time management (M = 4.24) followed closely. Overall, all variables scored near 4.3, indicating strong perceived effectiveness of MDT on teacher outcomes.

RQ 3: How do teachers and school heads describe the relationship between school heads' management practices shaped by MDT and teachers' performance?

Table 3. Correlation between Performance and MDT

Variable	#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Performance	1	1	.245**	0.068	0.106	.344**	0.05	0	.123*	-.186**
On-the-job training	2		1	.180**	.233**	.228**	0.103	0.05	0.116	0.067
Off-the-job training	3			1	.138*	0.026	-0.071	0.024	0.028	.180**
Further studies/Education	4				1	-0.008	0.06	0.051	0.09	0.112
SHS heads' association training	5					1	0.023	-0.022	0.056	-.207**
Gender	6						1	0.113	0.005	-0.019
Education	7							1	-0.025	-0.058
Teaching experience	8								1	0.06
Frequency of MDT	9									1

**p<0.001; *p<0.05

Performance has a positive correlation with on-the-job training ($r = 0.245$; $p = 0.000$; two-tailed) and SHS heads' association training ($r = 0.344$; $p = 0.000$; 2-tailed) in Table 3, indicating that performance improved as on-the-job training and SHS heads' association training improved. There was, however, no correlation between performance and off-the-job training ($r = 0.068$; $p = 0.05$; two-tailed) or additional studies/education ($r = 0.106$; $p = 0.05$; 2-tailed). Table 4 shows the perceived roles of MDT in schools.

Table 4 shows that school heads and DTOs generally shared similar views, reinforcing the reliability of the study's qualitative results. As highlighted earlier, the quantitative analysis indicated that the core areas of MDT had a positive influence on teacher performance. This result was reinforced by the qualitative analysis, which provided deeper insights into the specific ways MDT influenced teachers' effectiveness. The Figure 2 below shows the consistency of results on the roles and strategies of MDT for SHS heads from Table 4.

Table 4. Consistency of Results on MDT Roles and Strategies

Group	Variable	Number of supporting comments
Role of MDT	1. Through SHS heads' management development training (MDT), teachers have become highly motivated and committed hence, improves work output.	3
	2. Through heads' MDT, teachers have developed effective classroom management and enhance their performance in the class.	2
	3. Through heads' MDT, teachers have developed effective lesson planning and delivery strategies, hence high students' performance.	1
	4. Through school heads' MDT, teachers learn how to supervise students, hence improve students' discipline and performances.	3
	5. Through SHS heads' MDT, teachers have improved their time management skills, which helps to improve their performance.	2
3MDT strategy	1. Mentoring/coaching of "would-be" school heads ...	2
	2. Attending school heads' (CHASS) annual conferences.	1
	3. Electronic school management or reading management journals.	3

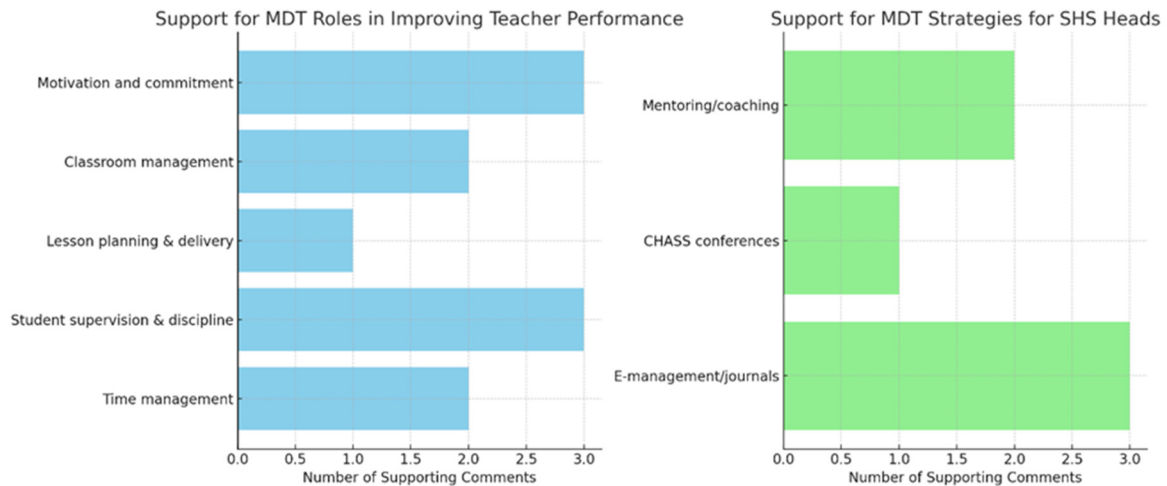


Figure 2. Consistency of results on the roles and strategies of heads' MDT

Figure 2 illustrates the perceived effectiveness of MDT roles and strategies in improving teacher outcomes. The most supported roles (3 comments each) are improving teacher motivation and enhancing supervision and student discipline. Moderate support (2) was given to classroom management and time management, while lesson planning and delivery received the least support (1). Among strategies, the highest support (3) was for using electronic systems or reading journals; mentoring/coaching received moderate support (2), and attending Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS) had the least (1), suggesting limited perceived impact.

4.2 Qualitative Results

This section analyses the qualitative data obtained from interviews and documentary materials. The results are presented under the same themes (i.e., corresponding to the specific research objectives), as: examine the nature and role of MDT for public SHS heads and suggest alternative strategies MDT for improving school heads' managerial duties in SHSs.

4.2.1 Interview Analysis

To gain a deeper understanding of the nature and role of Management Development Training (MDT) for public SHS heads in relation to teacher performance, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven school heads and three District Training Officers (DTOs). The participants were identified using the codes SH1- SH7 for school heads and DTO1- DTO3 for district officers, as outlined in the methodology section. Their responses were analysed and presented according to the themes identified in the study.

4.3 The Nature and Role of MDT

4.3.1 The Nature and Quality of MDT

The nature of MDT is affected by resources, training models, and styles, and the purpose of the training programme. For that reason, it is important to understand the nature of the training programmes targeting a specific group or sector, to know what can be done to improve current practices. Generally, participants were of the view that the personnel development programmes they were involved in, were less related to MDT, and more representative of an INSET programme. Some school heads reported never having been involved in any typical MDT, since becoming heads of their respective schools, as this statement confirms:

"Since becoming a school head, I don't remember receiving any MDT, except for some workshops and seminars. The pieces of training are normally INSET in nature and are organised once in a blue moon. Our association, CHASS – occasionally runs leadership training for us, especially the new heads. The teacher unions also once a while help with training workshops. The MoE and GES organise INSET when there is policy change or implementation." (SH2)

This notwithstanding, some participants equated leadership-oriented training with MDT programmes, possibly because management and leadership have a significant relationship. As the comment below indicates why school heads felt there were not enough MDT programmes:

"INSET programmes such as workshops, seminars, are the nature of our training. The only MDT I remember receiving so far, was leadership training by a public organisation and our association [CHASS]." (SH6)

Training often took the form of leadership-focused programmes aimed at helping school heads function effectively as leaders. However, this highlights a key distinction these were not true MDT programmes, as leadership and management require different skill sets. As a result, MDT differs from general leadership training. Notably, District Training Officers (DTOs) confirmed that most school heads received in-service training, which both they and the heads appeared to regard as less comprehensive or effective than formal MDT programmes.

“MDT ought to be the ideal form of training for SHS heads, given the significant organisational responsibilities they handle. However, what we currently provide is mainly in-service training (INSET). We primarily use workshops and seminars to train them. Additionally, CHASS supports our efforts by offering leadership training to its members, particularly newly appointed heads.” (DTO2)

Finally, regional universities such as UCC and UEW provided typical MDT programmes (where academic courses in school management and administration are offered) (GES, 2008). Participation in these programmes was, however, contingent on the individual’s interest and financial resources. Thus, school heads had to use their personal resources, to be able to benefit from the MDT programmes organised by the above-mentioned universities, if they wished to acquire relevant management-related competencies.

4.4 The Role of MDT

MDT played several roles in the lives of school heads. As the study participants indicated, such training offered them a way to learn and improve their job knowledge; being a process that equipped them with relevant competencies for succeeding in their role (Rao, 2010). The enormity of this role was demonstrated with the idea that a lack of relevant MDT can cause major setbacks in the management of SHSs. Role conflict, conflict of interest, and autocratic leadership are possible consequences for the school, if school heads do not participate in MDT. As the comment below indicates, MDT enhances effectiveness and efficiency among school heads, and influences teacher performance:

“Training is a continuous learning process. As educators, we must keep updating our knowledge. For me, regular training enhances my effectiveness and efficiency as a school head, improving my ability to manage teachers, students, and implement policies effectively.” (SH1)

This result was consistent with the views of some DTOs, who confirmed that MDT has an impact on school heads, by improving their skills in the areas of data management, budgeting, account management, and supervision. More importantly, MDT had a spillover effect on teachers, in the sense that the skills which school heads acquired by participating in training programmes, contributed to the effective monitoring and evaluation of teachers, which in turn facilitated high performance (see literature review). As the comment below indicates, MDT enabled school heads to discover themselves and their professional roles:

“MDT enhances the self-awareness of school heads. Regular training enables them to identify their strengths and build confidence in their abilities to lead effectively and efficiently. Ultimately, MDT positively influences both teachers and students.” (DTO1)

It was further revealed that the role of MDT goes beyond equipping school heads with basic leadership skills; it helps them stay current with evolving educational needs and developments. As student needs and teacher expectations continually shift, school heads must regularly update their skills to effectively manage emerging challenges. Without ongoing training, they risk relying on outdated practices that may no longer address present demands. Additionally, the GES frequently updates curricula and teaching strategies, making it essential for school leaders to acquire new competencies. MDT ensures heads remain aligned with these changes, enabling them to implement current educational practices and lead more effectively. Thus, MDT is both a learning process and a strategic tool for maintaining relevance in today’s dynamic school environment.

“MDT plays a significant role in my work. It helps me stay current with educational issues and policies, and exposes me to modern management strategies essential for running my school effectively and efficiently. It’s unfortunate we rarely have access to such training opportunities.” (SH2)

MDT plays a role which traditional classroom-based training does not cover: no school head can be adequately equipped with the competencies for managing an institution, by a college of education or by a university- managerial skills can only be acquired through MDT. Thus, through such training, school heads can come to understand, and master, the art and science of leading a school. Moreover, such training enables them to assume emerging responsibilities and adapt to regulatory and institutional changes. Arguably, the most crucial role of MDT is that it equips school heads with managerial competencies which classroom-based training or formal education cannot, and did not, confer on them. The next section discusses the impact which MDT has on teachers’ performance. To complement the interview results, the discussion now shifts to the analysis of relevant documents.

4.5 Document Analysis

The qualitative data, obtained using documentary evidence, were analysed and interpreted. Government statutes, such as the handbook for school heads (MoE/GES, 2010), the ESP (2018–2030) (MoE, 2019), and the PTPDM policy (MoE/GES, 2012) were examined, as these were deemed to have a direct effect on the training of school heads, and, by implication, on teachers' performance. A thematic approach was adopted in analysing the documents, and each heading is subsequently discussed as follows.

4.6 Nature and Roles of MDT

The review revealed that in Ghana, MDT is often equated with in-service training (INSET) and delivered at the school-based (SBI), cluster-based (CBI), or district-based (DBI) levels (GES, 2008; Prempeh, 2011). MDT may take the form of either internal or external INSET, depending on training needs, and is typically delivered through workshops, seminars, or conferences aimed at enhancing teacher performance (MoE, 2010). According to the MoE/GES (2010), key components of the performance appraisal system for SHS heads include strengthening managerial and communication skills, instructional supervision, financial management, record-keeping, fostering community engagement, accurate data reporting, and demonstrating positive personality traits. When these elements are well-developed in a school head, they significantly influence the performance of both teachers and students, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the school environment.

5. Discussion

The study examined the quality of management development training (MDT) provided to public SHS heads and its impact on teacher performance in Ghana. The results indicate that MDT is largely delivered through periodic workshops, seminars, and short in-service training programmes organised by educational authorities and professional institutions. It also emerged that MDT programmes sometimes encompassed further studies. While these initiatives provide school heads with opportunities to acquire administrative and leadership knowledge, they are often episodic and lack the continuity required for sustained leadership development. This pattern reflects broader trends in leadership preparation within many African education systems, where formal leadership preparation programmes remain limited (Bush & Glover, 2019). Evidence from Ghanaian educational leadership studies similarly suggests that many school heads assume leadership roles with minimal formal preparation in educational management, relying primarily on experience and occasional professional development opportunities (Amakye & Ampah-Mensah, 2020; Oduro & MacBeath, 2021). Although such MDT initiatives contribute to leadership awareness and managerial competence, the absence of structured mentoring, leadership coaching, and systematic professional learning frameworks may constrain their long-term effectiveness in transforming leadership practice within schools.

The second research question assessed the roles of MDT for public SHS heads, particularly in strengthening leadership practices within schools. The results suggest that MDT plays an important role in enhancing school heads' capacity to perform critical leadership functions (Amir & Amen cited in Ayalew, 2017), including instructional supervision, staff motivation, communication, and professional support for teachers. Teachers improved their classroom management skills, enhanced their overall effectiveness, and adopted more efficient lesson planning and delivery strategies, leading to better student outcomes (Ampofo et al., 2023; Nyarko, 2021). These outcomes align with the assumptions of Transformational Leadership Theory, which emphasises leaders' ability to influence followers through vision building, intellectual stimulation, and individualised support (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through MDT, school heads appear better equipped to guide teachers, promote collaborative professional cultures, and support instructional improvement within their schools. International research consistently demonstrates that such leadership behaviours contribute significantly to teacher engagement, organisational commitment, and effective teaching practices (Leithwood et al., 2020; Day et al., 2020). Within the Ghanaian context, where schools often operate under resource constraints, leadership practices such as encouragement, professional guidance, and supportive supervision become particularly important in sustaining teacher motivation and improving professional commitment.

The final research question explored the relationship between school heads' MDT and teacher performance in classroom instruction. The results indicate that MDT contributes indirectly to improved teacher performance through enhanced leadership practices that shape teachers' professional behaviour and classroom engagement. School heads who participated in MDT were perceived to demonstrate stronger supervisory practices, clearer communication with staff, and greater professional support for teachers, which in turn fostered improved classroom management, instructional commitment, and collaborative engagement among teachers. These results support previous research indicating that school leadership influences teacher performance through organisational mechanisms such as teacher motivation, professional collaboration, and supportive school climates (Grissom et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021). Contrast with Vaillant's 2015 implementation gap results already cited in the literature review, or with research showing leadership training effects fading without follow-up support), and explain why this study's Ghanaian results align or diverge. From

the perspective of Human Capital Theory, MDT can therefore be understood as a strategic investment in leadership capacity that generates indirect benefits for teacher effectiveness and organisational performance (Becker, 1993). However, disparities in access to advanced leadership training opportunities suggest that the benefits of MDT may not be evenly distributed across schools, highlighting the need for more systematic and equitable leadership development policies within Ghana's education system.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the quality of MDT for SHS heads and its impact on teacher performance in Ghana. The literature and interview results revealed that school heads currently receive overwhelmingly in-service training and periodic workshops rather than structured MDT, with coaching and mentoring almost absent (1.4%) despite being valued where it occurs. Further, results from the study found that MDT programmes helped to improve school heads' competence. It also showed that teacher performance was rated highly across classroom management, lesson planning, discipline, motivation, and time management, and correlated most strongly with on-the-job training and CHASS association training, not with off-the-job training or further formal study. This suggests that experiential, association-based learning currently does more to lift teacher performance than the generic seminars heads most often attend. Interpreted through TLT and HCT, MDT functions as both a behavioural and institutional mechanism through which heads' capacity translates into teachers' classroom behaviour, but only where the training is substantive rather than ceremonial.

On this basis, MoE through GES should formalise and expand on-the-job mentoring and CHASS-led professional development, since these are the avenues, the data actually link to performance, while reviewing the value of generic off-the-job workshops that show no measurable effect, and subsidising access to accredited university-based MDT currently limited by heads' personal cost.

6.1 Policy Implications

The results highlight several critical policy implications for educational leadership in Ghana. Most urgently, there is a need for a comprehensive national leadership development framework involving the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and universities. This framework should define clear leadership competencies, training standards, and structured professional development pathways encompassing pre-service preparation, induction, and continuous in-service training.

Current MDT programmes rely heavily on seminars and workshops, insufficiently developing practical leadership competencies. Policy reforms should therefore integrate mentoring, coaching, and professional learning communities to help school heads translate theoretical knowledge into effective leadership practice, particularly regarding instructional supervision and teacher development.

Finally, equitable access to advanced leadership training must be prioritised through government-funded programmes and certification pathways, while linking leadership development with performance evaluation systems to ensure measurable improvements in school effectiveness.

6.2 Limitations and Further Research

The study was confined to only school heads and teachers in public SHSs in the setting of this study. Hence, the deficit in the generalisation of the results of this research over all SHS, thus future research should expand the focus to include both public and private SHSs for holistic view of the nature and role of MDT. Also, the lack of similar research works on this topic narrowed the field of the available literature and affected the subsequent discussion. Thus, further research should be conducted to expand this field. Additionally, the reliance on teachers' self-reported performance may introduce common-method and social-desirability bias; future studies could triangulate with supervisor ratings or observational data. The qualitative sample ($n = 10$) limits the generalisability of the strategy-related results, and the cross-sectional design precludes causal claims about MDT's effect on performance; a longitudinal or quasi-experimental design is recommended.

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Author contributions

FKNGW: conceived the study, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, data curation, writing — original draft, writing — review & editing, visualisation, project administration. CM: was responsible for conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, data curation. UKA: writing — original draft, writing. RKA: review & editing. DMA: visualisation, project administration. All authors approved the final version for publication.

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