CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH INDUCTION PROGRAM IN THE AWUTU SENYA DISTRICT

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Abstract: *The study sought to identify challenges associated with the induction programme in the district. The researcher employed qualitative analysis procedures. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher deciphered the meaning underlying all the data gathered. Participants expressed that there are not many experts who can conduct induction programme in the district. From the findings of the study, it is palpable that induction programme could be made more beneficial to headteachers in the district in the following ways: the induction program should reflect the context of the district and the schools; it should be organized in small groups for headteachers with similar experiences, needs, values, and cultures; participants should bear some of the cost of the induction programme; organizers should seek external funding apart from the government; the facilitators should be experienced and experts in relevant topics related to effective school leadership and school improvement; it should not be compressed but well planned with flexibility; it should be conducted within a good time frame; However, it is recommended that the district education directorate seek further sources of funding aside from government sources since reliance on the central government for funding appears not to be working. The heads of basic schools should be encouraged to contribute to support their training programmes.*

Keywords: headteacher, challenges, induction program, Awutu Senya District, Ghana

1. INTRODUCTION

Induction has come to mean different things depending on the context in which it is applied. Teacher induction, and more specifically BTI, has its roots in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States, where mandatory schooling and professional standards for teaching were examined in the post-war period (Kearney, 2021). Induction in recent years has come to be an umbrella term for orientation, mentoring and support of teachers, both new to the profession and/or to new schools and has been linked to professional accreditation or registration (Erotocritou Stavrou & Chinaza Adaobi, 2020.).

For more than five decades, teachers have been reporting problems with 'discipline', 'classroom methods' and 'motivation' (Burris & Keller, 2008). In the early 1980s, Veenman found that beginning teachers reported problems that included 'classroom discipline' and 'motivating students' (Moore & Swan, 2008). In the 1990s in Australia, (Moore & Swan, 2008) found the problems of

classroom discipline and workloads were most prominent amongst beginning teachers, which reiterated the findings of Dropkin and Taylor in the 1960s and Veenman in the 1980s. It seems that from the 1960s to the 1990s the problems of beginning teachers were not only pervasive, but also uniform, confirming McDonald's sentiment in the early 1980s.

(Feiman-Nemser, 2020.) Indicated that in many educational organizations in Africa including Ghana's educational organizations, induction is often neglected and loosely- organized. Sometimes it is replaced with brief orientation. (Alhamad, 2018) opined that newly- appointed teachers who lead schools in rural areas in Ghana are often left to fend for themselves owing to the absence of induction programmes for them. In addition, (Hailikari et al., 2022) found out that, some informal induction programmes exist but the procedures used are inappropriate making them ineffective for the development of competent school leaders in Ghana. Kusi (2014) conducted a study on induction of newly appointed

headteachers in Sunyani Municipality and found out that there was no formal policy on the induction of newly appointed headteachers in the Municipality.

The unsatisfactory academic performance in the Awutu Senya District is partly caused by management deficiencies in schools in the district. The researcher is of the view that if headteachers are given proper preparation for their work through intensive induction programmes, academic performance may improve through effective leadership. This is the reason why the researcher deems it necessary to provide data on the current state of headteacher induction in the schools at Awutu Senya district. Majority of the studies conducted on induction in Ghanaian basic schools are about teacher induction.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

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

Research design

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

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

Sample and Sampling Techniques
(Martín, 2019) defines a sample as a fraction of the population that has been selected to represent the

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population. Sampling is the process of selecting a sample. Purposive sampling was utilized for the selection of participants for the interview and the selection of schools. Cohen (2007) defines purposive sampling as a type of sampling where researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought. The purposive sampling technique was employed due to the qualitative nature of the study, and this is in consonance with the views of (Mensah & Yeboah, 2022), who stipulate that in almost all qualitative research, the sampling is purposive. The population of the participants in the district is 124. A sample size of 25 participants, comprising 16 headteachers, 8 circuit supervisors, and the (1) training officer of the district, was employed in the study. The 8 circuit supervisors were selected for the focus group discussion (FGD).

Instruments

The researcher used semi-structured interview guides and focus group discussion as research instruments for the study. Observation was also used in some parts of the research process. These are appropriate instruments for qualitative studies. Coleman et al. (2002) have stated that it is useful to use interviews when studying factors influencing the outcomes of teaching and learning. Wragg (2002) noted that this instrument allows the interviewer to ask initial questions, followed by probes meant to seek clarification of issues raised. Probes are either stated in advance or posed in the course of the interview, making the interview process flexible. According to Kusi (2012), semi-structured interview guides are flexible to a greater extent, they offer interviewees the opportunity to express their views, feelings, and experiences freely, and they give the interviewer the freedom to divert from the items in the schedule to seek clarifications. (Boateng et al., 2022) indicated that the psychologists Brigitte Scheele and Norbert Groeben developed the technique for "studying subjective theories relating to school and other professional fields." The term "subjective theories" refers to the fact that interviewees have a complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study (p.

155). A semi-structured interview provided the rich data required for the study ((Inkoom et al., 2022) suggests that data contributed by those responsible for service delivery can help enhance the contextual data relating to the area of research, and therefore it was imperative to conduct an interview with the respondents. A semi-structured interview offered participants the freedom to discuss their views from their own perspective on the induction programme for headteachers. The semi-structured interview guides were developed in line with the five research objectives of the study. Three separate interview guides were developed for the headteachers, circuit supervisors, and training officers in the district.

Data Collection Procedure

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

headteachers agreed was appropriate for the interviews. The ninth and tenth weeks were used for the focus group discussions with the circuit supervisors and the training officer. The focus group discussion took place after a scheduled meeting involving the district education director and circuit supervisors in the district. The interview with the training officer took place on Friday of the tenth week of data collection between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Interviews were both manually and audio-recorded after seeking the prior permission of respondents.

Data Analysis Procedure

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

3. RESULTS

The themes that emerged as barriers to induction programmes included issues on the quality of presentation, inadequate resources (financial and material) and school improvement.

Quality of presentation

When headteachers were called upon to recount some unpleasant experiences they went through during their induction, a number of them expressed their views.

One of them had this to say:

> *For me it was an opportunity to enrich my experience and learn new things. However, during the program, participants were tired especially in the afternoon when the day's sessions or presentations were not yet done. This is because there seem to be too loaded topics for a couple of days.* (Headteacher 1)

Similarly, another headteacher said:

> *Personally, the induction program though loosely organized, and which has been in form of capacity building workshops, to some extent has improved my leadership and administrative style, efficient management of staff, physical structures, collaboration with community, and promotion of teamwork, transparency and accountability. I must add that it was not well financed. The mode of presentation was also not very good. For example, there were no projectors; the quality of food is another thing. It was a bit stressful due to limited duration or short time period and topics were compressed.* (Headteacher 2)

On the issue of the quality of the presentations, all the headteachers expressed that there are not many experts who can conduct induction programme in the district. Looking at the benefits and relevance of induction and its impact on effective and efficient school leadership and school improvement, it is very consequential for the district to look for resources elsewhere to train more experts to acquire the expertise to train the headteachers in the district. They also pointed out that learning equipment, facilities and other materials are inadequate. They try to solve this problem by utilizing what they classify as the

"shared approach" This is where groups of teachers take turns to use what is available. They also said sometimes they recommend textbooks for pupils and students to purchase and only few are able to procure them due to the concept of free education. They also stated that some parents shirk their responsibility and always count and wait on the government to provide everything for their wards.

Inadequate resources

With regard to the challenges, a headteacher commented this way:

> *I have a problem with inadequate resources in my school, some not readily available, no textbooks this academic year. My teachers depend on private textbooks. The government providing logistics at the right time is a big issue, sometimes they arrive late or not at all. Pre-finance is also not encouraged sister.* (Headteacher)

Similarly, a headteacher said this:

> *School infrastructure especially for the practical subject such as pre-technical-workshop, home economics, and ICT laboratory are not available in my school. The school has no computers, learning aids and furniture for pupils and staff is all-inadequate.* (Headteacher 3)

> *Sister, financial constraints or let me put it, lack of funding is the major problem. This cuts across everything we do and cannot do. The district officers themselves have funding issue to run the district. There are times that the funds come late. In addition, as to whether there is a budget for induction of headteachers in the district, I am not sure. We also have limited resources. This is clear in the school environment, not just here but in many of the classrooms in the public school setting. The free education has aggravated the situation. The song has been to improvise but not everything can*

> *be improvised. Think of ICT laboratory, Home Economics center, Technical workshop, textbooks etc. My school is under the school feeding program, which has attracted greater enrolment. Some parents just send their wards to come to school to eat without providing them needed learning materials. To them everything is free. More to this also, is limited period. A number of our training sessions hardly exceeds three days.* (Headteacher 1)

Issues of school improvement

Closely linked to the theme of inadequate funding and resources is the issue of school improvement which is perceived by a number of the interviewed headteachers as part of their induction needs in the district. Expressing his view a headteacher said the following:

> *In my experience as a Headteacher, working with professional teachers in a public school setting, it is expected that we do all we could to improve the school system. However, we are handicapped in certain situations as far as school improvement is concerned. Absence of educational facilities makes learning and teaching difficult.*

> *The headteacher, teachers and students are not motivated due to lack of logistics for effective teaching and learning. Some of my teachers complain of finding it difficult to impart knowledge and skills acquired or practice what they have learned. School management is trying to collaborate with stakeholders and build good relationship with them to improve the situation but unfortunately, there are some parents who are not actively involved in their children's education.* (Headteacher 1)

Another headteacher expressed a similar view in the following way:

> *I think to improve our school for better performance and higher achievement; the induction program will be beneficial to headteachers. I believe if properly it will help me build on my creativity and use my innovative ideas to help manage the school well. I believe it will also help me to utilize resources (human and material) efficiently and effectively in my school.* (Headteacher 3)

The Circuit Supervisors enunciated that they are very much aware of the fact that induction is a significant component of continuous professional development and it is crucial for all to go through it, even as circuit supervisors, teachers, as well as the Heads of schools but our major challenge or barrier to this exercise is funding. We have been supportive and have committed headteachers in this district. The heads will be open to the opportunity if it is well funded.

The data above portray that for headteachers in the district, induction needs can be met if the District Education Directorate allocates enough money into the induction of newly appointed headteachers.

This will enrich the content of the induction programme organized for the newly appointed headteachers.

Putting enough money into the district induction programme is not enough to meet the induction needs of headteachers. Funding should be provided to the schools for infrastructural development to enable headteachers implement whatever skills they have learnt through induction. Headteachers can put their leadership skills acquired through induction into practice if facilities for effective teaching and learning are available in their schools. Headteachers have expressed their desire to improve the schools in which they serve as headteachers. They are however constrained due to inadequate funding and educational facilities. The inability of the headteachers to improve the very

schools they head is a major need for them because this challenge is rendering whatever knowledge they acquire through their induction irrelevant.

The responses above mean that headteachers saw the induction programme organised for them as beneficial but were not properly organized to their expectation. For example, the short duration for the induction programme was loaded with a lot of topics. This might have generated loss of concentration resulting from fatigue. Funding of the programme and the quality of the presentations were among the key issues that played down the overall success of the induction programme. Some headteachers expected that people with higher expertise would have been invited to animate the programme and take them through a very comprehensive induction programme. The Circuit Supervisors claimed that all is not lost because they can point out some opportunities in the district that can help meet induction needs of headteachers. The district can seek support from GNAT, and sponsorship from the Awutu Senya District Assembly. Venue is available; we have schools churches and conference halls to organize such a program. Some Resource persons though not many are also available. To help headteachers know about the service and what goes into headship to work effectively towards achievement, they will personally recommend the program for all newly appointed headteachers. They suggest that GES make it mandatory for all heads.

One major setback to comprehensive induction that the training officer also can point out is lack of funding. Funds do not come. There are many for empowerment but how to finance is a problem. There is also the challenge of inadequate teaching learning materials especially audio visual aids. He also said that truancy, absenteeism and indiscipline among students also pose challenge in the schools. In addition, these days' students spend too much more time on social media than their studies. These seem irrelevant but they really need to be addressed during the training so that Headteachers will know the best ways to manage students. Inadequate resources both financial and material are also major challenges confronting our schools. I can mention

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furniture, textbooks and the like. An induction program for the headteachers can provide a platform to look into these issues

The responses above mean that the content of induction programme and the mode of delivery in the Awutu Senya district have been less satisfactory. The induction programmes have not properly touched on core issues in educational leadership in the district. The mode of delivery during induction programmes has not put newly appointed headteachers in the position to benefit from the programme. The data above mean that the Awutu Senya district needs a number of steps to be taken to make induction more responsive to the administrative demands of headteachers in the district.

From the text above it is obvious that induction programme could be made more beneficial to headteachers in the district in the following ways: induction program should reflect the context of the district and the schools; it should be organized in small groups for headteachers with similar experiences, needs, values and culture, etc.; participants should bear some of the cost of the induction programme; organizers should seek external funding apart from the government; the facilitators should be experienced and experts in relevant topics related to effective school leadership and school improvement; it should not be compressed but well planned with flexibility; it should be conducted within a good time frame. These responses mean that the district should not look up to the government for assistance in the effective training of its headteachers. They need to be more innovative to devise appropriate means of making induction more beneficial to newly appointed headteachers in the Awutu Senya district.

4. DISCUSSION

The study indicated that there are not many experts who can conduct induction programs in the district. This is because much of the literature on the induction of leaders of the school focuses on principals in mostly high schools, and only a few have written on the induction of newly appointed headteachers in the basic schools. Looking at the benefits and relevance of induction and its impact on effective and efficient school leadership and school improvement, it is very consequential for the district to look for resources elsewhere to train more experts to acquire the expertise to train the headteachers in the district. They also pointed out that learning equipment, facilities, and other materials are inadequate. They tried to solve this problem by utilizing what they classify as the "shared approach." This is where groups of teachers take turns using what is available. They also said sometimes they recommend textbooks for pupils and students to purchase, but only a few are able to procure them due to the concept of free education. They also stated that some parents shirk their responsibility and always count on the government to provide everything for their wards.

All the respondents pointed to lack of funds as the major setback to induction programme. Other respondents enunciated that they are very much aware of the fact that induction is a significant component of continuous professional development and it is crucial for all to go through it, even the circuit supervisors, teachers, as well as the Heads of schools but our major challenge or barrier to this exercise is funding. They admitted that they have supportive and committed headteachers in a district who will be open to the opportunity if it is well funded.

The study found that the induction needs of headteachers in the district could be met if the District Education Directorate allocated enough money for the induction of newly appointed headteachers. This will enrich the content of the induction program organized for the newly appointed headteachers. Putting enough money into the district induction program is not enough to meet the induction needs of headteachers. Funding should be provided to the schools for infrastructural development to enable headteachers to implement whatever skills they have learned through induction. Headteachers can put their leadership skills acquired through induction into practice if facilities for effective teaching and learning are available in their schools.

Headteachers have expressed their desire to improve the schools in which they serve as headteachers. They are, however, constrained due to inadequate funding and educational facilities. The inability of the headteachers to improve the very schools they head is a major need for them because this challenge is rendering whatever knowledge they acquire through their induction irrelevant.

The data collected indicated that, headteachers saw the induction programme organised for them as beneficial but were not properly organized to their expectation. For example, the short duration for the induction programme was loaded with a lot of topics. This might have generated loss of concentration resulting from fatigue. The issue of poor planning as a challenge of induction in the district is reflected in Joiner and Edwards (2008) that planning, adapting and implementing a high quality induction programme can be overwhelming. They said in planning and implementing an induction programme, the management of a school could be faced with numerous problems. These could include interpersonal dynamics, time constraints, lack of resources and negotiating the workload of mentors and cost effectiveness thereof (Adegbola & Adeleke, 2023). Funding of the programme and the quality of the presentations were among the key issues that played down the overall success of the induction programme. Some headteachers expected that people with higher expertise should have been invited to animate the programme and take them through a very comprehensive induction programme.

The findings portrayed that the content of induction programme and the mode of delivery in the Awutu Senya district have been less satisfactory. The induction programmes have not properly touched on core issues in educational leadership in the district. This reflect the views of Mullen and Shrunk (2010) who assert that principals who are inspired to nurture their communities and achieve goals otherwise unattainable as individuals are better positioned to exercise leadership that is contextually relevant" (p. 191). The content for the

program the headteachers go through should enable them to identify and respond to needs within their respective context. The mode of delivery during induction programmes has not put newly appointed headteachers in the position to benefit from the programme. The data showed that the Awutu Senya district needs a number of steps to be taken to make induction more responsive to the administrative demands of headteachers in the district.

From the findings of the study it is obvious that induction programme could be made more beneficial to headteachers in the district in the following ways: induction program should reflect the context of the district and the schools; it should be organized in small groups for headteachers with similar experiences, needs, values and culture, etc.; participants should bear some of the cost of the induction programme; organizers should seek external funding apart from the government; the facilitators should be experienced and experts in relevant topics related to effective school leadership and school improvement; it should not be compressed but well planned with flexibility; it should be conducted within a good time frame. These responses mean that the district should not look up to the government for assistance in the effective training of its headteachers. They need to be more innovative to devise appropriate means of making induction more beneficial to newly appointed headteachers.

The headteachers suggested that all headteachers within the district need time to construct common understandings, collaborate with other headteachers to ensure that there is consistency throughout the district that will lead to a coherent program as students' progress through the system. They claimed that even if the district does not provide this level of support, they as headteachers have a duty to take it upon themselves to collaborate just as Binkley (1995) had suggested and argued for principals. They also concurred with (Ansah, 2017) in their work on Bennett Public Schools, which are located in urban district. These authors have enunciated that since the role of the principal is second only to that of the classroom

teacher in affecting student achievement, it is necessary for districts to turn their attention to induction and support of new school leaders. The researcher is of the view that Awutu Senya District emulate this important requirement for headteachers in the district. A view that the respondents share since they suggested that all school districts are required to provide an induction program for all headteachers in their first year of practice.

5. CONCLUSION

The study sought to identify challenges associated with the induction program in the district. Participants expressed that there are not many experts who can conduct induction programme in the district. Participants pointed out that the major challenge or barrier to induction program is a lack of funding. They acknowledge the supportive and committed headteachers in the district and their readiness for the induction program if it is well funded. Another issue of concern that was raised was the quality of the presentations, which affects the overall success of the induction program. Some headteachers expected that people with higher expertise would have been invited to animate the program and take them through a very comprehensive induction program. To the view of the researcher, the content of the induction program and the mode of delivery in the Awutu Senya district have been less satisfactory. The mode of delivery during induction programs has not put newly appointed headteachers in a position to benefit from the program. The Awutu Senya district needs to review its induction program to make it more responsive to the administrative demands of headteachers in the district.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the finding that there is limited funding and resources for induction programmes in the district, it was recommended that the district education directorate seek further sources of funding aside from government sources since reliance on the central government for funding appears not to be working. The heads of basic schools should be encouraged to contribute to

support their training programmes. A well-designed induction program for heads of basic schools leads to effective school management. Ghanaian children will be properly formed and become more literate. Induction is imperative for school administration and management to ensure the smooth running of the school.

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