Exploration of the Organizational Culture of Selected Ghanaian High Schools

A dissertation presented to
the faculty of
The Patton College of Education of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education

Grace Annor
April 2016
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This dissertation titled
Exploration of Organizational Culture of Selected Ghanaian High Schools]

by

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the Department of Educational Studies
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Abstract

ANNOR, GRACE, Ed.D., April 2016, Educational Administration

Exploration of the Organizational Culture of Selected Ghanaian High Schools:

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The purpose of this study was to explore the organizational culture of two high schools in Ghana, examine the unique influence of cultural components on the schools’ outcomes, identify the exceptional contributions of the schools’ subcultures, investigate the emergent leadership styles of the schools’ leaders, and determine how these approaches promoted their work. This qualitative dissertation examined the various ways that the schools defined culture; how the schools’ subcultures participated in school governance; and how school leaders approached school governance. The description of the cultural components focused on the physical structures, symbols, behavior patterns, and verbal expressions, beliefs and values; and expectations. These descriptions were based on Edgar Schein’s diagnosis of the levels of culture.

Efforts to improve school outcomes have not considered school culture, as a strategy in Ghana, neither has any educational research focused on the organizational culture of schools. This study was based on the premise that the inclusion of the cultural approach to school reform produces more sustainable results than the technical or political approaches, used in isolation. The sample size for this study was 26 and comprised two school leaders, six teachers, two PTA chairpersons, two alumni, and 14 students. The study employed the case study tradition and garnered data through one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews; observation at morning devotions/assembly,
Sunday church services, classrooms, dining halls, orientation, sports festival, staff and academic board meetings, and the physical environment; and review of relevant documents.

Results indicated that although the Ghana Education Service managed both schools, and the schools were similar in some ways, they each demonstrated some unique characteristics. The major factors that influenced the achievement of school outcomes included the tangible and intangible cultural components; the involvement of subcultures in school governance; and three emergent leadership styles (participative, servant, and supportive) of school leadership. The schools targeted realization of outcomes through West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results, national quizzes, religious and moral growth, and extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs.

This data fills the gap in literature about organizational culture in Ghanaian schools. It also provides reference for educational practitioners, policy makers, school administrators, and teachers for their respective roles. The data guides parents concerning their roles in their children’s schools and also provides guidance for alumni about how they could give back to their alma maters.
Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my gracious and wonderful family. To my ever-loving husband and pastor – Rev. Dr. Patrick Kweku Annor, I salute you! You have done what most men cannot afford to do. Thank you for your readiness to remain a “married bachelor” all these years I sojourned in the USA to achieve my dream. Without your love, cooperation, and spiritual, emotional, financial, and material support I could not have reached this far in my academic life.

To my beloved brother/son – Mr. Felix William Ograh, I thank you for your instigation, inspiration, and support to embark on this dissertation journey. I could not have made it but for your financial and emotional support and prayers. Thank you for “mothering” my children all these years I left Ghana to pursue my dreams. I could not have made it if you did not take up this role. You believed in me that I can make it and this is the reason I have soared to this height.

To David, Donewell, and Delight, you are my angels. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation to remain focused when I left you at the time you needed me most. At the crossroad, you yielded to the Lord’s guidance and authority and did not sidetrack. Especially to my “adult girl” Delight, I adore you. You are indeed my delight. Your encouragement, readiness to spend sleepless nights with me, and always alerting me on my deadlines are very much appreciated. I love you dearly.

You gave me just what I needed from a father in a community that least respected girls’ education at the time. I express my heartfelt appreciation to my father – Mr.
William Kweku Ograh for defying every discouragement and providing a foundation that has helped me to build upon. Thank you so much!

Finally, to my friend Mr. Evans Odei and family, I thank you for your encouragement, prayers and advice, amidst your own challenges. Your contribution remains indelible in my heart.
Acknowledgments

I wish to express my profound and sincere appreciation and gratitude to the various individuals whose encouragement, support, prayers, and expertise combined to make this academic journey a worthwhile experience. First and foremost to my Lord and Master Jesus whose love, favor, and grace kept me against all odds to reach this far. To Him be all glory and honor!

My next gratitude goes to my Committee Chair – Professor David Richard Moore. Thank you for carrying an unexpected load that did not belong to your domain. At a time when there was a thick cloud and I did not know where to set my feet, you willingly took the challenge and accepted to become the Chair of my dissertation committee. I thank you for exercising faith to work with a student you did not know much about. I appreciate your comments and suggestions, inspiration, encouragement, and the calm composure that gave me comfort anytime I visited your office. I will forever be grateful for your support, patience, guidance, and wisdom in handling me.

The contributions of the my other committee members – Dr. William Bill Larson, Dr. Risa Whitson, Dr. Barbara Trube, and Dr. Francis Godwyll since the beginning of this research cannot be overlooked. Your feedback during the proposal stage helped shape the onset of this research. I appreciate your inputs. I am forever indebted to Dr. Francis Godwyll, whose encouragement masterminded my doctoral journey and provided not only the professional inspiration, but also the motivation to ascend the academic ladder. Although you left us on the middle of the road, you remained connected to check our progress. Thank you very much for the good seed sown in my life.
Many thanks go to all my Ohio University professors who taught me especially those associated to my doctoral program. I express my profound thank you for imparting the best academic knowledge that has enabled me to soar higher.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr. Godwin Dogbe for your wonderful guidance when I was preparing my IRB project. Your contributions were very helpful and I appreciate it.

To Delight Baaba Annor, I do not know how I can thank you for your earnest desire to provide the technical support to solve my computer challenges. I am forever indebted to you and thank you for being there for me.

I owe my dear friend Abigail Akyeampong a heartfelt gratitude for responding to my numerous demands to take care of my domestic needs so I could attend classes. I will always remember your sacrifices especially for my daughter while I attended classes.

Finally, my appreciation to all the friends I made in the course of study thanks. Aki I am indeed indebted to you for your promptings on issues I forget and sharing information and course materials you discovered. You are a wonderful friend one can comfortably lean on. To my entire cohort, I appreciate the times we took classes together and the new experiences I gained through rich your contributions you shared in class. I will forever remember you all.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Culture plays key roles in the functioning of organizations. With regards to schools, it directs the general behavior of school members and influences academic performance, discipline, and extracurricular activities among others. Understanding the organizational culture of schools, therefore, is of prime importance in tailoring strategies for desired outcomes. School organizational culture is important in educational studies because the success or failure of the school and its subcultures depends on it.

Usually, organizations are founded upon a culture that encompasses the artifacts, values and beliefs, and assumptions that define the tenets of survival and how things must be done. This dominant culture is intrinsic to the organization and constant through every faction under it. These factions are the subcultures that also have their own cultural features. The subcultures are either in agreement with, or in opposition to the dominant culture (Schein, 1990).

Culture plays a significant role in how an organization thrives to survive and achieve its goals. In an educational organization, culture has a profound influence on educational delivery. Educational institutions such as secondary schools have norms, values, beliefs, artifacts, and traditions that portray their culture. The characteristic idiosyncrasies shared by the members of these institutions; the things they cherish or abhor; their collective decisions and disagreements; the behaviors they accept or frown upon; and the way they organize themselves, demonstrate culture.
Schools aim to provide education for their students and to prepare them adequately for their adult lives. The culture of schools, therefore, determines whether they can successfully fulfill this goal, as culture has the potential to either promote or impede organizational growth. Thus, organizational culture of schools is a very crucial component of the education agenda. Identifying the various subcultures and how they interact to support the overarching organizational culture provides an understanding of how and why members do things the way they do.

Education is of prime significance in most nations worldwide, and Ghana is no exception (Maeka, 2013; Verspoor & SEIA Team, 2008). Indeed, the quality of a nation is determined by the quality of the human resources it possesses (Nsiah, 2011). Human resource capital is developed through education, which can help transform the lives of poor people through the knowledge acquired, skills developed, and qualification for gainful employment earned. Scholarly work confirms that education improves societies and builds nations (Harber & Mncube, 2011). These authors assert that there is a positive relationship between the level of education of a populace and national development. Also, Boyer (1983) states: “Schools reflect both the strengths and weaknesses of the nation” (p. 38). Thus, the worth of nations is determined by the quality of the human resource produced by their educational system. An effective educational system can be a powerful weapon for poverty alleviation among individuals and nations.

Owing to the role education plays in individual and national development, most governments strive to enhance educational investment and involvement, and make it a basic right of all children (Harber & Mncube, 2011). The authors explained that citizens
consider the government as the main stakeholder to provide quality education for children. Most African government regimes are judged by how they succeed in satisfying the educational needs of citizens (McWilliam & Poh, 1975).

Furthermore, international organizations and most nations have identified the secondary school education as an important tool for poverty alleviation and individual and national development (Palmer, 2005; Sayed, 2013; Verspoor & SEIA Team, 2008). The 2015-post millennium goal agenda prioritizes secondary education as a foundation on which to build human capital and a tool for development (Sayed, 2013). As Holsinger and Cowell (2000) stated:

Secondary education has increasingly become a central policy concern of developing countries, particularly among those that have made rapid progress in universalizing primary education, and those in which demographic transition has shifted towards adolescents. Secondary education also addresses problems unique in human development. Without requisite education to guide their development, not only would young people be ill prepared for tertiary education, or for workplace, but they would also be susceptible to juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy, thereby exacting high social cost. (p. 11)

More generally, the success of secondary schools has become a priority for parents, educational practitioners, governments, and even international organizations. As such, it is incumbent on schools to train and produce highly skilled and marketable individuals. Hence, governments and citizens of these nations have meted out formal and informal mandates to high schools to maximize performance and effectiveness (Good, 2008; Quist, 1999).

High schools have devised various strategies to progress and achieve their objectives. Scholarly work show that secondary schools have developed certain norms, beliefs, customs, values, and assumptions that guide the way they do things in their
settings (Brady, 2008). Brady states: “Secondary schools develop cultures that are
developed and nurtured within a framework imposed by a variety of tangible and
intangible organizational structures” (p. 2).

The story is no different in sub-Saharan Africa, especially Ghana. Following
Ghana’s independence in 1957, secondary school education emerged as a booster to the
nation’s development (; Nsiah, 2011; Quist, 1999). It gained popularity as a powerful tool
for poverty alleviation, improvement of lives, and promotion of national development
(Palmer, Wedgwood, & Hayman, 2007; Quist, 1999; Rolleston, 2011). Secondary school
education is a major platform used to foster human resource capital production in sub-
Saharan African nations (Lewin, 2007; Lewin & Akyeampong, 2009; Lewin & Caillods,
2001).

Over the years, secondary schools in Ghana have played very crucial roles in the
formative years of students (Lewin & Akyeampong, 2009; Quist, 1999). They have
provided an education that has shaped the lives of students holistically, preparing them
for their economic, intellectual, psychological, moral, spiritual, and social lives. A
scholarly work states, “high school is the home for many students” (Boyer, 1983, p. 3).

At the inception of formal education in Ghana, high schools adopted the boarding
system, in which students are provided board and lodging during their school term. In
addition to providing formal education, boarding schools provide informal training
consistent with what children received at home, thereby making students’ development
holistic. The schools endeavor to create favorable environments to promote quality
education. By the end of their secondary education, students are prepared as young adults to enter higher institutions or be placed for jobs.

Secondary schools carry out their obligations with the guidance of organizational cultural features that emerge over time. With these features defining everything that goes on within the schools, the level of success students achieve depends mostly on the organizational culture (Brady, 2008). In view of the dire need of quality education for human resource production, poverty alleviation and national development, successive governments introduce new reforms and policies in attempts to improve schools (Tonah, 2009). They continue to implement nationwide educational reforms and structural adjustments to improve education, especially at the secondary level. These reforms mostly focus on restructuring the school system, adjusting curriculum, improving professionalism, funding education, and providing teaching and learning materials; making their initiatives only technically and politically oriented (Quist, 1999).

Meanwhile, some education experts in the developed world maintain that three forms of change initiatives are required to reform the education sector: technical, cultural, and political (Owens & Valesky, 2007; Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, 1988). Ghanaian education reforms lack the cultural approach to change initiatives, and this dampens the effectiveness of the reforms.

The technical approach focuses on rational strategies to improve professional practices, and is based on the premise that increased knowledge and technical assistance are needed to bring about change in the schools (Rossman et al., 1988). Owens and Valesky (2007) refer to this technical approach as “knowledge production and
utilization”, where well-designed models are implemented to produce new ideas that are applied in practice (p. 237). Ghana’s education has experienced several technical strategies that focus on changes in syllabi, textbooks, subject content, structure, and teacher training procedures.

The political approach theorist posits that teachers, administrators, and other significant people in leadership positions use their various powers and influences to shape new programs to suit their interests (Owens & Valesky, 2007; Rossman et al., 1988). These authors point out that this is a “power-coercive” approach, and uses sanctions in the form of political, financial, or moral power to obtain compliance of schools to consume what they have proposed. In Ghana, this approach is prevalent, as successive governments by virtue of the power they possess, continue to initiate changes in the educational sector and do away with the existing ones, leaving high school education in a very unstable state (Djangmah, 2010; Kadingdi, 2006; Tonah, 2009).

The third strategy to school improvement, which is missing from educational reforms in Ghana, is the cultural approach. This approach lays emphasis on attitudes, shared norms, values, and beliefs among members of the schools, and the symbolic interpretations they attach to efforts toward change (Bennet, Harris, & Preedy, 2003).

This strategy, commonly referred to as “organizational self-renewal” or “normative-re-educative strategy”, stresses the subjective side of social behavior (Owen & Valesky, 2007, p. 245). It focuses on the premise that the actions of members of a school are based on values and attitudes prevalent in the school; therefore, initiating change may require changes to deep-seated beliefs and behavior (Miles, Thangaraj,
Wang, & Ma, 2002; Nickols, 2010). These authors explain that behavior patterns and actions of members are supported by sociocultural norms and members’ commitment to these collective norms. Therefore, change can only occur when members are engaged to change their normative orientations from the existing status quo, and to develop commitments to new ones. This requires changes in attitudes, values, norms, and major relationships (Miles et al., 2002; Nickols, 2010).

The cultural perspective requires problem solving skills and mutual collaboration of members of the schools to work out programs of change in their own direction for the final change strategy. According to Miles and others, “a sub-goal of the change process is to improve the overall skills of the system to direct its own change processes in future” (p. 6). The cultural approach is concerned with the experience that participating members acquire and are able to apply to future change innovations.

Strategies of change that are culturally oriented have the potential to overturn organizational unproductivity, provided there is collective agreement among its members. In other words when a school’s stakeholders collectively agree to change a particular way of life, they own the decision and are more inclined to live by it. Without shared beliefs about school purpose, practices, and desired behavior, change processes required to improve schools cannot be effective (Kruse & Louis, 2009).

School effectiveness studies also concur that organizational culture plays key roles in an organizational change initiatives, performance, and effectiveness (Burke, 2008; Deal, 1985; Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Schein, 2010). For schools to achieve their desired outcomes, it is important that governments take into account the cultural
components at play within the schools, the involvement of the various subcultures, and the emergent leadership styles of school leaders.

**Problem Statement**

The goal of organizations is to remain effective and continuously improve and optimize outcomes (Brady, 2008). The ability of any school organization to fulfill this task depends largely on its culture, which defines the way things are done within the organization (Schein, 1992, 2010). When a school’s values, beliefs, behavior patterns, practices, rituals and customs target prospects that enhance the school’s goal attainment, the members of the school work in the direction of achieving school outcomes. On the other hand, when these cultural components do not target the progress of the school, efforts to reform the school may prove futile.

Thus, Schein (2010) indicates that organizational culture is the key instrument that needs to change if real change is required in an organization. More to the point, Ott (1989) posits that working to improve an organization’s goals, structure, strategic plans, and information systems cannot resolve monumental problems unless there is change in the ingrained organizational culture. Several studies also emphasize that the culture of organization plays a significant role in its performance (Deal & Kennedy, 1983; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009).

Although organizational culture is such an important component of schools and very crucial to school performance and realization of outcomes, it has been minimally researched, and reformists have not considered it as having the potential to influence change initiatives for school improvement in Ghana. School reform programs in Ghana
have only focused on the political and technical approaches to affect structural initiatives and strategies (Ahiable-Addo, 1989; Akyeampong, 2009; Quist, 1999). The leadership of the educational sector initiates and disseminates change decisions to schools, while school administrators and teachers are expected to implement them per directives from above. Whether or not a school’s culture can accommodate these cookie-cutter strategies is not given much consideration.

Because these change strategies are ubiquitous and do not regard the peculiarities of individual schools, they mostly do not produce the expected results (Tonah, 2009). Some researchers posit that change programs that require people to change their method of doing things, must make such people part of the strategy (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Miles et al., 2002; Nickols, 2010). If strategies must be effective, members of the schools need to own them.

This study focuses on senior high schools because most educational studies and initiatives for school improvement mainly focus on primary level education. Some of the few authors who focus on high school education include Ahiable-Addo (1980), Foster (1965), Quist (1999), and Zainul-Deen (2011). Quist’s study, for instance, focuses his study on the problems of secondary education and nation building. Zainul-Deen’s study focuses on the factors that affect the quality of education in high schools.

There are numerous studies on the organizational culture of schools in developed countries such as the United States (Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Hoy, 1990; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Maslowski, 2001; Stolp & Smith, 1994) and similar studies done in few sub-Saharan African countries (Harber & Mncube, 2011; Martins & Martins,
However, there have been no studies that have focused on the various components of organizational culture of secondary schools and how they can be used as strategies to influence outcomes in the schools. When this missing link caught my attention, I chose to research on organizational culture and to contribute to Ghanaian high school literature. The goal was to conduct a systematic in-depth study of the culture in two high schools, and provide empirical findings to fill extant gaps in literature.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to explore organizational culture, subcultures, leadership styles, and their influence on school outcomes. The study was to delineate the various components of school culture, how stakeholders participated, the informal strategies of school leaders, and the influence of all these on school outcomes.

**Research Questions**

To understand the organizational culture of the study schools, the following research questions guided the study:

Q1. How do participants view organizational culture and its influence on school outcomes?

Q2. How does sub-cultural interaction promote school outcomes?

Q3. What forms of leadership styles exist in the schools and how do they influence school outcomes?

**Significance of the study**

The study provides information and created awareness about the importance of the organizational culture of two senior high schools in Ghana and its influence in times
of change. The study adds data to the existing body of knowledge on organizational culture of schools in sub-Saharan African countries especially Ghana. This data could be a reference source for government agencies and policymakers, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other educational practitioners, who make policies in attempt to improve and develop schools. It could guide the activities of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and alumni associations in their efforts to contribute to schools. This study’s data could guide school leaders in shaping their school cultures. It may energize educational directors in Ghana to focus on initiating strategies using cultural approach to promote the growth of schools. The data could guide stakeholders of underperforming schools to reexamine their culture, as they attempt to reform their schools. Finally, it could motivate the schools under study to acknowledge their potentials, as well as take necessary action to address their weaknesses.

**Delimitation**

The study took place from September to October 2013. The study was limited to two high schools instead of three as proposed initially. The headmistress of the third school declined the request to conduct the study in her school. Also, the study was limited to schools in only Accra, due to time and financial constraints.

**Definition of Terms**

Some words are provided operational definitions as used in the context and scope of this study.

**School outcomes**

Refers to the results and standards the schools expect of students during their school term. The areas measured include academic achievement in WASSCE test scores, spiritual growth, discipline, and extracurricular activities such as sports,
School organizational culture  Refers to the culture of a school (Barth, 2002; Hanson, 2001).

Headmaster/headmaster  Refers to the school leaders or principal of the schools.

Educational reforms  Refers to the change initiatives that the government embarks on to improve the educational system (Fobih & Koomson, 1998).

Old students  The alumni of the schools.

Senior secondary school  Used interchangeably with senior high school.

Senior high school  Refers to high school

Administrators  Collectively refers to the school leaders and their assistants within a school (Kruse & Louis, 2009)

Boarding schools  The high schools that provide board and lodging for students during the school term.

PTA  Parent-Teachers Association is a school based organization of students’ parents and staff members to enhance parent involvement, students’ welfare, and undertake projects to improve the school (Rankin, 1917; Epstein, 2011; Kruse & Louis, 2009)

Stakeholders  The individual groups who have interest in the schools’ progress (African Development Bank, 2001)

Organization of the Study

The study is organized in six chapters, a reference list, and appendixes. Chapter one clarifies the decision for selecting the topic of the study. It addresses the problem, purpose, research questions, significance, definition of terms, and the organization of the study. Chapter two presents a review of literature and studies Ghana’s education; the
concept of school organizational culture, school subcultures, and school leadership styles. It also presents the theoretical framework that underpins the study – Schein’s levels of organizational culture. Chapter three discusses the research design and methodology of this study. It describes the sources of data, and the techniques for sample selection. The study’s findings are presented in chapter four, and chapter five discusses these findings. Chapter six comprises the summary, conclusions, implications of the study and practice and suggestions for future research. References and appendixes follow these chapters.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify the features and components of organizational culture in two high schools in Ghana. These include the tangible and intangible cultures, subcultures, and emergent leadership styles of the schools. School reforms in Ghana often focus on technical and political approaches. It is imperative, however, that future efforts to bring change to schools embrace the cultural approach as well, for enhanced effectiveness. Understanding the culture of the schools could help educational practitioners and agencies adopt appropriate cultural models that foster school improvement and effectiveness, and yield the expected school outcomes.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter addresses two very important aspects of the study that are required to attain the study’s objectives - literature review and theoretical framework. The literature review draws extensively on the scholarly works, dissertations, and academic journals that have addressed the education in Ghana and the concept of organizational culture. A scholarly work indicates that literature review helps the researcher to understand the topics, be aware of various works done on it, how it has been researched, the key issues that have been addressed, and to become an expert in the field (Roberts, 2010).

The first part of literature review provides a context, overview, and analysis of the evolution of formal education in Ghana. This analysis of the education system is required to provide a contextual explanation of how high schools are organized in the Ghana. Literature provides information on education during the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. It provides two different contexts from which senior high school education emerged - European missionaries and colonial era and post-colonial government. The session also outlines some antecedents that led to various educational reforms and their implications for seniors during their high school education.

The second part of the literature review addresses the concept of organizational culture. The literature review covers aspects of school organizational culture including subcultures, school outcomes, school change, school leadership, the concept of school effectiveness, and some cultural strategies that promote school improvement. The description of school culture in these dimensions provides insight into what research has
been conducted on school culture at the school workplace. It describes the key role of school leadership and some cultural strategies that leaders can use to improve schools.

The theoretical framework section draws on the cultural diagnosis suggested by Edgar Schein (1990, 1992, 2004, & 2010). It is necessary to diagnose the school organizational culture because it contextualizes the various levels in which culture is revealed within organizations (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, & Sanders, 1990; Kruse & Louis, 2009). This approach also provides a guide to the very salient methods of studying the organizational culture, and the areas to focus on, for appropriate data (Schein, 1990).

**Context, Overview, and Analysis of the Evolution of Education in Ghana**

Ghana’s education changed throughout the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods. Schooling was initiated and heavily influenced by three principal actors: missionaries, colonial government, and the post-independent government. This section provides an account of indigenous educational systems that existed before the arrival of Europeans. The antecedents that led the introduction of a new form of education.

**Indigenous education in Ghana.** Before the arrival of the Europeans to the west coast of Africa, Ghana’s system of education was traditionally and informally oriented, where communities socialized their members for appropriate occupation and citizenship (Bray, Clarke, & Stephen, 1998; Owu-Ewie, 2006). The indigenous education differed among communities, posing difficulty in generalizing the educational system in Africa especially Ghana.

The classrooms consisted of homes, communities, or market places; teachers were parents, relatives, and elders in the communities. The curriculum was the way of life for
adults and instruction was the way socialization from adult to children; medium of instruction was native language; procedure for learning was mainly through observation; and graduation was the initiation rites from childhood to adulthood (Bray et al., 1998; Dei, 2011; Graham, 1971; Nukunya, 2003; Owu-Ewie, 2006). McWilliam and Poh (1975) acknowledged that the rationale for this informal education was to instill accepted and good attitudes, behavior, character, and healthy living in the youth of the community. It also aimed at providing adequate knowledge of their history, beliefs, and culture, and to make them active participants of the community (Adekunle, 2000; Nukunya, 2003; Nwomonoh, 1998).

Furthermore, parents socialized and trained their children to acquire the skills of the family’s major occupation; where males learned their fathers’ jobs and girls imitated their mothers. Dei (2011) summarized the features of the indigenous as:

The informal education is linked to traditional/cultural education that starts in early years of an individual’s life and approached through a culturalized medium of instruction, such as story sharing, songs, proverbs, apprenticeship, arts and craft, as well as vocational/trades’ knowledge. It is conducted within communities, homes, and families using intergenerational knowledge as context passed from elders and adults, as well as through experienced artisans and cultural custodians... Adults lead by example, teaching society’s morals and cultural etiquette, the essence of respect for oneself, peers, and group, the communal sense of individual character building, social responsibility and peaceful coexistence with Nature/Mother Earth. (p. 24)

The indigenous system of education is a lifelong process that adopts a holistic approach to prepare a person spiritually, culturally, mentally, emotionally, physically, and materially. This well-groomed individual is daily guided by the mutual obligations to and interdependence with the wider community (Dei, 2011).
The purpose of the non-formal education is to groom citizens to conform to the culture of, and contribute to, society. It also provided a means of survival for members, as they were prepared as responsible participants of the communities. However, the indigenous education had limitations and was inadequate for survival in this era of modernization, where societies are more industrialized.

Modernization emerged with changes in ways of doing things. For example, unlike the informal education which was unstructured, the formal education takes place at a school setting in classrooms, has trained teachers, a defined curriculum, and has a lingua franca, and graduates students after they pass a universal examination. In the event of globalization, students who understand the medium of instruction are able to work in formal institutions.

The indigenous education is vital to accompany the formal education but cannot be used solely for this era of modernity. As Dei (2011) pointed out, the indigenous education plays significant role in socializing the youth in contemporary world. He added that it is required to be part of students’ socialization in institutions because it “demonstrates ways societies deal with tensions, contradictions, and challenges in of tradition and modernity” (p. 35).

Missionaries and Ghana’s formal education. The arrival of the Europeans to the West coast of Africa in 1471 ushered in another system of education, which was organized differently from the indigenous one. The Western or formal education was introduced in Ghana (Gold Coast) by European merchants and missionaries in the 15th century for the purposes of economic and religious development (Arhin, 1993; Graham,
1971). These Europeans include the Portuguese, Dutch, and British; whose initial aim of establishing schools in their castles was to cater for their own children with Ghanaian women. Later, these schools were extended to train and convert natives into the Christian faith (Graham, 1971). As a result, missionaries of Wesleyan Methodists from Great Britain, Basel from Switzerland, Breman from North Germany, and Catholic from Italy and England perpetuated the establishment of schools.

The Danish started schools in the Christianborg Castle at Accra, the Portuguese in Elmina Castle, and the British in Cape Coast Castle (Arhin, 1993; Graham, 1971). In the 1600s, the Dutch took over the Portuguese schools and restarted castle schools to enhance the Christian faith. The Dutch Charter of 1621 emphasized the establishment of Christian schools at business centers (Graham, 1971). The goal was to advance the Christian faith, win more people for the Dutch authorities, and make disciples of the Dutch language. However, when the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Catholic churches arrived, their focus was on having well-educated natives to help propagation of the gospel. They extended the formal schooling beyond local communities along the coast to some interior parts of the country such as the Akwapim Ridge and Peki (Nukunya, 2003).

The local people who went to their schools were converted into the Christian faith, and most of them became lay preachers of the gospel. The changes that accompanied the new form of education have since influenced the culture of such schools in Ghana. The mission-based schools continued to exhibit the kind of values, beliefs, and norms that were instilled in them since their institution. As Nukunya (2003) noted,
Christianity led to the alienation of Christians from their indigenous beliefs, practices and observances, and many social changes.

In these schools, the youth were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, masonry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, sewing (mainly for girls), practical agriculture, and health education. The Basel Mission Society (now Presbyterian Church of Ghana) was able to translate English into three native Languages; Twi, Ewe, and Ga to facilitate education and the propagation of the Word of God.

**Ghana’s education during the colonial era.** When the British took over the administration of the Gold Coast in 1874, a number of mission schools were scattered in different parts of the colony. By 1881, Ghana had 139 mission schools. The Basel Mission had 47 schools, The Wesleyan Mission had 84 schools, The Breman Mission had four schools, and the Catholic Mission had one school (Greene, 2002). The colonial government supported the church based schools and helped in funding them. It also started its own schools to supplement those instituted by the missionaries (Nukunya, 2003). In spite of this progress, the education systems were varied based on the motives of the particular missionaries.

As a result of the differences, the colonial government drew up the first education plan in 1882 to streamline educational activities and development in the country. That ushered in an Inspector of Schools and the establishment of the office of the director of education in 1887 to 1890. The colonial regime’s goal education was to provide education for every African child, a teacher training college for every province, better
salaries for teachers, and the building of a Royal College, hence the establishment of the Prince of Wales College, now Achimota School.

During colonial regime, several technical and agricultural focused schools were established. Many students from the northern part of the country, which did not have schools, were engaged and awarded scholarships to further their education in British universities. In 1933 the government emphasized the training of teachers and approved some local languages to be examined for the Cambridge University School Certificate. Courses such as domestic science, bookkeeping, child welfare, and typing were added to complement the existing curriculum of the missionaries.

The British expanded the schools and by 1950, the number of primary and senior high schools rose to 3000. They laid a solid foundation for formal education that aimed at advancing the development of the individuals as well as the nation. As a contemporary scholar has argued, “education is the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment, the foundation of social equality, and the spearhead of political socialization and cultural vitality” (Rwomire, 1998, p. 4). Another scholar concurred: “the abundance of highly educated people is a precondition of national survival, and indispensable instrument for economic and social development, and source of military strength” (Nwomonoh, 1998, p. 3). The British helped to change and develop Ghana’s education system, thus influencing other institutions such as political and economic.

In spite of these efforts, some contemporary critics argued that Western formal education “served as a major instrument of cultural domination and intellectual
servitude” (Rwomire, 1998, p. 12). Egbo (2000) pointed out that the colonial education was the imperialist weapon to dominate and economically exploit the colonized because the people were educated to serve the colonial masters. Nukunya (2003) also claimed that colonialism was imposed out of selfishness. The formal education abandoned the collective effort that existed in the traditional settings and increased individualism, widen the gap between the rich and the poor, increased unemployment rates, and enhanced social stratification (Nwomonoh, 1998).

In sum, colonial regime laid a foundation for the development of the individual’s progress and the nation’s sustainability, although some parts of the country lacked access to education. This became the focus of the first local government after Ghana attained independence.

**Ghana’s education in the post-colonial era.** The post-colonial period describes the period after Ghana’s independence. After resuming office, the first president, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, was saddled with the challenge of extending formal education to parts of the country that lacked schools and provide a relevant curriculum that will meet the needs of the local people (Fobih & Koomson, 1998). The first black leader’s concern was to address the issues of education in order to promote rapid national development.

To attain these objectives, the president proposed several changes in the education system. The first reform was the establishment of the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951. In this package, the political leadership implemented a free and compulsory basic education package in 1961 (Fobih & Koomson, 1998). However, that this 1961 Educational Act was characterized by a top-down approach because the government did
not involve parents or communities in the formulation and implementation. The communities only were involved when communal labor was organized to construct school buildings.

The reform brought about many challenges including lack of school buildings, which resulted using church premises, temporary sheds, or shades of trees as classrooms (Fobih & Koomson, 1998). The expansion also resulted in lack of teachers, which necessitated the use of pupil teachers with basic Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC) to teach at the primary level. The pupil teachers had the choice of either a six weeks or 2-year training program to equip them with basic skills to help them teach effectively (Fobih & Koomson, 1998).

The first leader also established several teacher-training colleges that offered 4-year and 2-year training for post-middle and post-secondary graduates respectively. The teacher trainees received stipends during the course of training (Bourret, 1960; Fobih & Koomson, 1998). The outcome of the reforms was remarkable, as the number of schools increased from 1,592 in 1950 to 10,421 in 1966. Many secondary schools were established to cater for the influx of basic school students (Bourret, 1960).

The expansion of education necessitated the establishment of two universities – University of Cape Coast (UCC) and University of Science and Technology (UST), to accommodate the senior high schools and technical school graduates (Fobih & Koomson, 1998). The mandate for the UST was to produce engineers and high-level technicians to feed the emerging industries in the country, while UCC was charged to train graduate teachers for the secondary and technical schools. By 1960, Ghana had about 3,000
students in the technical institutions, 15,000 qualified teachers, and 9,860 students in the senior high schools.

Meanwhile, some of the nation’s elites criticized the first president’s idea of providing education to the entire nation. They argued that the expansion created a high unemployment rate in the nation and provided a curriculum that was irrelevant to the needs of Ghanaian communities. The challenges associated with the Education Act of 1961 included the nation’s fast population growth, a fall in teacher-pupil ratio, and inability of the technical schools to produce students with the expected skills. These challenges led the government to resort to supplying free textbooks and free compulsory basic education (Fobih & Koomson, 1998). Meanwhile, the 1961 Education Act allowed the government to gain greater control over senior high school education, secularized mission schools, and denied churches the ownership of their schools (Quist, 1999).

In attempt to curb the problems facing the 1961 Education Act, the government launched a seven-year development plan (1963-1970), which saw education at the core of socio-economic and political changes. The government intended to convert the last two years of middle schools into continuation schools, to prepare students for the labor market and occupational opportunities in location of schools. Unfortunately, these plans did not materialize because the government was overthrown in a military coup d’état in 1966.

The new military regime appointed a committee under the leadership of Professor Kwapong, the first black Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, to provide recommendations that would address the problems of the education sector. Though it did
not criticize the quality of education of the past government, it indicated that the country was young and not rich enough to provide free basic education. The Kwapong Committee recommended the conversion of existing middle schools into technically and vocationally based continuation schools; closure or conversion of some teacher training colleges into senior high schools; and withdrawal of teacher trainee stipends (Fobih & Koomson, 1998).

These proposals exacerbated the problems of the education system. Withdrawal of stipends led to a decline in the patronage of training colleges, and subsequently, shortage of qualified teachers to teach in the technical and vocational schools. Meanwhile, poor condition of the education service rendered the teaching profession unattractive and deterred many qualified teachers, causing them to move to other institutions for better-paying jobs. The close of some schools also led to a decline at the primary level of education. The middle schools education was no longer well patronized as most students passed the Common Entrance Examination and entered senior high schools at either primary six, middle school form one, two, or three.

Meanwhile, some students completed senior high school education in four instead of five years because of an abundance of graduate teachers from UCC, and the presence of improved teaching methods. A preliminary preparatory course offered at the UCC rendered the two-year sixth form in senior high school redundant.

When K. A Busia, a civilian government took the political mantle in the late 1960s, he set up the Amissah Educational Committee to overhaul the structure and content of the pre-tertiary education. This committee suggested the categorization of
senior high schools into lower and upper levels, but this was short lived as his government was overthrown in a coup d’état in 1972.

The new military regime set up the Dzobo Committee to address the problems inherent in the education system. These problems include lack of qualified teachers due to the shutting down of teacher training colleges, as well as teachers vacating their positions in search of better paying jobs, a lack of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials, and poor management and supervision of public schools. By this time, teaching and learning conditions in the public schools had deteriorated and parents who had the means, enrolled their children in the private schools.

These poor conditions brought about inequality in accessing senior high school education, as they favored people in urban areas than their rural counterparts. The curriculum was still not relevant to local community life, which caused school leavers to migrate to the urban cities to seek for white collar jobs. The move also consequently exacerbated the problems because most graduates who do not get jobs in the cities ended up as street hawkers in order to survive (Boakye-Boaten, 2006).

The Dzobo Committee was mandated to find methods to increase primary enrollment and access to senior high school, diversify the curriculum at all levels and give equal weight to technical, vocational, and business subjects, reduce the duration of pre-tertiary education, and review the two instruments of assessment: the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) and General Certificate of Examination (GCE) Ordinary (O) and Advance (A) levels. The Dzobo Committee’s proposal necessitated the issuance of a white paper that outlined a new structure and content for education system in 1974.
The features of the new system include kindergarten education: 4-6 years; primary education: six years; and junior secondary school: three years. A two-year lower senior secondary school prepared students towards a technical college or commercial college as terminal, or a two-year senior secondary school upper for GCE ‘O’ Level that led to either GCE ‘A’ level, teacher training college, polytechnic, or university (Fobih & Koomson, 1998; Quist, 1999). This new proposal brought pre-tertiary education to 13 years (K-6-3-2-2) instead of the previous 17 years (K-6-4-5-2).

Implementing this initiative required the government to establish three-year experimental junior secondary schools in all regional capitals as a pilot project based on the new curriculum which was a three-year teacher training program with subject specialization to equip post-secondary pre-service teachers for the main structural reform ahead, the Ghana Education Service (GES) to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of pre-tertiary education and programs – a role that was previously played by the Ministry of Education through regional and district education offices.

This new reform started with the gradual phasing out of old the system and by 1981, the old system had given way to the new system (Quist, 1999). In-service training sessions were organized for teachers to familiarize them with the new structure and content of education. Many experimental junior secondary schools were established to implement the reforms.

Unfortunately, this new reform faced difficulties when its funding became a huge burden for the government. The government attempted to fund it alone without sharing cost with parents or consulting any international organizations for assistance (Fobih &
Koomson, 1998). When a new government took over in 1978, it revisited the educational agenda, because the conditions of the educational sector had worsened.

**The educational changes of 1987.** Although the experimental junior secondary schools increased, unavailability of resources to implement the nationwide reforms proposed created more problems (Fobih & Koomson, 1998). During this time, there was so much confusion in the nation’s educational sector that there was no definite route for students. From primary six, students had two options - either to get into experimental junior secondary school 1 (JSS) or middle school form one. Owing to the lesser number of years in the new system, graduates from the experimental JSS three were reluctantly admitted into the old secondary school form four. Some educational leaders felt that these graduates’ educational qualifications were not equivalent to that of the old students. Again, students in the middle school continued to write the CEE for entry into the old system secondary school.

Academic standards continued to fall and there was a general lack of logistics; learning and teaching materials continue to dwindle. The nation experienced poor quality of basic education. Fobih and Koomson (1998) noted that Ghana’s education by the 1985 was described as “clinically dead” (p.166). The conditions in the educational sector called for educational reform. Fobih and Koomson (1998) summarized the problems of the education that necessitated reforms:

- Migration of trained and qualified teachers from the country due to economic decline in the mid-1970s;
- Lack of educational resources such as textbooks and stationery due lack of foreign exchange;
- Deterioration of school buildings, furniture, and equipment resulting from the collapse of school management;
• Cutting back on levels of funding of the education sector by successive governments;
• Non-availability of virtually any data and statistics needed for vital planning. Decision taking was mainly on ad hoc basis;
• Enrollment growth declined to 1.5% for primary 1.1% for middle; and 1.5% for secondary school levels;
• Lack of transportation for GES personnel to visit school regularly led to poor management and supervision; and
• About two-thirds of the adult population remained illiterate while the dropout rates from the formal school sector continued to rise. (pp. 166-7)

These issues compelled the incumbent government, under the leadership of Flt Lt Jerry John Rawlings to initiate the 1987 Educational Reform. It committed the Anfom Education Commission, which replaced the GES (suspended by the military regime), to review the education system and provide recommendations. The committee’s proposal was fairly similar to that of the Dzobo Committee on which the 1974 New Structure and Content was based. The Anfom Committee highlighted the following in its reform package (Fobih & Koomson, 1998, p. 168)

1. A nine-year basic education followed by a three-year senior secondary school and a four-year university education cycle (6-3-3-4);
2. A philosophy of education which should influence national thinking and planning;
3. Entrants into teacher training college should possess secondary education;
4. Teacher trainees should be paid stipends and treated on a parity basis with all other trainees in other institutions;
5. Local community participation in the provision of basic education should be mobilized without waiting for decentralization to be completely implemented.

Fobih & Koomson pointed out that although the Anfom Committee suggested implementation of this new reform in 1990 in order to give enough room for the government to prepare teachers, procure textbooks and other teaching materials, improve buildings and other equipment, and obtain prior commitment to the scheme; the reform had to begin earlier in 1986 with the following principles guiding it:
1. The affirmation of education as a basic right for every citizen;
2. That majority of Ghanaians do not participate in national development as a result of illiteracy, partial literacy, or mis-education;
3. The need for cultural identity and dignity;
4. Wrong type of education leading to unemployment;
5. The need for citizens to acquire scientific and technological skills to cope with the changes of life; and
6. A creation of an awareness of one’s own environment. (p. 169)

Based on these principles, the Educational Structural Adjustment Program restructured the whole educational system in Ghana to meet the over-all national educational objectives. The education reform restructured pre-tertiary schooling to 12 years (6-3-3). Below is a table showing the old and new educational structures.

Table 1:
*The Old and New Educational Structures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old System</th>
<th>New System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Years</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Primary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Middle</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Lower</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Upper</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Fobih & Koomson (1998, p. 162).

With this reform, the quality of education improved and was made relevant to socio-economic conditions of the nation (Little, 2010; Oduro, 2000; Quist, 2003; Zame,
Hope, & Respress, 2008). However, Akyeampong (2010) argues that improvement did not take place at the secondary school level because poor parents and most rural folks were unable to afford the fees that were required by the reform.

This was the first time Ghanaian secondary education shifted from the British model to American, Japanese, and Nigerian ones (Quist, 1999). This was also the first time in history of Ghana when all primary school graduates had a taste secondary school education (Akyeampong, 2010). The reforms favored the secondary education because it provided students greater opportunities to enter into the university and other tertiary institutions.

The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) for junior secondary school and the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) administered at the end of the senior secondary school – were introduced along with the reform (Quist, 1999).

The reforms brought about the establishment of 140 community senior secondary schools, most of which were day institutions, to meet the growing population. Government transferred a greater responsibility of the educational costs to parents, and gradually withdrew subsidies for secondary schools (Akyeampong, 2005, 2010; White & Masset, 2004). Furthermore, the government initiated the free compulsory universal basic education (fCUBE) to fan the implementation of the reforms in 1995.

As has been the tradition of Ghana’s political leadership, the senior secondary school structure experienced another change when a new political leader instituted an Education Reform in 2007. Under the leadership of John Agyekum Kuffour, the
secondary school education period increased from three to four years, and renamed senior high schools (SHS) (Little, 2010; Oduro, 2000; Quist, 2003; Zame, Hope, & Respress, 2008). It can be said that political leaders satisfy their interests at the expense of students and parents. Dei (2011) referred to changes the political leaders initiated in the educational system as “political footballing” (p. 25).

**Development of secondary school education in Ghana.** Ghanaian secondary school education has been initiated and influenced by three main bodies namely the religious, colonial government, and post-colonial government. The missionaries first introduced formal education in Ghana in the 19th century. The Methodist (Wesleyan Mission) built the first secondary school, Mfantsipim School at Cape Coast in 1876 as an all boys’ schools. In 1910, the Anglican Mission established another all boys’ school, Adisadel College. The Catholic Church established St Augustine College as their first boys’ secondary school in 1930. The Wesley Methodist Mission built an all-girls’ school, Wesley Girls, in 1935 and the Catholic Church built Holy Child High in 1946. These schools were built in Cape Coast, a coastal town where most of the missionaries first settled (Foster, 1965; Graham, 1971; Quist, 1999).

The British colonial government, under Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, established the Achimota School (formally Prince of Wales College) in 1924. By 1950, two government schools existed with an enrollment of 857 students. There were 11 government-assisted schools with student population totaling 1,919. The secondary schools that were not government-assisted numbered 44 with student body of 3,386 (Foster, 1965).
By the time of independence, the number of secondary schools were inadequate even though primary schools had expanded. As Arhin (1993) indicated, this situation put a lot of burden on the first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah because there was a lot of pressure on the few secondary schools. This situation prompted the Cocoa Marketing Board to provide funds to aid secondary school expansion. With the funds, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah founded the Ghana Education Trust (GET) in 1957, which helped to expand secondary school education to many parts of the country.

According to Quist (1999), the three traditions of secondary education in Ghana include “the ‘Mfantsipim tradition’, the ‘Achimota tradition’, and the ‘national school’ model (p. 427). The Achimota tradition was co-educational, founded, funded, and manned solely by the colonial government. Its principles were a blend of the British elite school model and the American model of education designed to train the African Americans in manual work after the American Civil War. The Mfantsipim tradition, he noted, was single gender and religion based. It was characterized by a blend of Western and Ghanaian cultural elements.

The third model, which the immediate postcolonial government leadership of Kwame Nkrumah introduced, was the ‘national school’ tradition. As a pillar behind secondary expansion and coordinator of schools between 1957 and 1964, the GET produced 19 secondary schools in 1958, which later increased to 23 schools by 1960 (Arhin, 1993; Quist, 1999).

The GET, in conjunction with the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan for education, was very instrumental in the development of secondary education in Ghana.
The two initiatives enabled the government to establish more schools than the missionaries. However, Quist (1999) was quick to point out that, except Achimota Secondary School, church based schools retained a standard of academic excellence that did not exist in many state-established secondary schools.

By 1960, all secondary schools used the British mode of seven years of schooling that comprised; five years of Ordinary (‘O’) Level and two years of sixth forms that led to an Advanced (‘A’) Level. The West African Examination Council became the examining body of the education system in Ghana. Until the 1980s, it took seven years to complete secondary school before one could initiate a university degree program. The tertiary education – university and some professional and research institutions lasted three years.

A great challenge that mission based schools faced during the 1961 Education Act was that the churches that owned them were deprived of their control. Instead, it gave the government full control of all public secondary schools in Ghana. By the Act, a minister of education was appointed to take over and control secondary education. The mission schools were only permitted to make a choice of the Board of governors - the membership based on the approval of the minister, who was vested with power to constitute, dissolve, or reconstitute (Quist, 1999). The board consisted of 12 members; three of who could be appointed from the church. Although the Catholic Church contested this, the situation persisted until 1991.

It took three years to complete the secondary school instead of seven years (Palmer, 2005; Quist, 1999; Zame et al., 2008). Generally, upon completion of senior
high school, students have the option to proceed to a university, a polytechnic, a teacher training college, or any other tertiary institution. This current school structure has mandatory core courses, which every student in junior high and senior high schools, irrespective of their electives, must offer to advance to the next level.

The basic and post-basic schools run a 40-hour per week school year. All seniors at the JHS and SHS are tested using internal continuous assessment (30% final grade) and an external examination conducted by the West African Examination Council, Basic Education Certificate Examination and Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination respectively (70% of final grade). Access to the next level of education depends on a student’s performance on these examinations. Today, about 700 secondary schools serve the population of Ghana.

In 1995, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) policy was instated that called for the revision of curriculum materials such as textbooks and syllabi (Akyeampong, 2009; Tuakili, Miller, Agyako-Kwarteng, & Jones, 2009; Zame et al., 2008). The secondary school curriculum was reformed to meet the requirements of the reform objectives. The subjects of the junior secondary school include mathematics, English language, social studies, integrated science, agricultural science, religious and moral education, French, Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), and pre-technical skills.

The senior secondary school programs normally include Arts, Science, Business, Home Economics, and Agricultural Science. Science students offer Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics; Business students offer Accounts, Business Management,
and Mathematics; General Arts I students offer Economics, Geography, and French; General Arts II students offer Literature, History, French, and Mathematics; Agricultural Science subjects include Chemistry and Mathematics. Students offer cores courses including Mathematics, English Language, Social Studies, and General Science.

**The senior high school in contemporary Ghanaian context.** The Ghanaian school system ranges from Kindergarten to form 3 over a course of 15 years. From primary school, students continue to Junior High and then to Senior High school (SHC). As a mandatory exit requirement policy from the Ghana Education Service (GES), students in the final year of junior high school write the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) to qualify into senior high school. Students at the end of their SHS education write the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) to determine movement to tertiary institutions.

The West African Examination Counsel conducts the examination and evaluates students with a grading system ranging from A1-F9 in all subjects areas. Students’ entry into the tertiary institutions is dependent on the score aggregate from this examination.

The GES, which manages public pre-tertiary institutions, is represented on the school boards, employs staff members, and provides directives for the schools. Though GES manages all public schools, the schools have been decentralized and the maintenance and provision of infrastructure and facilities in the schools are school-based efforts. Majority of the SHSs are both boarding and day (commuters), until recently when government embarked on providing district SHSs, which are mostly day schools to offset the population pressures on the old SHSs.
Every Ghanaian pre-tertiary school requires students to wear a school uniform. Basic schools (primary and junior high) students use the same dress code with a badge showing the names of the schools, while the senior high schools (SHSs) have unique uniforms they provide and parents and parents pay for. Secondary schools provide prospectuses to students after they gained admission into the schools. The prospectus outline the type of clothing expected in the schools. Clothing that not a prescribed uniform was not allowed and was tantamount to confiscation.

The senior high schools sell the school uniforms to students in order to ensure uniformity of fabric and style. These mandatory uniforms were the formal way of dressing in the schools. However, there is no GES prescribed uniform for its employees, or the staff members. There is a traditional African print for teachers designed by the Ghana National Association of Teachers, the teachers’ union, but which was not designed to be used daily as a formal dress for school.

Aside the Board of Governors, the day-to-day administration of senior high schools is done by a headmaster/headmistress and assistant headmaster/headmistress. Schools with large population of students have three assistant headmasters/headmistresses, while the small schools have two. The GES assigns roles to the positions in schools. The boarding schools have housemaster/housemistress depending on the gender of the school. High school teaching is based on subject specialization. Although the GES manages the schools, the general welfare of the schools is based on the school leadership efforts. The school leadership style plays a major role in the success or failure of the schools.
The Concept of Organizational Culture

Culture is a ubiquitous concept and the culture of an organization is referred to as organizational culture. It determines members’ lifestyles, provides an organization with its identity, and a framework for how things must be done. The originators of the term ‘culture’ were social anthropologists who wanted to describe and understand primitive societies (Ballou, 2008; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Lim, 1995).

Applying the concept of culture in the organizational context resonated in the 1980s when it was examined in corporate organizations to explain their differences. One of the pioneers of this initiative, William Ouchi, examined corporate cultures in Japanese and American companies and found that the success of effective companies was due to their distinctive corporate cultures (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). The study further revealed that the difference between companies of the two countries was that Japan had a highly motivated workforce that shared values, beliefs, and assumptions (Denison, 1984; Furnham & Gunter, 1993; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Lim, 1995). Many other scholars gave attention to the study of organizational culture in that period (Alvesson & Berg, 1992; Deal & Kenney, 1982; Hoy, 1990; Schultz, 1995; Smircich, 1983).

As with any societal culture, organizational culture consists of shared belief systems, values, assumptions, norms, artifacts, and patterns of behavior (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Ott, 1989). Some researchers indicate that although some aspects of organizational culture cannot be observed or seen, it supports obvious organizational activities (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Sathe, 1985). In related studies, researchers posit that organizational culture consist of tangible and intangible elements (van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, &
Coetsee, 2005; van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen, & Wolhuter, 2008). These works pointed out that the tangible culture communicates the intangible culture while the intangible culture provides guideline for behavior patterns.

**Definition of organizational culture.** Several definitions have been ascribed to organizational culture. Schein (1990) pointed out that the differences in the definitions of culture stem from the ambiguity in the concept of organization. Some researchers define culture as “a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together and give it a distinctive identity” (Hoy & Miskel, 2008, p. 177). Scheerens and Bosker (1997) define it as “the set of shared meanings, collective norms, and views on interactions and collaborations” (p. 17). From Sathe’s (1985) perspective, culture is “the set of important assumptions (often unstated) that members of a community share in common” (p. 10).

For Schein (1990), culture is “a) a pattern of basic assumptions, b) invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, c) as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, d) that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, e) is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 111). He explained that culture is what a group learns over time as members attempt to solve the problems of internal integration and survival in an external adaptation. These definitions present culture as something that is shared by members of a unit and because it bonds them, violation or observance could attract punishment or reward respectively. Thus, without a unified culture to regulate behavior, life within an organization will be full of chaos and confusion.
Organizational culture has several functions, making it paramount to the progress of an organization. Some scholars indicate that it socializes new members about “the way we do things around here” (Barth, 2002, p. 7; DuFour & Eaker, 1998, p. 133; Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 105). Other authors posit that organizational culture defines and sustains an organization’s borders, identifies its stakeholders, and initiates collective patterns of cognitive interpretations and perceptions that create awareness among stakeholders about accepted ways to act, feel, and think (Ott, 1989; Sergiovanni, 2001a).

In a related study, Hoy and Miskel (2008) state: “Organizational culture guides and shapes the attitudes and behaviors of an organization’s members” (p. 182). In other words organizational culture determines the kind of behavior that is acceptable within an organization. It provides the normative glue that holds the organization together. Its ability to unite is what provides direction for members and gives them a unified purpose.

**Deciphering organizational culture.** Culture covers every aspect of the organizational life. When it is described using a typology, it does not provide the right representation of all the variables contained in a culture (Schein, 1990). Irrespective of the size of a group or an organization, they are all faced with tasks or challenges that it must learn to cope with (Bales & Cohen, 1979; Schein, 1990). In the process of time, the way an organization responds to these tasks and challenges becomes its organizational culture.

Schein explains that, to be able to interpret what really goes on in a particular organization, one needs to inductively understand the pertinent dimensions on the basis of the organization’s history. This author explains that although it is easy to identify the
artifacts of an organization, it is not easy to know what they actually mean. The most appropriate way to understand an organization’s culture is to interview its members (insiders), who can provide rich information pertaining to the organization (Schein, 1990).

School Organizational Culture

Years ago, Willard Waller acknowledged that schools have cultures that distinguish them from others. A school’s culture provides the tenets for understanding its philosophy (Waller, 1932). Since then, several researchers have extensively engaged in the study of organizational culture of schools, using the research of corporate organizations as their basis (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Some authors have defined school culture as “the assumptions, beliefs, values, and habits that constitute the norm for the school and guide the work of the educators within it” (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010, p. 8). In a related account, Hanson (2001) explains:

Schools also have their own unique cultures that are shaped around a particular combination of values, beliefs, and feelings. These school cultures emphasize what is of paramount importance to them as they strive to develop their own knowledge base in a particular direction, such as producing outstanding football teams, high SAT scores, disciplined classrooms and skilled auto mechanics, or sending kids to college who come from inner-city urban schools. Although the culture of a school is not visible to the human eye, its artifacts and symbols reflect specific cultural priorities. (p. 641)

In another study, Hargreaves (1995) asserts that school culture is crucial when school dynamics and change are studied. To buttress the assertion of these writers, Schultz (1995) states that, “organizational culture consists of the organization members’ socially defined and meaningful realities, which reflect the organization’s special way of
life” (p. 81). In this situation, an individual’s culture does not matter; rather, what is
important is the shared culture from which school members derive meaning.

In related studies, the school organizational culture is viewed to include the
shared meanings of parents, students, teachers, and others conceived of as part of school
community, and the informal symbolic aspects of the school’s life (Hoy & Miskel, 2008;
Sergiovanni, 2001a; Schein, 2010). Another study shows that school culture is referred to
as a shared view of what the school is about, and how people should behave to insure that
this view materializes and is maintained (Rossman et al, 1988).

These descriptions of school organizational culture imply that the more the
culture is understood and accepted by members, the better it is for the school to achieve
its goals. Hence, another author noted that the school organizational culture embodies a
complex pattern of norms, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, values, ceremonies, traditions,
and myths that are immensely ingrained in the core of the school (Barth, 2002).

School organizational culture models behavior and socializes the thoughts of all
participants. As Barth (2002) asserts, the influence of organizational culture on life and
learning in a school far outweighs that of any stakeholder such as the government, the
superintendent, school boards, school leader, teachers or parents have. School culture is
influential because it dictates what all the stakeholders need to do for the school to
succeed. However, studies have shown that school cultures can be either hostile or
hospitable, which explains why some schools work towards improvement while others
oppose improvement and reform initiative (Barth, 2002). Barth pointed out that since
changes in schools tap their strength from organizational culture, the success or failure of reform innovation depends on the kind of culture that exists in the school.

Furthermore, Sergiovanni (2001a) posits that when a school’s organizational culture is cohesive, is accepted, and is well understood, stakeholders are able to forge forward to achieve the desired goals. This author indicates that schools possessing strong organizational cultures with quality vision that aims at quality schooling are often successful. Some other scholars posited that a school would have sustainable success if it nurtures and builds cultural norms that promote growth and foster strong organizational culture (Saphier & King, 1985). In other words, schools success depends on the emphasis placed on the organizational culture.

Since culture undergirds behavior, actions, practices, expectations, values, and assumptions in schools, ignoring it may be an attempt to neglect very deep properties that are required to help school growth. As a human institution, which thrives on relationships and interactions, creating a positive school culture is a necessary ingredient for school progress.

**School Organizational Culture and Subcultures**

Various studies show that aside an organization’s dominant culture, certain subcultures emerge that coexist and overlap to reinforce the consensus, consistency, and clarity of the organization (Ballou, 2008; Boisnier & Chatman, 2002; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Lok, Westwood, & Crawford, 2005; O’Reilly, 1989; Ott, 1989; Scaffold, 1988; Schein, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1984, 1993). Research shows that these organizational subcultures are made up of people who perform similar functions, share similar ethics,
share similar geographical locations, or are trained in the same professional cultures such as teachers, accountants, or administrators (Ballou, 2008). Ballou explains that subcultures possess characteristics such as “regular interactions with one another, identify themselves as a distinctive group within the organization, share the same problems, and take action on the basis of a common of thinking that is unique to the group” (p. 499).

Other scholarly works indicate that subcultures overlap, interlock, partially coincide, and sometimes conflict (Schein, 1990; Ott, 1989). Ott states: “The subcultures may also be strong, pervasive, and controlling; or they may be weak and hardly affect behavior” (p. 46). Schein (1990) posits that when a group has conflicting values, it results in deviant behavior, even though they may be in complete consensus with the underlying assumptions of the overall organizational culture. This author argues that if a group has an agreement on level of values and behavior but lacks consensus with the underlying assumptions of the overall organizational culture, it could lead to later conflict in the organization. Therefore, subcultures are useful to a group when their values are in consensus to the dominant organizational cultures.

Some scholars assert that there are three types of subcultures: enhancing, orthogonal, and countercultural (Boisneir & Chapman, 2004; Martin & Siehl, 1983; Ott, 1989; Siehl & Martin, 1994). The authors describe enhancing subcultures as those with assumptions, values, and beliefs that are compatible with, and are often stronger and held with fervor than those in, the dominant organizational culture. The orthogonal subcultures are those in which members accept the basic assumptions of the dominant
organizational culture but also hold to some unique but not conflicting assumptions of their own. Countercultures are the subcultures with basic assumptions that oppose, and are in conflict with, the dominant organizational culture of the school (Ott, 1989; Hebdige, 1979; Willis, 1993; Yinger, 1970).

Martin (1992) confirming the existence of countercultures explained that subcultures are detraction from overarching organizational culture. Yet Boisneir and Chapman (2004) argue that because of the notion that some subcultures always oppose the dominant organizational culture, people have conferred on them labels such as deviants, gangs, or non-conformant. They contended that such labels could not be generalized. A scholar, agreeing with Boisneir and Chapman indicate that, because subcultures emerge from the values of organizational culture, they cannot be entirely divergent – although some may have values that differ (Zellner, 1995). Scholarly works confirm that subcultures have the potential of enhancing, refining, or challenging the dominant culture, and at the same time, provide pockets of creativity and innovation (Boisnier & Chatman, 2002; Ott, 1989; Siehl & Martin, 1994).

Studies show that every subculture has its own relevant perceptions, which may not be similar across all the subcultures (Ballou, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009). Since subcultures may not totally aligned with, or oppose, the dominant organizational culture, it brings about differences in the types of organizational subcultures that may exist (Hofstede, 1998). Schein (1990) argues, “Once an organization has many subcultures, its overall culture increasingly becomes a negotiated outcome of the interactions of the subcultures” (p. 117).
In related studies, scholars contend that subcultures may be stronger than the overall organizational culture within the school, and therefore, can influence perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of members more than the dominant one itself (Ballou, 2008; Harris & Ogbonna, 1998). Martin and Siehl (1983) were fast to warn that the disagreement between subcultures and the dominant organizational culture, or among subcultures, could be detrimental to successful implementation of strategies that are intended to bring about change and quality outcomes.

The survival of organizations is either by special efforts to impose their overall dominant organizational culture or by allowing the subcultures, which may be better adapted to changing environmental circumstances, to be more influential (Schein, 1990). Thus, the degree of agreement between subcultures and dominant cultures in schools determines the level at which change initiatives are embraced. The greater the disagreement, the less likely the change initiatives will succeed (Ballou, 2008).

In an analysis of school organizational culture, Kruse and Louis (2009) pointed out six overlapping but distinctive subcultures that coexist and accommodate each other in order to support school life and the organizational culture. Research shows that, although the subcultures overlap, coexists, and accommodate each other, each of them has its own preferences, values, beliefs, practices, expectations, and assumptions (Ballou, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Schein, 1990). Kruse and Louis point out that the school subcultures include “teacher subculture, school administrator subculture, district subculture, community subculture, parent subculture, and student subculture” (p. 22).
Below is a figure showing the structure of the subcultures of school organizational culture.

*Figure 1: Subcultural Arenas in Schools (adapted from Kruse & Louis, 2009, p. 22)*

Kruse and Louis categorized the school subcultures into professional subcultures, which consist of the teachers, administrators, and district subcultures; and the nonprofessional subcultures, which comprise the parent, student, and community subcultures. These scholars described school administrator subculture as consisting of the norms and expectations members of the leadership hold that are involved in how to manage the school, assign responsibilities, make policies, and ensure that everything is orderly. They “manage and lead the groups towards a greater consensus” (Kruse & Louis, 2009, p. 24). The authors point out that in schools where the leadership fosters a mutual understanding and acceptance, conflicts are rare, participation in decision-making and other leadership initiatives are high, and there is a higher agreement on directions and choices. The school leadership maintains a positive and productive school culture as a result of its consistency and deliberate leadership effort (Kruse & Louis, 2009).
The teacher subculture focuses on managing daily tasks of engaging students in learning activities. The emphasis of the district subculture is on the management of many schools and creating policies that adjudicate between school culture and community and legal expectations (Kruse & Louis, 2009). These responsibilities represent the professional element of the school. Furthermore, the student culture focuses on “maximizing social arrangements and minimizing adult control” (Kruse & Louis, 2009, p. 23). Studies show that student social groups emerge from the student subgroups, which often undermine teachers’ preferences (Corsaro, Molinari, Hadley, & Sugioka, 2003; Kruse & Louis, 2009).

The parent subculture organizes formal and informal ways of working with their children’s school such as Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) (Epstein, 2011; Kruse & Louis, 2009). This subculture forms part of the community subculture, which focuses on doing things for the school and may organize particular projects, not necessarily for the good of individual students, but for the school in general (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Epstein, 2011). These last three subculture roles depict the nonprofessional component of the school culture. The different domains of the subcultures, in addition to the artifacts, collectively demonstrate the lifestyle of the school.

In schools, subculture identification is based on characteristics such as job position, occupation, employment relationship, affiliation with school, or gender relations, among others. Their overlap and coexistence is what keeps the school progressing. Research shows that when the human component of an organization is able to invent its basic strategies, it is best able to help the organization to interpret its own
culture (Schein, 1990). Therefore, since the subcultures share in the understanding of organizational reality and assumptions, which subsequently influence their behavior patterns, actions, relationships, and performance, it is expedient to involve them during change processes.

Schein reiterates this idea and posits, “Many organizational change programs that failed probably did so because they ignored cultural forces in the organizations in which they were to be installed” (p. 118). It implies that school reform programs that ignore the involvement of school subcultures may be deficient of the desired results.

**School Organizational Culture and School Outcomes**

This session focuses on the relationship between culture of schools and outcomes. According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, an outcome is something that happens as a result of an activity or a process. School outcomes vary from schools to schools, and often depend on the expectations of stakeholders. The benchmarks for these outcomes may include high-test scores, high graduation rates, high discipline, extracurricular activities such as sports, and safe environment among others.

Several educational philosophers and researchers following the cultural trajectory acknowledge the importance of school culture in relation to outcomes (Barth, 2002; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Harrison & Kuint, 2006; Hargreaves, 1995; Sergiovanni, 2001a). Many contemporary studies on school effectiveness have shifted emphasis from political and technical orientations to a focus on the culture of the school as a greater support for school change (Deal, 1985; Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Maslowski, 2001; Rossman et al, 1988; Sarason, 1996). Some argue that
the rational solutions to solve school problems have failed because they ignored the culture of the school (Fullan, 2001a; Sarason, 1996).

This approach has now gained a strong foothold in educational literature as the key force to improve the performance of schools (Hargreaves, 1995; Peterson, 2002; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997). Hargreaves argues that most early studies on school performance focused either on teachers’ activities or on administrative roles, with relatively little emphasis on school organizational culture. The studies of Scheerens and Bosker (1997) on foundations of educational effectiveness, for example, made little reference to school culture. Hargreaves advocates for the study of school cultures that focus on student and teacher cultures and the relationships between them. In a related study, Deal and Kennedy (1983) provide reasons why school cultures can improve educational productivity. They stated:

Culture provides an internal cohesion that makes it easy for teachers to teach; students to learn; and for parents, administrators and others to contribute to instructional processes. It helps schools to communicate their identity to the external world through their shared values, heroes and heroines, rituals and ceremonies, and an informal network. (p. 15)

School culture determines how the school should function to make it effective. Similarly, Brady (2008) argues that, school culture influences students’ academic achievement and engagement. Brady indicates that students’ academic performance depends on the cultural factors at play, the kind of attitude students demonstrate towards schooling, and how they participate in school activities. The school culture decides the school’s priorities, thus serving as a compass that directs the school leadership. Many other educational researchers concur that the culture of a school plays a key role in
fostering its outcomes (Deal, 1985; Deal & Peterson, 2009; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Rossman et al., 1988; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979; Sergiovanni, 2001a).

Deal (1985) proposes that the basic requirement for creating effective schools is to understand the symbols and culture of the schools. He argues that high performing schools have strong cultures that encourage productivity, high morale, confidence, and commitment. He concludes that a cohesive organizational culture is a determinant of a school’s strong performance, because the collective agreement on how things must be done, the routine rituals and ceremonies, stories, written philosophies, and symbols shape the behavior of members across all levels of the school, thus enhancing outcomes. The routine rituals and ceremonies in schools provide opportunities that reinforce values of a school (Deal & Kennedy, 1983).

**School Organizational Culture and Change**

Change is a necessity for school growth and is implemented to generate positive outcomes. As Burke (2008) states: “the fundamental mission of an organization is to survive” (p. 69). This author notes that organizations survive by continuously fixing problems and trying to improve the way things are done. Change in schools occurs to keep them alive, increase performance, and produce desired outcomes. Change initiatives introduce new things into the dominant status quo. Fullan (1982) comments: “real change, whether desired or not, whether imposed or voluntarily pursued, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty”
(p. 26). It alters organizational members’ norms, beliefs, and values because it requires modification of behavior and beliefs.

Some researchers identify three change processes that are crucial for the study of school culture and change, namely evolutionary, additive, and transformative processes (Burke, 2008; Rossman, et al., 1988). Evolution is a stable state where new cultural norms, beliefs, and values are introduced to gradually replace old ones, though not all members quickly accept it. The additive change modifies norms, beliefs, or values of a particular domain of culture quite quickly and spreads to modify an entire set of beliefs.

The transformative change occurs when the culture faces challenges and there is a need for change. Burke (2008) points out that the revolutionary change touches the deep structure of the underlying culture. He defines it as “a jolt (perturbation)” (p. 68). Transformation is “directed intentionally at achieving the acceptance of new cultural norms (Rossman et al., 1988, p. 17).

Furthermore, when commenting on the importance of change in schools, Fullan (2001a) argues that change in schools will not occur unless infrastructures and processes are developed to engage teachers, and emphasis is placed on the deep meaning of new approaches to teaching and learning. He advocates for a re-culturing of the teaching profession. Re-culturing refers “to the process of creating and fostering purposeful learning communities” (Fullan, 2001a, p. 136). Fullan emphasizes that lasting changes occur only when there are professional learning communities (PLC). He argues that the short-term gains that are often obtained in student achievement scores do not get at “the heart of learning which students need. They do not have depth and they have no staying
power” (Fullan, 2001a, p. 136). It is only when there is re-culturing that change can occur in schools.

Furthermore, Burke (2008) asserts that whether change initiatives receive a positive or negative response depends on the organizational culture, since change in the culture affects every aspect of the organization. Other studies concur that because norms guide attitudes and behavior of members of an organization, they can be used as strategies to bring about change and improve productivity (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kilman, Saxton, & Serpa, 1985, cited in Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Deal (1985) also observed that school reform policies could succeed only when they are tied to the school culture. Schools have unique cultures; therefore understanding how members of a particular school react to a particular change initiative is critical for school outcomes. Therefore, educational changes intended to improve school performance receive better attention when all members collectively accept the change.

Often, change that occurs in the structure of a school does not affect the whole system (Burke, 2008). Schlechty (1997) states: “Structural change that is not supported by cultural change will eventually be overwhelmed by the culture, for it is in the culture that any organization finds meaning and stability” (p. 136). In a related study, Newman & Associates (1996) note: “Structural innovations cannot be understood, and should not be undertaken without considering school culture” (p. 14). Fullan (2001b) concurs that when schools re-culture, there will be deep attainment and more lasting change. As Sarason (1996) observed:

If you want to change and improve the climate and outcomes of schooling – both for students and teachers, there are features of the school culture that have to be
changed, and if they are not changed, your well-intentioned efforts will be defeated. (p. 340)

Organizational culture plays a key role in school change initiatives and, therefore, should be a principal consideration when any educational change is being initiated. When change programs are tied to the cultural aspect of the school they become sustained.

School Culture and School Leadership

This section encapsulates the role of school leadership that emphasizes on cultural practices to bring change and achieve the necessary outcomes. Leadership plays a crucial role in school performance. As Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) affirmed: “The need for truly effective leadership is great” (p. 123). Collins and Porras (1997) define leadership as “top executive(s) who displayed high levels of persistence, overcame significant obstacles, attracted dedicated people, influenced groups of people toward the achievement goals, and played key roles in guiding their companies through crucial episodes in their history” (p. 262). Leadership is “vital to school effectiveness” (Marzano, et al., 2005, p. 4).

Other scholars confirmed that leadership matters greatly in organizational change and performance (Burke, 2008; Sergiovanni, 2001a). Some researchers have pointed out that, “the single most visible factor that distinguishes major cultural changes that succeed from those that fail is competent leadership” (Kotter & Heskett, 1992 cited in Burke, 2008, p. 262). Fullan (2001b) indicated that leadership is needed for problems that do not have easy answers. He states: Leadership is not mobilizing others to solve problems we already know how to solve, but to help them confront problems that have never yet been successfully addressed” (p. 3)
In his book *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, Schein (2010) points out that leaders are the main architects of culture, and they determine the kind of leadership that will be acceptable in future. Schein encourages leaders to endeavor to improve organizational culture if its elements are dysfunctional in order to sustain the survival of the organization. For Schein, a leader is anyone who facilitates progress towards a desired outcome.

Furthermore, Fullan (2001b) identified five components of leadership that can reinforce positive change and performance: leaders “should pursue moral purpose, understand change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge building, and strive for coherence” (p. 11). According to Fullan, “moral purpose involves acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole” (p. 10). He argues that without a moral purpose, school leaders cannot be effective in pursuing a culture of change.

Fullan further posits that leaders with the above five components, together with school members’ commitment, produce outcomes such as “enhanced student performance, increased capacity of teachers, greater involvement of parents and community members, engagement of students, an all-around satisfaction and enthusiasm about going further, and greater pride for all in the system” (p. 10). The interaction between these features enables the schools to meet school objectives and make a difference in the lives of students. Furthermore Fullan (2002) argues that leadership types such as charismatic and visionary cannot achieve the lasting reforms as leaders with moral purpose because the former are high-profile flashy performers. He indicated that
leaders possessing an intense humility and professional will are more likely to attain sustainable performance.

In a related study, Sergiovanni (2001b) pointed out that it is the school leadership’s responsibility to cultivate a school’s character. The author explained that school character has similar features of a human being’s character. According to Sergiovanni the character of individuals refers to their integrity, reliability, fortitude, sense of purpose, steadiness, and unique qualities of style and substance that distinguish these persons from others. Substance, distinctive qualities, and moral underpinnings are particularly important. Leaders with character anchor their practice in ideas, values, and commitments, bring to their practice distinctive qualities of style and substance, and are morally diligent in advancing the integrity of the schools they lead. (p. 76)

The author explained that school character builds when leaders incorporates moral, intellectual, communal, and political virtues into the organizational culture, and which help them to examine their activities to reflect on schoolwork. He argues that a school’s organizational character adds values to it and “may well be the most important ingredient in any school’s success formula” (p. x). He added that every school has a unique lifeworld that creates the schools’ distinctive character. The lifeworld comprises a school’s values, traditions, meanings, rituals, norms, and purposes that defines the schools culture. It is the lifeworld that usually determines the kinds of approaches and strategies school leaders initiate to achieve school outcomes (Sergiovanni, 2001b).

Deal and Kennedy (1983) describe the roles of an effective leader in the following: they are symbolic leaders who pay attention to minute but important cultural details, they “reflect desired values in speech and behavior; anoint heroes and heroines
among teachers, students, and parents; and tell stories about the school” (p. 15). Such small details can transform school culture over time.

Leadership has been linked to the effective functioning of complex organizations (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood, & Wisenbaker, 1978; Marzano et al., 2005; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Leadership in schools is considered vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school. Marzano and colleagues (2005) describe the cultural responsibility of a leader as “the extent to which a leader fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community cooperation among staff” (p. 48). The authors explained that cultural leadership take interest in members’ wellbeing, foster unity among staff, share and provide understanding of organizational purpose and vision among staff. According to the authors, “the effective leader builds a culture that positively influences teachers, who in turn, positively influence students” (p. 47). However, researchers alert that culture’s influence on an organization’s effectiveness could either be positive or negative (Hanson, 2001; Marzano et al., 2005).

Additionally, Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine (1999) affirm that it is not the building of principals that can directly affect student achievement; rather an effective school culture is the tool with which leaders can foster change. Sergiovanni (2001a) observed that the leaders of successful schools, shape a culture that upholds the notion of success. He states:

When expressing this cultural force, the principal assumes the role of “high priest,” seeking to define, strengthen, and articulate those enduring values, beliefs, and cultural strands that give the school its unique identity over time. As high priest, the principal is engaged in legacy building, and in creating, nurturing, and in teaching an organizational saga that defines the school as a distinct entity with an identifiable culture that builds institutional character. (p. 105)
The author further outlined some activities that leadership with cultural perspective exhibit:

Leadership activities associated with the cultural view include articulating school purposes and mission; socializing new members to the school; telling stories and maintaining or reinforcing myths, traditions, and beliefs; explaining “the way things operate around here”; developing and displaying systems of symbols over time; and rewarding those who reflect this culture. (p. 105)

The outcome of this cultural view of leadership is that it bonds the members of school subcultures together and binds them to the work of the school. Members appreciate and become committed to the school and its mission and are happy to be part of the school (Marzano et al., 2005). Since cultural life in schools is built on reality, the school leaders can influence the building of that reality by laying emphasis on “values, symbols, beliefs, and shared meanings of parents, students, teachers, and others conceived as a group or community” (Sergiovanni, 2001a, p. 105). Culture influences every aspect of the school, therefore, school leaders engrained in the cultural perspective tend to be effective leaders, and subsequently, improve school outcomes.

**Leaderships Types in Organizations**

“Leaders are people who do the right thing, managers are people who do things right” (Hartsfield, 2011, p. 136).

Generally, organizational people are leaders based on the formal positions they occupy. Some others become leaders when members of the organization accept their behavior and regard them as influential. The leadership that is assigned to formal positions is referred to as “assigned leadership”, whereas the leadership that is related to an individual’s behavior is known as an “emergent leadership” (Northouse, 2013, p. 8).
Assigned leadership is assigned responsibilities as a result of the positions they occupy. These include planning, supervising, organizing, commanding, and controlling (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Northouse, 2013). In the capacity of assigned leadership, leaders act as managers, emphasizing the compliance of staff members through reward and punishment systems (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Northouse, 2013).

Furthermore, Northouse indicates that the emergent leadership status is acquired over a period through communication behaviors such as “being verbally involved, being informed, seeking others opinion, initiating new ideas, and being firm or rigid” (p. 8). In a related study Curtin (2004) confirms that emergent leaders initiate different strategies and approaches to accomplish the organizational tasks.

Northouse (2013) points out that whereas assigned leadership management functions seek to provide consistency, orders, and stability to organizations, the emergent leadership thrives for adaptive and constructive change and movement. Northouse pointed out that both assigned leadership and emergent leadership influence other members of the organization. He argues that both the assigned and emergent leadership are required for an organization to prosper.

Various forms of emergent leadership styles exist in organizations that aim at helping members to improve themselves. Some of these include participatory (Northouse, 2013; Yukl, 2010), servant (Greenleaf, 1977; Northouse, 2013) and supportive (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; Schust, 2011). The demonstration of these emergent leadership styles brings about the differences in performance of school leaders.
The Concept of School Effectiveness

Schools are established on the premise that they would continually experience progress and be effective in their dealings. Effective schools produce quality outcomes, therefore educational planners and leadership greatest concern is how to sustain school effectiveness (Edmonds, 1979; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Maslowski, 2001). Research indicates that initial studies on school mostly focused on educational opportunities for all (Maslowski, 2001), but of late, interest has shifted to improvement of the quality of schools (Edmonds, 1979; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997). The goal of many educational studies is to investigate how the school can produce good results.

In general terms, every school performing well can be termed effective (Scheerens, 1992). Scheerens defines effectiveness as the “extent to which the desired output is achieved” (p. 3). It also refers to the degree to which educational means or processes result in the attainment of educational goals. Though these expectations apply to all schools, their materialization in each school depends on the factors especially the organizational culture at play in the schools. This explains the differences in school performance.

Several research findings outline various characteristics that contribute to make schools successful (Edmonds, 1979; Gray, Hopkins, Reynolds, Wilcox, Farrell, Jesson, 1999; Kirk & Jones, 2004; Lezotte, 1991; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011; Scheerens, 1992; Weber, 1971). In his study of urban schools, Weber observed that the features that contributed to school success include strong leadership, high expectations, and a serene atmosphere (cited in Edmonds, 1979, p. 16-7).
Similarly, Edmond (1979) in a study of the poor in urban areas added “emphasis on mastery of basic skills, emphasis on the achievement of objectives, and regular monitoring of pupils’ progress” to the list (p. 22). Lezotte (1991) laid emphasis on the environment and noted that schools perform well when the environment is safe and orderly, void of oppression, and conducive to teaching and learning. Some other studies found that successful schools have high expectation for success, a clear and focused mission, an instructional leadership, a safe and orderly environment, and opportunity to teach and learn (Kirk & Jones, 2004; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). Such schools frequently monitor students’ progress, and have strong home-school relations. These findings show that many factors are at play if school must be effective.

Research focusing on school in developing countries identified several factors as contributing to school effectiveness. Fuller and Clarke (1994) point out that the factors that influence school effectiveness include availability of textbooks and supplementary reading materials, quality of teachers, length of instructional time, and work demand on students.

In a related study Levin and Lockheed (1993) suggested three elements that could enhance school performance. These include investing in inputs, facilitating conditions, and the will to act. The inputs that must be invested include instructional materials, time for learning, and teaching practices. The facilitating conditions include community involvement such as community-school relationship and parent involvement; school-based professionalism such as principal leadership, teacher collegiality and commitment, accountability, flexibility – relevant curricula adjustments in levels, organizational
flexibility, and pedagogy flexibility. The will to act includes vision and decentralized solutions.

The scholars likewise indicate that a central philosophy, overall strategy, community involvement, empowerment, active learning focus, teacher expectations, and funding resources could promote school outcomes (Levin & Lockheed, 1993). Again Rutter and colleagues (1979) found that some organizational members’ behaviors and attitudes contribute to school effectiveness. These include group management in the classroom, high expectations and standards, positive teacher models, feedback on performance, consistency of school values, and students’ acceptance of the school norms.

The findings from the various works on school effectiveness include informal features that do not fall within the domain of the formal structure, the technical, or the political aspects of the school. Since behavior is guided by culture, the attitudes and behaviors identified demonstrate the existing culture of the schools. Therefore, reform strategies that are influenced by school values, norms, beliefs, traditions, and basic assumptions determine the outcomes the schools attain.

Furthermore, Scheerens and Bosker (1997) argue that the culture of a school is related in some way to its goals and structure. They pointed out that culture’s relation to the goals is about the normative positions and concerns the processes and interactions that are associated with being part of the school. Scheerens and Bosker further explained that culture in relation to structure concerns the interrelationship between units and members of the organization, and are more informal than to the formal. In a nutshell a
school’s organizational culture influences how it functions, it effectiveness and subsequently the outcomes it is able to realize.

**Some Cultural Strategies for School Effectiveness**

Studying the culture of schools requires an insight into the best cultural practices that help schools to function appropriately to fulfill their purpose and achieve their goals. Hoy and Miskel (2008) identified four kinds of school culture that describe the shared beliefs of teachers in a school. These are efficacy, trust, academic optimism, and control. The first three promote higher levels of student achievement, while the last impedes the socio-emotional development of students (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

A culture of efficacy refers to the shared beliefs of capacity and ability of teachers and administrators. A collective teacher efficacy is the shared perception of teachers that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have positive effects on the students; and this explains the differences in the effects that schools have on students (Bandura, 1993; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Some of the goals schools pursue include raising student achievement scores, increasing the rate of parent involvement, and increasing student enrolment.

Collective teacher efficacy can emanate from mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional arousal (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Mastery experience is the collective successes that teachers experience as a group, which build strong beliefs in their sense of efficacy (Goddard, Hoy & Hoy, 2004). As Hoy and Miskel (2008) explained, vicarious experience comes through the stories teachers hear about their colleagues or the accomplishments of other schools while verbal persuasion involves talks, workshops, professional development activities, and feedback about
achievements. In sum, collective efficacy promotes student achievement (Goddard, LoGerfo, & Hoy, 2004).

Another way to conceptualize the culture of school is in terms of faculty trust – the collective shared beliefs of teachers (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Trust among teachers facilitates cooperation, enhances openness, promotes group cohesiveness, and improves student achievement (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy, 1994; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2001).

Additionally, collective culture of optimism of principals and teachers creates a positive school environment that has positive impacts on student outcomes (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). However, a culture of control is the conceptualization of school culture in terms of the dominant beliefs that school leaders and teachers share about controlling students. Though pupil control is a central aspect of school life, when it becomes very rigid (custodial culture), it can result in several negative outcomes for students (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

Furthermore, some scholars have shown that a very promising strategy for improving schools, and helping students to learn at high levels, is for schools to establish professional learning communities (PLC) (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; Eaker, DuFour, & Burnette, 2002; Fullan, 2001a; Hargreaves, 2004; Kruse & Louis, 2009). The essence of a PLC is to have personnel collaborate and build social relations to discuss their profession, in order to help them perform their fundamental responsibility of getting committed to the learning of every student (DuFour et al., 2010).
Educational scholars who endorse the PLC concept argue that since the teaching profession pays homage to the importance of learning by doing, when professionals as well learn by doing in a collective manner, it could result in proficiency. The focus of a PLC is on what the adult members in the school do to generate the desired outcomes in students. However, Hargreaves (2004) pointed out that PLCs thrive better in affluent communities than in poor neighborhoods. When this occurs, the outcome includes inequality in knowledge economy and social skills, which favor the affluent more than the poor.

DuFour and colleagues (2010) further explain that a PLC has a collaborative culture that focuses on learning for all. It is “composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all” (p. 3). Collaboration is a systematic process where teachers willingly work together with the aim of impacting their classroom practices, thus, resulting in better outcomes for the students, team, and school as a whole. Therefore school could become effective and able to help all students to learn when the adults continually collaborate to learn. In other words when the adults engage in job-embedded learning as part of their daily practices, they are able to assist students in a better way. However, the collaboration leads to improvement only when the members align their focus on the right school issues.

Scholars also argue that since it is impossible for any personnel to know everything they need to know about their profession, there is a need for an ongoing learning to help them remain current in their fields (DuFour et al., 2010). The PLCs
serves this purpose to support teachers’ continuous learning. In schools with PLCs emphasis is both on the teaching of students and ensuring that all students learn the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Indeed, the best professionals could teach students, but if there is no mechanism to monitor students learning, most of what teachers teach, may go down the drain, and impede the attainment of student outcomes.

DuFour and colleagues (2010) outline some measures that schools could employ to help all students attain high levels of learning:

The members of a PLC create and are guided by a clear and compelling vision of what the organization must become in order to help all students learn. They make collective commitments clarifying what each member will do to create such an organization, and they use result-oriented goals to mark their progress. Members work together to clarify exactly what each student must learn, monitor each student’s learning on a timely basis, provide systematic interventions that ensure students receive additional time and support for learning when they struggle, and extend and enrich learning when students have already mastered the intended outcomes. (p. 11)

Learning organization are those willing to learn from their external environments (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Sarason, 1996). Transforming individuals and organizations requires a new language, which provides the same understanding for all stakeholders with regard to what they do (Kegan & Lahey, 2001). When a cultural shift from the traditional practice to a PLC occurs, a new language emerges. Once every educator understands the language, efforts to reform their schools will be based on a purposeful progression on a journey to success. As DuFour and others (2010.) argue, “educators will find it easier to move forward to where they want to go if they first agree on what they are” (p. 8).

In a related study another scholar indicated that an effective improvement process requires an honest assessment of the current reality – an effort to determine truth (Collins,
The reality is based on the organizational culture of the school, which consist of the assumptions, values, beliefs, expectations, and habits that constitute the norms for a school, and guide the work of educators within it. Thus, the new language imbibed from the PLCs helps them to achieve the desired outcomes. A scholarly work assert that PLC helps members to make honest assessment of their current conditions, step out of them, and employ fresh and critical perspectives that will help attain their goal (DuFour et al., 2010).

As PLC advocates encourage schools that seek to improve outcomes to first, address questions of the school’s purpose (Bardwick, 1996; DuFour et al., 2010; Drucker, 1992; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994). Several other studies corroborate that clarity of purpose among members helps schools to be effective (Lezotte, 1991; Newmann & Wehlage, 1996; Lickona & Davidson, 2005). Lickona and Davidson suggested a unity of purpose among members of a school and stated:

Great schools “row as one”; they are quite clear in the same boat, pulling in the same direction in unison. The best schools we visited were tightly aligned communities marked by a palpable sense of common purpose and shared identity among staff- a clear sense of “we”. By contrast, struggling schools feel fractured; there is a sense that people work in the same school but not toward the same goals. (p. 65)

Some works on effective schools posit that clarifying and reaffirming a school’s mission is a way of making schools effective (Kirk & Jones, 2004; Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). Other scholars concur that merely writing a mission statement does not automatically change how people act (DuFour et al., 2010; Pfetter & Sutton, 2000). These explain that what brings about school transformation is educators’ ability to make their vision, values, and goals; which are the pillars of upon which a school’s PLC rests, clear.
The mission pillar of the school asks the question: “Why do we exist?” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 30). As the scholars have pointed out, this question helps to reach a consensus about the primary purpose of the school, thus, clarifying the purpose and helping to establish priorities and guide decisions. The vision of the school attempts to answer the question: “What must we become in order to accomplish our fundamental purpose?” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 30). According to these authors, “vision provides a sense of direction, and a basis for assessing both the current reality of the school and potential strategies, programs, and procedures to improve upon that reality” (p. 30).

The vision is what helps members to create a compelling, attractive, and realistic future of what they wish their school to become. Several other researchers have emphasized on the importance of shared vision in the success of schools and other organizations (Autry, 2001; Blanchard, 2007; Eastwood & Louis, 1992; Kotter, 1996; Schlechty, 1997; Senge 1990, Tichy, 1997). A shared vision that is supported by the school community is able to drive the school to where it hopes to reach.

The third foundational pillar of PLCs, values, is the collective commitments that are required to answer the question “How must we behave to create the school that will achieve our purpose?” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 33). These authors pointed out that “when members understand the purpose of their school, know where it is heading to, and pledge to act in certain ways to move it in the right direction, they do not need prescriptive rules and regulations to guide their daily work” (p. 33). Values direct how each member can contribute to the school’s improvement agenda. Once the commitment occurs, it replaces
policies manuals and directives, and helps members to enjoy greater autonomy and creativity.

Values provide the moral backing for leaders to address teachers’ inappropriate behavior, since misbehavior is regarded as a violation of the collective commitment. Leaders become the promoters and custodians of what the members collectively declared as sacred and important. Bolman and Deal (2000) describe the shared values as the “vital social glue that infuses an organization with passion and purpose” (p. 185). As a crucial role of school leadership, creating a community of shared commitment enhances a school’s effectiveness (Collins & Porras, 1997; Fullan, 2001a; Lezotte, 1991; Sergiovanni, 2001a).

The final foundation pillar of a PLC requires members to clarify the specific goals they hope to achieve as a result of their improvement initiative. It requires members to ask the question, “How will we know if all of this is making a difference?” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 33). When goals are set, they guide members to work towards a common purpose and prepare the ground for members to achieve their expected outcomes. They motivate members to honor their commitment, thus, helping the school to move towards fulfilling its fundamental purpose of the learning of all students. Many educational scholars and organizational theorists assert that goals play key roles in the performance of the various subcultures of the organization (DuFour et al., 2010).

Creating the collaborative culture of a PLC accrues several benefits. Research shows that when school leadership initiates a PLC, it provides the opportunity to build consensus and seek the support of a guiding coalition before launching any reform
initiative (DuFour et al., 2010). These authors and others advocate the creation of a guiding coalition, or leadership team, as the first step for a school leadership that wants to be effective (Marzano et al., 2005). A culture of PLC allows staff members to learn together and share knowledge.

A scholarly work points out that, any school leadership interested in building a PLC lives beyond the ordinary notion that “accept the system as it is and lead it” (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 185). A PLC also has the potential to develop the capacity and confidence of staff members to confront unforeseen challenges that will surface in the future; making them the resource to provide students with quality education. In a documented interview with Hargreaves (2004), he mentions, “a professional learning community is an ethos that infuses every single aspect of a school’s operation. When a school becomes a professional learning community, everything in the school looks different than before” (p. 48).

From this conversation, a PLC can help change many things in the school. It is a complete paradigm shift, which cuts across every aspect of organizational culture: basic assumptions, beliefs and values, artifacts, and traditions among others. Efforts to help PLCs succeed requires a modification of the elements of the school culture as well as those of its subcultures. It is then that the contributions of the stakeholders will be meaningful, and bring the changes and outcomes that the school aims to achieve.

**Theoretical Framework**

The organizational culture theory guided this study. The theory draws on the cultural approach to studying organizations (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000;
Ott, 1989). The cultural perspective traces its roots originally from anthropology but contemporary researches embrace various disciplines including anthropology, ethno-archaeology, social psychology, artificial intelligence, sociology, communication, business administration, public administration, and educational administration (Ott, 1989). It emanated as a departure from the rational dominant structure and systems approaches to organizational theory. Though the study drew on the numerous studies of people who suggested this perspective, it is deeply rooted in Edgar Schein’s diagnosis of organizational culture (1990, 1992, 2004, & 2010).

Schein’s approach lends itself to the study of school culture because it provides the levels at which culture manifests in organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Sathe, 1985). Studying culture at the various levels provides the opportunity to observe the higher levels of school management from which emerge policies, rewards, formulation of control systems as well as other subcultures. This enables the researcher to observe culture as the byproduct of their practices (Schein, 1990). It helps the researcher to observe the systematic effects of possible interventions implemented and understand how the schools’ cultures developed over time (Beckhard & Harris, 1977; Schein, 1990).

The levels of culture. To enable the researcher analyze the organizational culture of the selected schools, it is imperative to distinguish the three fundamental levels at which culture manifests in the organization: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1990, 2004).

The figure below shows the levels of culture in an organization.
**Level 1**

**Artifacts and Practices: What you can see (hard to decipher)**
- Visible organizational structures and processes: symbols, rituals, rites, myths,
- Visible and audible behavior patterns

**Level 2**

**Espoused Values: What you can talk about**
- Sense of what is desirable
- Strategies, goals, philosophies

**Level 3**

**Basic Assumptions: What you take for granted**
- Relationship to the environment
- Nature of reality and truth
- Nature of human nature
- Nature of human relationships

*Figure 2: Levels of Organizational Culture*

**Level 1: Culture as artifacts.** At level one of Schein’s description are artifacts, which are at the surface of culture. They manifest as audible and visible behavior patterns and other physical things that one can readily see, hear, and feel when one enters an organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Maslowski, 2001; Ott, 1989; Sathe, 1985; Schein, 1992). Artifacts communicate information about the organization’s beliefs, values, assumptions, and expectations. These artifacts include physical environment, symbols, rites, rituals, ceremonies, heroes and heroines, myths, sagas, language, artistic creation, style, patterns of dressings, stories told about the organization, behavior patterns, organizational processes, and other permanent archival manifestations.
such as logos, mottos, company records, products, statements of philosophy, and annual reports (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Peterson & Deal, 2002; Schein, 1992, 2010; Ott, 1989).

Scholarly works show that these artifacts are tangible and are manifested visually, behaviorally, and verbally (van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, & Coetsee, 2005; van der Westhuizen, Oosthuizen, & Wolhuter, 2008). The visual manifestation include the infrastructure and facilities, and symbols such as trophies, anthems, logos, and uniforms. The behavior manifestations are defined through the rituals, ceremonies, and rites. The verbal manifestations are the written or oral expressions. They are portrayed as the heroes and heroines, storytelling, recognition and rewards, and rules and regulations. Sergiovanni (2001a) pointed out that the patterns of administrative behavior and organizational leadership are also described as cultural artifacts rather than expressions of individual leadership styles or patterns of behavior.

In the description of school culture, Kruse and Louis (2009) indicated that school artifacts include “the way students dress, recitation of the pledge, how the compound is cleaned, the reception given to visitors, how gentle or harsh students talk to each other, or how students comport themselves in the classroom” (p. 45). Artifacts could include unions used to address important issues in and outside the organizations such as advocacy and welfare groups (Ott, 1989). In schools these could be parent teachers associations (PTA), alumni associations, disciplinary committees, or students’ representative council (SRC).

Artifacts communicate to both inhabitants of the school and visitors what the school believes itself to be (Kruse & Louis, 2009). Many authors agree with Schein that
artifacts are visible and easily observed but hard to interpret without an understanding of other levels of culture (Hoy, 1990; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Schein, 1992). For instance, a visitor (outsider) and the school leader of a school (insider) will react differently to the same artifact in a school. Schein (1990) indicated that, the outsider’s perception of an organization does not explain why it is so or what it means to the participants. The insider explanation of what is seen provides the actual meaning for the specific artifacts.

Cultural artifacts are connected to the basic assumptions of a culture. Therefore, studying the artifacts without much insight into their connections could lead to inaccurate inferences (Pondy, Frost, Morgan, & Dandridge, 1983; Pondy, Boland, & Thomas, 1988; Schein, 1990; Wilkins & Dyer, 1988). Artifacts are collective expressions of values and expected patterns of behavior (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Ott, 1989). Ott stated: “They help create, maintain, and transmit shared meanings and perceptions of truths and realities within organizations” (p. 25). He added that these truths, meanings, realities, and the social constructions of an organization are collectively defined and thus become its culture. Though they are very important, people who use them unconsciously take them for granted.

**Level 2: Culture as espoused values.** Schein (2004) shows that espoused values are at level two of, and are central to organizational culture. Ott (1989) indicates that in the language of organizational culture, values, beliefs, ethical codes, moral codes, and ideologies all mean the same thing. Values are beliefs of what is desirable (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Kruse and Louis (2009) concur that values provide information about
enduring beliefs, or tendencies to prefer certain modes of conduct to others. Shared values provide reasons why people behave the way they do (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Jones, 2010; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Lunenburg, 2011; Ott, 1989). They are the ethical cornerstones for why some things are preferred over others. In other words, they are the overall guiding principles that direct the choices an organization makes (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Ott, 1989).

Beliefs are what members of an organization believe to be true or not true, or the reality or non-reality in their minds (Ott, 1989). Values (including beliefs) are so important to members that they cherish and protect them. For Deal and Peterson (1999), values are “the conscious expressions of what an organizations stands for” (p. 26). Other scholars confirm that values are the standard of goodness, quality, or excellence that undergirds behavior and decision-making (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Ott, 1989). Along the line of organizational culture theory, some educational researchers treat values as the defining aspect of culture (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Kruse & Louis, 2009).

Core values capture the deeper sense of an organization’s priorities virtually in every aspect. They are intangible and cannot easily be understood. In schools, values could include participative and consensual decision-making, collaborative teamwork, intimacy, trust, cooperation, and egalitarianism (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). These authors asserted that beliefs and values are held in high esteem, widely shared, and provide guidance to organizational behavior.

Hoy and Miskel (2008) note that values are the beliefs of what is desirable, and a reflection of the underlying basic assumptions. They define basic organizational character
as well as what members should do to attain organizational success. As these scholars pointed out, when members get to know the organization’s values and what it stands for, they become committed to uphold such standards. Therefore, they are more likely to make decisions that will support the organization’s standards and develop a sense of belonging. Values that become the embodiment of an organizational ideology or philosophy can serve as a guide to, and as a way of dealing with, challenges and uncertainties (Deal & Peterson, 1999).

Researchers posit that successful organizations are those who share beliefs and values that foster effectiveness (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). However, Hoy and Miskel were quick to argue that values may not necessarily define excellence because what promotes excellence at a time may not do likewise at another time.

The appropriate method for studying at this level is through interviews. Schein (1990) notes that examining values, norms, ideologies, charters, and philosophies through interviews will require participants to explain why certain observed things happen the way they do. Using open-ended interviews will help to understand how people feel and think. Schein argues that using questionnaires and surveys is not appropriate for this level because they prejudice the dimension to be studied. Cultural dimensions at this level cannot be predicted until deeper levels of culture have been examined.

**Level 3: Culture as basic assumptions.** At Schein’s third and deepest level, culture is a collective manifestation of tacit assumptions (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Ott, 1989; Schein, 2010). They include the beliefs, values, ethical and moral codes, and ideologies that have become so ingrained that they are often taken for granted (Kruse & Louis,
Schein noted that the only way one can have better understanding of a group’s organizational culture is by understanding its shared basic assumptions and the learning process by which they came to be. He explained that when solutions to problems work repeatedly, they tend to fall out of consciousness, and members are often unaware they exist. As some authors pointed out, basic assumptions define “what things to pay attention to, what things mean, how to react emotionally to what is going on, and what actions to take in various kinds of situations” (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 22).

Kruse and Louis (2009) indicate that in schools, “teachers may view teaching as an art or skill, their colleagues as resources or rivals, and attending workshops as essential to improved practice or waste of time” (p. 46). Though these underlying assumptions are scarcely mentioned, they influence the daily activities and efforts to initiate, embrace, or despise change.

The underlying assumptions also influence the culture by either blurring or making organizational messages clearer (Kruse & Louis, 2009). For example when teachers have a basic underlying assumption of continual improvement and a high sense of collective efficacy, they will continue to confess positively to encourage themselves that they can improve their school’s outcomes (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). These assumptions are imbibed and control their mode of practice. Similarly, schools with a basic assumption of support orientation will value people helping each other, communicating, collaborating, and caring for the school and its members (Kruse & Louis, 2009).
However, these authors have cautioned that basic underlying assumptions may not yield the desired results if they are not backed with discussions and daily remembrance of what members expect to change or outcomes they expect to achieve.

Further scholarly work points out that leadership is the originator of beliefs and values that enable a group to deal with its internal and external problems (Schein, 2010). If what they initially proposed works over an appreciable time, it eventually becomes a shared assumption. Therefore, if any leader wants to understand the basic underlying assumptions of a school, which are at the deeper level of culture, he or she needs to assess how the basic assumptions function at that level.

Schein (1990) indicates that the basic underlying assumptions require a very thorough observation, focused questions, and active involvement of motivated participants of the organization in an intensive analysis. This method helped me as an outsider to tease out and interpret the unconsciously taken-for-granted assumptions, which actually determine the thought processes, perceptions, feelings, and behavior of school participants. It also helped decipher the meanings inherent in various behaviors and other artifacts I observed (Schein, 1990, 2004). A deeper understanding could enable the researcher to recognize and interpret ambiguities that could be inherent in the school culture.

Some researchers have opposing views to the study of culture (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede & Bond, 1988; Kilmann, 1984). Hofstede and Bond contend that one cannot just learn about cultures through description, and suggested that the appropriate way is to make comparison of cultures between countries to identify the variations. They posit that
cultural differences should be measured indirectly by inferring from data on collective behavior such as national wealth distribution over population, mobility of the social classes, prevalence of political instability or labor conflicts, prevalence of traffic accidents, or suicides. The authors contend that it is inappropriate to measure culture through asking well-designed questions about people’s values and beliefs. They argue that the measurement of culture requires the use of matching samples from different countries. Matching sample means people with similar characteristics but different nationalities (Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

Another school of thought claims that the analytical descriptive approach is more appropriate to study culture (Martin & Siehl, 1983; Schall, 1983; Trice & Beyer, 1993; Wilkins & Dyer, 1988). These scholars suggest that culture must be empirically measured in small units, in which the focus of the study becomes the representation of the whole organizational culture. For instance, these researchers could study the rituals and rites, symbolic manifestations, or other cultural elements and draw conclusions that it depicts the organizational culture of a unit (Schein, 1990).

The purpose of this study is to explore the organizational culture of schools holistically. The diagnostic description Schein provides will best suit this exploration to bring out the real culture of the selected schools and meanings attached to the components of culture.

Application of theory to the study. Deal and Peterson (1999) made an assertion that when one wants to understand a group’s culture, one must attempt to grasp its basic
assumptions as well as the learning processes by which they come. These assumptions can be understood through an in-depth interviewing and extensive observation processes.

Schein’s suggestion falls in line with the organizational culture epistemology that qualitative research is useful for studying organizational culture (Ott, 1989; Rossman et al., 1988; Schein, 1990). Ott (1989) mentioned that qualitative research methods are best suited for seeking a thorough description of a limited sphere, such as deciphering the basic assumption of one organization’s culture. He stated that qualitative organizational research is “firsthand inspection of ongoing organizational life” (p. 102).

The epistemology uses inductive approach and tends to recognize the presence of the tacit elements that shape the experiences of specified constructs, and makes them explicit (Ashkanasy et al., 2000). Qualitative approach provides the means for inductive analysis, thus enabling the building of patterns from specific data. During observation in the organization, the qualitative approach allows for a first-hand account of events and things as well as a more reliable description. Its priority is to describe what is going on in a given time at a given place to help make sense out of what is described (Ott, 1989).

Qualitative research lends itself for participant observation and archival searches, while emphasizing confidentiality, where applicable, for ethical reasons. From this lens, trustworthiness can be safeguarded through the implementation of measures such as triangulating data from multiple sources and literature, member checks, peer debriefings, reflexivity, thick detailed description, and audit trails.

Using the diagnosis of organizational culture as a tool, the researcher was able to set the parameters for the study in the schools and explain the behavior of the schools’
stakeholders. Schein’s three levels of culture helped to frame the research questions that guided the study. The RQ1 sought to explore the artifacts described in Levels One and the espoused values in Level Two. These were the tangible artifacts: visual, behavior, and verbal; and the intangible culture: beliefs, values, mission, and expectations garnered from data. Through the lens of Levels One and Three emerged the research RQ2, which investigated the behavior patterns and relationships of the human aspect of the school: subcultures or stakeholders. Finally, since the schools leaders were in charge of the schools, the cultural levels provided the lens to view leaders’ approaches as the researcher gathered data in response to RQ3.

The qualitative approach to study schools allowed the researcher to gather data from multiple data sources including observation, one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. It provided participants the opportunity to discuss even the more subtle aspects of their organizational worlds. Gathering information about how participants viewed their school culture required in-depth investigation through interviews. Participants told stories and talked about how they did things to help realize their expectations. During observation the researcher tried to understand the meanings participants ascribed to artifacts, proceedings, and relationships.

Gathering data through Schein’s diagnostic approach helped to illuminate the various levels of culture in the schools. It provided the opportunity to unearth the schools tangible and intangible culture and the meanings they attach to them. The values, which was the basis of the intangible culture revealed how members communicated, rationalized different situations, and justified what they said or did as school communities (Ott, 1989).
Knowledge about their values enabled the researcher to understand the sense they made out of the artifacts and basic assumptions (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Ott, 1989).

Exploring the schools’ culture, provided insights about the subcultures and the various ways thy participated. Gathering data through Schein’s lens provided data on the types of human nature, the nature of relationships, and what they considered as reality and truth. Finally, the approach helped to identify the emergent school leadership styles. These explained the behavior patterns that leaders espoused aside the ascribe roles for their positions. These techniques helped the school leaders to create appropriate school communities for the stakeholders: how they related to staff members, students, alumni, and parents and community. It also described the various ways in which school leaders engaged stakeholders and provided insights about the channels of communication. This study helped the researcher to identify the kinds of support systems available to promote students and assist staff efficiency.

Schein’s three levels of culture enabled the generation of themes including tangible discernible culture: visible, behavioral, and verbal manifestations; intangible indiscernible culture: mission, beliefs, values, and expectations; subcultural interactions; and leadership styles: participative, supportive, and servant. Conducting the research through this approach helped to provide findings that filled the gap in literature regarding the organizational culture of senior high schools in the Ghana.

The advantage of the Schein’s diagnostic approach to the study culture over other methods is that the empirical knowledge gained provided a more balanced data. This is because it provided the opportunity to observe cultural origins and dynamics in the power
centers, where elements of the culture are created and changed by founders, leaders, and powerful managers (Schein, 1990). It made provision for a holistic study of culture of the school at all three levels.

The approach’s weakness, however, is that the approach neither provides the descriptive breadth of ethnographic nor the methodological rigor of quantitative hypothesis testing. Rather, it combines ethnographic and clinical research approaches to attempt to understand the concept of culture (Schein, 1990).

In summary, this chapter looked at literature drawn from various scholarly works done on organizational culture and its role in organizations especially in educational institutions. The literature is crucial to address the objectives of this study. It provided insights about the dimensions of organizational culture that should be researched on the field. It also provided the theoretical framework that underpins the study – the three levels of culture Edgar Schein proposed. The next chapter shows how the researcher conducted the study to answer the research questions.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This qualitative research explored the organizational culture of two Ghanaian senior high schools – Presbyterian Boys Senior High School (PRESEC) and Accra Girls High Schools (AGISS) in Ghana. The purpose of the study was to identify how the dominant school culture influenced school outcomes. This purpose provides an opportunity to conduct a qualitative study in which an extensive investigation is required to understand the dynamics of school organizational culture in the context of each setting.

According to Brantilinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson (2005), qualitative research is “a systematic approach to understanding qualities, or the essential nature, of phenomenon within a particular context” (p. 195). Patton (2002) stated regarding qualitative research: It seeks to understand phenomena in “real world settings” (p. 39). For Bryman and Burgess (1999), the language of qualitative research is natural and it helps to understand social reality on its own terms – as it really is – and describes what comes naturally. The authors noted, qualitative research seeks “rich description of people and interactions as they exist and unfold in their native habitats” (p. 122).

Besides taking place in a natural setting within a context, qualitative research regards the researcher as the key instrument: one who incorporates multiple methods including interviews, observation, focus groups, and documents to gather data. As the instrument for this study, the researcher employed these methods to gather data in the schools’ natural settings, conducted an inductive data analysis, focused on meanings participants provided, made room for emergent issues, provided interpretations of findings, and provided a holistic account of the phenomenon under study (Bogdan &
Biklen, 2003; Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993; Brantilinger et al., 2005; Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Golafshani, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002).

Qualitative research permits the researcher to use a theoretical lens to view studies (Bryman & Burgess, 1999; Patton, 2002; Roberts, 2010). In his explanation, Roberts noted that the conceptual or theoretical framework provides the parameters and scaffold for the study, thus explaining the main things to be studied – “the key factors, constructs, or variables, and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 129). The study was therefore viewed through the diagnostic description of culture Edgar Schein proposed. A combination of qualitative tradition, Schein’s levels of culture, and an extensive review of literature engendered the framing of the three research questions that guided this study.

Agreeing with Gay’s (1996) postulation about this approach, the researcher was involved in extensive data gathering in order to gain insights into the phenomenon under study. The rationale for using qualitative research was to capture the actual words of participants, their emic perspectives, and their experiences verbatim. Since the approach captured responses through the voices of participants themselves, it fostered accuracy, credibility, valid descriptions, and justifiable conclusions. Qualitative research helped the researcher to capture the participants’ firsthand accounts of school organizational culture. “Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3).

Qualitative researchers try to understand the reality of phenomenon among individuals or groups, and the cultural settings within which they function. The
phenomenon in this study is the organizational culture of senior high schools and its influence on school outcomes. Getting into the natural settings of the schools to conduct the study provided an understanding of the tangible and intangible culture, subcultural interactions, and the leadership styles and how the interplay of these components fostered school outcomes.

The qualitative approach is relevant for the study of culture because it helps to capture the complexity and richness of a culture (Martin, 2002). Qualitative research uses strategies such as case study, ethnography, participant observation, grounded theory, phenomenological study, and naturalistic approach to explore individuals’ experiences and their shared culture in a group (Creswell, 2012; Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993). The use of case study strategy in this study provided the opportunity to employ the qualitative methods of data collection to have a detailed and in-depth understanding of the organizational culture of the schools.

Qualitative research is endowed with the strength of being able to ascertain the trustworthiness of its findings through the measures of credibility (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It derives its strength from the flexibility that allows one to follow up on emergent issues or gather up more data in response to changes in ideas (Bryman & Burgess, 1999). Following a qualitative tradition to conduct this study permitted in-depth understanding of schools’ culture. Thus, a qualitative case study design was employed to conduct an in-depth study of the schools.
Case Study Design

In this research, the researcher engaged in a qualitative design using the case study approach to exploring the organizational culture of two Ghanaian senior high schools. The researcher chose the descriptive research method because it made room for an in-depth understanding of how participants perceive culture in the schools. The case study design provided in-depth exploration of tangible and intangible culture, subcultural interactions, and the leadership styles within the schools.

Several Researchers indicate that a case study is a detailed examination of a single entity, a process or event, or a collection of archival documents (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2013; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Stake argues that a case study anticipates in order to capture both the complex and the definite characteristics of a single case and to understand its activity within important circumstances.

The researcher chose the schools to understand their unique cultures based on the era of establishment, the founders, the mission of the school, gender status, and the values they uphold. Although the high schools were both boarding and day schools, the study focused on the boarding aspect of the schools because of the important role the boarding system plays in senior high schools education. Schools came up as a direct byproduct of missionary activities.

The missionaries set up boarding schools away from the communities and inculcated an entirely different culture in children because of their inability to convert adults. In their efforts to reach the heart of children, they decided to switch from doing
evangelism on the street to actually doing through the schools. So almost all the schools established before independence were established directly outside the communities. Students had to move away from the communities and stay in the schools often for nine months out of the 12 months in the year. In the schools, students were introduced to a new culture, new religion, a new language, and given new identity. In the initial stages, the acculturation was so intense that some students refused to return to their homes, because they were made to believe that everything in the communities was evil and uncivilized. As such most students preferred to spend their holidays with the missionaries on campus.

The public high school took over this legacy of the boarding system and situated schools away from the communities. By staying in the boarding houses, students were inculcated and acculturated into an entirely different ethos that would otherwise not happen if they were commuting to school from the communities. This boarding school system created a cradle for a type of civilization that is perpetual even after the government took over the management of secondary schools.

Senior high schools were mostly established as boarding schools. In view of this attending high school meant staying in the boarding house to receive the training the schools provide. Although the schools took in day students who commute daily, the influence of the schools are not intense on them as on the boarding students who spend most of their time in the school. Thus, all things being equal, parents preferred their children admitted to the boarding houses to commuting back and forth.
The Presbyterian Church established PRESEC as a mission school to train Christian gentlemen to enrich their missionary activities in Ghana. AGISS on the other hand was the product of the first local government after independence to meet the demands for secondary education and manpower of the new independent nation. These characteristics made the culture of these schools unique and exploring them was necessary to identify the unique characteristics of their culture.

Some studies reveal that case study empirically investigates a phenomenon in the real life context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Other studies assert that case study provides an in-depth, detailed, and vivid account of specific instances of a phenomenon that conveys the readers to the natural setting (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Employing the case study design required that the researcher went into the real world of the senior high schools to empirically investigate the components of organizational culture. The design provided the opportunity to explore culture in detail, and provide an in-depth account of the cultural components, subcultural involvement, and emergent leadership styles. The connections of these components with school outcomes were explored.

The researcher incorporated multiple sources of data collection including interviews, observation, and documents analysis to garner information in the senior high schools. This follows some scholars’ suggestion that case study embraces multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, observation, collection of documents and records, and physical artifacts (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Lancy, 2001; Yin, 2009). The case study strategy allowed the researcher to use of interview protocols to guide the interviews.
and focus of the study interest (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The design also enabled the researchers to write field notes that helped researcher’s reflection on positionality, in order to minimize biases.

Conducting a case study requires the fulfillment of legal and ethical requirements to ensure the protection of participants from any form of mental, physical, or emotional harm (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Before the commencement of the fieldwork, the researcher fulfilled the institutional review board (IRB) requirements. The researcher sought consent of participations, assured them of anonymity and confidentiality, and made them aware that they were free to end the participation at any time they wished.

Hancock and Algozzine (2006) suggest that data collection lasts as long as necessary to adequately define the case – from a few hours to a few hours. In respect to this suggestion, the researcher spent two months extensively gathering data in field. The qualitative case study requires that the researchers appreciate participants’ inside perspectives and experiences, while guarding against their own etic perspective and biases, which could interfere with the credibility of the study. The researcher was constantly reflecting on her position and was vigilant that her own predispositions and perceptions did not interfere with the study at any stage. Self-reflection helped to allow participants’ own views and expressions to dominate the entire study.

**Site Selection**

Presbyterian Boys Secondary (PRESEC) and Accra Girls High (AGISS) schools. Choosing a specific site was fundamental to the design of the study because it served as a
guide in determining the kind of research to conduct (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The criteria for selecting these schools was based on the eras of their establishment, the founders, gender of students, boarding system, and location. The major regimes that account for secondary education introduction and expansion in Ghana were missionaries and the first post-independence government respectively (Arhin, 1993; Graham, 1971; & Quist, 1999). Missionaries originally introduced secondary school education in Ghana.

The mission-based schools were originally single gender boarding schools, and one of such schools is PRESEC. After Ghana gained her independence, the first post-independence government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah established the Ghana Educational Trust (GET) to expand secondary schools nationwide to increase accessibility (Quist, 1999). All these GET schools were coeducational boarding and day institutions, with the exemption of AGISS, which is an all-girls’ school.

The study considered the gender of schools in order to identify the influence of gender in an exclusively male and female school. Since both schools are located in Accra, it helped control extraneous factors such as urban-rural dichotomy and differences in economic status. The study focused on the boarding aspect because the school’s culture had a lesser influence on day students.

Many Ghanaian senior high schools are located in Accra Metropolis, which has a population of about one million with diversity in inhabitants’ ethnicity, culture, occupation, and religion. Needless to say it is a cosmopolitan city and the seat of government, it is endowed with senior high schools of different orientations: public, mission based, or private.
To select the schools, I used the Internet to compile a list of all senior high schools in Accra Metropolis. From the list of schools established before independence, I purposively selected PRESEC, a mission based and an all-male school. Selecting PRESEC over other mission schools was its popularity nationwide. Since PRESEC was a male school, I needed an all-female school to satisfy the selection criteria – a GET school established after independence with similar characteristics, Accra Girls was the only all-girls school available.

This selection was based on the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (2003) that “some decisions are not good or bad in themselves; they are just a matter of choice (p. 61). A scholar suggests that researchers must purposefully select sites that best help understand the problem and research question (Creswell, 2009). Choosing the schools was based on Patton’s (2002) assertion that qualitative tradition typically focuses on small samples selected purposefully to permit inquiry into and understand a phenomenon in-depth. Thus the schools were purposefully selected for an in-depth study of the phenomenon using the previously listed criteria.

**Selection of Participants**

By definition, the sample is the unit of analysis and selection requires serious deliberation because there are many potential participants in any given site (Merriam, 1998; Roberts (2010). Participants were purposefully sampled for the research based on their association with, involvement in, and knowledge about the schools. They possess rich information by virtue of the positions they hold the schools. As Patton (2002) argued,
The logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding. This leads to selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling (p. 46).

The selection of these information-rich participants helped illuminate the questions under study. Additionally, the snowball sampling strategy was used to select the alumni, heads of department, and the prefects for the study. Snowball sampling involves locating information-rich people from those already in contact (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Patton noted, “snowball or chain sampling identifies cases of interest from sampling people who know people who know people who know what cases are information rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview participants” (p. 243). In other words, it involves the researcher asking well-situated people to refer him or her to people she could obtain information from.

The school leaders provided the names of alumni and prefects who have rich information about the school. This request was necessary because it was beyond the scope of this research for all alumni, heads of departments, and prefects to participate. Bogdan and Biklen (2003) advice that if it is impossible to examine the entire population, researchers should sample widely enough so that a diversity of types are explored. The researcher purposefully sampled participants from the various stakeholders of the schools to obtain thick and detailed data about the schools.

The sample includes the individuals who participate in a study, while the population is the researcher’s target group on which he/she would like the results to be applicable (Roberts, 2010). The population consisted of all stakeholders of the senior
high schools. The sample comprised two school leaders, six teachers, two PTA chairs, two alumni and 14 students – making a total of 26 participants. The teachers included one senior housemaster and one housemistress, two school chaplains, and two heads of departments.

Patton (2002) points out that no rigid rules exists for sample size in qualitative research. The sample size depends on what and why the researcher wants to find out and how the findings will be used. Patton (2002) indicated that in-depth information from a small number of people could be valuable when they are information rich. “The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than the sample size” (Patton, 2002, p. 245). The table below represents participants based on their categories.

Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>PRESEC</th>
<th>AGISS</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headmaster/Headmistress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA Chairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Representation of Participants
The number of participants I purposefully selected was valuable to the study. The school leaders were at post for more than six years, all the teachers were teaching in the schools for at least six years or more, the alumni had graduated from the schools for ten years, the PTA chairs and students were associated with the schools for three or four years. They had rich experiences and extensive information, and revealed thick, detailed and in-depth information about the schools.

Selecting from the key stakeholders of the school fitted the category of the study. However, after interviewing the school leaders, and some of the teachers, the students, and alumni, I realize that the information some participants provided was repetition of what others had disclosed. The data reached the point of saturation. Data saturation is the point in data collection where the new information the researcher gets becomes redundant (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). It presupposes that a new set of participants’ will provide similar responses about the phenomenon under investigation.

**Data Collection Protocols**

Interview schedules and observation guides were used for data collection. The interview schedules listed the basic questions for each category of participants, which the researcher wanted to pursue (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This was based on Rubin and Rubin advice that finding out how an organization works, requires that a researcher prepare an interview guide in advance. The interview guides helped the researcher to explore, probe, and request explanation that elucidated and illuminated on each particular subject area (Patton, 2002). The focus group interview guides kept the interactions focused and allowed participants perspectives and
experiences to emerge (Patton, 2002). The observation guide provided boundaries for what the researcher wanted to observe in the schools.

Open-ended questions used were appropriate because they allowed participants to unfold their emic perspectives without limitations. Such questions helped the researcher to probe, ask for clarifications on subjects that were not clear.

**Methods of Data Collection**

Data collection procedures for this study included observation, interviews, focus group interviews, and documents analysis. These techniques were used to solicit information from participants about how things are done in the schools. Patton (2002) mentioned that interviewing and observation are mutual because the face-to-face interview also involves and requires the researcher to observe “non-verbal messages, discern the effect of the setting on responses, and get acclimatized to interviewer-interviewee interactions and relationships” (p. 27).

Other researchers confirm that nonverbal communication is important to gain deeper understanding from participants (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2010). When observers get close to people in a natural setting, they need interviewing skills to enable them converse with the people. Merriam (1998) declares that interviews and observations are interwoven, and both are designated by the term fieldwork. Collecting data using interviews, observation, and document analysis techniques produced data that captured the emic perspectives of the participants about their school culture in the two senior high school settings.
**Observation.** This involves systematic noting and recording of events, behavior, and artifacts in the social setting through the five senses of the observer (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Patton (2002) indicates, when people-oriented qualitative researchers get close to the people and situations they are studying, they personally capture and understand exactly what participants say and quote the speeches verbatim; and are able to describe participants, their settings, interactions, and activities.

Observation provides firsthand knowledge and understanding of a phenomenon within a context, triangulate, and substantiate emerging findings (Merriam, 1998). Observing in various settings enabled the researcher understand and gain first-hand information of the tangible and intangible culture of the schools. As Merriam argued, it is not possible to observe everything in a setting, hence the researcher in this study used a checklist of elements to be observed as she suggested These include “the physical setting, the participants, activities and interactions, conversation, subtly factors, your own behavior” (p. 98).

Merriam (1998) affirmed that observation data collection begins the moment the participant observer begins to interact with the daily events and activities, the intuitive reactions, and hunches that people experience. Observation began immediately the school leaders granted the approval. Observation covered the physical environment and social gatherings, such as morning devotions, dining halls, new students’ orientations, church services, staff meetings, sports festivals, and classrooms.

The researcher observed the visual artifacts such as symbols, logos, dressing, buildings and the landscape; behavior patterns such relationships, interactions, and
events; and verbal expressions that took place in activities such as assembly and morning devotion and church, announcements, and at staff meetings.

To foster a suspicion-free observation, I established rapport and built trust with the participants. This was based on the advice of experienced researchers that the key to getting the cooperation of participants, converting potential difficulties into merits, and enabling participants to gain new and deeper meanings as they respond to questions is to establish rapport and build trust (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). The researcher had cordial relationship with all the participants and remained neutral. Participants trusted the researcher and opened up and divulged their understanding of their school culture. During each observation, the researcher wrote field notes that covered areas of inquiry with dates, settings, and times (Ruben & Ruben, 2005).

**Interviewing.** This is a purposeful conversation between two people – mainly directed by the interviewer to get information from the interviewee (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Stake (1995) posits that interviewing is the process of attaining multiple realities in the field. It allows the researcher to enter into the emic perspective of the participants (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) indicates that interviewing is the only way we can get information about “peoples’ feelings, thoughts, intentions, behavior that took place at some previous point in time, or how some people organized their world, and the meanings they attach to what goes on in their world” (p. 341). Collecting data through interviews helped to capture the words of participants the way they understand the organizational culture and its influence in their schools.
In a related study, Marshall and Rossman (2011) pointed out that interviewing draws the researcher very close to participants in order to have personal interaction with them for a long time. The interviewer’s closeness to each interviewee for an hour helped to accumulate rich, detailed, thick, and in-depth information about the schools’ culture. Interviewing requires flexibility and makes room for the researcher to use probes to seek clarification (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The researcher used probes and follow-up questions that helped to clarify the responses that were not fully understood. These follow-up questions fostered the richness of the interviews.

The researcher conducted 12 one-on-one interviews with open-ended questions. All the interview questions revolved around the three research questions to garner data from participants’ emic perspective. An interview guide was used and contained “a heading, date, venue, time, and a brief description of the project and the questions” (Creswell, 2013, p. 165). This helped to maintain a standard procedure with all participants. The researcher ended all interview by asking participants if any relevant information was not captured and which they wish to disclose.

**Focus group interviews.** In this method of interviewing several participants, usually seven to 10, are interviewed together because they share certain characteristics that are relevant to the phenomenon under study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Creswell (2012) defines the focus group interview as “the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six” (p. 218). He added that a focus group fosters the collection of shared understanding and views from several people.
During such interviews, the researcher is expected to create a supportive environment by asking focused questions that will generate discussions and evoke different expressions of opinions and points of view (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Each focus group interview comprised seven school prefects engaged for 90 minutes. With an interview guide, question were focused on the main three questions to solicit participants’ diverse views. This increased the researcher confidence in emerging patterns (Patton, 2002). This approach helped the researcher to garner data from more participants in a shorter time than individual participants. It helped the researcher to draw on the students’ perspectives, expectations, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences, and reactions; thus, providing a deeper understanding of the influence of the school’s organizational culture on their lifestyles, aspirations, and achievements.

Conducting focus group interviews provided a more relaxed atmosphere for participants and allowed the facilitator to explore emergent issues (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Marshall and Rossman assert that focus group interviews have “face validity”, because the findings appear believable (p. 149). The approach was cost effective, because a single trip interviewed many people at a time. It capitalizes on sharing and creation of new ideas which otherwise may not have occurred if participants were interviewed individually (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The researcher encouraged participants to respect each other’s views as they took turns to voice their views or answer questions posed.

Document analysis. Documents refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical materials that were relevant to the study. They are a “ready-made source of data
that is easily accessible to the imaginative and resourceful investigator” (Merriam, 1998, p. 113). Marshall and Rossman (2011) indicate that documents are records of a society, community, or organization that are routinely gathered; and analyzing them is a rich way of uncovering the values of participants in a setting, and supplementing other qualitative methods. Documents analyzed for a particular study should contain information that are relevant to the study and acquired in a systematic manner (Creswell, 2013; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

In this study, the schools’ written materials and objects were reviewed. The written materials included prospectus, lecture series, anniversary brochures, teachers’ attendance books, class registers, timetables, teachers and students’ duty roasters and notices. The objects encompassed logos, trophies, computer laboratories, pictures, and physical arrangements. Examination of these documents elucidated and illuminated the culture and supplemented the data gathered from interviews and observation.

The school leaders provided access to school documents upon researchers’ request. The researcher analyzed them and made notes, which were coded into themes, categorize, and linked to data constructed from the observation and interviews. The documents provided extra information that were not disclosed during interviews or obtained during observation. This confirms scholarly work that documents analysis can provide information that may not be accessible during interviews and observation (Creswell, 2009).
Data Collection Procedures

This section provides a description of the proceedings on the field from the point of entry to the end of data collection. The fieldwork lasted for eight weeks – September and October 2013. Gaining access into the schools started when I asked my brother to seek permission from the school leaders to conduct the study in their schools. Their approval helped to fulfill the IRB requirements. Since the permission was already granted, it was not difficult to gain entry access when I arrived in the schools.

The first week in the field was for familiarization with participants and the settings. I visited the schools and introduced myself to the school leaders, threw more light on the study purpose, and obtained consent for interviews. The school leaders formally introduced me at morning devotion/assembly and at staff meetings to the students and teachers. They explained my mission of being among them and encouraged them to be friendly to me.

The school leaders assisted in locating participants I had already indicated in the permission letter according to the sampling procedures. Interview dates and times were scheduled with each participant for one-on-one interviews. The school leader and senior housemistress helped to organize the students required for the focus group interview in AGISS, while in PRESEC, the school leaders and counselor assisted to organize the students. The meetings took place in the afternoons to avoid interference with the instructional times. With the help of the school leaders, the PTA chairs and alumni were contacted and interview dates scheduled. This familiarization was successful in both
schools except one teacher who was not available immediately. I contacted him and scheduled interview after he arrived. I started building good rapport from the first week.

Data collection took place for an entire week sequentially to ensure both schools received equal number of visits. On each day I visited a school, I conducted interviews based on availability of participants and schedules. Though most interviews lasted 60 minutes, a few required more time. In such instances another interview was scheduled to exhaust the questions. The duration of each observation was based on the existing schedule time for the events. However, observing the general environment was progressive. Once an event was taking place and I did not have an interview, I conducted the observation. When neither interview nor observation was taking place I reviewed the documents I acquired from the schools.

Throughout the study, I kept reflecting on what I was doing and did not allow anybody to sway me from my purpose. I made sure that my dressing was appropriate for a school setting and never displayed too much of my knowledge to show that I knew better than participants. By the end of the seventh week, I had conducted all interviews with all participants and observed all the settings. Document analysis was on going since I had most of the materials in my possession. Transcription of data went on along with data collection. I devoted the eighth week to contacting some participants for clarification of issues I did not understand. I thanked all the participants and promised to share the study results once I am done. I bid them farewell and left the schools.
Data Recording

An important aspect of my study was the data recording. The modes of recording data for this study for documentation and analysis included audio recording and note taking (Creswell 2009; 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Kvale and Brinkmann indicate that audio recording captures participants’ responses verbatim, allowing analysis to make sense of their emic perspectives, compare and contrast, combine the various data to form themes, interpret, and draw conclusions for the study. To help capture participants’ words verbatim, I sought participants’ consent and recorded the interviews using an audio tape recorder.

Furthermore, as some researchers encourage, I took field notes as backup in case the audio recorder failed (Creswell, 2009; Patton, 2002). Notes taken during the interviews helped me to reflect and come up with new questions as I probed for clearer responses. This confirms Patton’s (2002) assertion that taking notes helps formulate new questions, as the researcher is able to cross check something said earlier. The field notes I took provided insights on issues, which I was able to address in subsequent interviews.

The notes guided the researcher throughout the data analysis process because it consisted of phrases, lists of major points made, and key words shown in quotation marks in the participant’s language (Patton 2002). Reflections on written notes were critical to the study. I made sure that the writing of notes did not distract the free flow of conversation during interviewing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).
**Data Analysis**

I conducted an inductive data analysis. Data analysis means systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials accumulated during data collection to enable the researcher come up with findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe it as “the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to a mass of collected data” (p. 207). This involved working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2011).

I collected data and started transcription concurrently. Some researchers advised that, doing data analysis simultaneously with data collection does not only reduces the burden of handling voluminous data at the end of data collection, it also illuminates (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). The approach enabled the researcher to reflect on issues and sought for clarifications. The process threw more light on the responses and provided a clearer understanding of participants’ words. Marshall and Rossman (2011) stated: “Data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation” (p. 209).

I began the data analysis by coding the data into themes. Coding means to assign numbers, abbreviations or phrases to various aspects of data for easy identification and retrieval. Patton (2002) states, “Developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step of analysis” (p. 463). The researcher classified and labeled data with descriptive words as used by respondents.
I watched for themes, patterns, and categories that characterize the organizational culture of each school, such as its history, values, beliefs, norms, assumptions, rituals ceremonies, artifacts, stories, relationships, expectations, professional learning community, commitment, collaboration, collegiality, leadership styles, and how these influence school outcomes; and label them with abbreviations. For each of the groups, I created a master list of inductive codes, which I kept upgrading as I identify new codes (Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Merriam, 1989). In the master list, I defined each of the codes in a way that helped for easy identification.

The next step categorized the segments. I used inductive strategies to discover themes or patterns. By comparing segments or meaningful units with one another and looking for recurring segments, I sorted out and grouped like terms into themes and provided names based on emergent concepts from the data (Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Merriam, 1998). I further merged similar themes to form categories. These categories fitted together and captured the meaning of the data such as the tangible and intangible culture, subcultural involvement, leadership styles, and the professional learning community. Each category reflected the purpose of the study and represented an answer to a research question (Merriam, 1998).

In the process of analyzing the data I focused on literature review to fill the gaps in information. In addition, I constantly referred to the theoretical framework to find out whether the study fits into the diagnostic description of culture Schein proposed. I conducted within-case analysis separately for each school before conducting a “cross-case analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 194; Yin, 2009, p. 156). By this process, I summarized
data from each case, categorize them, and interpreted them separately, before merging them, and wrote a grounded case indicating particular uniqueness of each case. I looked out for commonalities and differences in themes and reported findings. I provided fair and strongly argued explanations and conclusions that supported data from each case (Yin, 2009).

**Research Ethical Considerations**

The researcher conformed to the ethical guidelines that the Ohio University Institutional Reviewed Board (IRB) espouses. I submitted an application to IRB for approval to fulfill the university’s requirement of approved proposal before data collection began. The application components included a summary of the study and how the ethical integrity would be observed to in protect subjects. I adhered to this and it helped obtain permission from the schools to conduct the study.

Throughout the study, I sought the consent of participants before I began the interviews. I ensured that the participants read the consent form and I explained in detail all that pertains to the study. I made sure the participants understood the study processes and were willing to participate before they signed the consent forms. In the focus group interviews, I read the consent form out loudly and provided explanation. I allowed participants to make the decision for participation. I also made them aware they were free to opt out at any time they wanted. I assured them of confidentiality, and granted them anonymity. Secret information participants disclosed I kept confidential and ensured that data collected was securely protected under lock and key.
Measures of Trustworthiness

A major concern of every qualitative researcher is how to ascertain validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). In place of these quantitative constructs, qualitative researchers used credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Maxwell, 2004). As Creswell (2009) notes, “qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while credibility in qualitative tradition indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (p. 190). Marshall and Rossman (2011) also explained that credibility is the way to show the goodness, quality, or soundness of a study, which are the criteria by which a study is judged valid and reliable in qualitative research.

Several researchers, Creswell, 2009; Golafshani, 2003; Kvale & Brinkmann (2009); Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002; Seale, 1999 have cited the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) on procedures to ensure credibility of the qualitative studies. These measures of credibility and validity of a qualitative study are listed as prolonged engagement, member checks, triangulation, audit trails, thick detailed description, peer debriefing, and reflexivity. To ascertain the credibility and accuracy of this study, the researcher employed triangulation, reflectivity, peer debriefing, audit trail, and thick detailed description.

Triangulation, according to various researchers, involves employing multiple sources of data and perspectives to increase the accuracy and credibility of findings.
(Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998); Patton, 2002). The study used multiple data sources and research methods to gather the data from the information-rich participants. Interviewing the school leaders, teachers, PTA chairs, old students, and prefects introduced variety and helped provided understanding of the phenomenon from different perspectives.

Multiple research methods were used to gather data. These included interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. This triangulation approach enabled the researcher to cross check if all methods employed to gather data generated consistent findings. The study was also seen through the lenses of Schein’s three levels of organizational culture.

Reflexivity involves the researcher clarifying his or her assumptions, worldview, or theoretical orientations and predispositions in the process of the study (Brantilinger et al., 2005; Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005; Patton, 2002). It is the process whereby the researcher continuously reflects on how his or her own values, beliefs, behavior, perceptions, or views can impact on the study settings, and affect data collection and analysis (Lambert, Jomeen, McSherry, 2010). It was important to ensure that my predispositions as a researcher did not interfere with the data collection, analysis, and study findings. The skill of reflexivity helped to curtail biases. Throughout the project the researcher engaged in critical self-reflection of what she knew about senior high schools. By this, the researcher consciously allowed participants’ views about their schools to take the central stage and dominate the interpretations as well.
Peer debriefing involves engaging either a colleague or a professor who has insight about the phenomenon to review the work of the research and provide feedback on the interpretations (Brantilinger et al., 2005; Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Christensen, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). The committee chair and the four members of dissertation reviewed the project and provided feedback on the data collection methods, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions I made from the findings.

Furthermore, to provide evidence that I carried out a systematic study, I kept a detailed account of all the procedures, data gathered, the dates, and times of data collection in a safe place (Brantilinger et al., 2005; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005; Patton, 2002). Such an audit trail will provide evidence to people who may later challenge the credibility of my study findings.

Finally, thick detailed description of the phenomenon was necessary to ensure a thorough report of findings. Researchers indicate that a thick description is the bedrock of the qualitative method because it is a way to help the researcher and others to understand the phenomenon under study and to draw interpretations about meanings and significance (Brantilinger et al., 2005; Creswell, 2009; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005; Patton, 2002). I vividly described the procedures and participants’ perspective of the school culture, subcultural involvement, and the leadership styles of the school leaders.

**Self as Researcher**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument throughout all the stages of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) points out that one of the key elements that determine the credibility of a qualitative inquiry is the credibility of
the researcher. The researcher’s identity, which entails their background, predispositions, values, beliefs, opinions, or positions, can influence the projects’ findings (Bourke, 2014). This author asserts that researchers own subjectivity comes to bear in the process of the entire research process. A scholarly work concurs that no matter how much researchers try, their past experiences - who they are, what they believe in, and what they value cannot be divorced from their research and writing (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Several scholars suggest that self-awareness is a way of sharpening the self-instrument, thus, it is necessary for researchers to be reflexive on how their identities and the status sets they bring into a study, and how they could influence their entry access, relationships, interactions, rapport, trust, data collection processes, analysis, interpretations and outcomes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Bourke, 2014; Kerstetter, 2012; Patton, 2002).

I am a born and bred Ghanaian. I received my high school education in a mission boarding school. Furthermore, I have three children who all went through the boarding school system. Before I came to the US for further studies, I was an educator for 9 years, and aware of the general notions about the limitations of school reforms. Conducting a research in Ghanaian high schools offers me a beneficial position because of my knowledge of the high schools system in Ghana.

Thus, this study positions me as both an insider and outsider. Researchers having both etic and emic perspective are uniquely positioned to understand the experiences of the cultures of which they are members (Kersketter, 2012; Naake, Kurylo, Grabowski, Linton, & Radford, 2010). By virtue of who I am, I knew how to approach and relate
with Ghanaians to gain audience. I knew that approaching the elderly with respect is the surest way to win their approval. Bourke (2014) opined that there is a natural tendency for researchers to be attracted to people with who they share common characteristics and attributes.

Throughout the research project, I was reflective of who I am in the study. Before I embarked on this study in Ghanaian high schools, I assumed that by virtue of my position I could easily gain entry access, make connections with participants, and build good rapport and trust. However, I entered the field with much caution because the school leaders did not know who I was and I needed to convince them that the study was solely an academic project. Upon entry and respectfully introducing myself and explaining the purpose of the study, the school leaders became receptive and open, and this transcended to the entire schools’ population after I was introduced. Participants readily received me and provided the information I required.

I quickly built a good rapport with the participants by maintaining good relationships and interactions with them even outside the interviews sessions. Marshall and Rossman (2011) encourage researchers to “maintain good relations, respect their norms of reciprocity, and sensitively consider their ethical issues” (p. 118). I could flow with participants easily and understood the language of the schools. I avoided “academic armors” (barriers that emanate from differences in experiences between a researcher and participants) and assumed the same educational levels of participants in order to gain warm interactions. I was aware of Marshall and Rossman caution that academic armors could prevent intimate emotional engagement that qualitative researchers need. Who I am
helped obtain a richer and more intimate acceptance from the participants as they willingly disclosed detailed information about tangible and intangible components of school culture, stakeholder participation, and the school leadership style.

During the process of data analysis and interpretation, I continued to reflect on who I am. By virtue of my position, the understanding I had about the data was deeper than if I were only an outsider. This deep self-reflection helped me to prevent my thoughts, feelings, experiences, associations, or knowledge about the high schools system to interfere with the study. By restricting my personal preconceived notions and experiences to dominate proceedings, I was able to perceive the issues in the senior high schools with a fresh perspective.

I took accurate notes, which helped me to reflect on the role of self as a researcher. As Patton (2002) mentions, “the fundamental work of the observer is the taking of field notes” (p. 302). I wrote down the exact things I observed, heard, felt, and touched. This helped to maintain the accuracy of the fieldwork proceedings. The accurate field notes became a reflection on what worked (or did not work) in gaining entry access, maintaining access, research ethics, and gathering data (Marshall & Rossman (2011).

During observations, I maintained a neutral stance and recorded exactly what I saw, felt, or touched. I asked question on issues I did not understand but made no contributions to justify or condemn any activities. I was mindful of the cliques in the schools. As Patton (2002) pointed out, it is obvious that in every human institution, there is the likelihood of existing subgroups or cliques that may either agree or conflict with one another. Throughout the fieldwork I was conscious of such possible factions and only
aligned with people who helped to get information to enrich the data. Hence my interactions did not arouse any suspicion. There were differences in opinions between leadership and some teachers and teachers and students. I distanced myself from all conversations beyond this study but gravitated towards participants only on the basis of gaining an understanding of their world.

I took the advice of Patton (2002) that researchers must recognize tensions, make decisions of personal relationships, group involvement, and manage the differential associations without losing perspective on what the experience is like for those with whom the fieldworker is less directly involved. I was careful about internal politics in the schools.

During data collection, I made connections with the anxieties, feelings, hopes, joys and complaints. Patton (2002) notes “one of the things that can happen in the course of fieldwork is the emergence of a strong feeling of connection with the people being studied” (p. 302). However, I expressed empathy rather than identifying with them and this gave me the power to understand their emic description about their world. The distance I kept helped to have a clear understanding of pertinent information that helped for logical judgments about the schools’ culture.

I was flexible with time, especially when scheduled interviews could not take place due to participants’ other engagements. Though challenging I was mindful that interview were unpaid for and participants did me the favor to disrupt their daily routines. Hence, I was very appreciative; I called each participant after the study to thank them. It
approach helped the researcher to maintain a good relationship with some of the
participants even after the fieldwork.

Summary

The study followed the qualitative research tradition using the case study design.
Two schools, PRESEC and AGISS were the study sites. Purposeful and snowball
sampling were used to select information-rich participants for the study. One-on-one and
focus group interviews, observations, and documents analysis were the main sources of
data. Data was analyzed and themes identified Ethical issues were addressed as outlined
by the Ohio University IRB. The measures of trustworthiness employ included
triangulation, member checks, reflectivity, audit trail, and thick detailed description.
Chapter Four: Research Results

This chapter presents the cultural context of two senior high schools in Ghana. The chapter is organized in accordance with the three main research questions (RQs) presented in Chapter one. RQ1 unraveled the two main types of organizational culture and their components, RQ2 identified the subcultures and their involvement, and RQ3 unknotted the emergent leadership styles of school leaders. The data is presented in descriptive narrative formats, as well as in tables, figures, and pictures to foster easy presentation.

Organizational Pattern

AGISS and PRESEC participated in this study. The study results were based on the views, comments and narratives from participants; data garnered from observations, and various documents. These results are presented in three segments showing the themes and categories identified. The first segment presents the components of organizational culture. The second segment presents the interactive aspect of the culture, depicting the subcultures and their involvement. The last section presents the leadership styles schools – servant participative, and supportive.

Before presenting the results, brief background information of each school is presented to provide the context for the cultural description. Interview responses, observation notes, information from documents, figures, and pictures were presented to contextualize each of the schools. Such a presentation could help export readers to the field. The figure below shows the themes that emerged from the RQ1.
Contextualizing the Study Sites

The cases selected for this study were AGISS and PRESEC boarding schools. PRESEC is an all-male school while AGISS an all-female school. Although there are day students in both schools, the study focused on the boarding aspect of the schools.

Presbyterian Boys’ Secondary School (PRESEC). The Presbyterian Mission of Ghana established PRESEC in 1938. It was originally located at Odumasi-Krobo, but was later relocated to Legon, a suburb of Accra in 1968. It commenced with 16 students and four teachers but currently has a student population of 2,200 and 90 teachers. The school’s location in the cosmopolitan setting, its affiliation with the Presbyterian Church, and its strong academic reputation in the WASSCE makes it attractive to many brilliant students of diverse backgrounds.

A 13-member Board of Governors governs the school, but the day-to-day administration remains the sole responsibility of the headmaster and three assistant headmasters – for academic, administrative, and domestic affairs. The school’s anthem contains the motto of the school, which reads: “In lumine tuo videbimus lumen” meaning “In Thy Light we shall see light”. The anthem also displays these words: “From Christian training we get a sure, solid foundation to take our places in the future of our country and church”. These words have anchored the school and its actions since its inception. As a mission-based school, providing a Christian education coupled with a sustained discipline, is its focus.

The school makes several great achievements in the WASSCE and members believe that their excellent academic performance was linked with their Christian
training. The belief was that students who received Christian training coupled with strong discipline tended to excel in their academic, social, moral, and economic lives; they were well prepared to face the challenges of life, and to work hard in future endeavors. In retrospect, students’ outstanding performances reflected in the awards they won and the leadership positions they occupied in adult lives.

**Accra Girls’ High School (AGISS).** AGISS is a secular school located in the central part of Accra – the capital city of Ghana. It was instituted in 1960 as one of the Ghana Education Trust (GET) schools established by the first president of the Republic of Ghana in response to the country’s increased demand for senior high school education. These GET schools are coeducational with the exception of AGISS, which is all girls. AGISS has a current population of 1,500 students with about 50 faculty members. The school has a 15-member Board of Governors that assists in running the school. The headmistress and two assistant headmistresses – academics and administration – carry out the daily administration of the school.

Although fundamentally a secular school, AGISS maintains the Christian tradition as the main religion. The need for a religious practice is based on the belief in African societies that the success of all endeavors are linked to God or lesser gods. As such, even when established as a secular school the Christian religion was incorporated to fulfill the desire for religion although there were Islamic and African Traditional Worshippers in the school.
Tangible, discernible Culture: Structures and Processes

The tangible, discernible culture, which constitute the artifacts, comprise the structures and processes in the schools. In an attempt to explore these artifacts, RQ1 was posed: How do participants view their organizational culture and its implications for school outcomes? Follow up and probing questions were used for clarification based on participants’ responses to the question. A careful examination of the transcripts revealed that congruency existed in respondents’ views of their schools’ culture with regard to many cultural elements. The responses were coded and presented in three categories namely visual manifestation, behavioral manifestation, and verbal manifestation.

Figure 3: Diagram Showing Emergent Themes on Organizational Culture
Visual manifestation of PRESEC’s organizational culture. The visual manifestation presents the visible structures readily seen in the school. The school was located on a semi-walled land. There were enough classrooms to cater to all students. The classroom blocks, most of which were initially built to accommodate an experimental science college – a motive that was later terminated – were well renovated. The first buildings in sight were the administration block and assembly hall/chapel. A monument indicating the schools’ logo stood at the heart of school next to the assembly hall showing the words of their motto: “In lumine tuo videbimus lumen”. Below are pictorial presentations of visual culture from the school.

Figure 4: PRESEC Administration Block and Assembly Hall/Chapel

Figure 5: PRESEC Logos
A building next to the assembly hall hosted the offices of the school chaplain, senior housemaster, assistant headmaster in charge of domestic affairs, a conference hall, and the staff common room. Heads of departments’ offices were located in the buildings assigned to their respective programs. The science building was fitted with science laboratories that were fairly equipped. A computer laboratory, the school counselor’s office, and a hall used for various meetings such as staff meetings, were located in one story building.

With regard to accommodation, PRESEC had nine dormitories that housed the boarding students. The houses except house nine were named after famous people including the first headmaster and some clergy of the Presbyterian Church. As a result of increased enrolment, the houses accommodated more students than was originally intended. Construction works were underway to curtail the problem (Personal Observation, September 2013). The schools’ octagon-shaped dining hall was in similar condition, accommodating over 2000 students instead of the original 1000 students.

The school had a ‘bush canteen’ that catered to day students. There were staff bungalows that accommodated some staff members. The school had a clinic that served the school community through the services of a nurse who treated minor medical ailments and made referral of major and complicated issues to external hospitals. Just opposite of the administration block was a resting place for visitors and students during their leisure times. Adjacent to the resting area was a car park, which was constructed by the school’s alumni. PRESEC compound was kept tidy with trashcans located at various
vantage points for waste disposal. It possessed a sports field that aided student’s athletic training.

The school enforced a dress code for classes, church, or the house. The school uniform for classes, prep, exeat, and official programs outside the school, had the school badge sown onto the pocket of a short sleeved, blue dress shirt matched with a pair of khaki shorts or trousers, brown sandals, and a brown belt. Exeat refers to permission granted to students to leave the boarding school premises. Students had two church outfits: a traditional cloth, designed by the school containing the images of their logo and the colors of the Presbyterian Church, worn with “aheneba” (native sandals) or with strapped sandals and a white long sleeve shirt and khaki trousers with black shoes and a tie designed by the school. Students were obliged to strictly adhere to the prescribed uniforms. Below are pictures of students in prescribed clothing.

![Figure 6: PRESEC Students in School Uniform and Church Attire](image)

Several trophies and awards won during competitions over the years in various disciplines were displayed in the headmaster’s office: a sign of the great achievements of students in various circles. The figure below shows some of the trophies students won.
A notice board situated near the administration block disseminated information to both students and teachers. The school environment and the architectural display, coupled with smartly dressed students created an orderly school environment.

**Visual manifestation of AGISS’s organizational culture.** AGISS was situated on a long strip of fenced land. Upon entry, there was a story building that served as the administrative block and the staff common room. The assembly hall was situated on the left side of the administration block, while the classroom blocks stood behind it. The classroom blocks were allocated to the departments based on the programs offered. The school had a library, a computer laboratory, a dining hall, and a kitchen. The dormitories that accommodated the boarding students were located at the western part of the compound. These houses include Aryee, Gibson, and Buckman.

A few staff bungalows accommodated the administrators, housemistresses, and the chaplain. A school nurse managed the school clinic that provided first aid services to students with minor medical conditions while major health problems were referred to the hospitals.
The school’s colors were yellow and green. Students used two types of frocks made of African prints for classes and occasions respectively. They wore “kaba and slit” (skirt and blouse made with traditional fabric) for Sunday vespers, and had another outfit for evening prep. The permitted heel height for all footwear was two inches. All students had low haircuts, wore no make-up, or fancy jewelry except tiny earrings. Students’ dress lengths were expected to be past knee level. Below are pictures of students dressed in school uniforms.

![AGISS Students in school Uniform](image)

*Figure 8: AGISS Students in school Uniform*

The school maintained a neat compound with trashcans located at various vantage points for rubbish disposal. Students were compelled and monitored to keep the compound clean and violators were punished. Compound prefects went round each morning to ensure that the students swept their plots before the commencement of classes. The compound was decorated with a monument of a girl in student outfit located opposite of the administrative block. There was another monument of an “Adowa” dancer on the far western side of the administrative block.
No sports field was available for athletic training. A stretch of land behind the assembly hall, however, was used for Physical Education classes. Poly tanks (water reservoirs) found around the kitchen provided water for students’ use during the dining sessions. Food was served in large aluminium bowls to distribute among a group of twenty students per a table. The outlay of the compound and the renovated buildings provided a picturesque scene.

**Behavior manifestation of culture.** The session presents organizational culture manifested through rituals and ceremonies. It was through these events that the schools’ ideologies, norms, and values were expressed, confirmed, and communicated to staff members and students. The rituals and ceremonies occurred regularly or occasionally to address different purposes. Data gathered from interviews, observation, and school documents provided insight into the activities of students in the boarding houses.

The figure below presents the rituals and ceremonies as components of behavior culture.
Data garnered from the field revealed that students were engaged in various rituals daily at stipulated times. The rituals and ceremonies occurred regularly or occasionally in the schools to address different purposes such as commemorating heroes and heroines, memorializing achievers, enhancing spiritual growth, promoting recreational activities, promoting healthy living, and fostering academic pursuits.

These included house chores, morning assembly/devotion, classes and preparation (‘prep’), dining sessions, and sleep and siestas. The AGISS school day began at 5:30 am and ended at 9:30 pm for students in the boarding house. Students were conversant with daily routines because they were mandatory. As one student pointed out:

> There is time for doing everything in the school; time for waking up, cleaning, going for classes and so on. Every student knows what is to be done at every particular time. All the students know the activities sequentially and the times allotted for them. We are all time conscious and so we are not late for any schedule. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

**House chores.** Students were assigned morning chores, which they did within a stipulated time each day before they went for assembly/devotion. Prefects supervised and ensured that each student performed his/her assigned morning chores as expected. The table below shows the weekly schedule for AGISS boarding students.
Table 3:

*Boarding School Weekly Timetable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:30 am</td>
<td>Rising Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 am - 6:15 am</td>
<td>Sweeping/cleaning of plots bathing and inspection of plots by prefects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20 am</td>
<td>Warning to leave the dormitory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00 am – 7:15 am</td>
<td>Morning assembly/devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15 am – 7:35 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:40 am – 8:00 am</td>
<td>Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm – 3:20 pm</td>
<td>Club activities/ Educational talks (Wednesdays only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:20 pm – 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Siesta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 pm – 5:20 pm</td>
<td>Bathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 pm – 8:30 pm</td>
<td>Evening prep/studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 pm</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Saturdays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4:30 am</td>
<td>Rising bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 am - 7:30 am</td>
<td>Washing/general cleaning &amp; bathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am - 9:00 am</td>
<td>Inspection of dorms and plots by and prefects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 am - 10:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am - 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 pm – 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm – 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Siesta/ironing/parent visitation (1st and 3rd weeks of the month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 pm – 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Entertainment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 pm</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sundays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00 am</td>
<td>Rising bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 am - 5:30 am</td>
<td>Cleaning &amp; sweeping of plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 am - 7:00 am</td>
<td>Bathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 am – 7:50 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 am – 10:30 am</td>
<td>Prep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am – 11:30 am</td>
<td>Denominational meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 pm - 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00 pm – 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Siesta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 pm – 4:30 pm</td>
<td>Bathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 pm – 8:30 pm</td>
<td>Church Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 pm</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AGISS Prospectus
Students who failed to do so were sent back to complete their chores after breakfast or were called to book if a pattern of negligence was realized. Students cleaned their dormitories, bathrooms, the compound, gutters, classrooms, and staff offices, cleared the weeds, and emptied trashcans.

An AGISS teacher commented on students’ chore performance: “As early as 6:00 am, you see the students doing their house chores. They sweep and clean the bathrooms and dormitories, and mostly, the seniors work on the compound” (Personal Communication, September 2013). A PRESEC document showed that the first and second year students were allotted plots to maintain daily.

Doing chores each day in addition to the academic work was challenging but this caused students to plan and manage their time to meet each day’s requirement. Students who were not exposed to doing house chores at their various homes soon learned to do so since it was obligatory for all boarding students. The school regimen equipped students with skills to complete similar tasks in adult lives. A student confirmed the benefits:

There are lots of differences in life at home and life in school. In the boarding school, the life is stricter than that of my home and everything is done in order. …Now I take decisions and carry them out by myself. (Personal Communication, September 2013).

**Morning assembly/devotion.** The morning assembly/devotion was an event that brought the school community members together each morning for both religious and secular information. The religious aspect, known as ‘worship’, followed Christian tradition and was characterized by singing, bible reading, and word ministration. A school chaplaincy board, led by the chaplain, coordinated and conducted the religious activities in both schools.
The chaplaincy board scheduled school leaders, teachers, students, and external preachers to lead the liturgy or minister the word of God. One PRESEC teacher noted: “The chaplaincy board extends to some of the staff, so some members of staff are robed in [brought in] to lead some of the morning services” (Personal Communication, September 2013). A teacher from PRESEC explained the rationale for allowing students to lead the devotion: “The peer preaching is just like peer counseling because when the students see their colleagues preach about the same things the adults preach, they take it more seriously” (Personal Communication, October 2013).

This gathering was highly revered and it was mandatory for both day and boarding students to be present and punctual. Teachers and seniors on duty monitored punctuality and maintained order at the gathering while housemasters/housemistress and house prefects ensured that all boarding students left their dormitories for devotion/assembly.

The second part of the gathering featured the announcements for the day. The announcements dispensed were based on the ongoing concerns (such as house cleaning issues), new developments, new rules, and/or upcoming events among others. The assembly/devotion period provided an avenue to mold the young students’ lives through the messages and advice. The views teachers and administrators expressed showed that the daily exhortations were important for students’ academic, moral, and spiritual development. This ritual provided students the opportunity to receive religious education and be kept updated on ongoing matters of the school. The AGISS headmistress indicated that she often advised students when preaching. She disclosed:
Three times in a week, when I take assembly, I let them [students] know that all the commandments in the Bible come to tell us to love God and love our neighbors. If you love your neighbors you will not hurt them, backbite, or covet; so we need it. As students, when you wake up in the morning until you go to bed, what love have you shown to your neighbors, teachers, and yourself? We have to keep reminding them. (Personal Communication, October 2013).

This ritual provided students the opportunity to receive religious education and be kept updated on ongoing matters of the school.

**Class and prep attendance.** Attending classes was a compulsory ritual in both schools. The headmistress/headmaster, teachers, and students alluded to the fact that various measures were put in place to ensure both teacher and student punctuality and regularity. The classrooms were safe and conducive for teaching students; form masters, class prefects, and teachers ensured this. There were class registers (monitored by the form master) that checked teacher and student absenteeism. Teachers had to append their signatures against their names after each lesson and class prefects noted and reported the teachers who were absent. Both teachers and student absences were acknowledged and reported to the appropriate personnel. A teacher from AGISS commented on the surveillance procedure:

After teaching, you are supposed to, as a teacher, sign a register, for lessons taught. Then check the attendance and record absentee students and their numbers. All students have coded numbers in the book. If you do not sign, and at the end of the day, the books come to the teacher in charge of the registers, he will write absent against your name. When it gets to the assistant headmistress academics, where permission is supposed to be sought, she goes through her book to verify those who sought permission. If there is no permission for an absentee teacher, she also records your name down for a query for not teaching. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

However, data revealed that sometimes teachers came to class but they spent time to talk about stories that were irrelevant to students’ academic learning.
A student pointed out:

As for me, I have a problem with some of the teachers. When they come to class, they don’t do what they are supposed to do. They tell stories that are not relevant to what we are supposed to learn. Our time is short and they use some of this time to talk about things we don’t need. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The prep time was integral to academic work. It was a highly esteemed rite scheduled to promote students’ academic learning. It took place after dinner and entailed students going back to their classrooms to do their private studies. It was mandatory for all students; therefore, lateness and absenteeism were punishable offenses. The students’ prospectus of both schools explicitly stated: “Prep is compulsory”. Some teachers monitored students at prep to ensure seriousness and silence. Participants admitted that prep time was of great importance for students to improve their learning. One AGISS student expounded: “Prep is another important aspect in this school. At prep, everybody learns seriously” (Focus Group, September 2013).

Aside prep times, students were allowed to use other times not officially recognized as ‘study periods’ to learn – provided it did not interfere with their daily mandatory rituals and chores. The school considered prep a means to promote academic performance. One AGISS teacher expatiated:

Incidentally, a year group’s results were not good and Sunday morning was added as prep time so that students can have ample time to learn. The change is good because, after the morning studies, they are able to get enough time to sleep early and prepare enough for the following day and since then the results have improved so much. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Attending classes and prep were the main avenues perceived to promote students’ academic progress. As a result of their importance, the school community paid a lot of attention to them and ensured that students were diligent during these periods.
Monitoring both students and teachers brought several benefits to students’ academic achievements.

**Dining sessions.** Dining sessions were available for boarding students while ‘bush canteens’ catered to the day students. The kitchen staff followed a menu for foods served daily. Students were provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner each day. It was mandatory for all boarding students to attend dining to ensure that the students received the right nutrition required for their development. Dining prefects were in charge of the dining halls while seniors on duty aided them to maintain order. The dining sessions served as a make shift assembly, therefore emergent information was delivered here.

A food committee coordinated and ran the food services. The committee inspected the food served to students to ensure that students received the required nutrients and adequate proportions of food, and ensured that the kitchen staff followed the menu for the students. Teachers on the food committee were often present in the dining hall to enforce student control. One teacher from AGISS noted: “we have teachers on duty, the senior housemistress, and the dining teachers who go to the dining hall to ensure that students are well fed” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The senior housemaster of PRESEC expressed similar views about the role of teachers on the food committee:

In the dining hall, we have teachers who are in charge and I work closely with them but we have given them the free hand to operate. When they encounter problems, they come to me and we discuss the issues. I, then, forward the cases to the assistant headmaster in charge of domestic issues and we discuss and see how best we can solve them. Where it is necessary, we go to the headmaster and discuss such issues and get solutions to them. We have a report book where we enter our comments. For instance, when there is a problem with the food, they record it in the book. The food committee is chaired by [the] assistant headmaster
in charge of domestic affairs, and members include the domestic bursars, senior housemaster, dining hall teachers, dining hall prefects, and assistant school prefect in charge domestic affairs, and some kitchen staff. We meet once a term to discuss issues that bother on food. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Based on the data, it is clear that the schools attached a high level of importance to student nourishment. The existence of the food committee and its resulting efforts all point to the fact that the schools understood the importance of good nutrition for the students’ overall wellbeing.

Rest periods. It was a custom in both schools that students observe a daily nap after instructional periods. Both teachers and students alluded that these rest periods were beneficial as it replenished students’ strength and rejuvenated them for academic and other extracurricular activities. One student remarked: “We rest and relax our minds during siesta so that when we go for prep our minds are refreshed to study. It also prevents dozing and tiredness during prep” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The prefects and housemistresses/housemasters monitored the dormitories and ensured that students observed sleep times; violators were reprimanded accordingly. The insistence for students to observe this time was to ensure that they got enough sleep and were refreshed after laborious daily activities. It recharged their bodies and prepared their minds for upcoming activities. Students found loitering around after lights out were punished. In spite of these checks, data revealed that some students often did not observe the rest periods. One PRESEC teacher commented:

Sometimes, around midnight, I go round the houses to find out what the boys are doing – whether they are sleeping. And as you know, most of these boys will not sleep early… Sometimes, they engage in activities that are not suitable for the night so we go round and do a check. (Personal Communication, September 2013)
Church services and vespers. The schools organized church services on Sunday mornings and/or evenings. In PRESEC, students worshipped on Sunday morning and evening, while AGISS students did so only in the evening (vespers). Sunday worship was compulsory for all boarding students, and staff living on the campus was expected, but not compelled, to participate. The components worship times were characterized with singing hymns and praises, drumming and dancing, reading bible, giving offering, and word ministration.

The church services were all-inclusive as students, chaplains, external preachers, and/or staff members participated in the liturgy or word ministration. The schools had choirs who were featured during worships and on special occasions. Once every month, the Christian ‘Communion’ was administered during the morning service at PRESEC. Observation at PRESEC on Sunday morning showed that the worship rituals were organized in the style of the Presbyterian tradition. A school choir, adorned in choir robes and in a procession while singing a hymn, ushered in the chaplain [priest] and staff members, while the congregation of students kept standing. The liturgist did the call to worship after which the choir sang and the congregation sat.

Aside the choir’s hymn ministration, the congregation sang hymns intermittently. In addition, the students sang praises, amidst drumming, and dancing. Students read the Bible and the preacher ministered the word. It was a common practice in Christianity that congregation members offered cash or kind (‘Giving of Offering’) to assist the work of God. ‘Giving of Offering’ was integral to the schools’ Sunday worship but not mandatory. It was mostly given in the form of cash. Congregants lined up to cast their
contributions into the offering bowl amidst singing and dancing. Data revealed that this rite was a way of honoring God and of showing appreciation for what God had done for them. Participants indicated that the offering was used to purchase items needed for sustaining the religious activities in the schools.

On the first Sunday of each month, as it was custom, PRESEC held Communion service for members who had been confirmed into the protestant faith. The chaplain gave the announcements and the benediction, and closed the meeting. The choir recessed with the preacher and teachers present, after which the students dispersed. Additionally, vespers were organized every Sunday evening for students. The rituals followed the same order as in the morning.

AGISS did not perform Sunday morning services, but organized vespers as an interdenominational church services, with no emphasis on any particular Christian denomination’s style. Prayers, singing, giving and the ministration of the word characterized this service. Teachers and the chaplain, as well as outside preachers, delivered the word of God. Some teachers on duty attended the service. However, no communion services or baptism rituals were organized. Data revealed that communion was only organized for students of the Catholic faith.

Beside these regular worship programs, PRESEC organized supplementary Christian rituals such as retreats, fasting, and prayer times. These were intended to enhance student spirituality, and perpetuate students’ religious commitments. A PRESEC teacher threw light on these religious practices:

In the first and second term each year, we organize baptism and confirmation services for the students… One Tuesday of each month is for a school retreat. We
refer to the retreat as spiritual revival day… During this time, we invite teachers
to join with the students and we pray and exhort each other. … In the second and
third terms we hold a three-day revival from Friday evening and end it with a
service on Sunday morning because we don’t want to interfere with school
activities. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Another teacher noted: “We also have Saturday dawn meetings where the
students meet and pray for themselves and their parents. We believe that they should
begin feeling responsible and reciprocate parents’ responsibility” (Personal
Communication, September 2013). In both schools, non-denominational groups existed
and their activities enabled students to improve their spiritual commitments. A PRESEC
teacher noted: “… we have non-denominational groups that hold their meetings on Friday
evenings for one hour before prep. These groups include the SU [Scripture Union],
NupsG (National Union of Presbyterian Students-Ghana), PENSA [Pentecost Students
and Associates, and other groups” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Students
voluntarily decided which group to belong. Teachers also accepted to be patrons
(advisors) of these groups.

Response from a PRESEC alumnus showed that non-denominational groups
boosted the religious commitments of many students. He stated: “We also had a lot of
religious groupings that we joined. I was a member of the Scripture Union… By the time
I came out, I was a changed person as far as church activities were concerned” (Personal
Communication, September 2013). At these meetings students prayed, sang praises,
discussed the word of God, engaged in evangelism, and other religious activities. A
teacher from PRESEC pointed out: “The groups actually supplement what the chaplaincy
offers to students. Normally, when they group, they have a common interest, they are
able to plan certain programs within the jurisdiction of the allowable limits in the school and conduct it” (Personal Communication, September 2013). This ritual enhanced students’ interest in the work of God and allowed them an avenue to independently pursue a relationship with God.

**Singing practice.** Singing was integral in the schools and specific times were scheduled for singing practice. The schools’ tradition required using songs for various occasions. Songs covered a variety of topics such as patriotism, morality, and religiosity among others. Songs sang in the schools included hymns, praises, and school and national anthems. Students learned the school anthem the very moment they join the school community because it expressed the values of the schools. The schools’ anthems were sung during special occasions to remind students of what the schools stood for.

AGISS’s Anthem:

> Accra Girls’ Secondary School, thou my pride, my greatest pride. That which thou expects of me, I’ll do it with my might. In all aspects of school life I shall try to do my best. A shining example, I must be To my friends. As a student of the School or when an old girl I am, I shall do all that I can Thy great name to uphold Loyalty and purity, Honesty, in all I do. These are qualities that I pray God Me to give. (AGISS Prospectus, p. 1)

PRESEC’s Anthem:

Happy are we! Studious are we! Students of Presbyterian Secondary School, Onward we march, we trudge along. To happy victory, to victory, to victory. Our motto is a solid bulwark propping us along. IN LUMINE TUO LUMINE TUO VIDEBIMUS LUMEN. In Thy Light, Thy Light, we shall see light In Lumine tuo Videbimus Lumen. From Christian training we get A sure, solid Foundation to take our places In the future of our country and church From Christian training we get A sure, solid Foundation to take our places In the future of our country O come along and join us O come along and join us. Happy, studious are we! (PRESEC Prospectus, p. 1)
Hymns were used during worship services to approach God. The PRESEC chaplain explained: “Hymns of invocation draw us near to God” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Hymns were also used during ceremonies such as Christmas Carol Nights and Speech and Prize Giving Days. In PRESEC, singing competitions were organized among students. Winners of this competition had the opportunity to participate in the Christmas Carol Service. It was a prestige for students to sing on that great occasion when parents and other invited guest were present.

**Club meetings.** Various clubs existed in the schools. Club meetings enabled students with common interests to develop themselves, learn new skills, and served as a means to promote their social lives. Examples of clubs included drama groups, dance groups, reading club, debate teams, and science clubs. Students took up leadership roles at such meetings, and they demonstrated individual talents that fostered their individual lives and, collectively, the growth of their clubs.

Some of the clubs competed at the national level. The PRESEC headmaster’s office showcased several trophies won during various National Club Championship competitions. Teachers acted as patrons of the clubs and guided activities to conform to lay down school rules. Clubs sometimes invited professionals with expertise in areas related to the respective clubs to give talks. The clubs’ existence enabled members to socialize among themselves, thus, fostering unity.

**Parents’ visits.** The schools allowed parents to visit students fortnightly. It enabled parents to take responsibility for and take care of their children’s needs. The visits began and ended at given times and all parents were expected to comply. Parents
came with food and other provisions to supplement the food provided by the school as well as with ‘spending money’ to ensure their wards had their needs met. Data showed, however, that some parents violated the time of visitation. An AGISS parent remarked:

…because of their class in society, those of the affluent would want to impose their ideas on the school… Some would want to come and visit their children any time and anyhow. Such blatant and deliberate disregard for the rules set bad examples for students. (Personal Communication, October 2013).

The schools expected all stakeholders to observe the laid down rules in order to maintain law and order. Hence, except in emergencies, deliberate violations were not tolerated.

**Social and educational talks.** These were events that were organized in the schools to give students first-hand information about careers they aspire to have. During these talks, experts in various fields were invited to lecture students on their respective areas. During a focus group interview, an AGISS student noted that, “On some Wednesdays we have educational talks. People are invited to come and talk to us about their carriers” (Personal Communication, September 2013). A PRESEC teacher gave a similar account: “On Tuesdays we have social talks, counseling… presentations in the first two periods” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Aside these periods, the PRESEC alumni sometimes held meetings with students and spoke to them about their own careers. One teacher remarked: “Sometimes the old boys [alumni] come to give talks or provide career development counseling to the students” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Such meetings and talks threw light on areas students wanted to explore as they got firsthand accounts from experts in the field of interest.
Sports and games. Sports and games were regarded as essential for both schools. Sporting activities were mandatory. Competitive sporting events were organized at the house level – the various houses chose athletes of various disciplines to represent them. The best performers at the house level were selected to represent the schools in interschool sports competitions. The winners in various events received trophies or certificates for their respective schools.

PRESEC students prevailed in athletic games such as soccer, basketball, tennis, and volleyball among others. One PRESEC teacher said about students’ achievements: “For sports, we are a force to reckon with. When it comes to athletics, we have challengers but not champions over us. We always win” (Personal Communication, September 2013). AGISS had a track record of excellence in organized sporting activities. Some of Ghana’s National Champions in athletics were products of AGISS. However, at the time of this study, their performance was unsatisfactory. According to the headmistress of AGISS, lack of sports resources was detrimental to sports progress in AGISS. She notified:

Sporting has not been the best. When the school started, we had a lot of sports girls such as Alice Afriyie and Alice Anum. At that time, the school had a sports field and the PE teachers were doing well… When the road was constructed, part of the school land was taken and the school was pushed inwards. Since then, we don’t have a field… We have not been doing well – we get second and third position in some – but in general, we are not doing well. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

The inability to practice due to inadequate facilities lowered AGISS students’ performance levels, which in turn diminished the school’s reputation as a formidable contender in sports.
Orientation, opening, and closing ceremonies. Data gathered revealed that each term began with an opening ceremony that welcomed students back to school from break. It was often conducted the morning after the reopening day. During the opening ceremony, the students prayed to thank God for guiding them through the holidays and bringing them back to school. After this religious ritual, the school leader delivered the announcements and declared the school officially resumed. At the end of each term, a closing ceremony was organized and the whole student body and teachers converged for the farewell message and announcements. A PRESEC teacher narrated:

    Often, the school chaplain preached, after which the headmaster announced the program outline for the term. During this announcement, students were notified of all developments that emerged while they were away. New teachers were introduced and the headmaster/headmistress declared the term formally opened. Similarly, on the day of vacation students, have to clean their halls of residence before the closing ceremony, although recalcitrant ones had to complete the cleaning after closing ceremony before their departure. All teachers are expected to be present and after prayers and farewell message - often delivered by the school chaplain - the headmaster/headmistress departs the students after presenting the various announcements including the day of resumption for the following term. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

    Furthermore, the schools organized new student orientation. Administrators, teachers, and school counselors took turns to address the new students and made them aware of what was required of them. Speakers expounded on the rules in the students’ prospectus – rules that were to guide students’ behavior. In PRESEC, parents were part of the orientation program on the first day. The school authorities wanted both parents and students to be cognizant of the rules and regulation, since violations were subject to punishment.
Speech and Prize Giving Days. The Speech and Prize Giving Day was an event that was organized in both schools to recognize and reward students for their accomplishments. This annual ceremony brought invited honorable guests, alumni, staff, parents, and students together. The awardees were students who worked assiduously for excellent performance in various academic subjects, extracurricular activities such as sports, club championships, and for well-behaved students with exceptional mannerisms. The students were usually awarded books.

Data from both schools showed that the alumni provided the resources for these awards. An AGISS alumnus disclosed: “We have a branch in UK, AGOSA UK provided cash, books, and some prizes for prize giving days” (Personal Communication, September 2013). In PRESEC, the alumni did not only provide the prizes, but also chaired and acted as guest speakers for this ceremony (Odadee, 2011). Additionally, the alumni provided trophies and other gifts for students who triumphed in national competitions. The rationale for this ceremony was to encourage awardees and to motivate other students to work harder in order to achieve excellence.

Pre- and post-examination rituals. Before the onset of the WASSCE, the schools organized counseling sessions to educate final year students about the examination procedures. The essence was to prepare students for the task ahead of them, and create the awareness of the dangers of examination malpractices. In PRESEC, prayers and exhortations accompanied the counseling. A PRESEC teacher narrated:

We have what we call the family day. Every year, before the final-year students start their examinations, we invite parents to join their wards in a service. The chaplaincy, in conjunction with the counseling department, counsels the students on how to write examination and we pray with them. On that day, parents are
expected to sit with their wards so they listen together and encourage them before they start the examination. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Students learned to rely on God’s support during examination. The prayers said on their behalf sought for God’s assistance, guidance, and to alleviate fear in the process of writing the examination. The blessings of God were invoked on them for success in the WASSCE. Parents participated to show their support for their children.

The same procedure was repeated after the WASSCE results were released in PRESEC. One teacher in PRESEC noted: “When the results come, we have thanksgiving service – the occasion that brings back all graduates to school to join us to thank God for what he has done for them” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The pre and post examination assured students about the God’s assistance and the importance of showing gratitude respectively.

**Electoral procedures.** Student government was crucial to both school communities. A group of students were assigned leadership roles to act as prefects. To ensure that this group was truly representative of the student body, they were elected into the offices democratically. The elections occurred every second term to replace outgoing prefects. The aspirants went through an established, highly democratic electoral procedure. The electoral commissioners (teachers) conducted the elections so that there was transparency. An AGISS teacher described the electoral procedure:

Anytime elections are to be carried out, we bring out the publications of the positions and expect students to pick up forms and apply for the various positions. Both students and teachers nominate and endorse for a student to vie for a position. The nominated candidates are endorsed based on their academic performance and other qualities we might have observed in the candidates in the course of their stay in the school. A committee vets them for the various positions after which they are scored and short listed and presented to the students. They
are given the opportunity to read their manifestos after which we conduct elections. We do not impose anyone on them. We want them to practice democracy and [let them] come up with their own choices. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Once the voting was cast and the prefects were elected, there was a formal ‘handing over’ ceremony. Both the outgoing and incoming head prefects were given the opportunity to address the schools. The officiators of the ceremony encouraged the new student leaders to discharge their duties faithfully, and the school chaplain prayed for them. The school counselors took student leaders through orientation and intermittent counseling to ensure the roles as leaders do interfere with their studies. The process of election gave the students a firsthand experience with democracy, which instilled in them respect for others.

**Disciplinary committee meetings.** Discipline was a principal part of the schools. Both schools viewed discipline as one of their main anchors. Participants believed that the level of discipline among students determined their success. They made rules that guided students’ behavior while in school. Data depicted that the schools relied on disciplinary committees to resolve disciplinary issues that are associated with students and teachers. The following remarks were from a PRESEC alumnus:

I opted to be the chairman of the disciplinary committee to help uphold the level of discipline in the school… The disciplinary committee normally sits on disciplinary cases involving students. Sometimes, we even sit on disciplinary cases involving teachers and non-teaching staff because without discipline, there would be no PRESEC. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The disciplinary committee served as a police for behavior on campus, which allowed for order to be maintained. Parents of offenders were often brought in to be part of decisions made concerning their children’s disciplinary issues. These often occur when
the offenses were very grievous and required expulsion or suspension. Participating in these events provided students the opportunity to develop physically, socially, academically, morally, politically, and spiritually. Some of the occasional ceremonies provided motivation and encouragement to students in their academic work. These processes together provided the foundation for students’ future lives because the development of students’ personal skills, such as hard work, time management, and independence, enabled them to develop a balanced lifestyle.

**Verbal manifestation of culture.** This segment reports findings on verbal manifestation of culture that was expressed orally to reinforce the schools’ expectations. These included honoring heroes and heroines, storytelling, recognition and reward systems, and school rules and regulations.

![Diagram](image)

*Figure 11: Verbal Manifestation of Culture*

**Heroes and heroines.** Both schools had past and present personalities that were considered heroes/heroines. These were school leaders, teachers, clergy, and students
whose dedication benefited other members and the schools. Also, students whose deeds exemplified the schools’ values and purpose were considered heroes.

Data revealed that members had an awareness of the history of heroes in the schools. In PRESEC, school documents revealed that some clergy of the Presbyterian Church were considered heroes on the basis of their eminent contributions to the establishment of the school. They were ministers who, against all odds, gallantly persevered to sow the seeds of a great school (Odadee, 2011). For example, Rev. Kwansa, a Presbyterian synod clerk, acquired both the funding that aided in the establishment of PRESEC and the land on which the school is currently located. One of the students’ houses was named after him in honor of his enormous contribution to the school (Odadee, 2013).

The Annual Commemoration lectures were events that celebrated and honored the founding fathers (also the first three headmasters) of the school – E.A.W Engmann, Enoch Joseph Klufio, and E.K. Datsa – whose efforts nurtured the school into an excellent institution. The Odadee (2011) states:

> We owe the PRESEC success story to the excellent qualities of wise leadership provided at each critical stage of development by the triumvirate of Engmann, Klufio, and Datsa, whom we are immortalizing through the institution of the memorial lectures bearing their names. (p. 7)

The event reminds students, staff, and, other stakeholders of the toils, hard work, sacrifices, and achievements of these personalities in the establishment and relocation of the school (Odadee, 2011). Each year, it brought about the memories of these icons whose dedication brought about the establishment and continuation of the school. PRESEC’s past teachers were remembered for their hard work and concern towards their
students’ excellence. The first four teachers were revered as heroes for their hard work, despite a poor school environment. These teachers were commended for their enthusiasm, professional commitment, devotion, hard work, dedication, and high aspiration for academic excellence and distinction in extra-curricular activities. The teacher, Mr. J.L. Anang, was remembered for composing the school anthem (Odadee, 2011).

The names of the first set of PRESEC students were always on the lips of the school’s leaders, teachers, alumni, and students. The members perceived these first nine students as the founding pillars of the school’s academic performance because, even under challenging conditions, they wrote the Cambridge School Certificate Examination and performed spectacularly. Since then, the names of students who made straight ‘A’s were documented and frequently announced to motivate other students to follow their examples. Students who excelled in the WASSCE were venerated in AGISS.

Sports heroes were also fondly remembered in both schools. For instance, previous students who excelled in sports were considered heroines. They were often spoken of and referred to when encouraging students to strive for excellence. Though they were not celebrated on special occasions, these heroines were often on the lips of the staff members.

_Storytelling in the schools._ With regard to storytelling, data revealed that it was prominently featured in both schools. It took place at morning assembly/devotion and/or church service. Storytelling related to academic achievements, extra-curricular victories, issues of discipline, and religion and spirituality.
In PRESEC, stories told covered students who had excelled in national competitions such as the Brilliant Science and Math Quiz and in their WASSCE, alumni achievements, and student who demonstrate high levels of discipline. The students were told stories about the heroes, who were commemorated in yearly events. In addition, stories were told in sermons preached in church. Teachers and the headmaster heralded the names of alumni that were in prominent positions both nationally and internationally. Stories about the students’ performance since the school’s inception were passed down year after year. The purpose of storytelling was to encourage, inspire, and motivate students to develop the spirit of hard work, the commitment, and the devotion that helped the heroes in the stories to prevail.

In AGISS, storytelling also took place at assembly. Often, there were about academic matters, life experiences, religious stories, and sports achievements. The intention of the stories was to motivate and keep students on the right path. Stories of alumni who excelled in sports were continuously told during the sports season to increase students’ motivation for winning. Stories about alumni, who had straight ‘A’s in the WASSCE, were also told in classrooms and assembly to reinforce students’ determination to excel. Storytelling not only motivated students but also served as a tool to model their behavior. Additionally, it created the awareness that every student was capable of excellence.

**Rules and regulations.** Interview responses from both schools showed that rules and regulations existed in the schools to ensure discipline and order. They existed as both oral and written (in the prospectus). Each student was expected to be conversant with the
rules and the punishments that followed violations. This was based on the Ghanaian culture where communities are guided by rules for members to follow. Violators are punished and sometimes banishment, depending on the gravity of the offense.

In the Ghanaian culture, members are socialized with the principle of having respect for authority and elders. Generally, society is a top down structure where children are expected to give respect to whoever is older irrespective of their relationship. Any form of instruction or confrontation towards an elderly person is deemed disrespectful, uncultured, behavior. Children are socialized to submit and give respect to whoever is older or above them.

Grievances are presented a polite manner if one needs to be heard. There are usually rules that spell out how such cases should be handled. The same mentality was transferred into the school community. Schools have rules that governed them and provide direction for every situation. Violation of any sort attracted punishment.

Data indicated that rules were means of guiding students’ behavior and conformity to the schools’ expectations. The rules were intended to help students have respect for other individuals especially the teachers, and the school community as a whole. The following were some of the written rules found in the school prospectus of both schools.

AGISS

- Silence must be observed in the library, during rest hours, at assembly, and during class hours.
- Classes and prepare compulsory. Students found loitering during classes’ time are liable to a day’s suspension.
- Dressing: All students are expected to appear in approved school attire while in school; boarders are expected to appear in school uniform when they go outside
the school. Improper dressing is prohibited and punishable. These include dangling earrings, and make up - painted lips, nails, and eye shadow.

- Fighting and quarrelling and assault of staff members, their dependents or other students are prohibited and punishable.
- Stealing and petty theft are prohibited and punishable.
- Being rude to staff members, flouting staff members’ authority, and disobeying a prefects order are all offenses that are punishable.

**PRESEC**

- Non-performance of house duties is forbidden and punishable.
- Disrespect of teachers or prefects is forbidden and punishable.
- Unsanctioned uniforms and dress items are banned and punishable.
- Fighting is prohibited and punishable.
- Leaving school without exeats warrants suspension.
- Illicit substances, such as cigarettes and alcohol, result in suspension or dismissal.
- Stealing and burglary attract dismissal.
- Physical attack on staff members and other students is prohibited and punishable.
- Bullying is prohibited and punishable.
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices are banned.
- Occultism is strictly forbidden.

These and many more rules were in place to check inappropriate behavior.

Participants revealed that without the rules, it would be difficult to control the adolescents in the schools. Since students are from diverse backgrounds, the rules helped the schools to keep the students on the same level ground. No students’ status is allowed to dominate any aspect of the school life.

**Recognition and rewards.** Data showed that rewarding students was a common practice in both schools. Students were rewarded for excellent performance in the WASSCE and were celebrated for the hard work that enabled them to continue their tertiary education. The schools recognized and rewarded students for academic and extracurricular achievements during special ceremonies. Furthermore, students were rewarded when elected as prefects. These prefects received special recognition with titles
that distinguished them from other students. They were assigned special rooms in the dormitories and were respected for their offices. In dormitories, housemasters or housemistresses openly or privately commended students for good behavior or hard work while teachers did the same in classrooms.

Teachers were regularly rewarded for their dedication to students’ progress. In AGISS, for example, teachers in the school were provided free snacks daily and occasionally, full course meals. Teachers in both schools occasionally received cash bonuses in appreciation for their hard work. The administrators and teachers were rewarded when the students performed tremendously in various disciplines as they gained reputations for effectiveness, commitment and competence. They also felt accomplished for being part of successful school communities.

In a nutshell, the expression of the verbal culture revealed reinforced school members’ progress. These were expressed through honoring heroes and heroines, storytelling, recognition and rewards, and rules and regulations. The intent of the verbal culture was to inspire students to work hard, encourage appropriate behavior, and instill discipline required for a well-rounded development.

**Summary**

The tangible organizational culture of the schools was the physical structures and the witnessable processes manifested in the schools. The structures comprised visual manifestations such as the physical environment, the facilities, the symbols, and the dress code that one could easily see. The witnessable processes included the behavior manifestations as revealed in the daily and occasional rituals and ceremonies; and the
verbal manifestations that featured the heroes and heroines, recognition and rewards, storytelling and rules and regulations. The tangible culture existed to enforce the intangible culture – the mission, values and beliefs, and expectations of the schools.

The Intangible, Indiscernible Culture

This segment presents the findings on the intangible, indiscernible aspect of organizational culture. This is the unseen, uneasy-to-decipher school culture that directs behavior and processes in the schools. It includes the mission, beliefs and values, and expectations of the schools.

School mission. The mission of the schools was either written or orally disseminated to members. A review of PRESEC’s prospectus and responses from participants provided the data for the identification of the school’s mission and purpose.

The PRESEC mission statement reads:

The school exists for the equipping of students for a fuller life to which Christian education, based on the Presbyterian tradition, opens the door. Hence, it stands excellent in academic, moral, and skill developments. Its purpose is to discipline, not only the mind and the body, but also the spirit. (PRESEC prospectus)

The PRESEC headmaster buttressed that the purpose of the school was “to train students in the Presbyterian doctrine to become Christian gentlemen, work hard for academic excellence, discipline for good morals, and excellence in extra-curriculum activities such as sports” (Personal Communication, October 2013). In AGISS, although there was no officially written mission statement, responses from participants demonstrated an understanding of what the school stood for – provide an education that would prepare students in totality for adult roles. One AGISS teacher noted:
We hope to train them and cultivate in them the culture or habit of learning. We hope to bring them up and groom them to be models. Not only for them to be academically good but to be socially and morally groomed to meet the challenges of this world. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Members of both schools demonstrated a high degree of awareness of the core obligations and responsibilities of the schools towards students. The mission, therefore, directed the behavior patterns of members and influenced the level of their daily input. In other words, participants in both schools knew the mission of the schools and worked towards it accordingly.

The schools existed to cater not only to students’ academic needs but also to the social, and religious and moral aspects of students’ lives. Data revealed stakeholders’ efforts contributed to enable the schools carry out their missions. My personal observation at staff meetings of both schools, revealed teachers commitment to the task of training students to become well rounded.

Regarding students’ academic skills development, students were encouraged to attend classes and prep regularly, and stick to the timetable. Teachers were encouraged to work committedly and avoid absences from class. They were also to ensure that they completed the syllabus for the year groups and if needed, organize extra classes (teaching that took place outside the stipulated instructional periods) for students. The heads of department monitored teachers, identified underperforming ones, and provided assistance. The assistant headmaster/headmistress in charge of academics ensured that teachers signed a register after lessons to check teacher absences.

Additionally, class monitors ensured that both teacher and student absences were reported to the right quarters. The AGISS headmistress held meetings twice a week with
heads of department to receive progress reports about their respective departments.

Students’ religiousness and morality was developed through daily preaching of the word of God. This was intended to draw them closer to God and to guide them to behave in appropriate Christian tradition towards their fellow school members.

Rules and regulations instilled discipline into students to guide them to live acceptable lifestyles. Students were advised (and deterred through punishment) against engaging in illicit behavior and drugs in order to ensure a conducive school community. However, although there was a high level of awareness of the schools’ obligations towards students, data showed some teachers in the schools seemed to be indifferent towards their responsibilities. Two teachers remarked: commented on teachers’ indifference.

For now it is not the best that we have and that also affects the way we control the students because some teachers will go to the classroom and teach their stuff and once they finish with the academic work that is the end of it. Whether the students are well dressed or not, they don’t talk about it – which is very wrong. They sometimes go to the classroom and the place is a bit unkempt but you see a teacher teaching in that environment, and say they are not in charge of cleaning the classroom. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

I have a serious problem with the new generation of teachers. Voluntarism is fading out of the place and this gives us a lot of problems. Some are very inactive because they don’t care. It is an attitude they came in with. They are those who go to class and teach and don’t care about anything. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Aside the few teachers who were apathetic about their surroundings and students, majority of the school members made many efforts to ensure that they met their obligation to students. Measures established by the school such as rules and regulations
and rites and rituals helped the members to achieve their goals, thereby accomplishing the mission of the school.

**Beliefs and values.** Analysis of the cultural manifestations and members’ responses about the beliefs and values of the schools led to the identification of values that were espoused and shared in the schools. In both schools, values were acknowledged in documents such as students’ prospectus, mission statements, brochures, and timetables. Acknowledgement of the values was also found in mottos, logos, crests, school anthems, and rules and regulations. The school values were communicated to students and other stakeholders through various rites, ceremonies, and rituals that took place in the schools.

These avenues were also used for socialization processes of incoming students or to remind school members of the schools’ values and their beliefs. For example, orientation programs were used to disseminate the schools’ values to new students. The schools’ anthems, when sung, reminded students about the values schools espoused. The beliefs and values that emerged from the data are presented in the following session.

**Holistic training and development.** The notion of holistic training was unanimously emphasized, supported, and shared among members of both schools. Documents and responses from participants indicate that, even though the schools’ priority was students’ academic achievement, other facets of their lives needed to be developed just as well. The schools aimed at providing a holistic education for the students’ development of life long skills. Their belief was that this would positively influence all aspects of the students’ lives.
In PRESEC, the holistic training was based on training the “3 ‘H’s” – the head, the heart, and the hands – of students. The “3 ‘H’s” training was aimed at producing a well-rounded student. The PRSEC headmaster stated:

For the Presbyterian concept, every person who gets into their schools, the “3 ‘H’s” - the head, the heart, and the hands – must be involved. The heart deals with the morals, the head deals with the academic issues, and the hands deal with the skills. The aim is to prepare students to face life. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

In both schools, efforts were channeled into providing training that catered to several aspects of students’ lives – academic, social, religious and spiritual, and moral – to prepare them for adulthood. A PRESEC teacher noted: “As a school, if we are concerned with the academic aspect of the student alone, we will not be helping them” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The AGISS headmistress stated:

We are looking at turning out girls that will be useful to themselves, and to the society at large. It is not only from academic aspect that they can realize this from and so we try to look at every aspect of their lives as students, and that is why we have the counseling unit that takes care of their individual problems. We also have the school chaplaincy that takes care of their spiritual lives… they come out as useful citizens in life. For those that are not academically sound we encourage them in other areas. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

This idea of providing a comprehensive training was intended for moral, intellectual, and skill advancement. Students who went through the schools were well equipped for their school and adult lives. For example, in both schools, engaging students in house chores daily, alongside their academic endeavors, instilled in them hard work, time management, and self-dependence. Participating in religious activities advanced students’ spirituality, morality, leadership, and public speaking skills. These skills were highly valued in the schools, and, consequently, adult members of the school
communities constantly reinforced and reminded students about them. In the words of one PRESEC alumnus:

In fact, PRESEC is a Christian institution, and it has contributed a lot in shaping my life. The school regimen is structured such that if you allow yourself to be trained, by the time you come out, you will be a changed person. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Housemasters/housemistresses considered the boarding students their children. In that capacity, they channeled their efforts to ensure that the students under their care behaved appropriately and in accordance with school rules and regulations. One teacher remarked: “We want to turn them into good adults” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The holistic training was aimed at producing well-rounded students who would emerge as smart, law abiding, courteous, and hardworking citizens. This kind of training fostered students’ academic, social, moral, and spiritual lives, as well as enhanced their leadership and public speaking skills.

*Academic excellence.* Both schools encouraged students to work diligently toward academic excellence. All stakeholders perceived academic excellence as a priority for students and made varied efforts to achieve it. A PRESEC alumnus commented: “The primary objective of schooling is the academic aspect, and I must say that PRESEC is an institution of academic excellence, and this academic excellence happens to be perpetual” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Various rituals, and ceremonies were organized and enforced to enable, motivate, and encourage students to excel in their academic pursuits. These included documenting class and prep attendance, organizing extra classes for underperforming students, Speech and Prize Giving Day, and experts or alumni meet and greets.
**Trust.** Leaders demonstrated trust in their staff members through task delegation. By assigning tasks to various members, the leader trusted that these members would see their assigned tasks through to the very end successfully. Teachers in turn trusted that the leaders were being fair in their delegation of tasks and accepted them willingly. Teachers also exhibited flexibility when they took on additional responsibilities – such as serving on a committee or becoming a form master – as they had to change their schedules to accommodate their new duties.

Teachers also freely approached school leaders with their problems because they trusted the leaders would be both helpful and understanding. Students trusted in their teachers to impart the right knowledge to them and to be fair in their grading. They also demonstrated trust when the confided in their teachers or sought their assistance in various situations because they believed the teachers genuinely cared about their wellbeing. Teachers exhibited trust in their students’ ability to do their work effectively and thoroughly. Parents and guardians consigning their wards to the schools shows that they trusted them to keep their wards safe in their absence and carry out the training the school advertised.

**Discipline and compliance.** There was a strong sense of discipline, and compliance with the rules and regulations and the accepted way of life, in the schools. The rules were written down (in the prospectus) or communicated verbally to guide students during their time in the school. Students were expected to show discipline by complying with all the school rules. School leaders and staff members enforced these rules and accordingly took action on violators.
Discipline was regarded as one of the main devices to help students achieve their academic goals. Discipline led to compliance with the school rules and regulations, on the part of students, thereby, ensuring order in the school. This enabled the school staff to maintain order, even with large numbers of students. This compliance also enabled the schools to maintain the safety of the members and to provide a conducive environment for students and teachers.

Both schools enforced rules and regulations to maintain order and safety of members on the campuses. Students’ compliance promoted self-discipline in them, thus helping them to develop autonomy, become responsible, and work to meet their goals.

**Equality, egalitarianism, and uniformity.** The schools strongly emphasized egalitarianism and equality. Irrespective of a student’s background (ethnicity, class, socioeconomic, religion, and political among others), all students were treated equally and staff members were forbidden to do otherwise. All students were to observe school rules and violators were punished accordingly. Students were all served the same kind and rations of food, and chore allocation was indiscriminate. The AGISS headmistress recounted how she once enforced equality:

> Another rule is that nobody should bring mobile phone or its accessories to school. Two years ago, some students did it and we punished them. The boarders were removed from the boarding house. Then one “big man” called me pleading for a girl but I told him that, “it is a rule that we are applying [enforcing], and there are many of them involved. We have asked all of them to go out of the boarding house so if I take her back I will be hurting the system.” That ended the matter and I respect him for that. He is in a top hierarchy that one might feel I should bend the rule. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

The only exceptions allowed were based on medical conditions. The prospectus enumerated the same prescribed items for each student. This ensured uniformity and lent
itself to maintaining equality and egalitarianism among the students. For instance, students with good socioeconomic backgrounds wore the same clothing and had the same haircut as their less fortunate counterparts. This uniformity took away certain differences between students and lessens the occurrence of conflicts and social vices such as stealing. For example, in PRESEC, students were only allowed a maximum of GHC100 (equivalent of $30.50) at any given time, and in both schools, electronic gadgets were strictly prohibited.

**Religiosity, spirituality, and morality.** Both schools focused on, and unanimously supported and shared, Christian training. The Christian values were instilled in students right from their first day in the schools. The various religious rites and ceremonies promoted students’ religiosity and spirituality, which in turn promoted and reinforced the students’ moral consciousness. Immersing students in these rites enabled them to be constantly and consistently motivated and encouraged to be more committed to God. This commitment also went on to further strengthen their religiosity and spirituality.

Students’ participation in religious morning devotions, Sunday church services, vespers, nondenominational groups’ activities, retreats, revival programs, and prayer sessions enable them to demonstrate their commitment to God, thus strengthening their religious and spiritual lives. Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion services organized in PRESEC for students helped to affirm their faith. The word of God was preached daily to remind students about the life Christ wants His followers to live.

**The school family.** Responses from both schools’ participants indicated that stakeholders were enthusiastic about the welfare of one another. The school leaders were
concerned about the welfare of their teachers and students, teachers and parents cared about students, and parents were concerned about the teachers and students. The school members made efforts to maintain warm and cordial relationships with one another. The stakeholders did so because they believed that if one subculture suffered it affected the dominant culture.

There was collaboration in the schools. Teachers worked in teams to achieve goals. Parents and staff members came together under the umbrella of the Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) and engaged in various projects to support the schools and enhance or expand their facilities.

However, professional learning communities (PLC) did not exist in the schools. The only type of collaboration that existed was between heads of department and underperforming and/or new teachers. A PLC is a collaboration of school personnel to build social relations and discuss their profession in order to improve their performance and better carry out their fundamental responsibility of commitment to student learning.

Members regarded each other as family. The AGISS headmistress cared about the staff’s welfare and teachers saw themselves as siblings. An AGISS teacher stated:

> We live here as families. We have staff living here and even the colleagues who live outside the school are part of us the moment they come to school. Even when they leave we still consider them to be part of us. Most of the time, she [the headmistress] jokingly tells us that she owns everybody in our school including us [staff members], so long as we are under her tutelage, she is so much into us” (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The AGISS headmistress stated: “I believe that we are one another’s keeper” (Personal Communication, October 2013). PRESEC members understood and appreciated the concept of family. School leaders and parents of students realized the
hassle and danger of teachers and students commuting to school daily, and because they cared for their wellbeing, the PTA undertook projects to expand the school’s infrastructure to accommodate the more students and teachers on the campus. The PRESEC PTA chair remarked: “We cannot think about only the children without taking care of the staff so we have our second phase of projects. When we finish with the classroom block, we will concentrate on building, further, bungalows for the teaching staff” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Members of both schools believed that housing more teachers and students on campus would enhance efficiency and safety of both teachers and students.

PRESEC organized family events, such as Family Day, that involved parents of students in the school. A PRESEC teacher pointed out:

The carol service is a family service where parents are invited. We have what we call the family day. Every year, before the final year students (seniors) start their examinations, we invite parents to join their wards in a service. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Students also realized that they needed to assist their peers. An AGISS student revealed:

In the science class, we try to help each other. Any time a teacher is not present and some do not understand a particular topic, the student who understands goes to the front and explains it to those who do not understand. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Both schools understood the importance of family and collaboration. Therefore, they set up measures to create a genial environment to foster strong ties between school members. Members’ view of the school members as a family provided them the drive to do things to promote the welfare of the school and its members.
**Politeness and mutual respect.** In both schools, mutual respect for one another and civility was highly valued. Members were encouraged to be courteous to one another. Also, rules existed that guided students’ attitudes towards staff members and their peers. As a result, adults showed concern for students and students were obedient and polite to adults as well as their peers.

**Professionalism and responsibility.** Both schools emphasized professionalism. Teachers were encouraged to be professional by being punctual and avoiding absenteeism. Teachers demonstrated their professionalism by making sure that all their daily responsibilities were fulfilled. For this reason, the teachers were punctual to class, taught their lessons, and signed the class registers after each lesson.

School leaders demonstrated professionalism by carrying out their duties fairly and effectively. Both school leaders and teachers did not allow their personal lives to interfere with their professional work. School leaders and staff members took responsibility for the students while in school and acted as foster parents to provide their basic needs and training. The school leaders showed responsibility for the teachers and ensured that they had the tools necessary for effective work. Parents showed responsibility for their wards by being cooperative with the school authorities. They also took responsibility of their wards’ education by improving the school facilities through the PTA.

**Recognition and rewards systems.** Both schools organized and held annual events that lauded and/or rewarded achievements. The award ceremonies sought to encourage, motivate, and reward students for academic achievements, extracurricular activities, or
general good behavior. An example of such an annual event is the Speech and Prize Giving Day. Recognition and rewards were used to motivate and encourage teachers for hard work and commitment. Teachers were provided with cash bonuses and food or snacks.

Diligence and determination. Stakeholder’s expectation for academic achievements was high. These values were highly emphasized to fully tap into students’ potentials for academic progress. Teachers encouraged students to observe school rules such as regularly attending classes and prep. All these served to encourage the students to work hard to achieve their goals and the schools’ expectations of them. Consequently, students made optimum use of their time, completed their chores daily, and worked hard to study or revise their notes daily.

These values also transferred to other areas of students’ school lives. They approached extracurricular and religious activities with the same spirit of diligence and determination, which brought excellence in the extracurricular activities and fostered growth in their religiousness. Even though lifestyle could be tasking, the students were determined to persevere and complete their training.

Both the school leaders and staff members exhibited hard work and determination. As they viewed themselves as foster parents, they diligently monitored and worked with students in order to see them excel in all aspects of their training. Heads of departments supervised teachers assiduously to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Teachers carried out their duties faithfully, in and outside the classroom. Counselors and
nurses ensured that students were in optimal mental and physical health to allow them pursue their goals in the schools.

The kitchen staff worked diligently to provide well-balanced meals for student nourishment. The school leaders ensured that their staff fulfilled their assigned duties and unwaveringly supported their staff and students with whatever they needed. The tradition of preserving the schools’ good names propelled school leaders, staff members and students to work diligently to realize the schools’ expectations.

*Freedom of worship.* Spirituality was a crucial aspect of school life for most Ghanaian students. In both schools, the belief was that students’ daily activities should accommodate the word of God. The school leaders, teachers, and students opined that the school environment should be fertile enough for spiritual growth – be it Christian or non-Christian. The AGISS chaplain commented: “Every Sunday, opportunity is given to the Islamic group to meet by themselves and worship” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The PRESEC chaplain expressed similar views and explained that since both GES and the church managed all mission-based schools, it was required of the schools to observe the government policies as well as that of the church. The government policies promote freedom of worship; therefore, although the school was (Christian) mission based, members of the Islamic religion were allowed to worship.

It was clear from the data that beliefs and values were the compass that directed the members of both schools. Therefore, they were highly emphasized in the schools and all members shared them to foster the attainment of their collective objectives and goals,
and, subsequently, meet the expectations of the schools. These observed values and beliefs influenced how members of the school conducted themselves, discharged their duties, and related with one another. They carried out their responsibilities with these values in mind.

**Schools’ expectations and outcomes.** Participants’ responses about the outcomes expected by both schools were congruent: students’ success in academics, extracurricular activities, discipline, and religious and spiritual growth. The headmaster/headmistress, teachers, alumni, and students alluded that their schools’ expectation was to produce well-rounded students. In view of that, the schools provided holistic education that enabled the students to achieve the schools’ four main outcomes. The goal of both schools was for students to attain a high degree of success in their endeavors. The headmaster/headmistress pointed out respectively:

We train students in the Presbyterian doctrine to become Christian gentlemen, work hard for academic excellence, discipline for good morals, and excellence in extra-curriculum activities such as sports. Every student is expected to receive training of the head, heart, and hands. The aim is to prepare students to face life. From the Presbyterian concept, every person who gets into their schools, the “3 ‘H’s” – the head, the heart, and the hands – must be involved. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

We are looking at turning out girls that will be useful to themselves and to the society at large. It is not only from academic aspect that they can realize this from and so we try to look at every aspect of their lives as students and that is why we have the counseling unit that takes care of their individual problems. We also have the school chaplaincy that takes care of their spiritual lives. Apart from whatever they are learning to make the grades, they come out as useful citizens in life. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

The schools engaged students in rituals, and ceremonies that equipped them in all aspects of their lives in order to achieve their expected outcomes.
**Academic achievement.** There was a high expectation for teacher’s commitment to students’ learning. Data revealed that teachers had the desire for students to excel, and they demonstrated the commitment required to attain it. As one teacher noted: “For teachers, the expectation is that they will be able to teach well, and not only teaching, but that the students will be well informed” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Both schools perceived students’ academic excellence as their principal goal. This academic excellence was to be demonstrated in termly exams and the final senior high school exit examination, WASSCE, which, upon passing, allowed students to pursue tertiary education. It was indicated that the WASSCE was a highly competitive examination because failure limited a student’s pursuance of higher education. Schools that produced a higher percentage of students who scored “A” in all subjects were adjudged the best. Four teachers, the headmistress and headmaster, two parents, and two alumni attested to the fact that their greatest concern and expectation was for the students to excel in the WASSCE. An AGISS teacher noted:

> My goal in this school is to make sure that my students score 100% in external exams [WASSCE]…assuring that most of my students get grade A so that it will enable them enter the university and do courses of their choice. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

A PRESEC teacher stated: “The primary aim is to improve upon performance, both in internal and external exams” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Owing to this ideology, students developed the desire to work hard and excel in their academic pursuits. This was an account from a student during a focus group interview: “In fact, everybody wants to learn so, if you go about fooling, you will be left out… For me, the
way other students learn has motivated me to imitate them.” (Focus Group, September 2013)

At staff meetings, school leaders emphasized the need for teachers to complete the syllabus before the WASSCE. To carry out this mandate, teachers had to adhere strictly to the syllabus and avoid absences. Teachers offered academic counseling and encouragement to students who were struggling with their courses.

Various strategies were adopted to improve students’ performance. In both schools, goals were collectively set on departmental basis; teachers signed the class registers and noted student absences after lessons, class prefects (monitors) documented teacher and student absences and reported to the appropriate staff; heads of departments monitored content delivery; form masters (class teachers) held class meetings every first week of the term to discuss students’ terminal reports and fortnightly to discuss their challenges; schools organized educational talks during which experts from various professional fields, conscientized students about potential careers in their respective programs; and school leaders closely supervised the unfinished work of final year students and arranged for supplementary classes for underperforming students. In addition, prep was a device to promote students’ academic pursuits. In AGISS, the headmistress held meetings with the heads of departments twice every week to address various developments.

New students were acculturated to the schools’ way of doing things during orientation. The academic expectation was frequently announced and emphasized at devotion/assembly, and in the classrooms to remind students of the task ahead of them.
The awards and recognitions, given on Speech and Prize Giving Days, motivated students to excel. The headmaster/headmistress worked collaboratively with the staff members to effect changes that could enhance student performance. Teachers provided feedback to parents about student academic progress at the end of each term through termly reports. The schools’ PTAs and alumni embarked on projects that improved the learning environments for students.

In PRESEC, the alumni periodically organized a meet and greet with students where they shared their past experiences while they were in school, encouraged and counseled students on the benefits of their ongoing school training, and offered expert knowledge about their fields to inquiring students. Students reciprocated the efforts of school leaders, teachers, parents, and alumni by attending classes and prep, devoting their time to studies and making optimum use of the available resources in achieving academic excellence.

The schools demonstrated how proud they were of students who excelled in the WASSCE, by listing their names in yearly brochures. An AGISS alumni, who was the second best candidate in the 2002 WASSCE nationwide was pictured in the school’s brochure. The headmistress and the teachers often told stories about her achievement at assembly and in the classrooms respectively. In PRESEC students who scored straight ‘A’s in all the WASSCE subjects as well as those who emerged as champions in national competitions were documented in the annual brochure. The members of the school boasted about these students and made regular references to their feats. In both schools, alumni who were in high-ranking positions were often mentioned to students in stories to
encourage and inspire them to work harder to attain their goals, and in effect, the schools goals.

**Discipline.** Members of both schools viewed discipline as an integral part of school training. Beside the goal of achieving high academic performance, they believed that it is self-disciplined students who could prevail. Participants revealed that discipline was a pivot on which all learning rested. Consequently, the schools adopted various ways to instill discipline into students.

Both schools established rules and regulations to guide student behavior and inform them about the ramifications of engaging in unacceptable behaviors. The schools believed that adherence to the established norms would promote a healthy environment that fosters student learning. They instituted disciplinary committees that reviewed cases and meted out the appropriate sanctions to violators.

School rules were spelled out to buttress the acceptable ways of behavior in the school communities. The dress code, obedience to adults, mutual respect, and performance of house duties were all emphasized orally and were documented. Staff members and prefects of the schools persistently communicated and reminded students of this acceptable way of life and of their responsibilities. Parents were well informed about what was expected of their wards and updated on any developing disciplinary issues. During my observation, parents of PRESEC students were invited to be present as the rules and regulations were expounded on to students during orientation.

Academic excellence was associated with discipline, among other values. Members from PRESEC ascribed their academic success to the emphasis the school laid
on discipline. The headmaster, the alumni, PTA chairman, two teachers, and four
students agreed that discipline, which was required in the training of the head, heart, and
hands (3 ‘H’ s), had been the fulcrum of the school since its inception. An account about
the relevance of school discipline documented in the “Odadee” (2011) reads:

Right from the day of her foundation in 1938, PRESEC began a Christian type of
education which imbued the boys with a behavior pattern that made the products
of the school God-fearing, as well as toughened and seasoned both in academic
and general attitude towards life, which at the same time made them unassuming.
It is a type of Spartan toughening discipline…the discipline is meant to impress
upon the students the need for law and order as well as liberty and responsibility.
(p. 13)

Self-discipline was emphasized and it ran through all aspects of the students’
training in the schools. Members’ awareness of the rules enabled them to get their lives
organized to accomplish their assigned tasks during the training. Students were tasked
with engaging in house chores each day before they went to classes. The expectation was
that this training would not only sharpen their life long work skills, but also enable them
to plan and manage their time efficiently in school, and eventually, in their adult lives.

The training taught them to be self-dependent to enable them to face challenges.
Responses from students showed that the regimen they went through introduced many
important virtues to them; thus, improving their lives. In a focus group interview,
students made the following comments:

There are a lot of differences in life at home and life in school. Here, everything is
done in order. There is time for everything we do in each day. You have to do
many things by yourself. We are strictly monitored for everything we do and that
has put some level of discipline into my life. (Focus Group, September 2013)
Life in PRESEC has helped us to manage our time very well. We are encouraged
not to be late to social gatherings and classes. Students who go to gatherings late
are punished for that, so I try to be punctual. (Focus Group, September 2013)
There is so much discipline in this school that you just have to obey every word if you want to enjoy your stay. It has helped us carry out activities within the time available. I do not go about idling. As I see other students studying it motivates me to also study. There is timetable for everything we do and that has helped me a lot. (Focus Group, September 2013)

A PRESEC alumnus testified about their encounter with, and influence of, the school discipline in their lives:

In fact, PRESEC is a Christian institution, and it has contributed a lot in shaping my life. The school regimen is structured such that if you allow yourself to be trained, by the time you come out, you will be a changed person. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

A documented quote of an alumnus stated: “The 7 years I spent in PRESEC from 1973-1980 were defining years in my life...The discipline of PRESEC shaped my life as I entered adulthood” (Odadee, 2011, p. 76). The schools emphasized to ensure that the school environment was conducive for learning and devoid of violent behavior. The school rules were also in place to prevent students from indulging in practices such as use of drugs, smoking, alcohol use, sexual misconduct, harassment, and fighting, occult practices, and possession of dangerous weapons that could jeopardize the safety of the school members. Students, who engaged in these practices, when caught, were accordingly penalized. All members were aware of the relevance of discipline in the school community.

The training enabled students to be morally conscious because it continually emphasized and endorsed “good” actions (acceptable behavior) while it discouraged and disfavored “bad” actions (unacceptable behavior). The PRESEC headmaster pointed out the importance of discipline to the students: “We train students in the Presbyterian doctrine to become Christian gentlemen, and emphasize discipline for good morals”
Similar responses from AGISS revealed a consensus in maintaining a high standard of discipline in order to produce girls with good character and morals. One AGISS teacher noted: “We hope to bring them up and groom them to be models. Not only for them to be academically good but to be socially and morally groomed to meet the challenges of this world (Personal Communication, September 2013).

There was a general awareness of the sanctions that accompanied a breach of rules. The sanctions included a loss of boarding status, expulsion from the school, suspension with or without hard labor, and corporal punishment. An AGISS student stated: “All of us know that there are rules and regulations that we have to obey” (Focus Group, September 2013). One PRESEC teacher expounded on the repercussions of violating school rules; “We are very strict about our discipline and the students know that our code of ethics is no respecter of person… So we deal with our code of ethics to the letter” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The importance of discipline was stressed during the acculturation process at orientation. The school prospectus was expounded on to make new students aware of what was expected of them. A teacher recounted on the socialization process for new students:

When students are admitted into the school, they are given a brochure or prospectus that contains all the things that are expected of them. It contains the school rules and regulations… In the first week of arrival, we organize orientation for them and discuss every bit of thing in the school brochure. We have spelt out the offenses and the kind of punishment the offenses merit (Personal Communication, September 2013).
In the focus group interview in AGISS, seven students indicated that all students were aware of school rules and regulations, and the repercussions of violating them. A student stated, “All of us know that there are rules and regulations that we have to obey. We have them in our prospectus and so we try to live by them so we don’t get ourselves into trouble.” Another student noted: “Every student knows the punishment that accompanies his or her offense. You don’t need anybody to tell you what to do or expect.” Participants in both schools pointed out that disciplinary committees existed to handle serious offenses that students committed. A PRESEC teacher remarked:

At the school level, we have the Disciplinary Committee that meets to listen to students who have erred – usually in very serious situations…we all agree on the kind of sanctions [punishment] we lay on them. These are some of the things we do to check discipline in the school. (Personal Communication, October 2013).

Discipline was emphasized to enable students observe the rules and regulations that were enforced to guide behavior and protect the school environment. The school’s expectation was to raise disciplined students whose behavior would be beneficial to themselves, the school community, and, eventually, the nation.

*Excellence in extra-curricular activities.* Both schools’ expectation was that students would excel in extra-curricular activities. There was an expectation that every student engages in activities such as sports and games, clubs, and other competitions and quizzes that exhibited their talents. Documents stated “Physical training, hobbies, and organized games are compulsory for all and there are various clubs and societies offering opportunities from the development of special interest and skills, a student is expected to join at least one” (PRESEC prospectus). Members were aware that recreation played an important role in the development of students, especially adolescents.
With regard to sports and games, opportunities were available for students to organize and engage in activities such as soccer, basketball, volleyball, and athletic disciplines. A sports field was available in PRESEC for students to engage in these field events. However, AGISS lacked a field and had to use an improvised field, situated behind its assembly hall, which could not be used for vigorous field activities. In sporting activities, students competed at the house, school, zonal, and national levels.

Some of the clubs that existed in both schools included Writers and Debaters Club, Drama Club, Science Club, French Club, GUNSA, Cadet Corps, Choral Society, UNESCO Wildlife, Computer Literacy Club, and National Commission for Civic Education Club among others. Both schools’ responses and reviewed documents were congruent about the importance of extracurricular activities and documents reviewed spotlighted this.

Members in both schools believed that extracurricular activities were very crucial for students’ development. They were a source of entertainment for students, promoted students’ physical progress, and enhanced their social skills. An AGISS teacher simply stated on the importance of extracurricular activities: “It is said, ‘all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’ (Personal Communication, September 2013). A PRESEC alumnus stated: “Apart from curricular activities, the extracurricular activities we engaged in has helped us. I was part of the house football team. I also got selected into the school’s football team” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The schools prided on the achievement of students in extracurricular activities, as the students met the schools’ expectation.
The PRESEC headmaster noted: “Since the institution of the school, PRESEC students excel in both curricular and co-curricular activities; the evidence is the awards you see displayed in my office” (Personal Communication, October 2013). However, PRESEC participants pointed out that, although the school has the training resources, they did not perform well in soccer. He stated: “For soccer, we are mostly knocked out, though we have excellent players here”. My observation in PRESEC revealed a large collection of awards – certificates and trophies – students had won during sports and club competitions.

Also presented were five consecutive awards that PRESEC students won in the National Math and Science Quiz competitions – a feat no school had replicated. They could also boast about the awards they had in the National ICT competition, the Coca-Cola Hit Single music competition, the Municipal inter-school drama competition, the Sankofa Drama competition, the Volta River Authority (VRA) Golden Jubilee debate, and the Narcotic Control Board Annual competition.

The AGISS headmistress pointed out that the students did well in the “Independence Debates”. She commented, “In the third year of my being in office, we were first. We had a trophy for that” (Personal Communication, October 2013). Data revealed that the school had a record of alumni who excelled in sports and became National Champions. The headmistress remarked, “When the school started, we had a lot of sports girls, such as Hannah Afriyie and Alice Anum, who became national and international champions” (Personal Communication, October 2013). However, she
pointed out that the situation of sports activities in the school had declined over time due to lack of resources. She noted:

    Sporting has not been the best. When the school had a sports field that enhanced training. However, currently the school does not feature in sports and games as in time past, due to lack of a sports field for training. We have not been doing well, because we get second and third positions in some events, but in general we are not doing well. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

    My observation in AGISS during sports the season revealed that, students did not engage in extensive training, but participated in Inter School Competition at the El Wak Stadium. During the competition, the students did not perform as well as other girls from the other competing schools. The situation in the school meant that students had the potential but it was not being tapped into, due to lack of resources.

    The expectation of the schools was for their students to participate and excel in extracurricular activities. As a result, various avenues were in place for students to function since every student was mandated to engage in at least one activity. These activities provided entertainment, health benefits, and social development. As teenagers, their involvement in extracurricular activities was essential to redirect their energies to do things that could benefit them, the school, and the society.

    **Religious and spiritual growth.** One aspect of students’ lives in which the schools expected progress was their religious and spiritual growth. There was a high expectation that students became inclined to God and the things of God. Christianity was the dominant religion in the study schools. Responses and documents from PRESEC revealed that the school provided a Christian-based training that instilled the fear of God in students. The school’s motto: “In lumine tuo videbimus lumen” in Latin means “In
Thy Light we shall see light” was heralded in the school anthem to constantly remind students to focus on God for their light. AGISS, although a secular public school, expectations still existed to see students emerge as committed Christians.

A chaplaincy board existed in the schools to see to the religious aspect of students’ training. The school chaplains of both schools were teachers/pastors, who were assigned by the GES to the school to organize the spiritual activities for students. The PRESEC chaplain noted: “As a chaplain, I am here to see to the spiritual and the moral upbringing of the students” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Various activities were in place to help the school bring up the students to become the Christians the school expected. It was routine that the school day begun with God – morning devotion was characterized by prayer, singing hymns/praises, bible reading, and word ministration. This meeting was mandatory for all students to enable them get involved in the Christian rites and rituals performed each day. Sunday services were organized in the schools to enable students learn more about God and assume various responsibilities in church.

In PRESEC, the services were organized in the tradition of the Presbyterian Church, while AGISS services were more interdenominational oriented. The headmaster, three teachers, an alumnus, one parent, and seven students attested to the importance of the Christian training in PRESEC. A PRESEC teacher explained: “As a Presbyterian school, the tradition of the church is instilled into the students. We believe that in addition to academic work, we need to bring up our children in the fear of the Lord” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The headmaster stated:
We encourage spiritual growth, work towards good morals, hard work, and discipline in every aspect of life… When they are in the work place, because of good morals, they know how to handle themselves. You [students] don’t cheat on people and think you are having a leeway. When you are dealing with morals, you know and so these are core values that cannot be compromised. They go out there and they will still be the people we want them to be. So that’s why in school we make morning devotion a priority for students to start the day. The word of God is preached to them to mold their lives and make them responsible students for the nation as well as for God. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

My observation at the morning devotion/assembly, Sunday morning service, and vespers in both schools revealed the various ways student involvement in religious activities was promoted. Students led liturgy, led and sang hymns, sang praises while drumming and dancing, read the bible, gave offering, and sometimes preached the word of God. Data revealed that practices such singing praises, drumming, and dancing, which are atypical of Presbyterian tradition, were adopted into services because they were ingrained in the Ghanaian culture. PRESEC organized baptism, confirmation, communion, retreats, and special fasting and prayers to boost students’ spiritual growth.

It also organized special prayer and counseling services to usher in the WASSCE. Parents of the WASSCE candidates joined in these services to encourage and affirm their support for their children. A thanksgiving service, which brought back the graduated students to express their gratitude to God for their accomplishments, followed the released of the examination results. Although a secular school, AGISS gave recognition to God in various ways. Every program was organized in AGISS according to the Christian tradition. The table below demonstrates the emphasis AGISS placed on Christian tradition.
Table 4:

50th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procession</th>
<th>Choir/Clergy etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introit</td>
<td>Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to Worship</td>
<td>Rev. F. S Agbale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymn</td>
<td>MHB 1 1-3, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship/Praises</td>
<td>Suzzy Mensah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymn</td>
<td>MHB 338 1-4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scripture Readings

| 1st Reading     | Jer. 14:7-8      |
| 2nd Reading     | II Tim. 4:6-8, 16-18 |
| 3rd Reading     | Luke 18:9-14     |

A Song        Choir

Sermon        Evangelist J.F. Tamakloe
Offertory     Saint In Praise/choir
Dedication of Offertory Mr. Mpete-iah
Announcements Mrs. Acorlor
Vote of Thanks Matilda Nuamah
Closing Prayer Evangelist J. F. Tamakloe
Benediction   Evangelist J. F. Tamakloe
Closing Hymn  MHB15: 1-3
Recession     Choir & Clergy etc.

Source: Retrieved from the 50th Anniversary Brochure, 1960-2010

The headmistress accounted: “We are looking at turning out girls that will be useful to themselves and to the society at large. It is not only from academic aspect. We also have the school chaplaincy that takes care of their spiritual lives” (Personal Communication, October 2013). Non-denominational groups existed in both schools, and allowed students to engage in religious activities outside the purview of the schools’ official way of organizing religious activities. This allowed participating students to develop unique, individualized relationships with God.

These religious engagements enhanced student’s religious awareness and, subsequently, their interest in God. Students had the opportunity to engage in religious
activities that fostered their religiousness and spiritual growth. The belief was that students’ knowledge of God strengthened their relationship with Him. Helping students to make connections with God helped to make them the well-rounded students the schools expected.

Various rituals, ceremonies, and tasks were put in place to help students attain these outcomes. For academic excellence, school leaders provided the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning; heads of departments monitored and supported teachers to ensure professionalism, teachers were punctual and regular to classes and worked diligently to meet targets, parents and alumni provided resources to improve the schools’ environment to foster teaching and learning, and students attended classes and prep regularly.

Similarly, the schools attained excellence in extracurricular activities by encouraging student participation in entertainment, sports, club activities, and national competitions. Both schools promoted students’ religious and spiritual growth through students’ engagement in rituals and ceremonies that followed Christian tradition. These include morning devotion; Sunday church services and vespers, retreats, prayers and fasting, communion, baptism, and confirmation.

Finally, to promote discipline and ensure safe school environment, students were made aware of the schools’ rules and regulations and the repercussions of violating them.

**Sub-Cultural Involvement in Schools**

Data shows that both schools had similar subcultures, including the Ghana Education Service (GES) and Presbyterian Church (PRESEC only), administrators,
teachers, parents and community, alumni, and students. The figure below shows the various stakeholders of the study schools.

![Diagram of Senior High School Subcultures](image)

*Figure 12: School Subcultures*

Each of these subcultures played multifarious roles in schools. Although the GES was identified as a subculture of the schools, much emphasis was not on its roles because its contribution is ubiquitous – it has a role in all public senior high schools in Ghana.

This section focuses on the school-based subcultures and each subculture’s unique contributions to the schools. It describes the capacities in which these subcultures participated to improve the schools, and promote student achievement.

**Educational unit involvement (GES and/or Presbyterian).** The GES solely managed AGISS, while it managed PRESEC in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church. The Ghana government established the GES in 1974 to oversee pre-tertiary education. It was mandated to provide human and material resources for all public
schools; therefore, all employees of these schools are on the government’s pay roll. The government is responsible for the provision of public school infrastructure.

However, like all other public schools, these study schools experienced inadequacy of some infrastructure and facilities due to financial constraints on the part of the government. The PRESEC headmaster stated: “We have many needs, which the government alone cannot provide” (Personal Communication, October 2013). Consistently, the government rarely undertook rehabilitation projects in the schools. Similarly, in PRESEC, the Presbyterian Church did not make much financial commitments. Documents reviewed showed that the Presbyterian Church was in collaboration with the GES to recruit the human resource of PRESEC, but did not partake in the paying the employees. The GES established policies to govern the schools. Additionally, the Presbyterian Church participated in making critical decisions that affected PRESEC.

**Administrator subculture involvement.** The administrative subculture consisted of school leaders and their assistants. A thorough gleaning of the data revealed that the schools’ administrative team interacted cordially with other subcultures, which resulted in the effective running of the schools. The school leaders’ interaction with the other stakeholders of the school – formally and informally – greatly influenced the schools’ progress.

Both schools’ management teams comprised Board of Governors, headmistress/headmaster, and assistant headmistresses/headmasters. The GES’s policy required that all senior high schools have two assistant headmistresses/headmasters – one
for administrative affairs and another academic affairs. Schools with large populations of students were required to add a third assistant, who was responsible for domestic affairs. Interview responses from the schools showed that AGISS had two assistant school leaders while PRESEC had three because of its large student population. One teacher of AGISS further elaborated on the hierarchical structure:

Under assistant headmistress academic, we have HODs. Under the assistant headmistress administration, we have senior housemistress and housemistresses. We have two assistant headmistresses because our number is not large. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

In both schools, the school leaders and their assistants handled the day-to-day administration of the schools. The school leaders steered the affairs of the school to ensure that things were done according to the laid down policies as established by the GES. The school leaders reported regularly to the GES.

Data revealed that the school leaders’ relationships with the staff members were different from the one shared with the GES. The school leader–GES relationship was formal and authoritarian as opposed to the school leader–staff members’ relationship, which was more cordial and informal (to a certain degree). This school leader – staff members’ relationship produced a relaxed and genial atmosphere. The school leaders used various avenues to enhance the performance of their schools and the relationships between them and their staff. For instance, the school leaders involved staff members in planning and decision-making, which makes them more cooperative in implementing decisions. Also, involving teachers in decision-making was seen as crucial to the progress of the school and student outcomes.
The leaders had good relationships with parents and the alumni of the schools. The school leaders maintained good relationships with these stakeholders, which allowed them to communicate the schools’ needs to them. This relationship was beneficial to the schools because these stakeholders were the only subcultures that financially supported the schools.

The school leaders implemented welfare associations that financially assisted staff members who experienced situations such as bereavement, marriage, sickness, and childbirth. The administrators organized orientation programs for new teachers, ensured that underperforming and/or new teachers received coaching from their HODs, monitored teacher and student absences, motivated teachers by lobbying the PTA to provide incentives for teachers, and ensured that the staff members carried out their assigned roles. They ensured safe school environment for effective work to be done. With the openness to engage all stakeholders, they were able to achieve what they could not if they had solely relied on the GES.

**Teacher subculture involvement.** Teachers’ roles were very crucial in the schools. Their services in various capacities contributed to the progress of the school as a whole. Findings show that, each teacher was specialized in one subject of the curriculum. In addition to their traditional role as teachers, they assumed other responsibilities such as mentoring, supervising, counseling, and preaching the word of God to the students.

In addition to engaging in these responsibilities, they also participated in decision-making by serving on committees and acted as form masters, teachers-on-duty, housemasters/housemistresses, association leaders and members, heads of academic
departments, school counselors, club patrons, and school chaplains. Hence, although
teachers taught their specialized subjects, they were actively involved in performing extra
roles. An AGISS teacher commented: “Here [AGISS], everybody is doing something”
(Personal Communication, September 2013). The PRESEC headmaster recounted:

The housemasters, counselor, and chaplain have their jobs already defined but the
rest of the teachers are assigned various roles in the school. They come on duty
weekly, serve on committees, participate in school events, and are class teachers,
representatives for GNAT and GNAGRAT at district and national levels.
(Personal Communication, October 2013)

**The classroom business.** In both study schools, teachers followed well-planned
timetables that determined the periods for each lesson and class. Teachers attended
classes regularly and punctually, and had to append their signature to the corresponding
lesson in the attendance book. Findings showed that teachers were expected to seek
permission from the appropriate authority if they were absent from class a process that,
when not complied with, attracted a query.

Teachers monitored students’ attendance, and reported absences. One teacher
noted: “After teaching, you are supposed to, as a teacher, sign a register, for lessons
taught. Then check the attendance of students, – who were those absent in class? They all
have coded numbers in the book” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Teachers
also maintained order and ensured that the classroom was conducive for learning.

The syllabus provided the content of lessons taught. Therefore, teachers prepared
lesson notes to guide the lessons. The lesson notes needed to be endorsed by the HOD’s
and the assistant school leaders in charge of academics. Participants revealed that
teachers worked assiduously to complete the syllabus for each term before students wrote
their end of term examinations or the WASSCE. In AGISS, teachers organized supplementary classes to assist students who were challenged by certain concepts. An AGISS student notified: “They [teachers] try to make the best out of the time we have. Some organize extra classes for us so we can cover the most difficult topics we cannot handle on our own” (Focus Group, September 2013). Teachers prepared report cards at the end of each term. These cards were sent to parents to help them track their wards performance in the schools.

**Teachers as housemasters/housemistresses.** The transcripts gleaned revealed that teachers who became housemasters/ housemistresses were viewed as foster parents of the students in the boarding house. Teachers were assigned this position as a promotion in their careers. The next level of promotion would be to become senior housemasters/ housemistresses, who coordinate the activities of all the housemasters/ housemistresses in the school, and oversee the general administration of all the dorms in the schools.

In their capacity as foster parents, the housemasters/housemistresses protected the students, made decisions, distributed and ensured house chores were carried out. They also instilled school’s values in the students, and ensured they obeyed school rules and regulations. The senior housemaster of PRESEC pointed out:

> So, I see myself as one who has to build up values in them that will make them better citizens and responsible adults… What I do is regularly is to remind them of our code of ethics and discipline. We make sure that they comport themselves and follow the orders that have been laid down by the school. My duty is to see to it that all these students comport and conform to these guidelines that we give to them and the activities. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The housemasters/housemistresses ensured the security of all students. This sometimes meant keeping them safe from one another in situations such as bullying. The
AGISS senior housemistress declared: “Sometimes, when seniors want to molest or maltreat them [first year student] they [first year students] talk to us… So we expect them [first year students] to open up to us as their immediate parents or foster parents here” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

My observation in both schools showed that some of these housemasters/ housemistresses resided close to students’ dormitories. This was to facilitate effective supervision. The teachers frequently visited the dorms to ensure students’ safety, check student health, and ensure student compliance with the school rules and regulations. One AGISS teacher commented:

The senior housemistress encourages her housemistresses to visit their girls as often as possible. Every every morning and evening, one or two housemistresses visit the girls, and the girls are at liberty at any time to get to the housemistress if there is any complaint. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The AGISS headmistress added: “The major issue that we guard against is breaking bounds because these are people’s children they have entrusted into our hands” (Personal Communication, October 2013). PRESEC’s senior housemaster narrated how he monitored the students in the dorms:

… I also hold regular meetings with the house captains. I visit the houses regularly and this is the biggest task I have. Normally, I do not go at a fixed time but rather at random and at odd hours when they are not expecting to see me. Sometimes, around midnight I go round the houses to find out what the boys are doing, whether they are sleeping. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Data revealed that carrying out this role of the housemasters/housemistresses could be challenging. A PRESEC teacher stated: “This job is a sacrificial one but you just have to sit up and do it. Once you do and a pattern is created, you just supervise and ensure the system is not broken” Personal Communication, September 2013).
**Teachers as heads of departments (HODs).** In both schools, HODs coordinated the affairs of their departments and ensured that teachers adhered to the syllabus and worked as was expected of them. Data showed that they collaborated with teachers and planned ways to progress teachers’ work in their respective departments. The HODs engaged in decision-making at academic board meetings, departmental meetings, staff meetings, or short ad hoc meetings.

In AGISS, the HODs, along with other teachers, met with the headmistress on Wednesdays to discuss matters that confronted their departments. An AGISS teacher commented: “… Madam [headmistress] holds meetings with heads of departments, senior housemistress, and assistant headmistresses to aid in free flow of communication” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Data revealed that during ad hoc meetings, the HODs presented emergent problems and suggested solutions to the school leaders.

The data disclosed that HODs assisted underperforming teachers (old and new) to improve their teaching. An AGISS teacher narrated:

They [HODs] help new teachers that are not demonstrating professionalism [effectiveness and competence] in their teaching to rise to the standard. They provide such teachers with guidance, counseling, textbooks, and reference materials to assist the teachers. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Additionally, the HODs prepared timetables appropriate to ensure efficiency. A PRESEC teacher indicated:

The primary aim is to improve upon performance, both in internal and external exams. To achieve this is to make sure the department has a permanent timetable devoid of clashes and confusion because every school thrives on that. I also hope to achieve that through good interpersonal relationships with the teachers in my department that is, sharing my goals with them and bringing everybody on board. (Personal Communication, September 2013)
As cordial relationships existed among HODs and their subordinates, they collaborated and worked in harmony to achieve their goals.

**Teachers as school chaplains.** School chaplains were teachers who were assigned the role of coordinating the religious activities of the schools. Both schools had school chaplains who were teacher-pastors. Chaplains were revered as the spiritual heads and backbone of the schools. The chaplain steers the affairs of a chaplaincy board that organized the religious affairs of the schools. A review documents revealed that the Chaplaincy trained the students spiritually and morally, and inculcated in them the Christian virtues. This Christian training was what the students needed to lay a solid foundation for religiousness (“Odadee”, 2011). A PRESEC teacher buttressed the essence of the training:

> The students at this stage are teenagers and need a lot of guidance and direction in life. This is the period they are trying to identify themselves and establish an identity, so the chaplaincy helps the students to facilitate that aspect of their lives apart from academic work. With the years, I have seen a lot of them come out of troubles and coming out as leaders in society. That is what complements academic work. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

My observation in both schools showed that the chaplain’s roles included counseling, teaching, preaching, and church service officiating. For PRESEC, the Chaplaincy Board consisted of the chaplain, a deacon, and two assistant deacons. PRESEC also had the “vestry boys”, who helped to organize and prepare the assembly hall for Christian services and any related activities. Some teachers were also engaged in chaplaincy roles. The Chaplaincy organized numerous activities. These included regular Sunday morning services and vespers, morning devotions, prayer meetings, all day retreats, and counseling. The chaplaincy organizes Baptism and Confirmation services
every year for students. The chaplain had an office and there was a vestry where all religious materials were stored.

The role of the chaplain was new in AGISS. The school had no chaplain until about five years ago. The Chaplaincy Board comprised the chaplain, the headmistress, the senior housemistress, and the chapel prefects. Data showed that until the school had a chaplain, the school depended on external preachers to officiate Sunday worship. There was neither a vestry for storage nor office for the chaplain.

In both schools, the Chaplaincy Board’s efforts initiated choirs, which sing at religious ritual and ceremonies. During ritual and ceremonies, the chaplains performed religious rites such leading the liturgy, preaching the word, saying prayers. In PRESEC, they also administered communion, baptized students, and confirmed students into the Christian faith. Aside the official Christian rituals and ceremonies found on AGISS’s calendar, no extra Christian engagements were organized in the school. These rites served to promote their spiritual and moral development.

As the spiritual pillars of the schools, the chaplains addressed matters that could jeopardize the students’ spiritual wellbeing. They helped the students through counseling, prayer, and the administration of God’s word. A PRESEC teacher pointed out: “As a school, if we are concerned with the academic aspect of the student alone, we will not be helping them” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

In the Ghanaian society, pastors are revered as those who possess powers to resolve problem. The students, and other teachers, who faced emotional, spiritual, and even physical challenges contacted the chaplains for assistance. The chaplain worked
hand in hand with the counseling department to help resolve students’ problems. The school counselors were full time employees of GES who addressed issues that concerned students and teachers.

The operations of the school chaplains helped the school to instill and develop Christian virtues in students. The chaplains organized religious programs that enhanced the knowledge of God in students and fostered their participation in Christian practices. They served not only as chaplains but also as counselors for students and teachers experiencing emotional, physical, and spiritual problems. These roles developed one aspect of the schools’ expectations – to produce holistic students.

**Teachers’ additional roles.** In both schools, teachers took on other roles such as teachers on duty (teachers in charge of maintaining order on campus in their assigned week), committee leaders and members, and patrons/patronesses of clubs in the schools. Each week, two or three teachers were assigned to serve as teachers-on-duty to ensure order on, and oversee the maintenance of, campus. The teachers-on-duty of a week became the main custodians of the school for that period. In their capacity as custodians, they ensured that both day and boarding students got to class and other school gatherings on time, behaved appropriately, and observed the rules.

Teachers on duty saw to it that the classrooms and the compound were kept clean. It also was expected that teachers-on-duty attend the Sunday worship to help monitor the students. During the process of discharging their duties, any problems encountered were referred to appropriate staff for direction and/or resolution. An AGISS teacher elaborated on teachers-on-duty roles:
In this school, we have teachers-on-duty, the senior housemistress, and the dining teachers who go to the dining hall to ensure that students are well fed. There are teachers on duty, who go round to make sure that students behave themselves. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Members of staff were made members and/or leaders of various committees or associations. As participants, they made decisions that affected school members and the school as a whole. Teachers who served on the welfare associations ensured that teachers paid their dues and teachers received what was due them according to the mandates of the association’s constitution. Teachers serving on the food committee made sure that the right kind of food and adequate portions were served to students in the dining hall. Teacher served as both members and secretaries of the PTA. Teachers took up other responsibilities such as becoming GNAT and GNAGRAT representatives. In their capacity as patrons of clubs and non-denominational groups, teachers supervised students as they shared and developed their interests. Teachers acted as form masters of various classrooms to improve communication between students and administration, check recalcitrant students, and ensure the general wellbeing of each student in their assigned class.

In sum, teachers contributed to the development of students, other staff members, and the school as a whole. As housemasters/housemistresses, heads of department, chaplains, class teachers, teachers-on-duty, committee leaders and members, and club patrons, they made decisions, oversaw proceedings on campus, guided students and facilitated development of students and other staff members and collaborated to achieve their collective goals for the betterment of the school.
Parent and community subculture involvement. Parents played significant roles to foster the progress of the schools and students. They viewed their contributions as a necessity to help the wards perform to their expectations. A PRESEC parents remarked:

We thank God for the understanding and cooperation of parents who are prepared to help. Because at the end of the day if you don’t spend now for your children to pass well you will be the loser. So it is better to spend now while the child is in school and make sure you see him through. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

One of the avenues through which the parent and community subculture operated was the PTA of the schools. Data from both schools revealed that parents were actively involved in the schools and provided to meet more of the schools needs than any other stakeholders. The PTA comprised parents of students, administrators, and teachers. The PTAs made decisions about school infrastructural problems and implement them. The administrators’ job in the PTA included pointing out the problems in the schools while teachers served as secretaries to the association. All projects initiated were solely carried out through the financial contributions of the parents. They recurrently provided the necessary amenities for the schools. In both schools, it was mandatory that parents be involved in their wards education. In AGISS, the PTA contributed in several ways to help the school advance. The headmistress accounted:

Our PTA [parents] has been very supportive. Normally, PTA, government, and old students support the school. It is the PTA that we can commend among the three. For government, it is its responsibility, but for PTA, nearly everything that we have it is the PTA that has provided. Anything we need that government should have provided and has not, it is the PTA that does it for us. (Personal Communication, October 2013)
The list of projects the PTA undertook in AGISS included provision of poly tanks (water reservoirs), potable water, a photocopier machine, a school bus, and a cold store for the school kitchen; school beautification project; daily provision of snacks to motivate teachers; renovation of school buildings and offices; and provision of incentives in the form of cash to teachers. They also refurbished the computer lab and stocked it with computers. The AGISS PTA also ensured the security of the school by fortifying the fence around the school and paying extra security personnel to guard it. They provided some of the awards presented to students on Speech and Prize Giving Days.

Parents’ collaboration with the school administration and staff helped curtail and manage problems such as teenage pregnancy and truancy. As they dealt with such issues at home, the administration and staff handled them at the school. They provided the resources to organize extra classes for their underperforming wards and ensured their training continued at home during school breaks. In both schools, parents paid a PTA levy that was used to support the schools.

In PRESEC, documents, responses, and my observation revealed the numerous ways the PTA supported the school. The following paragraph enumerates the activities PTA engaged in and the resources they provided to support the school. The PTA employed casual workers – four kitchen staff, eight security men. Paid teachers who were not yet on the government payroll – four science teachers at the time of my study were receiving this support from PTA. It employed some of the teachers. Each term, the PTA gave incentive packages to teachers as an honorarium. It bought a 58-seater TATA bus
for the school and sponsored the Golden Jubilee Clinic that provided a 24-hour service to the school community.

The association also employed a nurse and an orderly, and provided the drugs, equipment, and facilities required for the operation of the clinic. The PTA provided a 6-Unit classroom block for the school. In addition, it supplied 530 mono desks to be used in the classrooms. The association also bought 50 new Dell computers, a projector, and provided Internet services for the ICT laboratory in the school. It continued its activities by providing 90 three-deck iron beds for the new house 9. The association was constructing a 600-capacity dormitory at the time of this study.

At the house level, parents of student of particular houses were responsible for the provision of facilities and maintenance of those houses. Parents were also involved in the discipline issues of their wards in the schools. Participants revealed that when a student commits a serious offense, parents were involved in the case and worked in collaboration the school to rehabilitate the students. This allows the student to get back on track with their training. One PRESEC teacher pointed out: “We also get the parents involved. Sometimes when we get to certain levels of indiscipline, we call in the parents so that we get together to raise the standard of discipline in the students’ lives.” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Parents’ efforts improved the school’s communities as they provided resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning. All these efforts resulted in making the school a better place for their wards and the other school members.

Alumni subculture involvement. Data showed that the alumni of both schools played key roles in the sustenance of the schools. The alumni had associations referred to
as the Old Students Association (OSA) that was made up of graduated students. As associations, Year Groups, and on individual bases, the alumni contributed in various ways to improve their alma maters. Their contributions ranged from providing facilities to organizing programs. The following presents the various ways alumni contributed to the schools.

In AGISS, the OSA was referred to as AGOSSA with its Britain-based alumni group known as AGOSSA-UK. An alumnus of AGISS was known as an “Old Girl.” Data revealed that the AGOSSA-UK was involved in providing for the school. They provided poly tanks (water containers), donated library books, supported the Speech and Prize Giving Days with cash and awards, and renovated the dormitories. At the time of the study, data revealed that the AGOSSA was dormant due to some hitches. The headmistress explained:

It is our Old Girls [AGOSSA] that are not trying and it is because they have not been able to get a formidable group. Those who want to move the association are not many. Each time they meet they are not more than 12 members. For a school that was started in 1960, that is not a good sign. By now they should be able to get about 200 members at a meeting. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

An AGISS alumnus noted that the association used to function until about five years ago – when misunderstanding emanated among the leaders and members. However, this study did not delve into this problem because it was beyond its scope and objectives. A PRESEC alumnus was referred to as an “Odadee” while the alumni union was known as the Old Boys Association. In PRESEC, the alumni were commended for their numerous contributions. The Odadees provided several of the amenities that helped to keep the schools’ track record of success. Data revealed that the Odadees contributed to
the school as individuals, year groups, or on the grounds of the Old Boys Association. They undertook new projects and expanded existing infrastructural facilities; provided financial incentives for teachers’ motivation, students’ awards; and offered advice to students about academic work, during national competitions, and career choices. These contributions facilitated the production of high quality human capital and helped to uphold the name of the school.

As Year Groups, The Odadees’ contributions included the renovation of school clinic with beds, medical supplies, and accessories (1975-79 Year Groups), the supply of ulcer medication to the clinic and the construction of a semi-detached duplex for staff (1963-65 Year Groups), the renovation of the Visual Arts block, turning it into a modern studio (1978 Year Group), sponsorship of sports tournaments and yearly supply of medals, trophies, and footballs for Inter House Competitions (1991 Year Group), construction of school gate and security post (1984 Year Group), construction of borehole (1985 Year Group), building of the school’s website (2001 Year Group), donation of hockey posts and nets (1977 Year Group), and construction of a Basketball court (1979 Year Group).

Other contributions carried out by various Year Groups included the sponsorship of Speech Days and provision of professional advice and motivational speaking to students and staff (Odadee, 2011). Each year, the Odadee Year Group that celebrated its Silver Jubilee (25 year Anniversary) sponsored the Annual Speech and Prize Giving Day. A PRESEC alumnus narrated:

Usually, any year group that is celebrating its 25th anniversary sponsors the Speech Day. When they sponsor the Speech Day, they present a project they have
completed for the school. For instance, the car park we have was presented by a year group. They also organize career conferences for the students. The best one I saw was organized 2 years ago by the 1999-year group. It was so well organized and publicized, it attracted people from outside. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The Odadees as individuals contributed to promote the schools. Individual Odadees chaired and honored invitations as Guest Speakers during school functions, renovated the garden lights in the schools, donated sports equipment, sponsored sports activities and donated trophies, sponsored medical care for staff and students, provided educational and career talks to expose students to various career pathways. The interactions provided opportunities for alumni to advise, encourage, and inspire the students.

With regard to the overall Old Boys Association, it organized The Annual Homecoming programs, which takes place every first day of July. These programs featured fun games, food fairs, and amalgamation of alumni with students and staff members. Other contributions of the association included provision of professional advice to the school and its management staff, establishment of prizes for excellent academic performances as incentive for students, donation of books and other academic materials, provision of support services for competitions especially Maths and Science Quiz, donation of laptops, and projectors for contestants’ use.

In addition to these contributions to the school, the alumni had cordial relationship with administration. An alumnus pointed out: “The relationship has been cordial. There has never been an occasion where the Old Student Association
agonized school administration. They always want to help the headmaster” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

In both schools, the alumni turned teachers sometimes returned to teach in the schools. Since these teachers attended the schools, it put them in the unique position of being able to carry on the standard of the training that made them the adults they were. A PRESEC alumnus disclosed:

When I joined the staff of the school, I had the zeal to help maintain the academic standards. I opted to be the chairman of the disciplinary committee to help uphold the level of discipline in the school. So, we have been keeping the flame of instilling discipline in the students. Sometimes we even sit on disciplinary cases involving teachers and non-teaching staff because without discipline, there would be no PRESEC. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

In sum, the alumni of the schools actively participated by contributing in various ways to promote the schools and students development.

**Student subculture involvement.** The students played significant roles to sustain the progress of the schools. Students undertook leadership roles as prefects that enabled them to contribute to the smooth running of the schools. Via the Prefectoral system, students participated in decision-making and supervision, and developed their leadership and public speaking skills. The student government was highly recognized in the schools. Students served in various capacities as prefects at the school level as well as at the house and classroom levels.

The student government was highly recognized in the schools. Students served in various capacities as prefects at the school level as well as at the house and classroom levels. As school prefects, SRC executives and members, house prefects, clubs and organizational executives and members, committee members, and class monitors,
students made and implemented decisions that benefited students, teachers, and the schools. In each position, the incumbents were engaged in decision-making as they carried out their duties. The table below shows the Prefectoral systems of the schools.

Table 5:

Prefectoral System in Study Schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESEC</th>
<th>AGISS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Boy + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
<td>Senior + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief boarding Officer + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
<td>Dining Hall + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds and Furniture + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
<td>Compound + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacons + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
<td>Entertainment + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protocol + Assistant</td>
<td>Church + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
<td>Library + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep + Assistant</td>
<td>Prep + Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports + Assistant</td>
<td>Sports + Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library + Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance + Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entertainment + Assistant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dispensary + Assistant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Kwansa House + Assistant</td>
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<td>Clerk House + Assistant</td>
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<td>Engmann + Assistant</td>
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<td>Akro + Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riis + Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labone + Assistant I &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ako Adjei + Assistants I &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owusu Parry + Assistants I &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House 9 + Assistants I &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: School Prospectuses

In both schools, students contributed to the schools’ progress through the clubs and non-denominational groups. In these groups, they governed themselves and were responsible for their decisions, which helped them develop their leadership skills and
taught them unity and accountability. Students in PRESEC participated and won awards in various competitions, such as The National Brilliant Maths and Science Quiz and debates and won trophies, which elevated the name of the school.

In the non-denominational groups, students engaged in bible discussion, prayers and evangelistic programs, where they shared the word of God with colleagues helped students experiencing hard times. They encouraged and supported them at these times when they go through the hard times. One PRESEC teacher disclosed:

Scripture Union students, during witnessing, meet students with problems at home, some spiritual cases, some involved in drugs, and alcoholism, but we use spiritual methods to deal with them. We put such a person on our counseling list and deal with it as such… We do it in support of a lot of prayer and the word of God and finally he gets his deliverance. (Personal Community, September 2013)

Furthermore, students participated in interscholastic athletic competitions and won trophies in various disciplines that enhanced the pride of the schools. Schools selected their athletes from inter house competitions, to represent the school in external competitions. Sports made the school proud, was as a source of recreation, and a means of enhancing students’ general development. Students’ observance of school rules and regulations promoted a safe and conducive school environment that lessened the burden of teachers in dealing with disciplinary issues. Students made decisions in the dormitories, classrooms, clubs and organizations, and at school level offices that contributed to the achievement of schools and students’ outcomes. They participated in sports as well as religious activities while in school and which helped to add value in their leadership acumen.
Summary

The subcultures of the schools’ were involved in governing the schools. Aside the formalized roles ascribed, each subculture was engaged in additional roles. Engaging in such responsibilities were geared towards the successful running of the schools and creation of safe and conducive school communities. This involvement facilitated the attainment of school expectations.

Leadership Styles in Schools

The study investigated the schools’ leadership styles and attributes – beside the officially assigned leadership roles – and their influence on school outcomes. To identify these behavior patterns of the leaders, the research Question 3 – “What form of leadership existed in the schools, and how does it influence school outcomes?” – was posed. Other sub-questions and probes were used to retrieve description of leaders’ behavior and approaches. Based on participants’ responses, three themes emerged including servant leadership, participatory leadership, and supportive leadership.

Servant leadership style. Teachers, students, and school leaders’ responses on the leaders’ styles revealed the characteristics of servant leadership. The teachers noted that school leaders were good listeners, very receptive to staff members’ suggestions and complaints, and fair in their dealings. The leaders demonstrated flexibility and empathy. The school leaders were concerned with building healthy school communities. They could persuade staff members and students to act in the best interest the schools. They had the foresight to avert problems that could jeopardize the safe and conducive school environment.
The figure below represents the findings on the emergent leadership styles the school leaders used to govern the schools.

Figure 13: Emergent Themes on School Leadership Style

Data showed that leaders took responsibility of issues in the school. The school leaders’ emphasis was on both student learning (short term goals) and student achievement (long term goals). They encouraged teachers to pursue academic and professional goals in order to enhance their ability and improve their teaching, which subsequently, impacted the students’ academic education and future aspirations. The leaders focused on the general wellbeing (personal, intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical) of the staff members and students as the basis for goal attainment.

**Approachable and receptive.** The leaders were approachable, receptive, and readily listened to staff members’ grievances and helped to identify solutions to problems. The school leaders made room for staff members to approach them and discuss
work and even personal problems. An AGISS teacher commented: “She opens up, she
tells us, if we have any problem, we should come to her” (Personal Communication,
September 2013). This openness fostered the staff members’ confidence to approach the
leaders anytime they had problems and needed assistance. A PRESEC teacher noted:
“Doors of the heads are always opened to teachers. I don’t have a problem approaching
them. I enter their offices to get my problems resolved” (Personal Communication,
September 2013).

This quality fostered a desirable and cordial environment that made staff members
felt comfortable, thus enabling them to focus on their work. The reception and
approachability of leaders built confidence in teachers to work committedly.

**Empathy.** The school leaders showed empathy towards the school members.
Responses from both schools revealed that, as a result of this empathy, the school leaders
showed concern about members’ general wellbeing. They were sensitive to members’
emotional safety, and empathized with them to the extent that they sometimes referred
such members to agencies for assistance. An AGISS teacher recounted:

> She is very particular about the welfare of her teachers. For example, when a
teacher had an emotional issue, she took this man herself in the company of the
Reverend Minister (Chaplain) and went to see a clinical psychologist. After that
she followed up to see how he was responding [to intervention] (Personal
Communication, September 2013).

Participants revealed that the school leaders demonstrated empathy when new
teachers experienced major changes in their lives, such as childbirth, marriage, and
bereavement among others. In Ghana, all public senior high schools have a Teachers’
Welfare Association (TWA). Usually, as registered members of TWA, teachers paid
monthly dues, which is used to support members in times of need. However, since new teachers were not registered yet, they were not entitled to the benefits of the TWA. In such instances, school leaders lobbied for donations from staff members. Although the donation is voluntary, there is an unspoken understanding that it is compulsory for all teachers to donate. This is termed ‘volu-compo’ meaning “voluntary but compulsory”. A teacher disclosed: “Aside that, there’s even something we call ‘volu-compo’- should something happen to someone who is not a member yet, we put our hands together and stretch forth” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

School leaders also demonstrated empathy towards students. The AGISS headmistress provided encouragement, showed concern, and organized counseling sessions for girls who became pregnant. She also briefed both the girls and their parents about opportunities that were available to them in post pregnancy. A teacher commented on headmistress’s approach in the following words:

In fact, even if there is pregnancy, no one is dismissed. Madam organized a counseling sessions for the girls involved and parents. Consequently, she makes them aware that it is emotionally unsafe that the girl came back to the same school, so she helped them look for other schools after delivery. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Leaders’ ability to ‘put themselves in another’s shoes’ allowed them to see the world from the school members’ perspective. This enabled them to offer the appropriate assistance to each school member when he/she needed it. Empathy helped school leaders to win the hearts of school members and desired their wellbeing, even in difficulties.

**Commitment to members’ development.** School leaders showed concern about the development of their school members, and continually encouraged them to pursue their academic and professional goals. Data revealed that school leaders’ concern for
student development was portrayed through the avenues they created to promote students’ learning, enhance academic achievements, and define career goals. For example, in both schools, they organized programs and invited experts to give career counseling. School leaders emphasized school rules to ensure that students used time judiciously, exercised self-discipline, and worked hard in their learning. They also ensured teachers offered counseling on subject selection for students to pursue appropriate programs to meet their career goals. AGISS headmistress remarked:

Our business is to help the students succeed and so we are always looking for areas that will help them achieve something in life. If you allow them to continue with the programs they chose even if they are not doing well, in the end you will not be achieving your real goal of having them here. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

School leaders’ behavior of showing concerns rubbed off on teachers who also exhibited the same behavior towards the students. Teachers went out of their way to assist students overcome their challenges. An AGISS student simply stated: “Our teachers are really forcing for us” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Another student confirmed:

They [teachers] really sympathize with us…we need more time to cover [the syllabus]. They try to make the best out of the time we have and that is why some organize extra classes for us so we can cover the most difficult topics we cannot handle on our own. (Focus Group, September 2013)

In mimicking the school leaders’ behavior of concern and commitment towards other school members, teachers also assumed responsibility of other areas of students’ development. An AGISS teacher explained:

So far when they [students] come here, we tell them of the prospects, we share our life experiences with them, and we open up about the syllabus. Many of them lack knowledge, so you need to talk and let them know and see the light, let them
know the facts, and, by that, they would learn to understand. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

With regard to teachers, the school leaders encouraged them to pursue further studies. The leaders cared about teachers’ professional development, and provided opportunities for them to learn and acquire new skills and knowledge. A teacher from PRESEC remarked: “Most of the teachers here have the opportunity to go and further their studies anytime they want. I have heard of teachers from other schools who don’t have that opportunity; they are either released to go or have their salaries withdrawn” (Personal Communication, September 2013). An AGISS teacher also commented on the encouragement teachers received from the headmistress: “So she encourages us to improve ourselves so that we can help these girls” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The leaders cared about the physical wellbeing of staff members and students. Leaders encouraged the staff members to visit indisposed colleagues, whom they also actively urged to pursue the appropriate treatment. One teacher recounted on the leaders’ concern for teachers’ health:

The headmistress gets so close to teachers with problems. She will always refer them to see the specialist who can help them. For some people she wants to inspect the receipt to make sure they went to see the doctors. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The spiritual growth of students was also a concern for school leaders. In the study schools, it was compulsory for all students to attend the official Christian rituals and ceremonies, such as morning devotion, Sunday Church services, where prayers, and preaching of the word of God took place. School leaders allowed the operations of
Christian non-denominational groups in the schools. Although the Christian tradition dominated in the schools, the school leaders gave freedom to Islamic students to worship during club meetings. These liberties created additional platforms for students to meet spiritual needs and fulfill their spiritual obligations. A teacher in PRESEC noted: “… so the spiritual atmosphere in the school is not tensed up that students are limited in doing what they love in their denominations, but within the confines of our doctrine” (Personal Communication, October 2013).

Leaders showed concern for the holistic wellbeing of school members by assisting them in times of need, and encouraging them to develop academically and professionally. This trait attested to their commitment to their school members and the schools’ progress.

**Healthy school communities.** School leaders worked to maintain healthy school environments, as they were crucial for student learning and allow staff to dispense their duties. Data revealed that they endeavored to maintain school communities that were safe and conducive. The school communities were devoid of conflict between members as school leaders took measures to foster healthy relationships with them and among them. They also persistently enforced rules that ensured safety in the schools at all times.

School leaders not only maintained cordial relationships with school members, they encouraged the same type of relationships among members of the schools. An AGISS noted: “She [headmistress] does relent things no matter how young you are and encourages us to say sorry when we have not done well even to the students we teach and to our colleague teachers” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The nature of these relationships substantiated the social wellbeing of the members. For example, the
AGISS headmistress regarded staff members as her family, and encouraged the latter to do likewise – to be one another’s keeper, and take delight in helping one another. An AGISS teacher described the leader and staff relationship in the school community:

Administrators’ relationship with staff members is very cordial. The younger teachers are their sons and daughters, the older ones are their brothers and sisters. We play around ourselves so we have very cordial relationships. I mean she’s a mother to us the teachers and she’s a mother to the children [students]. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Although, in general, teachers related well with one another, those within a particular department had closer ties because they interacted with one another on a daily basis. A PRESEC teacher commented on relationships in the school: “ Majority [of teachers] relate very well especially on departmental basis. We share ideas, discuss issues among ourselves to promote the work” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Socialization programs for new members’ acclimatization were organized. These acculturation processes included orientation programs and support systems at departmental levels for teachers. The school leaders emphasized these processes to ensure conformity to the schools’ culture and to prevent disruption of already existing healthy school communities. In AGISS, heads of departments monitored and mentored new and low performing teachers. A teacher from AGISS commented on the orientation and department support systems:

The assistant headmistress academic organizes an orientation for new teachers. She informs them about what the school expects of them and after that she relegates the responsibility to the head of departments to provide all the necessary guidance to them and the assistance they need to enjoy their stay. So the heads of department monitor, check, and help them to live up to expectation. (Personal Communication, September 2013).
New students’ acculturation took place at Student Orientation. The school leaders ensured that every student was involved in this orientation process. This was to ensure that students were conversant with the rules that govern the schools and to prevent unacceptable behavior. The PRESEC headmaster declared: “Rules and regulations are written in the prospectus so that each student knows what to do and at what time.” (Personal Communication, October 2013). They strictly enforced the rules outlined in the school prospectus to maintain safe and conducive environments.

School leaders promoted fairness among staff members and students, and showed no favoritism. No students were discriminated against, irrespective of their background or family status – they were all treated equally at their levels. The AGISS headmistress stated:

Everybody knows that if you break bounds in AGISS, even if the minister comes you will not be taken back into the boarding house. We let students know that all measures are towards discipline, not because we don’t like them. This is a rule others have suffered for, so when we break it for one person we are breaking our own discipline, so they all respect it. But we don’t bend the rule to hurt others. If you do that, others will do the same and run to other big men to plead for them or make reference to this incidence. All know that no rule is broken here and you get away with it. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

The school leaders strived to maintain environments that were safe and void of conflict for the school members. They employed various strategies; such as maintain cordial relationships with school members and persistently enforcing school rules, to achieve this.

*Provide direction.* The school leaders were conversant with the missions of the schools. They communicated these missions to members and encouraged them to work towards their fulfillment. Since they provided the direction in the schools, they steered
every situation that arose and did so in conformity with the schools’ missions. Leaders were not only concerned with the short-term goal of students passing the WASSCE, they also pursued holistic development of students in order to produce well-rounded young adults who could contribute to the betterment of society. The PRESEC headmaster pointed out: “We train students in the Presbyterian doctrine to become Christian gentlemen, hard work for academic excellence, discipline for good morals, and excellence in extra-curriculum activities such as sports” (Personal Communication, October 2014).

**Leaders’ foresight.** The school leaders had foresight about the dangers of certain behaviors. They cautioned staff members and students to exhibit acceptable behavior to stay out of trouble, as any infractions of the school rules negatively affected both the miscreant and the school leadership. An AGISS teacher simply said: “As a mother, she sees ahead of us.” (Personal Communication, September 2013). A teacher recounted:

> Jokingly, she tells us she owns everything in this school because if the minister [of education] should come here now she is the one to be held accountable for everything. If there’s any problem because a teacher has caused some confusion, she’s the one to be questioned and not that teacher. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The school leaders guided the behavior of members in such a way that prevented avoidable problems. They were vigilant about school members’ actions in order to identify signs of danger.

**Participative leadership style.** The section of the study presents another leadership style that emerged during the investigation of the research Question 3. The school leaders, six teachers, two parents, two alumni, and students of the two focus
groups were interviewed with follow up questions related to participation in, and
terms, and procedures of, decision-making. These interview responses, observations conducted at
staff and academic board meetings, as well as documents reviewed, revealed that the
school leaders involved other stakeholders in decision-making through various avenues.

The following are the avenues through which stakeholders participated in
decision-making in the schools:

- **Board of governors:** This structure plans, monitors, and governs the school. It comprises a chairman, school leader, GES representatives, teachers, parents, and alumni. It also, in the case of PRESEC, includes a representative from the Presbyterian Schools Directorate.

- **Academic Board:** Comprises all heads of departments and the school leader, assistant school leaders. It meets and develops operational plans and budgets for various departments. All issues that concern the departments are addressed at its meetings. It also evaluates and preapproves proposals, and then forwards them to the GES – and the Presbyterian Church for PRESEC only – for approval. HODs disseminate information from the Academic Board to the members of their departments and feedback from teachers to the Board at subsequent meetings.

- **School Management Committee (SMC):** This is the day-to-day administrative team. It comprises the school leader, assistant school leaders, senior housemaster/housemistress, and HODs of the academic departments and counseling department – and chaplaincy board in PRESEC only.

- **Parent-Teachers Association (PTA):** It comprises students’ parents, administrators and staff members, It plans and assists in addressing problems that the school encounters.

- **Committees (For Food, Examination, Sports, Time Table, etc.):** These committees comprise the school leaders, assistant school leaders, teachers, students, and non-teaching staff. They oversee, plan and address issues in specific fields.

- **Old Students (Alumni) Association:** Consist of alumni of the school. They plan and implement projects to support the school and student development.

- **Student Representative Council (SRC):** Is a body that represent students at the school level and liaises with the school administration on behalf of students.

- **Form masters:** Teachers assigned to serve as faculty advisors to students of particular classes. They monitor and oversee students’ progress and assist to resolve students’ problems.

- **Housemasters/Housemistresses:** Teachers assigned to be ‘foster parents’ of boarding students in the halls of residence. Under the leadership of senior housemaster/housemistress, they manage, plan, and monitor students.
- Chaplaincy Board: The team that coordinates religious activities. It comprises the school chaplain, the school leader (AGISS only), deacons (PRESEC only) and chapel stewards (students).
- Prefectural Board: Comprises school prefects. The prefects assist in governing the schools
- Clubs Executives: These are club leaders who coordinate the activities of their respective clubs.
- Welfare Associations: Comprise all school workers and oversees the welfare of members.

**Student participation in decision-making.** Students’ involvement in decision-making took place through a Prefectoral system where they assumed leadership roles, and made decisions that affected both them and the school. Each prefect engaged in decision-making as they carried out their duties. They worked in conjunction with teachers to maintain order in the school campuses. A teacher commented on students’ decision-making:

> Then the student body has its administrative hierarchy comprising all the school and house level positions. The school level prefects report to the teachers in charge of the unit, while the house level prefects work from the house and report to the school level prefects and teachers in charge. They coordinate and work. (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Students also participated in decision-making in their capacity as SRC members. Representing their respective classes, they liaised with the administration and made decisions that affected the whole student body.

Students took decisions that affected them in clubs, and non-denominational groups. One PRESEC teacher remarked: “Normally, when they group, they have a common interest, they are able to plan certain programs within the jurisdiction of the allowable limits in the school and conduct it” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Data revealed that students were also made decisions regarding disciplinary
issues. A PRESEC teacher remarked: “… Usually in very serious situations, the school prefects help me sit on disciplinary cases” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Students’ contributions eased the burden on teachers and the leadership.

**Teacher participation in decision-making.** Responses of the school leaders and teachers unearthed the various ways in which teachers were engaged in decision-making. These included serving as heads of academic departments, housemistresses/housemasters, chaplains, form masters, counselors, teachers on duty, and committee members. They collaborated with other stakeholders in diverse ways to discuss and make decisions that affected them, students, and school in general. A teacher expatiated about their participation

The headmistress exhibits a democratic leadership and engages everybody in the running of the school. Aside the roles of the housemistress, school chaplain, and counselor, all the remaining teachers take part in other roles, such as being part of committees, teachers on duty, form masters, or involved in some kind of roles. She respects the views of the staff and makes them submit suggestions to the smooth running of the school. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The AGISS headmistress noted that most decisions were taken at staff meetings depending on their agency. School leaders often solicited teachers’ views especially in very tough situations. Some teachers saw their involvement in these functions as an opportunity to collaborate and work towards student and school success. Collaboration of teachers, though unofficial, was useful for the teachers who shared ideas and boosted their approaches to their work.

**Parent participation in decision-making.** Parents were included in the decision-making processes in the schools. They were actively involved in making decisions that affected students’ academic, disciplinary, and moral issues, as well as school
development. Data shows that school leaders involved parents in making decision on behalf of students. A PRESEC teacher acknowledged the role parents decision-making: “We also get the parents involved. Sometimes, when we get to certain levels of indiscipline, we call in the parents so that we get together to raise the standard of discipline in the students’ lives.” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Parents’ involvement in decision-making concerning school development was captured in these words of the AGISS headmistress: “Our PTA has been very supportive. Normally, PTA, government, and alumni support schools. It is the PTA that we can commend among the three” (Personal Communication, October 2013). PTA of both schools participated to provide both financial and material resources.

**Alumni participation in decision-making.** The alumni were also involved in decision-making for the schools. They served on the Board of Governors and committees, and influenced the schools with their decisions through the implementation of development projects. An alumnus of PRESEC noted:

I can say that apart from the PTA, the alumni come next as far as provision of assistance to the school is concerned. I decided to help the students the best way I could. …I opted to be the chairman of the disciplinary committee to help uphold the level of discipline in the school. I have done this for the past 6 years. (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The alumni made decision during events such as Speech and Prize Giving Days. They participated as guest speakers, Guests of honor, or Chairpersons during such important functions. Additionally, the alumni served as resource personnel and provided advice to school management about possible ways to improve the schools. As
individuals, year groups, or the general Alumni Associations, their contributions in decision making added value to the schools’ progress.

In sum, the study responses revealed that the school leaders involved the various subcultures of the schools in decision-making processes. These stakeholders’ participation in decision-making helped to promote the success of the schools in various ways. Hence the participative leadership style employed by school leaders was instrumental to realization of the schools’ expectations.

Supportive leadership style. Another leadership style that was identified from participants’ descriptions of school leaders’ style was supportive leadership. Teachers, students, and the school leaders alluded that school leaders were concerned about staff wellbeing, created cordial relationships, and created conducive environments for both the staff and students in the schools. This session presents how leaders in the study schools demonstrated qualities of supportive leadership.

Members’ wellbeing. The school leaders were very receptive of, and supportive towards, teachers’ work, and provided avenues to discuss and address issues related to both their work and wellbeing. They made efforts to provide incentives, which made teachers work harder. The school leaders demonstrated concern for their staff’s wellbeing by providing support for new and/or underperforming teachers to enable them excel in their professional endeavors. The also lobbied for cash bonuses for staff, organized parties and recreational programs to refresh staff members.

Data revealed that one of the ways the school leaders were thoughtful of staff members’ wellbeing was their wish for staff members to be accommodated in the schools
to avoid the challenges of daily commute – travelling long distances and lateness – and in effect help control teacher turnover. The PRESEC headmaster expressed these concerns when he commented: “There are many teachers who come from places far away from the school. If they have accommodation here, many problems like lateness and lack of commitment will reduce.” (Personal Communication, October 2013). It is a common practice in Ghana for schools to provide accommodation for staff members. Owing to inadequate infrastructure, the schools were unable to provide accommodation for all teachers. School leaders, therefore, turned to parents and alumni for the development and expansion of the schools. In PRESEC, through consultation with the PTA, the parents and alumni made efforts to provide the needed infrastructure and facilities that enabled most teachers to reside on the school premises.

However, data revealed that some teachers were disadvantaged in the allocation of bungalows in the schools. Priority was given to teachers who were the same sex the school catered to. In other words, male teachers in PRESEC had higher chances of being assigned accommodation on campus than their female counterparts, and the converse is true for AGISS. The disadvantaged teachers perceived the school environment as not gender friendly.

Although teachers’ professional development was a priority for school leaders, data revealed that it was rare for some teachers to advance in their professional careers through the usual criteria in schools that catered to students who were of the opposite gender of the teacher. A common aspiration of senior high school teachers was to become
school leaders. In Ghana, to begin on this track, a teacher has to become a housemaster/housemistress or a HOD.

In the study schools, the promotion to the position of housemaster/housemistress did not depend on only academic qualification, but also the gender of the candidate – a teacher of the same gender that the schools catered to was more likely to be given the job. Next, a teacher has to become an assistant headmaster/headmistress. From this position, the chances of becoming a headmaster/headmistress are better. An AGISS male teacher pointed out:

AGISS is not gender friendly. It is difficult for the GES to make male teachers housemasters in girls’ schools because some had the opportunity and abused it, other than that, why is that women can look after boys but men cannot look after girls?…If you remain here as a male teacher, you will remain here without promotion. A lady will come today, by tomorrow she is made a housemistress and you the old male teacher remains without such opportunity. Once you are a made a housemistress, you have a chance of staying on the compound. About 90% of male teachers live outside the compound – only three live on campus. Meanwhile, out of about 70 teachers, majority are male teachers. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The school leaders’ concern for staff wellbeing was also demonstrated in their encouragement of teachers’ professional development. In both schools, the school leaders encouraged the head of departments to assist underperforming teachers. Participants alluded that there was high concern for underperforming teachers to excel. A teacher noted:

When teachers are not handling the teaching and learning professionally, the heads of department try to put up some help for the teachers concerned. They give such teachers some guidance and counseling. Sometimes, books and other materials are given as references to help the under-performing teacher. Normally, new teachers are placed under the heads of department so they are supposed to handle them. (Personal Communication, September 2013)
However, data did not show that professional learning communities (PLC) existed in the schools. The PRESEC headmaster explained the reason no effort was made to coordinate teachers:

Often, teachers are left to do their own things because everybody feels the government employed him. It is not something we do that when new teachers arrive, we organize programs to orient them on their subjects or give them mentors to supervise or monitor them. It is believed everybody could take care of his or her situation as trained for the work. (Personal communication, October 2013)

Newly posted teachers equally benefited from the school leaders’ support. In Ghana, newly trained teachers are automatically employed by the GES. However, due to bureaucratic and processing delays, they are not on the government pay roll to receive their salaries immediately. This deprivation could last several months, often, leaving new teachers in financial crises. In PRESEC, new teachers who were not yet on the government pay roll were given support in the form of cash until they were ‘technically employed’.

This assistance made was possible through the collaborative effort of the headmaster and the PTA. The PRESEC PTA chairman elaborated: “…The PTA takes care of their salaries until their documents are processed and absorbed by the GES for them to be recognized as permanent teachers. Currently, we have four of them [being] taken care of by the association” (Personal Communication, October 2013).

Aside helping new teachers, all the teachers were occasionally given gifts as incentives to motivate and, at the same time, keep them comfortable and in good spirits. Teachers in AGISS were given incentives such as cash bonuses and food. An AGISS teacher commented:
The headmistress has been very supportive. You know, motivation is a very important thing in everybody’s work. She has been able to talk to the parents and then they provide us with some money and every time at the end of the term, teachers go out with something, apart from your salary and that is motivating us to work hard. Occasionally, at the end of year, they organize the year party for us and from there we’re able to dance a little and have fun. Yes! We shake off the stress. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

A teacher from PRESEC presented a similar scenario about the provision of avenues for teachers’ relaxation:

We organize outings for staff members during, which teachers come with their families with packed lunch, take the school bus and go all the way to interesting places such as Akuse as an excursion. It was just for the staff and families to interact and relax. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The leaders demonstrated concern for students’ wellbeing in the various counsels, monitoring, preaching, and instructions they provided. Daily, students were exhorted to study hard and draw closer to God and do what he expects of them if they wanted to succeed in life. A PRESEC student recounted how they were directed and monitored:

Aside the emphasis on our learning, we are also encouraged to trust in God for our needs so I rely on God a lot... We have some teachers who monitor our prep times. The regular roll calls in the school keep us in the school so we don’t get involved in the bad things some bad students involve in and get into trouble. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

An AGISS student commented on the support they received through the leaders’ efforts: “The teachers are very concerned. When we are sick and have visited the hospital, the housemistresses come round to check on us. Sometimes, they go to hospital with students at midnight when there is emergency” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

School leaders’ support of students’ wellbeing was also demonstrated in their emphasis on providing enough information for students about the school rules and
regulations in order avoid unacceptable behavior that could lead to trouble or endanger them. With the assistance of teachers and school prefects, the leaders were able to carry the message of discipline across to the students and enforce it. They constantly reminded the staff members to monitor students closely. School leaders demonstrated concern for the school members’ wellbeing in various ways. They advocated for avenues to improve conditions in the school to thereby improve students training. They encouraged school members to do what was expected of them to ensure their own successes.

**Healthy relationships.** The school leaders demonstrated the supportive style by creating and maintaining cordial relationships with the staff members. They encouraged staff members to avoid conflicts and often mediated if they occurred. An AGISS teacher commented: “She does relent things no matter how young you are. She also encourages us to say sorry when we have not done well even to the students we teach and to our colleague teachers” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The leaders were alert on situations that could disrupt the rapport between teachers. When they identify such situations, they cautioned the parties involved to avert any potential damage from being done to the conducive environment created. They allowed teachers to approach them to discuss work or even personal matters. One AGISS teacher expatiated:

> The headmistress opens up, she mingles with us, and she’s down to earth. Our relation is good because whatever we want, they [headmistress and assistant headmistresses] supply. They help us with all the information that we need to do our work. Madam is a mother to us and we go to her even with our own personal problems. (Personal Communication, September 2013)
One PRESEC teacher expressed similar views about the headmaster’s relationship with staff members: “Administrative doors [headmaster and his assistants] are opened. Everybody can go in at any time to talk about issues” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The PRESEC headmaster explained that he maintains a good rapport with teachers and invite them to approach him with their problems. However he deters when any staff member wanted to capitalized on this relationship to sabotage the work. The school leaders promoted the idea that the school was a family.

The school leaders went out of their way to foster stronger bonds with staff members. The leaders accompanied their staff members to various social programs such as wedding ceremonies, naming ceremonies, and funerals. In sum, school leaders encouraged healthy relationships among staff members. They used various approaches to ensure that the relationships between them and staff members, and among staff members remained genial.

**Healthy school environment.** These school leaders worked to maintain conducive school environments. They made efforts to maintain a conflict free environment to promote cordial relationships among staff members. The congenial school environment enabled the staff members and students to carry out their duties and work undisturbed.

Data from both schools showed that the school leaders endeavored to create a conflict free environment for staff members enjoy working in the schools. They played active roles in ensuring that working relationships between school members remained professional and amiable. However, data from PRESEC revealed that, in spite of the
school leader’s efforts to nurture a healthy school community, some teachers did not cooperate. The headmaster noted:

Well, as the head of the school my wish is that we will all be one in everything we do. However, this has not been so. There are factions who oppose certain decisions and feel things must be done their own way… Informally, I try to relate with everyone as brothers and sisters… As humans you cannot expect that everybody will like you but we try to relate well. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

Data showed that some teachers made the headmaster’s work difficult by dishonoring his authority. A PRESEC teachers confirmed: “We have a problem currently. There are personal clashes; some of the teachers don’t show respect to the headmaster as expected” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

In addition to school leaders endeavor to maintain a conflict free environments, the school leaders worked hard to sustain a violent free school environment. Three teachers and three students attested that the school environments were very satisfactory for teaching and learning, with few or no occurrences of violence. The school leaders enforced discipline to maintain a well-ordered and well-managed school environment for both students and teachers. Rules and regulations were enforced to prevent students from indulging in illicit activities that can compromise the peace of the school. A PRESEC student pointed out:

All of us know that there are rules and regulations that we have to obey. We have them in our prospectus and so we try to live by them so we don’t get ourselves into trouble. Though there are some who decide to misbehave, most students do the right thing to keep them from trouble. (Focus Group Interview, September 2013)

Another student from AGISS noted: If a student is caught altering any part of the uniform he is dealt with accordingly. It has helped caging all students into the same level.
Nobody comes to boast of what she has and we are all uniform in our outlook (Personal Communication, September 2013). The school leaders’ strict enforcement of school rules and regulations guided behavior and eliminated conflicts and insubordination in the school environment. For example, the rules prohibited the use of drugs alcohol, fighting, disrespect of authorities, stealing, and use of arms.

Amidst these efforts the leaders made to maintain conducive environment, the transcripts revealed that unfavorable conditions still occasionally arose among students. A PRESEC teacher pointed out: “Hm, because of our large number of day students, [boarding students] mingle with them and get involved in drug issues, immoral issues like running around with girls and so on. Sometimes we have cases of bullying” (Personal Communication, September 2013). In such grave offences, disciplinary committees existed to handle and sanction offenders. Parents of such deviants were brought in to be part of the decisions made.

Furthermore, the school leaders worked in collaboration with their respective PTAs, to fortify the security of the schools against external intrusion. An AGISS student’s parent recounted: “Where we realized that the fenced wall exposes the children to threat from the public, we built upon it and fortified it and now we pay extra security personnel to ensure the security of our children” (Personal Communication, 2013). Similar views were shared in PRESEC about the importance of ensuring a secure school environment. A parent recounted: “The security system in the school was very weak, therefore, the PTA has employed five security personnel to secure the school” (Personal Communication, October 2013).
The supportive school leaders enforced school values to ensure a healthy school environment – conflict free, violent free, and secured – for all school members. As a result of the support, students and staff members were able carry out their roles without interference.

**Summary**

Data identified the existence of, participative leadership, servant leadership, and supportive leadership styles in the study schools. School leaders employed these leadership styles to govern the schools, carry out the schools’ missions, and meet the schools’ expectations. They engaged stakeholders in decision making for the schools, sought the welfare of school members, promoted healthy relationships, created safe and sound environment for teaching and learning and supported stakeholders while carrying out their duties.

**Reflections on Data Collection**

As I read through the transcript and reflected on the whole data collection process, one thing that resonated with me was that most of the responses emphasized the positive things about the schools. This might stem from the fact that the purpose of the study was to explore the school culture and its influence on outcomes. Participants presented the way things are done in the schools to help them achieve their expectations. Again, these schools were small communities that were well structured and organized, with strict rules guiding behavior. The school culture becomes dominants and bonded members, as they subdued individual cultures. It was not surprise that their emic perspectives are mostly positive.
Furthermore, I am aware that in Ghana, a school is prestigious when most of its students scored straight “As” in the WASSCE. I am also aware that PRESEC is one of the outstanding schools in the country. However my choice of the schools was not based on academic laurels. I purposefully selected them based on the research criteria.

Finally I purposefully selected information rich participants to provide insights into their culture. I noticed that after interviewing a number of participants, the data reached a saturation point, which presupposes that even if I had a new set of participants, similar responses will resonate. Since qualitative case study permits the use of few participants for a research, I can convincingly say that the data gathered from this study is a true reflection of what actually goes on in the schools.
Chapter Five: Synthesis and Analysis

This chapter discusses the results in the light of the research questions, literature review, and the theoretical framework. The discussions are presented in the order of the research questions posed in Chapter One and the patterns and themes that emerged from the data. The first segment of the chapter discusses findings based on the RQ1 under the themes and patterns that demonstrate various components of culture. The second part focuses on the RQ2 that describes the various interactions that existed to promote the schools’ success. The final section concentrates on the findings based on RQ3. It discusses the emergent leadership styles that leaders employed to improve to run the schools.

Relevance of Tangible, Discernible Culture in Schools

From Schein’s (2004, 2010) diagnostic description of organizational culture, level one consists of artifacts that embody the physical structures and processes in an organization. These artifacts communicate information about the organization’s beliefs, values, assumptions, and expectations. A number of scholars describe school artifacts to include the physical environment, behavior patterns, dress codes, rites, rituals, ceremonies, heroes and heroines, school stories, school records, logos, mottos, pledge recital, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA), alumni associations, disciplinary committees, Students’ Representative Council (SRC) among others (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Maslowski, 2001; Schein, 1992; 2010).

This study’s findings corroborate the description of the cultural artifacts the authors present. The study presents three classifications of artifacts, namely visual,
behavior, and verbal manifestations of culture. The visual appearances include the physical environment, symbols, and dressing. The behavior manifestations include the various rites, rituals, and ceremonies that the school members engage in daily and occasionally to foster their norms, beliefs, values, and expectations. The verbal manifestation is expressed through recognition and awards of past and present headmasters, teachers, and students they considered heroes and heroines, storytelling about significant occurrences, and rules and regulations. Participants mention that expressing culture in these capacities helps the schools to achieve their expected outcomes.

**The role of visual culture in school success.** The visual demonstrations of culture that enhance Schools’ success include the physical environment, infrastructural facilities, logos, school anthems, monuments, trophies, and the pattern of dressing (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Maslowski, 2001; Ott, 1989; Sathe, 1985; Schein, 1992; 2010; van der Westhuizen et al., 2005). These authors point out that visual artifacts convey information about an organization’s beliefs, values, assumptions, and ways of doing things. The study’s findings support this assertion, as the participants reveal that the schools’ physical environment and symbols communicate the values and beliefs about what they consider important for the schools.

Participants maintain that the meanings they derive from the physical structures and symbols are embedded in the schools’ values, beliefs, mission, and expectations; and these influence the things they do and the way they do them. Their determination to provide adequate classrooms and dormitories; maintain tidy compound, dormitories, and
classrooms; ensure availability of a sports field; and the location of administration block and assembly halls; are indications of the school’s values, beliefs, and expectation for high performance and achievements. Similarly, symbols such as logos, anthems, the mission statement, mottos, awards, trophies, plaques, and monuments represent and convey the beliefs and values of the schools.

These physical structures and symbols constantly provide inspiration to school members and provide direction for their activities. These assertions further confirm the work of Peterson and Deal (2002) that the physical environment and architecture convey what is important, foster a sense of community, communicate core mission and values, and motivate diligence and pride. The authors indicate that physical environment and architecture affect inhabitants’ emotional state, their ability to concentrate, and communicate the acceptable way of life. Peterson and Deal (2002) stated: “Symbols are a representation of deeper values and beliefs. They depict or signal core values and build affiliation with others in the school. As an expression of shared sentiments and sacred commitment, they tie people together and reinforce purpose” (p.71). Sproat (2001) concurs with the idea that an organization’s physical structures convey its values.

For instance, PRESEC motto: “In lumine tuo videbimus lumen”, which means, “In thy light we shall see light”, guides the school to provide a Christian training for students. As the school anthem points out, “From a Christian training we get a sure, foundation to take our places in the future of our country and church” buttresses the mission statement, which accounts for the provision of education that develops students in all aspects of their lives.
Similarly, the AGISS crest conveys a message and serves as the driving force and inspiration for both students and teachers. It had a pen, a book, and an eagle, suggesting that students need to be sharp-sighted, keen, and enduring in their academic work. Their motto, “Aim High” implies that the sky is the limit for students in their academic pursuits and they should never give way to mediocrity or complacency (AGISS, 2010, p. 8). The schools’ anthems depict the values of the schools. The architectural designs carry messages that uphold the values and beliefs. The location of administration blocks as the first sighted buildings in the schools suggest the need to first consult school leadership for any school transaction.

Furthermore, visual culture, which is revealed through school uniforms, helps to easily identify students and helps the students to demonstrate their pride of belonging to their schools. Students find it a prestige to be seen in their school uniforms because each school’s is unique. In addition, students are less likely to misbehave when they had the uniform on because they would not want to tarnish the image of their schools. These views supports Walmsley (2011) submission that the uniform helps create a school culture that makes students proud of their school and more respectful to their teachers and administrators. Wearing uniform encourages a sense of belonging in students as it symbolizes their membership in the schools.

The uniforms communicate the schools value and beliefs and emphasize the acceptable way of dressing. For example, students wear uniforms the schools specially design from African Prints to contain images of the schools’ crests. The crest reminds students about the School values and expectations. Using the uniform to fulfill these
purpose corroborates the assertions of Joseph (1986) and Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001) that the use of uniforms is a way of communication that conveys information about values, beliefs, and emotions and functions as a symbol of membership of an educational institutional community. School uniforms distinguish students of different schools.

The school attire provides uniformity among students and promotes egalitarianism. The style of the uniforms, as well as other dress accessories, is the same for all students in the schools. The use of school uniforms curbs unnecessary competitions among students because it eliminates markers of background such as socioeconomic status and ethnicity. Students within the schools’ boundaries are considered equal. A teacher remarks: “There is no respecter of persons in this school” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The use of uniform to promote egalitarianism supports Brunsma and Rockquemore’s assertion (2001) that the uniform suppresses individuality by enforcing a standard way of dressing, thus avoiding unique appearances.

School uniforms enable the schools to enforce discipline. Students are likely to be disciplined when they wear uniforms because it takes self-discipline to comply with a dress code. Uniforms establish social control and have an effect on discipline (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 2001; Sommers, 2001). Since it is easy to identify students in uniform from a particular school, student endeavor to behave appropriately to preserve their schools’ reputation. Sommers argues that when students dress formally, they are likely to
observe rules and tend to be serious about school business, but when they dress informally to play, they tend to be more of a discipline problem.

It appears that the uniforms the schools prescribe help the schools to maintain discipline in the schools. It enables students to focus on their schoolwork as it eliminates the burden trying to decide on what to wear. The idea of uniforms upholding discipline corroborates the Walmsley’s claim (2011) that the use of school uniform provides students with a sense of duty and reminds them that their current job is to be students. The few times students spend thinking about the latest fashion of dress to wear, the more time they get to focus on their schoolwork. Again, students from poor homes worry less about how to rub shoulders with their rich mates in dressing. These types of regulations probably promote students’ learning and achievement in schools.

Finally, the use of school uniforms enhances safety in the schools’ environments. Students in uniform are less likely to break rules for fear of easy identification and expulsion from the school. Using the uniform possibly promotes comportment among students. It confirms Anderson’s work (2002) that, with proper interventions in school communities, “using school uniform could positively influence school climate, student behavior, and academic success” (p. 20). The uniform probably prevents unacceptable behavior and promotes the safety of the school communities.

However, school uniforms did not always discourage deviant behavior as some students find ways to elude easy identification. Participants indicate that some boarding students in PRESEC disguise themselves, mingle with the day students, and escape to town without permission.
In sum, the visual manifestation of culture plays significant roles by assisting schools to communicate their mission, values, beliefs, and expectations. The visual culture conveys messages that motivate school members to act appropriately in accordance with their values, beliefs, and work towards their expectations. They provide easy identification, create a sense of belonging, nurture equality and homogeneity, foster discipline, help students focus on schoolwork, and help sustain a safe school environment for teaching and learning. Subsequently, the visual culture probably influences the attainment of school outcomes.

The worth of rituals and ceremonies in school success. This segment discusses Schein’s (2010) description of artifacts in action, which the schools express through rituals and ceremonies. These rituals and ceremonies occur daily or occasionally to uphold their mission, beliefs and values as well as meet expectations. This study’s schools, rituals and ceremonies are prolific, and they mark the schools’ very existence.

Peterson and Deal (2002), describe school rituals as processes or daily routines that are imbued with deeper meaning, and when they connect to a school’s mission and values, they mobilize spirits and reinforce cultural ties. They enable members to remain connected, nurture renewal, and offer opportunities for members’ bonding. These authors assert that ceremonies are formal, periodic, and culturally sanctioned mutual events that mark transitions in the school year. Through ceremonies, the study schools celebrate successes, communicate values, and recognize special contributions of staff, parents, and students. This study’s findings validate the above description of ceremonies and rituals.
The schools perform routine rituals to communicate and uphold school mission, beliefs, and values as well as meet expectations. Similarly, the rituals take place occasionally to accomplish purposes such as to express schools’ traditions, welcome new members into the school community, recognize and celebrate successes of past and present students and staff, and to express and communicate beliefs and values of the schools. Participants view these rituals and ceremonies as events that catalyze their academic and non-academic endeavors. As Pacanowsky (1983) indicates, members’ regular or occasional performance of rituals orients them temporarily, synchronizes their focus, and regularizes their senses into the culture.

Similarly, Moore and Myerhoff (1977) buttress the relevance of rituals and ceremonies – they are useful indicators of an organizational culture that could be “employed to structure and present particular interpretations of social reality in a way that endows them with legitimacy” (p. 13). The study’s schools the rituals and ceremonies school members perform enable them to work towards and achieve their expectations.

**The worth of rituals in holistic development.** Data reveal that the schools value the students’ holistic development and perform rituals that foster this expectation. One of the rituals is the tradition of engaging the students in house chores. Students clean their dormitory, scrub their bathrooms, and sweep and weed the compound to keep their environment tidy and also improve sanitation for healthy living. This ritual expresses the belief that aside the academic pursuits, adolescent students need to acquire skills that foster holistic development to make them versatile. As the headmaster of PRESEC points out, “Every student was expected to receive training of the head, heart, and hands. The
aim is to prepare students to face life in totality” (Personal Communication, October 2013).

This view buttresses the accounts of some historians concerning youth training among indigenous Africans (Dei, 2011; Marah, 2006; Mautle 2001; Owu-Ewie, 2006). These authors indicate that before the introduction of formal education, Ghana, like most African countries, had an informal education system that was traditionally oriented. Communities and families were the agents of socialization. The families trained their members for the appropriate family business, and the communities helped to train the youth to become responsible citizens.

Parents served as teachers while the homes were the classroom. They trained the children to run errands for the home. Girls learned housekeeping from their mothers and boys learned the occupation of their fathers. This type of socialization equipped the youth with skills to navigate in social, political, spiritual, and cultural issues (Bray et al., 1998; Dei, 2011; Marah, 2006; Mautle 2001; Owu-Ewie, 2006).

This informal training still exists in some contemporary Ghanaian homes. Most senior high schools enroll students into the boarding house where they receive a combination of the formal and informal training. Unlike the typical traditional Ghanaian home where gender specific roles are espoused (Salm & Falola, 2002), the boarding schools compel both boys and girls to carry out similar chores. In a typical traditional Ghanaian home, girls remain home to do the house chores while boys engage in the occupation of their fathers or attend school.
This practice is based on the premise that wives are the homemakers. Therefore girls should be receiving the training in order to mature into virtuous wives in adult life. It is incumbent on mothers to groom their daughters to become good wives. Little emphasis is on boys doing house chores. However, boys are groomed to become breadwinners of the home. Many boys imbibe the idea that only girls do house chores. Therefore some of these boys do not help in doing house chores not even when they get married. That notwithstanding, some boys change their mentality after attending the boarding schools.

Furthermore, Adekunle (2000), Nukunya (2003), and Nwomonoh (1998) recount that the indigenous education instills the right attitudes, behavior, character, and healthy living in the youth of a community. It provides adequate knowledge of community history, beliefs, and culture to the youth and makes them active participants of the community. In this study’s schools, students’ training does not only target the development of their minds, but also focuses on the development of their hands and hearts.

Similar to the indigenous communities, in the boarding schools, the school leaders represent the community leaders, the housemasters/housemistresses serve as parents, while the rest of the staff and students serve as members of the community. Adults contribute to raise students to meet the schools expectations. Performing this role supports Dei’s claim (2011) that the well-groomed individual is guided daily by the mutual obligations of interdependence in the wider community. The adult members of the schools assist in nurturing the students to attain expected virtues.
Combining the indigenous way of training with the formal education probably makes students multitalented. Engaging students in domestic chores results in neat dormitories and compounds although no hired cleaners exist to do the job. The schools, in addition to intellectual training, engage the students in house chores as part of their holistic training.

Furthermore, involving students in domestic chores inculcates in them the virtue of hard work in all endeavors. As one AGISS teacher points out, “we hope to train them so that they will learn and cultivate in them the culture or habit of learning” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The PRESEC headmaster states, “Our core values are hard work for academic excellence, discipline for good morals, and excellence in extra-curriculum activities such as sports.” This notion confirms Dei’s assertion (2011) that the indigenous system of education is a lifelong process that adopts a holistic approach to prepare a person spiritually, culturally, mentally, emotionally, physically, and materially. Students work hard to achieve excellence in the WASSCE, end of term examinations, and in other non-curricular activities in schools.

A byproduct of this complete training is the development of time management skills. As the adolescents’ juggle their social engagements and domestic chores with their academic endeavors within the stipulated time, their management skills are sharpened. Surviving multitasking required in the school environment is preparation for a demanding adult life. Students become time-conscious and develop the attitude of punctuality. Two students comment: “We are all time-conscious and so we are not late for any schedule”
“Life in PRESEC has helped us to manage our time very well” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Comments from alumni and students reveal that, although the daily routines are rigorous and challenging, the resultant benefits are both immediate and long term. This perception supports a quote by a famous poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) that, “the heights by great men reached and kept were not attained by sudden flights, but they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night.” Hard work is paid for in students’ holistic development.

In summary, this tradition of students performing domestic chores does not only help them to develop their personal skills but it also helps them to develop their skills of hard work, time management, and multitasking. Engaging the students in carrying out the chores concomitantly benefits the schools and provides a sense of healthy living for students. Students are responsible for maintaining clean environments for the school communities and the schools save the money that would have been used to employ the services of laborers. Engaging in domestic chores contributes to student holistic development.

**Sustaining religious and spiritual development.** The study findings show that the school initiates certain rituals to cater for the spiritual growth of students. This practice is based on the belief that a person’s religious and spiritual development is linked with his or her success in life. This belief agrees with the findings of Regnerus (2000) that students’ involvement in church activities has a positive relationship with their educational expectations and achievements.
In Ghana, the religious quest focuses on the Christian faith. The dominance of the Christian religion in the schools’ communities is a reflection of the influence of early missionaries, which resulted in Christianity being the dominant religion in Ghana. This account corroborates the works of van der Geest (2001), Graham (1971), and Nukunya (2003) that Christian tradition in schools is a legacy of the Christian missionaries who first introduced formal education into the Ghanaian society. Even in secular schools, the officially recognized religion is Christianity.

Commenting on the perpetuation of Christian values in Ghanaian schools, the renowned contemporary Ghanaian sociologist, Nukunya, recounts that the changes that were introduced into Ghana at the inception of formal education by missionaries have continued to influence the culture of the schools they established (Nukunya, 2003). He points out that mission-based schools continue to exhibit the same kind of values, beliefs, and norms that were instilled in them since their establishment.

The PRESEC headmaster affirms: “The school socialized and inculcated in students the cherished values and traditions of the Presbyterian Church that made them [students] disciplined Christian gentlemen” (Personal Communication, September 2013). As PRESEC provides Christian training to students, the students become acculturated and ingrained in the Christian tradition. One cannot explain Christianity’s domination in secular schools (as they are established by the government) but it may be that students who graduated from the mission schools and were employed in the secular schools carried with them, the Christian tradition, and instilled its values, beliefs, and practices
into the new secular school communities. Data reveals that although other religions exist, only Christian faith is officially recognized in the public schools.

The rituals that the schools use to facilitate the spiritual development of students include the morning devotions, Sunday church services and vespers, non-denominational group meetings, retreats, fasting and prayer meetings, and pre- and post- examination rites. As students perform religious roles such as reading the Bible, leading praises, and preaching at these meetings, their leadership, and public speaking skills are developed. These rituals are avenues for a kind of “apprenticeship” that gives them on-the-job training. This approach supports what a scholar refers to as “learning by doing” (Reese, 2011). “Learning by doing” is learning from experience and directly from one’s own actions. As students in the study schools participate in diverse religious activities, they learn from those experiences, thus, helping them to acquire and practice new skills.

Students acquire leadership skills that enable them to lead, and the ability to speak in public. One teacher notes that “As they [students] engage in service activities, in a way these children are exposed to leadership skills, public speaking, and many know how to conduct themselves.” (Personal Communication, September 2013). It also supports the learning approach that was embedded in the African traditional education system (Dei, 2011; Marah, 2006).

Students’ involvement in religious activities also enhances their understanding of other students. Participants reveal that when students preach to their fellow students, it has a positive impact on them. Their peers readily accept the message because it comes from one of their own. This attitude confirms scholarly work that shows that as an agent...
of socialization, peers are able to influence each other in bad or good ways (Arnon, Shamai, & Ilavov, 2008). The authors further point out that peers are a very important socialization agent for the youth.

However, they argue that peers may either encourage idle activities that can negatively impact the students’ academic achievement, and exacerbate already high levels of delinquency and antisocial behavior or positively influence their lives in various ways. Through the Christian rituals, students get to learn about the right and wrong ways of life. The AGISS headmistress indicates that whenever he preaches to the students he points to them the need to keep the commandments in the Bible and encourage them to love God and love our neighbors.

The constant exposure to religious engagements with time influences students' interests and desires. This claim corroborates the findings of Arnon and colleagues (2008) that students with religious backgrounds prefer to spend free time on activities that are beneficial to their training while their counterparts from secular schools spend that time doing pleasurable things such as drinking alcohol and doing drugs. Participants probably believe that the more students engage in Christian rituals, the more they learn the Christian principles, and the better they learn to do the right things and live in harmony with other members and the environment.

The religious rituals are intended to guide the students’ spiritual growth. The educators believe that God underpins one’s success; therefore, they constantly remind the students to be serious about God and His word. This belief is so ingrained in Ghanaian societies that success in any undertaking is attributed to God’s supernatural power.
Hence, even members of the secular school believe that it is through religious practices and knowledge of God that students can receive training to become successful. This assertion is in consonance with Mbiti (1990) that “Africans are notoriously religious and religion is in their being” (p. 1). Mbiti posits that religion permeates every aspect of the African society; therefore, even the secular schools perform religious rituals to honor God – there is no formal distinction between the secular and un-secular.

Participants probably hold the belief that students’ spirituality increases when they engage in non-denominational groups, fasting, prayer meetings, and retreats. Therefore, schools provide avenues for the performance of these rituals. The schools believe that students can only be successful when they learn to rely on God’s support. This is most likely the brain behind the pre- and post-examination services. As students learn to rely on God’s support for success, a connection with God emerges, and this helps to enhance their spirituality. As they become spiritually inclined, they tend to do the rights things and live the right way with others. Thus, constantly engaging in the Christian religious activities help students have a positive image of the world they live in, and this contributes to the holistic development the schools expect in students.

The journey to academic success. This portion of the study provides insight into rituals that contribute to students’ academic achievements. Previous researched show that student absences (Gottfried, 2009; Railsback, 2004; Roby, 2003) and teacher absences (Miller, Murnane, & Willett, 2007) could be detrimental to school effectiveness and students’ academic achievement. The current study supports this literature. Participants reveal that they view class attendance of both teachers and students as an important
avenue for academic excellence. Teacher and student absences are monitored to curtail the loss of valuable time and to optimize student performance (Miller et al., 2007).

Participants note that teachers are punctual to class. Their punctuality shows their level of commitment and their eagerness to assist students in their academic pursuits. By so doing the levels of students’ confidence in and trust for teachers is high. As an AGISS student noted, “Our teachers are really concerned with our studies, prep, and our class work.” Such a report signifies that the students acknowledge the commitment of teachers towards their schoolwork. This attitude the teachers exhibit can motivate students to be diligent in their learning.

In the schools, the existing tradition is that class prefects record and report teacher and student absences. The teachers and students have the responsibility to provide explanation for their absences. A teacher remarked:

If you [teacher] do not sign, and at the end of the day the books come to the teacher in charge of the registers, he will write “absent” against your name. When it gets to the assistant headmistress academics, where permission is supposed to be sought, she goes through her book to verify those who sought permission. If there is no permission for an absentee teacher, she also writes you name down for a query for not teaching. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

Surprisingly, students are given the privilege to monitor teachers’ attendance in class. It could be because the administration wants students to participate in decisions that affect them, or it could be that the schools implement a type of separation of powers as a check, which ensures that everybody carries out their duties. This approach further sharpens the leadership skills of students. It also supports the bottom-up approach strategy that gives the opportunity to people at the grassroots to take part in decision-making processes (Abiona & Bello, 2013). The collaborative monitoring of teachers and
students probably reduces absences and improves punctuality, which allows students to experience better quality teaching, which in turn can enhance student and school outcomes.

Additionally, to ensure teachers do their work, heads of departments mentor underperforming and new teachers to help them improve their teaching skills. Although this is not a perfect replica of PLC, it gives the opportunity to such teachers to improve. Some educational practitioners (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; Eaker, DuFour, & Burnette, 2002; Fullan, 2001a; Hargreaves, 2004; Kruse & Louis, 2009) advocate for PLCs because teachers’ collaborations could improve schools and assist students to excel in their academic work. The effort to help underperforming teachers to improve is an indication of the schools’ optimism for academic excellence.

Furthermore, educational talks by experts in various disciplines encourage students in their academic endeavors and career choices. These talks provide students with information about possible opportunities in their fields of study and also inspire them to study hard to attain their goals.

Prep is an essential ritual the schools use to promote students’ academic work. Students have this time to do extra academic work - revise their notes, do their assignments, or seek assistance from friends who have better understanding of areas they do not have a good grasp of. This ritual supplements the efforts of teachers, which suggests that school leaders believe in the combined efforts of teachers and students to achieve the schools’ desired outcomes. This finding supports the work of Loras (2010) that indicates that even if teachers provide a great learning environment, a greater deal
depends on the efforts of the students. Loras advises that students be committed and consistent in their individual studies to prevent learning gaps.

As daily teaching proceeds in the study schools, the students’ individual efforts are required to complement the teaching they receive from teachers, which subsequently improve student performance in the WASSCE as well as in internal examinations.

Ceremonies are also used to promote academic success. Both schools organize Speech and Prize Giving days to inspire efforts for excellence. While the ceremony encourages awardees to persevere harder, it also motivates non-awardees to strive for excellence. Dining services are mandatory for students to ensure they receive the right nutrition required for learning. Providing the right kind and amount of food for students is crucial because adequate nourishment plays a key role in students’ wellbeing, especially with teenagers who are still developing.

The idea corroborates the work of some researchers whose findings show that nutrition plays key roles in the development of bodies and the minds of children (Kar, Rao, & Chandramouli, 2007; Ross, 2010). These authors found that malnourished children perform poorly on tests of attention, working memory, and learning and memory ability. They indicate that hunger or malnourishment causes inability to focus, inattentiveness, and restlessness; thus, leading to bad performances in schools.

Ross contends that a healthy diet helps students to reach their full academic potential and supports their mental growth and lifelong health and wellbeing. This scholar recommends that school administrators provide avenues for the head of kitchen staff to be educated about good nutrition so as to guide the kitchen staff to provide
healthy food for students. The schools oblige students to go for dining to avoid
malnourishment since it can cause students to lack the mental and physical strength
needed to complete their daily and academic tasks, which can lead to unsatisfactory
performance. To promote a healthy growth through these building blocks, parents pay for
students’ feeding as part of the boarding fees. Food committees exist to ensure that the
kitchen staff serves students with the right, adequate-in-size, nutritionally balanced food.

Other rituals that enforce healthy bodies for students are adequate night’s sleep
and siestas. Participants view naps as an effective way to rejuvenate students’ minds and
bodies for learning and chores, while designated sleep times ensure adequate amount of
sleep for each student at night. The purpose of these rest periods corroborates research
that sleep and naps promote memory efficiency, consolidation, and recalls (Cooper, 2012;
Peigneux et al., 2001; Seeck-Hirschner, Baier, Sever, Buschbacher, Aldenhoff, & Goder,
2010; Stickgold & Walker, 2005). Cooper explains that most memory consolidation
occurs during sleep, and sleep deprivation affects the ability to commit new things to
memory. Sleep helps memory storage and retrieval. As a result of the key roles sleep
plays, providing students with short naps during the day and allowing them sufficient
sleep at night ensure that their minds are in the ideal state for learning.

Dawson (2005) buttresses on the relevance of sleep in the lives and learning of
students. His study finds that lack of sleep motivates academic and behavioral problems,
tardiness, and absenteeism in students. Not providing enough time for students to relax
and invigorate their minds can cause sleep deprivation, which in turn can lead to lateness
in undertaking their daily activities. The more students of the study schools rest, the better prepared they are for their daily learning rituals.

In sum, both schools highly emphasize academic achievement. They engage students in various rituals and ceremonies that facilitate student excellence. These include prep, classes, dining, nap and sleep times, and educational talks. They monitor student and teacher absences, celebrate Speech and Prize Giving Day support underperforming teachers, provide balanced diets, pay attention to students’ health and ensure good rest for students. Both schools do all these to ensure that students receive all the necessities to achieve their academic goals.

**Acculturation of newcomers.** The schools organize ceremonies that welcome and initiate new members into the school community and new positions. Participants reveal that orientation ceremonies are organized to welcome new students, conscientize them about rules and regulations, and make them conversant with the school premises. The schools’ ideology behind orientation supports a description of orientation outlined in the Missouri Science and Technology Orientation Guide (2010):

Orientation helps students receive information about school expectations. It points students to the right direction, provides information about the right code of conduct, attendance, and discipline. Orientation enables students to develop a positive attitude toward self-discipline and socially acceptable behavior and enables schools maintain a conducive learning environment that is safe and void of disruptions. It helps ensure that students show respect to authorities, follow school rules and regulations. It helps to foster sound educational practice and learning, and equips students for successful today and the future. (pp. 1-7)

The study’s findings show that this ceremony occurs during the first week of school. With the aid of the school prospectus, selected teachers take turns to address students on various topics that give them insight about what they need to know to make
life in the school successful and meaningful to them. Balski (2011) concurs that orientation is designed to help new students get prepared to have a successful time in school – it helps them know more about campus resources, strategies for academic success, and ways to get involved in clubs and student organizations.

Balski adds that the school authorities are aware of the dilemmas that confront students when they are to choose their lifetime careers; therefore, providing a session for orientation helps clear doubts, and keeps floating minds at ease. The idea that orientations helps to locate programs buttresses the study’s that when new students are frustrated about their programs of study, the teachers have the responsibility of informing them of possible careers in those fields. Additionally, experts are invited to give talks on the various fields and the possible careers.

Arriving in a new environment can be frustrating and challenging. Organizing orientation is a way of conscientizing students about their new surroundings and the way things are done. Orientation is also very crucial to students’ adjustment as it informs students of support systems at their disposal. The usefulness of orientation in this wise supports the summary presented above in that new students may be clueless about many things and struggle if this acculturation process does not exist.

In PRESEC, students who desire to become members are initiated into the Presbyterian culture through baptism and confirmation rites. The ceremonies are memorable days for both students and their parents, because it is symbolic of the students’ Presbyterian Church membership.
Finally, the schools initiate new school prefects into their offices through induction ceremonies. The new elected prefects are officially handed the mandate to participate in school governance. The staff members supervise their on-the-job training as school counselors, and housemasters/housemistresses provide ongoing counseling and encouragement. As a result, students gain insights into their responsibilities and receive support for emergent challenges. This acculturation process probably prevents disruption of the school communities as new students and prefects are made thoroughly aware of what is expected of them.

**Equipping future generation leaders.** Engaging students in civic and political activities is crucial for competence in skill required for adult life. Participants indicate that students elect their prefects democratically. Participants account that teachers do not impose prefects on students but give nominated prefects and their supporters the privilege to enjoy the freedom of speech, to campaign, and to read their manifestos before the elections. A teacher noted: “We do not want to impose anyone on them. We want them to practice democracy and come up with their own choices” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Students learn to make decisions in the choice of their leaders.

The electoral process demonstrated in the schools confirms the words of a scholar and former US ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, who describes democratic elections as, “not merely symbolic…They are competitive, periodic, inclusive in which the chief decision makers in a government are elected by citizens, who enjoy broad freedom to criticize government, to publish their criticism and to present alternatives” (quoted in Mbi, 2007, p. 9). Another study concurs that democratic
procedure fosters students’ social and emotional competences as well as, civic and character engagements (Greenberg, O’Brien, Zins, Resnik, & Elias, 2003).

It is common knowledge that the youth grow to become future leaders; hence, introducing students in the schools to electoral procedures in a democratic manner probably inculcates a habit of competition, fairness, respect, and constructive criticism into the students. Kirkpatrick indicates that democratic elections help candidates to constructively criticize their opponents as they present alternative policies. The process of elections in the study schools probably exposes students to constructive criticisms while they campaign and read their manifestos. All students have the privilege to cast their votes and choose their leaders. Defeated candidates learn to accept the election results and rally behind the winners while they discharge their duties.

The behavior manifestation of culture is expressed through various rituals and ceremonies to help schools attain their expected outcomes. Through the student government, students learn to bear with one another and are mindful that, every student has a genuine role to play in the school. The prefects learn to respect one another’s views and the decisions that are made from these views. They acquire leadership skills for political and civic responsibilities and learn to participate in community enhancement programs such as chores performance.

Furthermore, by involving in religious activities, students develop the skills to engage in church activities after graduation. An alumnus notes: “The first thing is it [religious engagement] actually developed my Christian life because Christian devotion
was of primary importance. So by the time I came out, I was a changed person as far as church activities were concerned” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

The counselor, chaplain, and senior housemaster/housemistress are responsible for prefect acculturation into their new offices. They provide ongoing services to help resolve problems prefects encounter. The roles prefects play supplement the work of administrators and staff members in the schools. This exposure imbues students with the skills needed for interaction in their future workplaces.

*Sidestep the “Dull Jack”*. It said, all work and no play make Jack a dull boy.

Some rituals provide recreation for students. These include sports festivals, games, club activities, music, and entertainment. Students need recreational activities to serve as a break from their academic training. Some researchers indicate that involvement in outside the classroom activities contribute positively to students’ educational experience (Haines, 2001; Lindsey & Sessoms, 2006).

Intramural sports and sports festivals are part of the recreation package for students in the schools. Students also have entertainment on Saturday evenings to refresh themselves after the week’s hard work. In addition, student participation in clubs such as the drama or dance clubs provides other sources of entertainment. Providing opportunities for students to refresh themselves subsequently helps students to amalgamate, learn new things, and/or acquire skills that motivate them to remain in the field of entertainment.
Summary

The rituals and ceremonies in the study schools provide an opportunity for students’ holistic training. This training is especially crucial since these lifestyles, acquired in their formative years, greatly influence their future adult lives. Similar to the indigenous education the youth in African communities receive, the rituals and ceremonies equip the students with comprehensive skills for well-rounded adult lives. These rituals and ceremonies facilitate students’ spiritual growth, academic success, excellence in extracurricular activities, and self-discipline while equipping them with leadership and time management skills, among others. As the Bible puts it, “train up a child the way he should go and when he grows he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 6:22 KJV).

It is clear from the study that the foundation of a person’s adult life depends greatly upon the kind of training he/she receives during the developing stages of life. Students’ training in the schools is established on discipline and tackles all the facets of life needed to produce fully functional, highly effective adults. Engaging them in well-structured rituals and ceremonies seem to shape their lives positively for future endeavors and allows them to develop their personal, social, intellectual, spiritual, moral, and emotional skills, hence, preparing them for the complexities of adult life.

Verbal manifestation of culture and student learning. This section presents artifacts that manifest through spoken or written communication. Findings from the study show that through written documents and speeches, the schools commemorate their heroes and heroines; recognize and award successes; emphasize rules and regulations;
and tell stories about the schools histories, key milestones, or challenges. This corroborates van der Westhuizen and colleagues’ (2005) description of verbal manifestation of culture:

Verbal manifestation refers to way and manner an organization’s culture is portrayed and transferred through written communication or through words. Language, heroes and heroines, curriculum, and rules and regulations form part of the verbal manifestation of culture. (p. 95)

These activities occur as daily rituals and during ceremonies to reinforce the values, beliefs, and expectations of the schools to influence students’ learning. The session describes the various ways by which verbal culture is conducted in the schools.

“*They* made a difference.” Deal and Peterson (2009) provided a description of heroes and heroines:

School heroes and heroines are staff members who worked committedly to help students and whose deeds exemplify the schools’ values and purpose. Heroes persevere to form the foundation of the schools. They exemplify shared virtues, model dedicated service and caring connections, and radiate commitment. They are role models who inspire others to be more than they think they can be. Heroes and heroines’ stories help motivate people and bond them to the virtues of the school. (pp. 120-121; 208)

The participants’ acknowledgment of heroes and heroines in PRESEC supports Deal and Peterson’s description above. PRESEC’s heroes include the first three headmasters, pioneer students, first teachers, and clergy, who played significant roles in the establishment of the school. Annually, these heroes are celebrated for their accomplishments through a series of lectures. They tell stories about the challenges the leaders faced in bringing the school into existence.

Similarly, the first batch of students, recruited into the school is praised for the foundation it laid for academic excellence in the school, against all odds. Participants
believe that these students were the pacesetters for academic excellence in PRESEC. The first four teachers are equally acknowledged for their sacrifices in providing a strong foundation for the school’s academic laurels. The Presbyterian Clergy, who solicited funds to purchase the school land and to build the school, are equally celebrated. The school acknowledges that these heroes’ endless commitment made what seemed impossible become a reality.

Other heroes are honored for their various contributions in the study schools. The schools honor these heroes and heroines through invitations to school programs – making them Guest Speakers, Guests of Honor, or Chairs for special functions such as Speech and Prize Giving Days. Some heroes and heroines serve on school boards and committees, and while performing these roles, become part of the decision-making body. During anniversary celebrations, such as the Silver, Golden Jubilees or Centennial Anniversaries, dignitaries are invited, and heroes and heroines are honored. These findings confirm the work of Deal and Kennedy (1983) that the identity of a school could be communicated through its heroes and heroines. The recognition of heroes reflects what the schools value and believe.

These heroes are fondly remembered and constantly mentioned at various ceremonies and rituals to remind school members of their commitments, diligence, and deeds. Constantly announcing their achievements seems to be a way of motivating school members to emulate the heroes by working harder to leave a legacy.

**Recognizing and rewarding success.** The schools recognize and award students for the demonstration of extraordinary behavior and excellent achievement in various
disciplines. As Deal and Peterson (2009) stated, “Successful culture finds ways – both small and elaborate – to celebrate, commemorate, and salute the accomplishments of others” (p. 103). Hoy and Miskel (2008) concur with these authors and indicate that, awards, whether formal, informal, or professional, foster hard work and enable school leaders to influence students and staff. These authors posit that, although deeper connections to educational values drive the work in schools, recognizing school members for their accomplishments and services they render can make the school a better place.

Participants show that the schools use various rituals and ceremonies, such as Speech and Prize Giving Days, end of year parties, Carols nights, church services, devotions, and lunch times in the staff common rooms, to recognize and reward the accomplishments of students and staff members. These proceedings support Schein’s (1990) declaration that studying culture provides the opportunity to observe higher levels of school management rewards. Recognizing and rewarding school members for their achievements lift up their spirits and inspire them to work harder. Northouse (2013) indicates that awarding others for their accomplishments encourages the heart, and “the outcome of this kind of support is greater collective identity and community spirit” (p. 199).

Schools award students for academic achievements, honor them for excelling in sports, club competitions, and National Competitions; and recognize them for demonstrating exceptional mannerisms. The intent is to inspire students to do more and motivate non-awardees to aspire to excellence. This notion confirms DuFour and others’
(2010) assertion that rewards, no matter how small, could be used to help people overcome challenges.

Teachers receive recognition and rewards for their efforts to foster the schools’ values. They are rewarded with parties, food surprises, and cash bonuses. The supports Northouse’s (2013) claim that effective school leaders give praise to workers for jobs well done. The teachers feel appreciated for their efforts, and thus, desire to do better. The headmistress of AGISS pointed out:

… The assistant headmistresses and myself try to show love from our pockets once in a while. The assistant headmistress sometimes prepares food, especially “fufu” for the teachers. During Christmas, I provide drinks with some “khebab” [grilled meat] and we all sit under the tree and share. The PTA also organizes ‘end of year get together’ for us. We feel very happy when we socialize in this way. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

As Deal and Peterson (2009) notes, “Recognition and award in schools heighten the feelings of being on a winning team, of being part of something greater than themselves” (p. 104). The schools maintain the tradition of recognizing and rewarding members who strive to facilitate the attainment of the schools’ expectations – academic excellence, excellence in extracurricular activities, discipline, and spiritual growth. This reason for recognition buttresses DuFour and others’ (2010) argument that, recognition should have a link with the purpose and vision, collective commitments, and goals of the organization. With no traces of favoritism, only deserving members receive recognition and awards for their accomplishments.

In conclusion, recognizing and rewarding students and teachers probably provide more motivation for diligence. The fruits of this motivation manifest in many school members’ commitment to school mission, values, and meeting of expectations. Teachers
and students work enthusiastically to attain goals and excellence respectively. Probably, this motivation helps members to work assiduously towards the attainment of outcomes.

**Storytelling: Linking the past to the present and future.** The schools tell stories to announce and inform students about past and present occurrences, achievers, and accomplishments in the schools. Storytelling also communicates the values, beliefs, and expectations, and any important information about the schools to their members. The rationale behind storytelling is in agreement with a scholarly finding that storytelling in schools is used to communicate the values and norms of the community to students (van der Westhuizen et al., 2005).

Deal and Peterson (2009) buttressing this point indicate that, “stories carry values, convey morals, describe solutions to dilemmas, foster collaboration, share knowledge, lead people into the future, and shape patchwork of culture” (p. 71). At meetings and other social gatherings, school leaders and teachers tell stories to convey the values the schools espouse and to motivate members to duplicate them in their lives.

Stories of past and present occurrences that school members tell communicate what the schools stand for, and encourage the members to focus on the mission of the schools. Storytelling is used to announce the achievements, challenges, and failures of past and present school members. Stories are told to encourage and educate members about the appropriate working methods and ethics they need in orders to attain their expectations. Religious stories are used to teach moral lessons and remind students of the repercussions of immoral deeds. The AGISS headmistress points out that anytime she is preaching at devotion, she makes the students understand the importance of loving their
neighbors. As a result, students receive information that motivates them to emulate these stories.

During orientations, stories are used to convey the values to newcomers. This socialization process is crucial for new students to be aware of what the schools are about and what it expected of them. The school leaders tell stories about the history of the school, mention key accomplishments, and encourage students to emulate the heroes in the stories. School leaders understanding history and stories, and using them actively, is the foundation in shaping strong school culture (Deal & Peterson, 2009). Without constantly telling stories of the past to school members, very important information that moved the schools to their current stages could likely be un-communicated, leading to a discontinuation of tradition.

In sum, school leaders and teachers use stories to inform, create awareness, and remind students about the schools’ mission, values, beliefs, and expectations. Storytelling helps current school members to learn about the school history and past heroes and achievements. Lessons from these stories motivate students to emulate positive outcomes and discourage them to desist from the negative outcomes. Stories told motivate students to work harder for future accomplishments. Telling stories connects the school to the past and the future and seem to influence students’ outcomes.

*Molding requisite character for survival.* Rules and regulations are collectively the moral compasses of the schools. They are both written and oral, and members highly emphasize them in every aspect of the schools to promote acceptable behavior in the school communities. The existence of rules in the schools confirms the words of Hoy and
Miskel (2008) that rules and regulations are inherent in all positions of organizations to help coordinate activities.

The rules established since the inception of the schools are still observed – with amendments over time, as the schools evolve. The Rules promote continuity, uniformity, coordination, and stability of members’ actions (Hoy & Miskel (2008). Data shows that the rules and regulations that are routinely announced do not only exist, but also carve an accepted way of life for members to conform to the demands of the school communities.

Furthermore, participants note that rules exist for students as well as staff members. Rules guide teachers’ professional procedures and hierarchical positions. This buttresses the assertion of Deal and Peterson (2009) that “conformity to professional values is an individuals’ moral obligation” (p. 243). Aside the formal rules, informal rules guide relationships among school members. Teachers are aware of actions that can make or mar relationships with their superiors or with colleagues.

In the same way, written and verbal rules guide students’ behavior in every aspect of their school lives. There is a high awareness of rules and their sanctions. As one student notes in a focus group discussion, “You don’t need anybody to tell you what to do or expect. Everybody knows the repercussion of whatever she does” (Focus Group Communication, September 2013). To stay out of trouble and enjoy school life, students endeavor to comport themselves and conform to the laid down rules and regulations.

Observance of the school rules instills self-discipline in students, which trickles down into all aspects of student endeavors. One teacher stated: “Discipline is the key word for good performance” (Personal Communication, September 2013). This
subsequent influence of rules confirms the writings of Bear (2010) that, “self-discipline promotes positive relations with others and a positive school climate, fosters academic achievement, and promotes self-worth and emotional well-being” (p. 1).

Although these study schools enforce the rules to guide behavior and enhance discipline, participants reveal that, occasionally, some students portray deviant behavior. This confirms the work of some researchers that, the problem of non-conformance is not a new phenomenon in schools (Khuluse, 2009; Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010; Smit, 2010). In human societies where different people with different orientations converge, deviant ways of life emerge. In addition, the strict discipline in the schools could be contributing to the students’ behavior problems. Some past studies show that the Zero-tolerance approach to introduce discipline in schools has doubled the rate of indiscipline in some schools (Wald & Losen, 2003).

Strict discipline can deprive students of the opportunity to internalize self-discipline, orders, and responsibilities. Some students can become fearful and timid, and are likely to develop tantrums and anger. Strict discipline can make students believe that authority is always right and it is only the later that can make decisions to affect their lives. Some students may become rebellious due to strict discipline. These kinds of attributes can be detrimental to students’ life.

It takes more than observing rules and regulations to the letter to help such deviants realize their shortcomings. This situation calls for school leaders’ emergent leadership style to help deviant students have control over their lives. In AGISS, a teacher points out that when girls live deviant lives and become pregnant, the headmistress does
not just dismiss them but provide counseling services on the dangers of abortion. She also makes them understand the psychological implications of continuing in the school. She helps them to enroll in other schools after they deliver.

In sum, participants indicate that the schools use various measures to maintain discipline in order to prevent disruptions in the school communities. The initiation of rules and regulations assist in keeping the school, students, and teachers in shape. Students and teachers comport themselves within the tenets of the school rules. Emphasizing rules and regulations probably fosters the accepted behavior that provides a favorable environment for school members – a violence free community – where teachers feel free to teach and students are comfortable to learn. This condition probably aids the schools and students to achieve the expected outcomes.

Summary

Through the verbal manifestation of culture, the schools propagate their values, beliefs, and expectations of school members. The schools proclaim the exceptional endeavors of heroes/heroines. Achievers receive recognition and awards; storytelling helps the schools to link the past to the present, and through the rules and regulations, students receive direction for acceptable behavior and actions. While the schools’ beliefs, values, and expectations direct their affairs and general behavior, the schools may not be able to achieve their goals if members refuse to comply with modalities. Thus, the verbal culture probably helps students and teachers to learn appropriate lifestyle, the schools’ history, occurrences, the positive, and refrain from negative actions.
The Ultimate Determiners of School Life

Values are the principles that guide the way members of an organization behave, and are the beliefs they consider desirable (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Jones, 2010; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Lunenburg, 2011; Ott, 1989). The findings of this study corroborate this description of the values the authors present. The participants reveal that everything they do in the schools hinges on the tenets of their values. The mission of the schools is to develop holistic students; thus the schools provide an education that does not only emphasize academic achievements but also excellence in extracurricular activities, discipline, and spiritual growth. The training targets the head, hands, and heart of students to prepare them for adult life. Hence, students get exposure to things that will make them competent in every aspect of their lives.

This approach to training students is reminiscent of the indigenous education that is embedded in the Ghanaian society for the youth before the introduction of formal education by missionaries (Bray, Clarke, & Stephen, 1998; Dei, 2011; Marah, 2006; Mautle, 2001; Owu-Ewie, 2006). As the schools provide holistic education, they prioritize academic success and all stakeholders contribute in diverse ways to see it materialize.

The school leaders and teachers work effectively and efficiently to ensure that students have the necessities for academic excellence. The parents and alumni contribute to providing safe and conducive school communities for school members. Students reciprocate the adults’ efforts by working diligently to achieve outcomes. These combined efforts support the assertion of Hoy and Miskel (2008) that, the collective
culture of optimism of school leaders and teachers creates a positive school environment that has positive impacts on student achievement. Participants believe that academic progress is one of the keys to unlocking positive prospects for students.

Furthermore, the schools value discipline as an important device to control and guide behavior and promote compliance and self-discipline among students. They noted that it self-discipline that helps students to study hard, obey school rules, and behave appropriately. This belief supports the work of Skiba, Eckes, and Brown (2009) that student discipline is the third most important legal issue confronting educators and requires efficient ways to redress indiscipline.

Bear (2010) posits that the emphasis of school discipline is to reverse deviant behavior and reinforce compliance. Such corrections can create and sustain a safe, orderly, and positive learning environment, while instilling self-discipline in students. Skiba and others (2009) concur that discipline provides the skills required for successful interaction in schools and society.

The schools enforce discipline through a set of rules and regulations. They lay emphasis on strategies that promote discipline. School staff and students are aware that discipline and compliance with school rules are principal to student achievement. A teacher states: “The major issue that we guard against is breaking bounds” (Personal Communication, September 2013). The teachers monitor closely in accordance with school rules and regulation and punish violators accordingly.

With regard to the uniformity, equity, and equality, the schools ensure that there is no favoritism when dealing with students. Since every student is to observe school rules
and regulations, violators receive punishment accordingly, irrespective of their status. The schools treat students with fairness in the distribution of food, chores, and opportunities.

Schools maintain dress codes to enhance uniformity and encourage students’ focus on schoolwork. The role uniforms play in schools supports JICA’s (2012) suggestion for schools to have uniforms because the way students dress affects learning environments and has a direct influence on school discipline, academic achievement, and students’ success. Maintaining a dress code also eliminates economic and social barriers among students. It creates the impression among students that they are all on a common ground. A teacher comments: “This uniform also prevents needy students from the temptation of desiring to be like the rich and getting tempted to steal or pass evil ways to get what others have. We are uniform in our dressing” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

In Ghana, religion is entrenched in the culture, with Christianity being the predominant one; hence it is not surprising Christianity is prevalent in the study schools. Both staff members and students are of the view that participating in the Christian doctrine influences students’ lives positively. The entrenchment of religion in the schools falls in line with Mbiti’s claim (1990) that religion is in every aspect of African’s endeavors and pervades the society. Students participate in a variety of rites, rituals, and ceremonies that facilitate their religious and spiritual growth. One alumnus stated: “The first thing is, it [Christian training] actually developed my Christian life because Christian devotion was of primary importance” (Personal Communication, September 2013).
The schools cherish and maintain cordial relationships among school members. Members believe that trust helps them to work together for the common good of the school and students. As scholarly works indicate, trust among teachers facilitates cooperation, enhances openness, promotes group cohesiveness, and improves student achievement (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoffman, Sabo, Bliss, and Hoy, 1994; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Teachers openly work with each other on committees about issues concerning students. Students are able approach teachers when they need assistance on issues that bother them. The school leaders trust teachers and other stakeholders and involve them in various decision-making processes to enhance the success of the schools.

Suitably, school members view themselves as a family. Members do not only relate well formally but also take an interest in their informal relationships. Members of the school community stand with each other in times of joy and pain. As a family, they have a unity of purpose and believe that it is through collaboration that the schools can fulfill their mission. The desire to have a united front corresponds with Lickona and Davidson (2005) assertion that, clarity of purpose among members helps schools to be effective. All stakeholders work collaboratively for the common good of the schools and students. DuFour and colleagues (2010) buttress the idea that school transformation occurs when educators are able to make their vision, values, and goals clear to school members. Members work on common decisions and programs to achieve and sustain the schools’ expectation.
The schools highly emphasize mutual respect and politeness. Sanchez (2009) pointed out that respect is an essential resource for members of an organization to work in harmony. He states, “Respect among colleagues embodies the professionalism of the parties involved” (p. 97). On this point, the schools are on the same page with Sanchez – they show respect for one another, which is fundamental to harmonious living. Members of the school community value respect and teach students to be respectful and courteous to others. Participants reveal that students respect the staff members and others in the school hierarchy; staff members respect one another and the school leaders, and the school leaders show respect to staff and even students. There is reciprocity of respect among the members of various subcultures.

Professionalism is mainly attributed to staff members. Teachers show professionalism by staying within the boundaries of their professional code of ethics. They are punctual, avoid absences, and check student absences as well. Heads of departments help assist underperforming to teachers rise to the task and maintain desired standards. This approach supports Fullan’s (2001a) call for teachers to have a moral purpose for teaching that does not focus on devotion alone, but also on technical knowledge. School leaders encourage teachers to demonstrate professionalism in all aspects of their work to improve student learning.

The schools maintain recognition and reward systems to honor outstanding students and teachers. The approach serves as an avenue to motivate non-awardees to work harder. Students receive awards in the form of certificates and books for curricular and extracurricular achievements and exceptional demonstration of acceptable behavior.
This practice supports Usher (2012) that rewarding students with academic-related awards such as books can have positive effects on students’ motivation and achievement. Teachers’ awards are in the form of cash and food.

**Summary**

It is clear schools’ values serve as the compass that directs the members of the school and determines behavior patterns in the schools. The schools hold their values in high esteem and help members to do likewise for healthy living. The stakeholders contribute to the sustainability of the schools’ values. Working towards school goals substantiates the individual membership of each stakeholder. School members live by these values for daily directions. Values guide members’ actions as they work assiduously to support student achievement and carry out the schools’ mission.

Members highly emphasize and share them to foster the attainment of their collective objectives and goals. Sharing the values influences how members of the schools conduct themselves, discharge their duties, and relate with one another. In other words, they carry out their responsibilities with these values in mind.

**All Hands on Deck: Subcultural Involvement in School Governance**

The study identifies that subcultures exist in the schools and contribute to, and are crucial for, the general welfare of the schools. This segment focuses on stakeholder participation in the schools. Since GES involvement in the affairs of schools is ubiquitous in Ghana, the discussion focuses on the remaining school base subcultures and their unique contributions.
**The schools’ backbone.** The school-based subcultures include the administrators, teachers, parents and community, alumni, and students. These subcultures work in their respective domains to make the schools a better place for teaching and learning in order to attain expected schools outcomes. The existence of these subcultures in organizations confirms the works of (Ballou, 2008; Boisnier & Chatman, 2002; Kruse & Louis, 2009; O’Reilly, 1989; Ott, 1989; Scaffold, 1988; Schein, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1984; 1993; Kruse & Louis, 2009) that school subcultures that are distinctive, coexist and accommodate each other in order to support school life and the schools’ organizational culture.

These authors point out that these school subcultures have a legitimate interest in the welfare of the schools. In the study schools, the stakeholders identify with the schools and have interest to supports them. In their respective capacities, they participate at various levels to help the schools attain their expectations. This level of involvement corroborates a scholarly work that, where members mutually understand and accept the culture, there is less conflict, more participation in decision-making and other leadership initiatives, and generally, more agreement on directions and choices (Kruse & Louis, 2009). The collective efforts of the subcultures probably enable the study schools to achieve their desired outcomes. The next session describes the unique ways in which the various subcultures participate in school-based governance.

**Harnessing stakeholders’ energies.** At the core of the daily administration are the school leaders and their assistants. The findings of the US Senate Select Committee
on Equal Educational Opportunity as quoted in Sergiovanni (2001a, p. 99) and Franklin (2006, p. 19) state:

In many ways, the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He is the person responsible for all the activities that occur in the school building. It is the leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism, morale of teachers, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. If the students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost always point to the principal’s leadership as key to success. (U.S. p. 305)

The findings of this study concerning the roles of school leaders corroborate the above quote. The school leaders are in charge of everything that goes on in the schools. They direct the affairs of the schools and guide all teachers and students with regard to school values and expectations. Sergiovanni (2001a) indicates that the position of the principal is the most important in the whole school for maintaining and improving the school’s quality. The study’s school leaders engage the stakeholders in planning and decision-making, which in turn pave the way for each subculture to have a sense of belonging.

Teachers and students contribute based on opportunities the school leaders create for them or the official roles their positions require of them in the administrative hierarchies of the schools. It stands clear that the school leaders’ efforts, initiatives, styles, and relationship with stakeholders determine the degree of subcultural interest, involvement, and commitment to participate in school governance. This approach corroborates research works that both leadership and management qualities of the school leaders are crucial to school success (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Senge, 2012; Yukl, 2010). Kruse and Louis indicate that schools can be progressively sustained when their leaders
are both competent managers and influential leaders. The leadership skills enable them to work on improvements that are sustainable; they can entice and empower staff to perform excellently, and to develop trust within the school.

Barth (2002) also indicates that because of the increasing demand for high performance in schools, school leaders have no option than to become coalition builders and create shared leadership. In the study schools, the ability of the school leaders to blend leadership and management skills into a seamless operation are shown in the roles they play in involving other subcultures. The leaders acknowledge the leadership tendencies in stakeholders and create opportunities for them to participate in school governance.

Furthermore, as managers, they organize and address the daily routines within the school system while supervising staff performances. Due to the sizes of the schools, this system of delegating responsibilities eases the burden of school leaders and minimizes the occurrence of mistakes overworking can cause. This delegation of authority probably enables the school leaders to focus on the overall mission of the schools as they work to see it come to fruition.

Participants indicate that the school leaders involve all the subcultures. As one teacher notes “Madam [headmistress] involves all of us” (Personal Communication, October 2013). The subcultural involvement will not be possible if the school leaders ignore the potentials of stakeholders or do not create opportunities for them to participate. Identifying them as important actors for schools’ progress and involving them enhance their participation levels. A parent (PTA chair) indicates that the PTA undertakes projects
based on needs that the school leaders point out to them. He states: “Any time the headmistress identifies the challenges facing the school, she notifies me, and I call an executive meeting to discuss and share ideas with them as to how best we could handle such situations” (Personal Communication, October 2013).

The strategic involvement of stakeholders fosters their contributions towards school progress. It falls in line with Kruse and Louis’ (2009) assertion that a principal cannot ignore other subcultures because they help meet the daily demands facing the school administration. The more the subcultures agree on decisions and initiatives that improve schools positively, the greater they participate in implementing them. The school leaders’ efforts are to be geared towards maintaining positive and productive school cultures.

Aside the efforts of the school leaders to create opportunities for subcultures to participate in decision-making and undertake projects, the school leaders trust the stakeholders and delegate authority to them, which makes it possible for members of the subcultures to contribute in myriad ways to support the schools. Thus, members make and implement decisions; provide infrastructure, facilities, financial assistance, spiritual guidance to strengthen students’ Christian faith; and voluntarily organize training and counseling sessions for staff members and students respectively.

This kind of local governance of schools is the decentralization of schools (Caldwell, 2005; Chien, 2003; Essuman & Akyeampong, 2011). Namukasa, 2007). The strategy enables the subcultures to contribute to school progress even when the GES
cannot shoulder the demands of the schools. However a parent points out that the extent to which subcultures participate in school remains under the purview of the GES.

The school leaders’ ability to harness the capabilities of stakeholders in governance enables them to tap both the material and human resources to improve their schools. The schools cannot benefit if the school leaders do not open up to engage stakeholders. Stakeholders taking part in the school-based governance is one of the things that brings differences in the schools’ achievements.

**Teacher energy for sustainability.** York-Barr and Duke (2004) provide an all-comprising description of teachers’ involvement in the school setting:

Teacher leadership is practiced through a variety of formal and informal positions, roles, and channels of communication in daily work of schools. Sometimes, teachers serve in formal leadership positions, such as union representatives, department heads, curriculum specialists, mentors, or members of a site-based management team. At other times, leadership is demonstrated in informal ways, such as coaching peers to resolve instructional problems, encouraging parent participation, working with colleagues in small groups and teams, modeling reflective practice, or articulating a vision for improvement…Teachers leaders sometimes assume full-time position of leadership, and other times continue with full-time positions as classroom teachers while also taking on various individual and collective leadership responsibilities. (p. 263)

One cannot underestimate the importance of the teacher subculture. The findings of this study corroborate the work of the above authors. The various roles that teachers play in the study schools are both formal and informal. Teachers do their full-time jobs in the classroom but participate in leadership roles outside the classroom concurrently. Their leadership positions include heads of departments, housemasters/ housemistresses, chaplains, counselors, club and organization patrons, teachers-on-duty, committee members or leaders, and form masters.
While discharging these duties, they engage in making decisions, and planning and implementing them. This participation supports research that teachers demonstrate their leadership skills through their professional roles, the ideas they express, and their participation in decision-making in matters that concern the schools and students (Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2014). In other words, teachers’ involvement in schools is not limited to only teaching; they also engage in non-curricular activities that contribute to the welfare of the school and the students.

As housemasters/housemistress, teachers actively engage in school governance as they make decisions that influence the welfare of the school and its members. They served as “foster parents” of boarding house students and daily engage in making decisions concerning the students such as ensuring the students observe the rules, and maintaining their safety. These “foster parents” instill in students the values required for self-discipline development in every aspect of the lives – be it academic, moral, social, or physical. They ensure students share in the values and beliefs that the school upholds to maintain the good name of the school. The housemasters/housemistresses are accountable for students’ lives in the boarding houses; thus, they effectively discharge their duties to ensure the safety of students.

Heads of departments, as teacher leaders, constantly involve in making decisions related to the curriculum and teachers’ professional development. They do this alongside their full-time jobs as teachers; they attend meetings, meet with their respective department members; and monitor, supervise, and mentor their colleagues concerning the timetable. For example, the heads of department are in charge of underperforming and
new teachers – to coach and help them improve their professional skills. As part of the school management team, the department heads make decisions to influence the school, teachers, and the student body.

Chaplaincy is another channel through which teachers participate in school decision-making and school leadership. Chaplains are the custodians of students’ religious and spiritual matters. While these teachers perform their full-time roles, they ensure that students get their daily religious and spiritual nourishment. School chaplains mentor students, counsel those with spiritual and emotional issues, and ensure that students maintain a disciplined attitude to enhance their future lives. This role provides the reason some parents prefer to enrol their children in mission-based schools. A research report shows that some parents prefer the mission based schools because the schools instill Christian values in students, and emphasize discipline in their academic and moral lives, thus making the students obedient (Gemignani, Shogo, & Wodon, 2014). In this study schools, the chaplains make decisions to improve the schools for student learning. This teacher leaders’ participation in decision-making seems to influence several aspects of the students’ lives.

Serving on committees and associations, teacher leaders make decisions that affect the school and its inhabitants. For instance, teachers serving on food and disciplinary committees, welfare associations and PTAs, and as representatives of unions such as GNAGRAT and GNAT participate in making decisions that affected themselves, their colleagues, and students. As teachers on duty, the teachers make decisions to influence students as they monitor daily operation on campus. Their monitoring and
supervision ensure a safe and conducive school environment for both teachers and students.

Teachers assigned to particular classrooms engage in making decisions that foster student learning. They address issues such as teacher and student absences and ensure that matters that concern students in the classroom are forwarded to the appropriate offices for redress. In the schools, some teachers are patrons [advisors] to clubs and other student organizations. At these levels, their decision-making influences students’ extracurricular engagements.

Without the teachers as leaders, the school leaders cannot carry out all responsibilities required in the school; teacher participation reduces the workload on the school leaders who have to juggle myriad roles (Barth, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The school culture cannot be complete without the contributions of the teacher subculture. The roles teachers play are so crucial that it is impossible to disregard them, as they are critical in making and implementing decisions. York-Barr and Duke indicate position that teachers hold the vital knowledge regarding the day-to-day operations and interactions of their students; therefore, their involvement in leadership is very crucial for student and school development.

In sum, the teacher subculture is an important participant in decision-making in the schools. Its members serve in various capacities to affect the welfare of the school and its members. The teachers monitor, supervise, guide, guard, coach, counsel, and provide the appropriate tools for students to model their life’s paths. As a result of their roles in the decision-making process, teachers get more committed to the decisions they
make. In agreement with the work of York-Barr and Duke, the teachers have front-line knowledge of issues relating to the culture of the school. Therefore, the school leaders in this study make optimum use of teachers by engaging them in decision-making processes to improve the quality of decisions and the school and student outcomes.

**Parent and community energy for sustainable schools.** The study identifies the parent and community subculture as a paramount aspect of the schools. The parent and community subculture refers to the PTAs of the schools. Chapman, Barcikowski, Sowah, Gyamera, & Woode (2002) assert that the parents and community participation in local school governance is an important and positive strategy to develop schools. The PTAs participation in the study schools corroborates these authors’ assertion. Their participation is fundamental to school success. The AGISS headmistress stated: “Our PTA has been very supportive. Normally, PTA, government, and old students [alumni] support the school. It is the PTA that we can commend among the three…nearly everything we have, it is the PTA that provided” (Personal Communication, October 2013). The contributions of the PTAs buttress Chapman and others’ assertion that unless the parents and community understand the kind of activities that help schools and engage in achieving them, school-based governance cannot be a reality.

Research shows that parents’ participation in regular two-way communication throughout the school year can enhance student performance (Agronick, Clark, O’Donnell, & Stueve, 2009). Participants reveal that parents of students understand the importance of their contributions to make the school a better place for their children. The school leaders regard the parents’ involvements as key to the schools’ success. This
corroborates the work of some writers who posit that an effective strategy to improve schools and promote student achievement is for schools, parents, and communities to collaborate (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Epstein, 2011). The authors indicate that such effective connections can support even students with limited connections with the schools to become successful.

The greatest way the PTA participates in school decision-making is through the provision of infrastructural facilities and financial support to teachers. Individual parents aid in resolving disciplinary issues of their dependents and provide funds for extra lessons to support their underperforming children. The PTA makes decisions based on the problems the schools identify. The following quotes confirm the involvement of PTA in solving school problems.

Any time the headmistress identifies the challenges facing the school, she notifies me and I call an executive meeting to discuss and share ideas with them as to how best we could handle such situations.

For now nearly everything that we have, it is the PTA that has provided. Anything we need that government should have provided and has not is, the PTA does it for us.

We are blessed to have a very active PTA. When we identify a need we consult the executive, and they take it to the meeting for discussion. When they approve of it, they take it over and implement it.

We also get the parents involved. Sometimes when we get to certain levels of indiscipline, we call in the parents so that we get together to raise the standard of discipline in the students’ lives.

The main motivating factor that urges parents on to actively participate in the schools is the notion that their efforts contribute to their children’s success in the schools.

In a narrative, a parent explained that the idea of the PTA came up to supplement the
efforts of the government. The PTA believes that if they did not participate and provide resources for the schools their children will be the losers. The account supports some research findings that parents perceive themselves as primarily responsible for their children’s education (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Peters, Seeds, Goldstein, & Coleman, 2007).

Parents in the study’s schools are passionate about the success of their children in the exit examination, WASSCE, since it is the basis for students’ pursuance of higher education. The inability of students to perform well in the WASSCE is tantamount to their inability pursue higher education. In view of that, the PTA endeavors to provide the necessary facilities that make the school environment conducive and appropriate for their children’s learning. Hence, they participate in decisions that affect their children, and invest financial, physical, and social resources in improving the schools.

In spite of the zealousness of most parents, few parents have contrary views and hesitate to participate in the school development agenda. Such attitudes create frustrations for the PTA executives when they have to levy parents to undertake projects. A PTA chair states:

To be frank, it is not easy to solicit funds from parents for projects. Human as we are, most of us want to have everything free, so, when you present such demands they feel you are in collaboration with the school authorities to take money from them (Personal Communication, October 2013)

This apathetic attitude of some of these parents lends credence to earlier research that there are differences in parents’ involvement; their attitude toward their roles, and the power relations between parents and the schools (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014; Clarke & Wildy, 2004). These authors explain that the interactions of family and school factors
generate such attitudes among parents. They indicate that parents with low socioeconomic statuses normally find it a burden to actively make contributions because they lack the resources. However, in spite of the resistance when it comes to participation, such parents succumb and contribute towards the PTA projects.

Without parents’ commitment, the school would lack the facilities, and school life would be unbearable for both staff members and the students. The PTAs of these schools takes on the challenge to provide for schools instead of waiting for the government, which mostly cannot spare funds to improve, expand, or provide new infrastructural facilities for existing schools. Parents’ intensified commitment to these schools probably enables their children to succeed in the schools and after.

As research shows, parents and community involvement has myriad benefits to the schools, staff members, and the students (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). These authors indicate that parent and community involvement is crucial to the schools because the challenges of educational achievement are beyond the scope of schools alone. For the study’s schools, PTA involvement solves many of the issues that they confronts. Parents providing infrastructural facilities and involving in students’ disciplinary issues offload many educational burdens the schools bear. Such involvement promotes sustainable decision-making and implementation, fosters teacher commitment, and enhances good interpersonal relationships among the schools’ subcultures. Subsequently, it fosters student learning and achievement. This also supports the reports of some researchers that parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling is a predictor of student success in schools (Gaitan, 2004; Hamilton, Roach, & Riley, 2003).
In sum, the parent and community involvement in school governance enriches the school environment for student learning and fosters healthy interactions among subcultures. The schools receive the necessary facilities that they require to make life comfortable to sustain effective learning. The PTAs’ support by providing infrastructure, facilities, and finances, and getting involved in students’ general well-being, probably contributes to the positive academic achievements the students make. It is evident that without the parent and community subculture, the schools probably may lack the facilities and that may retard their progress.

**Alumni energy for sustainable schools.** The alumni of the schools participate in diverse ways to contribute to the schools’ welfare. Their participation in school governance takes the form of providing infrastructure and facilities, giving financial assistance, serving on boards and committees, providing encouragement services to students and staff members, advising school management, and organizing and funding ceremonies to promote the culture of the schools. This alumni involvement supports a research work, which indicates that the engagement of alumni and students opens the avenue for support in terms of giving, volunteering, and advocacy which are essential to growing and sustaining schools (Daniel, Bellani, & Marshall, n.d.). By giving back to their alma maters, the alumni in this study contribute enormously to the promotion of their schools.

However, data show that the level of alumni engagement differs in the schools studied. The “Odadee” of PRESEC provides infrastructure and facilities, sponsors ceremonies, and provides incentives to motivate teachers and competing students in
national competitions. The AGOSSA of AGISS provides financial support for school ceremonies and for the maintenance of existing facilities.

The alumni subculture of schools provides incentives to award winners on Speech and Prize Giving Day. These financial commitments complement school, teacher, and student efforts. This alumni commitment is in tune with Dolbert’s (2002) suggestion that alumni of schools should find opportunities to recognize and reward staff members for their effective teaching, commitment, and service.

The PRESEC alumni engage in decision-making in the school by providing infrastructure, serving voluntarily on school boards and committees, providing professional advice to the school and its management staff, providing counseling services to students on their academic pursuits and career options, and honoring invitations as chairpersons and guest speakers during ceremonials. Some alumni of both schools turned teachers, return to the schools to teach as a way to give back to and promote their alma mater. For example, an assistant headmistress of AGISS, an assistant headmaster and senior housemaster of PRESEC were alumni and by virtue of their positions, participates in decision-making to improve the schools. Such teachers voluntarily take on more extracurricular jobs. One alumnus turned teachers narrated:

When I joined the staff of the school, I had the zeal to help maintain the academic standards... I decided to help the students the best way I could. I opted to be the chairman of the disciplinary committee to help uphold the level of discipline in the school. (Personal Communication, September 2013)

The alumni subculture participation in the study schools confirms a scholarly work that, alumni could give back to their schools effectively when they develop strong partnership with the schools (Dolbert, 2002). Participants in this study reveal that alumni
relate well with staff members; participate in events, reunions, chats; and serve on boards and committees. The relationship between the alumni subcultures and the schools probably helps to sustain the schools in the absence of GES’ support, as they work to facilitate the achievement of the schools’ expectations.

Furthermore, researchers suggest that the best way to foster alumni involvement in schools is to include them in activities such as recruiting, mentoring, modeling, guest teaching, career planning and networking, and transitional rituals and ceremonies, at all stages of the school and students’ cycle (Daniel et al, n. d.). This study’s findings support this assertion, as alumni serve as guest speakers and advise students about career options, an effort that provides students with insights into the prospects of their courses of study. They advise students concerning their academic activities, discipline and moral development, and provide preparatory lessons for competing students in national competitions, and general counseling about school life. Alumni encourage students to work hard to maintain the school’s status quo and to promote its tradition.

In another study, Hayman and Partridge (2013) concur that alumni networks provide students without work experience the career insights and employment information they would otherwise not have access to. Students of the study schools probably view the informal alumni advice as crucial and a lucrative source of student career counseling service. As Dolbert (2002) advocates, the alumni should commit to long-term relationships by serving as mentors to students. The author also points out that when alumni share their stories about their careers, it helps the students to build their careers. As the alumni engage in activities with students in these schools, it strengthens
the relationships between them. The interaction between alumni and students probably motivates and challenges the students to work hard to reach the alumni’s levels of success in their respective fields.

Dolbert also indicates that when alumni engage in school governance, they are able to influence the staff members’ understanding of the traditions of the school, as they work collaboratively to advance school outcomes. The alumni of PRESEC advise school staff and management on professional issues to help them administrate the school appropriately for success. In spite of the active participation by the majority of the Odadees, data show that some of them do not show a keen interest in school events or become active members of the Old Boys’ Association. This unresponsive attitude of alumni confirms a study concerning alumni involvement in Ghanaian schools that finds that alumni’s volunteering is limited (Hayman & Patridge, 2013). The authors explain that lack of involvement is due to their work schedules; therefore, some happily make financial contributions instead.

In AGISS, the alumni association does not actively participate in school governance as the school expects. Data show that due to certain challenges, the alumni association does not function or participate in the school governance at the time of this study. This situation creates a deficit in the contribution the school receives from its alumni. PRESEC, however, enjoys a vital participation of its alumni, and the outcomes of their engagements influence the school, staff members, and the students in diverse ways. Their interaction with students helps students to learn about school history, make connections for future benefits such as higher education or jobs information.
In sum, the alumni subculture giving back to their alma maters is crucial for attaining school outcomes. Without an operational alumni association, the schools may lack very important benefits, such as education and career counseling for students, professional advice for staff members and school management, and financial assistance to support development projects and programs that enhance the schools. Additionally, alumni participation in decision-making probably enhances school progress because it enables alumni to positively enrich members’ knowledge about the schools’ culture. Moreover, from data, it seems that alumni participation results in a stronger relationship between the alumni and their schools, which further increases their active participation in school. However, lack of alumni involvement in schools can probably cause schools to lose many benefits that can promote their achievements.

**Student energy for school success.** The role of student subculture is crucial to school governance. As stakeholders of the schools, students in this study participate in the decision-making process to influence themselves and the schools. The media through which students participate include the Prefectoral Board, the SRC, clubs executives, committee members, and seniors on duty. These roles confirm the work of Kuh and Lund (1994), who find that students’ involvement takes diverse forms.

The study’s participants show that students participation in the various positions exposes them to leadership activities that require them to make informed decisions, organize, plan, serve, supervise, monitor, control disciplinary issues, and resolve disputes. While performing these roles that help to harmonize situations and control students to ensure order in the schools, the students become practically competent in
leadership skills, time management, communication skills, and interpersonal relationship skills.

For example, a PRESEC alumnus turned teacher discloses that in the absence of teachers, some school prefects sit on disciplinary cases that involve students, teaching and non-teaching staff. This mode of participation creates the opportunity for students to sharpen their leadership skills; they learn how to tackle and solve various issues. Kuh and Lund (1994) assert that such student participation in purposeful and meaningful leadership activities that enables them to make decisions and resolve conflicts. Gaining leadership skills is most likely because the more students participate in decision-making processes, the greater their experience in dealing with various challenges and situations.

Student involvement in school governance produces varied outcomes for the schools and their members. With regard to the school, student participation in school governance improves the school community life. The student leaders maintain order and ensure that, as much as possible, students abide by the rules and regulations. This finding corroborates Kuh and Lund’s (1994) and Kuh (2001) researches that participation in student leadership fosters students’ learning experiences in diverse areas of their lives. It influences their relationships with people, involvement in civic programs, occupational choices, a sense of moral awareness, personal responsibility, and leadership and communication skills. These qualities emerge as students of this study engage in the roles attached to their positions.

Some prefects indicate that the roles they play equip them with skills required for handling issues and people, thus, influencing their relationship skills and their tolerance
levels. Additionally, in the process of discharging their duties, they articulate and bring ideas into fruition, and concurrently fulfill their responsibilities as students. This enhances their time management and interpersonal skills. Participation in student government gives students the foundation for and prepares them to pursue careers in the national political terrain. A PRESEC teacher noted, “…It trains them for future leadership programs. Currently, there are 11 ‘Odadees’ sitting as MPs [Members of Parliament]” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Many alumni of the schools occupy top leadership positions nationally, and they attribute their feats to the leadership skills they acquired while they were students. Their claims corroborates Kuh and Lund’s (1994) findings that students who engage in student government develop leadership skills that enhance their learning and personal development. The experience fosters satisfaction and enhances their relationships with their peers. Astin (1982) concurs that student involvement in student government increases their political interest and leadership gains.

However, some prefects point out that the workload associated with the responsibilities of their positions takes a toll on their studies. They indicate that some housemasters do less in the houses. This disclosure agrees with a teacher’s response that some housemasters are not actively involved in discharging their duties. As prefects work hard to marry their studies with the leadership responsibilities, some commitment on the part of housemasters can reduce the workload on the prefects, which most likely would give them ample time to study.
The various positions students hold create opportunities for them to involve in decision-making in the schools. Carrying out the various responsibilities associated with these positions seems to enhance their leadership, time management, and interpersonal skills as well as enhance the attainment of school outcomes.

Summary

The findings show that the subcultures’ involvement fosters the schools’ success. The roles they play in school governance include decision-making. The school leaders play critical roles in subcultural involvement as cultural builders. Their attitudes and styles determine the level at which subcultures get the opportunity to participate in decision-making and make commitments to the decisions they implement. The involvement of each subculture yields several benefits for the schools and their members. The most outstanding benefit is the influence on student learning outcomes. The efforts of the subcultures are directed towards creating a school environment favorable to student achievement. This helps students to achieve high scores in the WASSCE, thus allowing them to pursue higher education. Since the needs of the schools are numerous and no single subculture can meet all the demands, involving the various stakeholders in decision-making most likely influences school and student outcomes.

Lucrative Strategies

This section presents the discussion on the styles the school leaders adopt to govern the schools studied. These are the leadership styles that the GES does not formally assign to leaders based on their positions, but emerge from the leaders’ behavior
and initiatives. Data reveal that the school leaders demonstrate three emergent leadership styles: participatory leadership, servant leadership, and supportive leadership.

**Participative leadership orientation.** Yukl (2010) describes participatory leadership in the following way:

Participatory leadership involves efforts by a leader to encourage and facilitate participation by others in making important decisions… It involves the use of various decision-making procedures that allow other people some influence over the leader’s decisions. …Potential benefits of involving other people in making a decision include high decision quality, high decision acceptance, high satisfaction with decision process, and more skill development (pp. 87-89).

The data of this study corroborates Yukl’s description of participatory leadership. The leaders use diverse channels that provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage in decision-making. As leaders collaborate with other stakeholders, pertinent ideas emerge that they use to boost the quality of discussions and decisions.

Some of the researchers that endorse participatory leadership approach explain that it embraces the invitation of subordinates to share in decision-making, in which case, the leader consults with the other members, solicits ideas, views, and opinions; and integrates these suggestions into the decision-making process (Northouse, 2013; Kaner et al., 2007). The school leaders, through formal and informal decision-making processes, solicit varied perspectives on issues, and capitalize on such ideas to run the schools. Since decision-making is not limited to the ideas of the leaders alone, the decision-making process yields higher quality decisions as Yukl (2010) points out.

Bush (2011) makes a similar point that participative leadership increases school effectiveness. He argues that because participative leadership is relevant to collegiality, it enables members to cooperate, and share a variety of ideas and knowledge to address
issues. As a result, the tendency of reaching higher quality decisions increases, thus, providing better outcomes that enhance school effectiveness. This agrees with an Akan proverb that says: “Ti koro nko agyina” meaning “one head does not make decisions.” This all-inclusive approach to decision-making provides solutions that the school leaders cannot reach by themselves.

However, research shows that when the leaders and participants have incompatible goals, it may lead to a lack of cooperation, which can reduce participation, and subsequently reduce decision quality (Yukl, 2010). Participants reveal that some individuals or groups oppose the school leaders’ strategies to improve schools. One school leader remarks: “…There are factions who oppose certain decisions and feel things must be done their own way.” However, since such opposition is in the minority, the school leaders’ collaborative decision-making helps the schools to achieve goals.

Yukl (2010) further notes that participative leadership yields higher decision acceptance. The study’s findings support this point. The stakeholders’ participation allows them to accept and own decisions they reach and removes the idea that, someone imposes decisions on them. In addition, since the process involves their own voices and choices, there is better understanding and satisfaction of its outcomes. The level of decision acceptance may be different if the school leaders solely make decisions.

When the housemistresses/housemasters make decisions concerning the dormitories, they take responsibility and provide explanations. The PTA and alumni make decisions to provide structures, portable water, and improve sanitation among others for the schools without imposition. The responses from parents show that when a
problem is identified in the schools, the entire PTA membership discusses and reaches a consensus about how to rectify them. A parent discloses: “…I discuss it with the executives and the decision taken is passed on to the general group. All the parents write their names and sign to show that they were present at the meeting and took decisions” (Personal communication, October 2013). Parents’ decisions to undertake development projects are not by coercion; therefore, they feel duty-bound to decisions. Projects that the alumni undertake to enhance the schools are as a result of a consensus decision. In each of these instances, there is high decision acceptance.

Participative decision-making process sharpens staff members’ decision-making skills and makes each member of staff equally capable of making decisions (Yukl, 2010). Some authors agree with the assertion that when individuals participate in decision-making, their leadership skills are improved (Kaner, Lind, Toldi, Fisk, & Berger, 2007). The study confirms this assertion among students. Students who engage in decision-making and school governance sharpen their leadership skills for subsequent endeavors. The more they engage in decision-making, the greater their experience and expertise. A teacher noted: “In a way, these children are exposed to leadership skills, public speaking, and how to conduct themselves” (Personal Communication, September 2013). Many students who participate in these leadership roles end up becoming leaders later in lives.

In spite of these benefits of participative leadership, Owens and Valesky (2007) indicate that participation of staff members in decision-making could be time-consuming for both the teachers and school leaders; thus, at certain times, teachers may prefer the school leaders to make decisions and inform them accordingly. Although the participative
leadership orientation sounds crucial for the attainment of school outcomes, more time is required to explain and convince opposition’s acceptance of decisions.

In sum, the school leaders exhibit participative leadership behavior. Since there is full participation from members, there is mutual understanding and shared the responsibility of decisions. School leaders benefit from the contributions of the stakeholders because the stakeholders’ diverse perspectives allow them to consider various angles on issues. This approach probably helps school leaders to make significant progress in the schools as members help to make, own, and implement decisions.

**Supportive leadership orientation.** Data reveal that the school leaders exhibit supportive leadership style. The findings support House (1996), Northouse (2013), Rafferty and Griffin (2004) and Schust’s (2011) description of supportive leadership:

The supportive leadership is one in which the leaders’ behavior is directed towards the satisfaction of staff members’ needs and preferences. Such leaders express concern for staff members’ well-being and ensure that the working environments are friendly and psychologically supportive. Supportive leaders are approachable and make efforts to make the work pleasant for staff members. They create a motivating and value-oriented climate, which has a constructive and acknowledging effect on staff performance. Such leaders treat their staff members as colleagues and accord them the necessary respect. This orientation comprises the empathic skill to deal with, work with, and live with staff in a communicative, ethically fair, cooperative, and interactive manner. It enables subordinates to build self-confidence, acquire social satisfaction, reduce stress, alleviate frustration, and increase performance. It enhances the quality of, and energizes, the relationship between leaders and staff members.

The findings on the supportive leadership orientation in the study corroborate the above description the authors provide. Participants reveal that the school leaders show concern for school members, have knowledge of their needs, and treat and respect them as colleagues. The leaders empathize with teachers on their challenges and make efforts
to assist them to get solutions. As Rafferty and Griffin (2004) affirm, supportive leadership is “expressing concern for followers and taking account of their individual needs” (p. 333).

**Seek members’ wellbeing.** The data from the study shows that the staff members of both schools perceive their school leaders as supportive, which enables them to resolve their personal problems and work challenges, overcome professional hurdles, and advance in their educational and professional careers. Participants indicate that the school leaders show concern about their wellbeing, which they reciprocate by relating cordially with the leaders. This agrees with the work of Newton and Maierhofer (2005) that, when staff members perceive their leaders as supportive, there is the tendency of higher levels of wellbeing.

Participants mention that the school leaders seek the progress of both underperforming teachers and students, and create opportunities for their assistance. This characteristic of the leaders further supports Schust (2011) work, which indicates that supportive leadership helps leaders to identify underperformers and support them. Data reveal that the school leaders entrust HODs with the responsibility of helping the underperforming teachers to optimize output. For underperforming students, the school leaders in consultation with parents, provide teachers with resources to embark on extra classes to assist them.

The leaders take an all-inclusive approach to understanding the needs of members of the school community. By doing so, they are able to closely monitor the teachers, identify those who need improvement, and provide the necessary assistance to improve
their teaching and learning capabilities. Schust (2011) asserts that as the leaders’ provide suggestions that relate to members’ fitness and development, it creates a win-win situation. As the leaders encourage teachers to make progress in their professional careers, the leaders, in turn, get more qualified personnel whose work enable the school to attain the expected outcomes. The school leaders are confident that staff members would work better when they are holistically sound; thus, encourage healthy relationships and safe and conducive school environments.

Support for healthy relationships. This study reveals that school leaders’ establish positive relationships with staff members through respect and understanding. The leaders regard the staff members as colleagues and hold them in high esteem. These findings support Yukl’s (2010) assertion that supportive leaders initiate and sustain successful interpersonal relationships. Yukl maintains that considerate and friendly leaders are more likely to win their staff’s friendship and loyalty. Participants indicate that staff members experience cordial relationship with their school leaders, which makes them feel comfortable to work in the schools. This corroborates scholarly work that the effect of supportive behavior is a staff that is more satisfied with both their leaders and their own jobs (Yukl, 2010).

Yukl further explains that the emotional ties that form when leaders and staff members have good relationships make it easier for the leaders to gain cooperation and support from the staff members on whom the leaders may rely to do the job. When leaders and staff members develop emotional ties, it generates good relationships that
make it favorable for the leaders to gain members’ maximum cooperation and support. The outcome is that the leaders can rely conveniently on them to do the job.

It is probable that maintaining healthy relationships with the teachers helps them to reach their goals of training well-rounded students, which reflects in students’ WASSCE performance, sports and club competitions, and spiritual awareness and growth; and helps them to exhibit high levels of discipline. However, although the school leaders do their best to sustain healthy relationships with staff members to foster teaching and learning, the excellences the schools expect of students do not occur in some sectors. For example, AGISS students’ barely score straight ‘A’s in the WASSCE and also do not report excellent performance in sports. Similarly, some PRESEC students have discipline issues. This presupposes that certain factors beyond the school leaders’ control are contributing to such lapses.

Furthermore, the data shows that the supportive leadership in the schools contributes to staff academic and professional performance. The finding endorses Yukl’s (2010) claim that supportive leadership has a strong positive effect on staff performance. It also increases their self-confidence, enhances acceptance of leader, promotes trust of the leader, reduces stress, and nurtures willingness to do extra things for the leader. Hence, the school leaders obtain maximum cooperation from their staff members.

One would assume that having a cordial relationship implies that there is harmony among teachers. However, the participants reveal that human nature is unpredictable even within a group that is working toward the same goal. Some teachers form cliques that oppose the efforts of the leadership while occasional misunderstandings emerge among
staff members. A teacher notes: “We have a problem currently. There are personal clashes; some of the teachers don’t show respect to the headmaster as expected, so it makes control of some members of staff a bit difficult.” A school leader confirms that “Some [teachers] neglect doing their assigned duties and that can be challenging.” A teacher confirming that some teachers approached their responsibilities with apathy notes: “Whether the students are well dressed or not, they [unconcerned teachers] don’t talk about it. They sometimes go to the classroom and the place is a bit unkempt, but you see a teacher teaching in that environment.”

This development confirms research works that conflict is inescapable once two or more entities or individuals come into contact with each other to achieve a goal (Ballou, 2008; Hofstede, 1998; Martin & Siehl, 1983: Rahim, 2001; Schien, 2004). There is the likelihood of incompatibility among members and those who oppose often disagree with leaders’ directives. Martin and Siehl indicate that disagreement between subcultures and the dominant organizational culture or among subcultures could be detrimental to the successful implementation of strategies initiated to bring change and improve the quality of outcomes. Once factions do not agree with leadership, members of these factions do not place value on the leaders’ proposals. In such situations, instead of seeing the merits of the proposal, they see problems.

However, Rahim argues that conflicts have both functional and dysfunctional consequences; nevertheless, when an organization handles conflicts in a constructive manner it will remain effective. Amidst the disagreement and indifference among some
teachers, the supportive leadership attribute helps leaders to handles conflicts constructively and appropriately and to avoid escalation and disruptions in schoolwork.

In spite of these challenges, these supportive school leaders manage the conflicts to avoid. They prevent conflicts from disrupting the school environment, by employing various tactics that promote and maintain healthy conflict resolution. They admit their faults and encourage staff members to do likewise. School leaders have foresight to recognize and stop situations that could cause conflict to arise. They also open up and hear staff members’ grievances to ensure that they do not snowball into more serious disruptive problems.

**Support for appropriate school environment.** From the description some researchers provide, one characteristic of supportive leaders is that they create favorable environments for their subordinates to work (Northouse, 2013; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; & Schust, 2011). The data from the schools corroborates the works of these researchers, in that, the school leaders endeavor to provide conflict-free environments that enable students and teachers to learn and work respectively. Observing rules and regulations is one of the devices that urges members to conform to the accepted norms and behavior in order to maintain appropriate school environments.

The members are also cognizant of consequences of breaking any of the rules. The existence of rules and regulations in the study schools supports the work of Hoy and Miskel (2008), who point out that rules and regulations are integral to every organization, and are one of the characteristics of all organizations. The rules probably help maintain appropriate school environment because they forbid any form of action that could initiate
violence or chaos. Also, school leaders ensure a high standard of discipline in the schools to maintain appropriate school environment. This level of discipline allows school members to thoroughly do the things the schools deem right and avoid violent behavior that can disturb the school communities and their members.

In a nutshell, school leaders’ approaches reveal the characteristics of supportive leadership in the study schools. The school leaders provide the appropriate conditions that teachers and students require to work and study effectively. The school leaders have concern for school members’ wellbeing, create the appropriate environment for teaching and learning, and sustain healthy relationships with and among staff members. To support staff members, school leaders seek ways to enhance their physical, emotional, financial, and professional wellbeing. School leaders promote healthy relationships by being genial, approachable, and respectful while encouraging members to do likewise.

Finally, they create the appropriate school environment by advocating practices that create and maintain conflict free, violence free, and safe school communities. They enforce rules and regulations and uphold high levels of discipline, which guide school members’ behavior. The supportive leadership orientation seems to promote the attainment of school outcomes, although these efforts meet various challenges.

**Servant leadership orientation.** According to Northouse (2013), a servant leader has the following characteristics: “Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community building” (p. 221-223). This study data corroborates this literature on the characteristics of servant leadership. The school leaders are open, receptive, and readily
listen to staff members’ suggestions, complaints, and views. These make it possible for teachers to approach the school leaders for discussions about personal and professional issues. A teacher comments: “Doors of the heads are always opened to teachers.” The school leaders also seek members’ views in times of decisions, change initiatives, and new developments. A school leader points out:

Internal issues are however handled by the top administration and then with the whole staff. Most often the teachers present their views to their heads of department who direct the discussion to assistant headmasters and finally to me. Sometimes, staff members come to me directly to present their suggestions, and when we meet at our levels, we try to address them. (Personal Communication, October 2013)

With regard to empathy and healing, the school leaders identify with school members’ excitement, and predicaments and make efforts to address the problems. The school leaders participate in various ways when members are bereaved and need consolation or financial support; empathize with those with emotional disturbances; celebrate with the teacher during weddings and childbirth, and lobby for financial support for newly unpaid staff members. These efforts to satisfy the needs of school members conform to Greenleaf’s (1977) position that, servant leaders’ highest priority is to ensure that the needs of other people are being served. Identifying with teachers strengthens relationships and establishes the leaders concern for them.

However, in spite of these endeavors, participants note that some teachers feel that the schools are not gender-friendly because teachers of different gender to the students are less likely to have access to staff bungalows. Furthermore, the leaders provide counseling to members about matters that concern them personally and their job. They take actions that help members to remain on track with the mission, goals, and
expectation of the schools. A school leader notes that, “Our business is to help the
students succeed, and so we are always looking for areas that will help them achieve
something in life” (Personal Communication, September 2013).

Additionally, the school leaders concern does not only emphasize student success,
but they also show a keen interest in staff members’ professional development. They
relentlessly pursue the later to further their education. A teacher comment: “So, she
encourages us to improve ourselves so that we can help these girls” (Personal
Communication, September 2013). This emphasis on teachers’ development seems to
promote the schools’ and students’ achievements in both internal and external
examinations. As a scholarly work assert, the outcomes derived from the servant
leadership orientation include follower performance and growth, organizational
performance, and societal impact (Northouse, 2013).

Van Dierendonck (2011) concurs that servant leaders acknowledge personal
characteristics and the cultural aspects of the organization, and use them to influence the
individual-follower relationship and the general psychological environment of the school.
As seen in the empirical findings of this study, one of the school leaders’ concerns is to
help students excel. In the process of attaining this goal, they need the commitment of
teachers. Provided teachers do their jobs properly, and students study hard, the schools
can to achieve their goal of producing excellent students. As a result of this excellence,
the students could forge ahead towards attaining higher education, obtain higher paying
jobs, uphold the name of the school, and positively impact their communities and the
nation at large.
Van Dierendonck (2011) also pointed out that, servant leadership characteristics jointly influence members as individuals, who self-actualize due to positive job attitudes and increased performance. Through this approach its members gain better insights, work in better ways, thus, maintaining sustainability and social responsibility in the schools.

Leaders’ focus on staff and students development corresponds with the moral purpose that Fullan (2001a) describes as one of the components of leaders that could influence change successfully. He defines this moral purpose as “acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and the society as a whole” (p. 3). Fullan argues that change initiatives could only be successful if leaders continue to build consummate relationships with diverse people and groups who are different from the leaders themselves. The study’s school leaders’ interest in staff members and students’ improvement promotes favorable relationships with stakeholders, thus, fostering dedication in contributions. For instance, parents and alumni subcultures passionately contribute to improving the school through development projects.

Since good relationships ensue between leaders and stakeholder, the leaders constantly foster purposeful and problem-solving interactions with stakeholders at various levels in an attempt to solve problems in every aspect of the school organization. Again, the school leaders conceptualize the success of the school not only on short-term achievements but also on the long-term influence on students. While their concern is for students to excel in school and their final WASSCE, the school leaders are also passionate about how to approach situations so that students can be useful in their adult
lives. The “big picture” – holistic training becomes the utmost expectation of stakeholders.

In view of that, leaders have the foresight and plot the course for action. They encourage school members to work toward the great achievement and discourage deviant behaviors that could jeopardize the goal. The school leaders show vigilance and hold members accountable for their actions. As a result of their efforts and interactions with stakeholders, they are able to create and maintain school communities that are friendly, violent free, and some level of conflict free. This servant leadership approach probably engineers commitment among stakeholders, enabling a strong impact on school outcomes.

However, data show that some staff members were apathetic about the leaders’ approach and find fault with the leaders’ efforts. This attitude is in line with the criticisms that supportive leadership conflicts with individual autonomy (Northouse, 2013). Thus, reciprocity can be a problem with the servant leadership style. As Northouse indicates, whether the people it serves reciprocate the services is not empirically researched and is beyond the scope of the current study. This scholar asserts that school member need to commit to the concept and to have the necessary skills and behavior traits to reciprocate the school leaders’ servant leadership efforts.

The school leaders in the study schools exhibit the servant leadership behavior, which enables them to show concern for the needs of school members. Their diligence to promote school members’ growth and development, create healthy school environment,
show empathy, and give audience to members among others enables them to obtain the maximum support of stakeholders.

**Summary**

Three emergent leadership styles, participative, supportive, and servant leadership, helped the schools leaders to influence the stakeholders and the school outcomes. Their attitudes helped stakeholders to become active participants in school governance. These strategies seem to enhance the efforts the leaders make in achieving the schools’ expectations.
Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions, and Implications for Practice

This final chapter presents a summary of the study and conclusions derived from the data presented in chapter four. This is followed by a discussion of implications for action, implications for practice, suggestion for further research, and concluding remarks.

Overview of the Study Method

The sources of data were individual and focus group interviews, observation, and document analysis. The study employed various instruments to solicit views about ways the culture of the schools. Observation and document review checklists were used to guide the acquisition of information. This qualitative research sought the views of, and details from, participants to identify organizational culture of schools as demonstrated through the tangible culture – structures and processes, and intangible culture – mission, values and beliefs, and expectations; the various subcultures – administrators, teachers, parents and community, alumni, and students; and the emergent leadership style of school leaders; and their contributions for school outcomes. The study explored the purposes and relevance of artifacts, values, and assumptions. The overarching research questions of this study were:

Q1. How do participants view organizational culture and its influence on school outcomes?

Q2. How does sub-cultural interaction promote school outcomes?

Q3. What forms of leadership styles exist in the schools and how do they influence school outcomes?
To obtain viable and relevant answers, five sets of semi-structured questions were framed to solicit responses from the five categories of participants of the study. The interview protocols guided the interviews and aided participants to remain focused to delve deeper into the issue under investigation.

Observations were conducted at morning devotion/assembly, Sunday morning and evening services, dining halls, classrooms, orientations, staff and academic board meetings, and student leadership meeting. School documents obtained from administrative offices were reviewed and notes taken to supplement the data from interviews and observations. Data was coded and sub-coded when required. The codes were categorized based on the descriptive narratives of cultural components, the subcultural engagements, and the leadership styles indicated in the transcripts, field notes, and documents. The categories were then grouped under the following themes:

a) Schools tangible, discernible culture
b) Schools intangible, indiscernible culture
c) Subcultural interactions in schools
d) Leadership Styles in schools

Limitations of the Study

The initial plan for the study was to interview the GNAGRAT/GNAT representatives. However, a response from one GNAT representative showed that their programs were not school specific; therefore, interviewing this group would not provide information about the schools’ unique cultures. However after an observation at the morning assemblies and church services, the researcher realized that the school chaplains
performed unique roles in the each school. I therefore interviewed them in place of the GNAGRAT/GNAT representatives.

Additionally, the initial plan was to study three senior high schools; but Achimota School declined my request. I concentrated on these schools because no school met the criteria for its selection – school the colonial rulers established. Unfortunately, nobody could provide any reason for this denial. However, in spite of the denial, the goal of my study was not compromised because each of the remaining study schools had different origins and met the criteria used for selection.

Moreover, owing to things like busy schedules, some participants found it challenging to make it for interview appointments. Meetings were often postponed or rescheduled, which was quite frustrating because I travel to the study sites before realizing that the interview cannot take place. Traveling to the sites was time consuming due to heavy vehicular traffic in Accra.

Lastly, the initial plan was to observe at PTA and alumni meetings, but no meetings were scheduled within the time frame of this study, which made it impossible to observe proceedings. However the interviews conducted with the PTA chair and alumni provided enough information about the associations.

**Summary of the Study**

The study explored the organizational culture of two Ghanaian senior high schools and its influence on school outcomes. This study described and differentiated between the tangible and intangible culture, and investigated each one’s unique influence on the achievement of school outcomes. Furthermore, it explored the subcultures
(stakeholders) of the schools, their involvement, and the influence these interactions had on school outcomes. Finally, this study explored the emergent leadership styles school leaders employed to run the schools and how these approaches influenced school performance.

School performance refers to the extent to which the school attained their expectations for students. Also, the styles of the leaders were the emergent leadership characteristics the leaders exhibited aside the ascribed leadership roles based on their positions. The information derived from this study is crucial to various categories of people and agencies interested in reforming schools in order to attain the standards that make them effective. These include government agencies and policymakers, international organizations, and NGOs, PTAs, Old Students Associations, educational practitioners (such as education directors), school leaders, and teachers.

Previous educational reform strategies implemented to reform pre-tertiary, especially, senior high school education, minimally considered the cultural perspective of schools. The reforms focused mainly on the political and technical approaches. Knowledge about the importance of school organizational culture in reforming schools is crucial to the planning and implementation of strategies for school improvement. The urge to conduct this investigation stemmed from the exclusion of cultural strategies in school reforms for school improvement.

Ignoring the culture is ignoring the vital elements that support and enhance school performance. The study supports the idea that students in effective senior high schools qualify for higher education, demonstrate self-discipline, develop good morals based on
religious and spiritual affiliations, and excel in extracurricular activities. It also supports the view that school reform strategies do not only focus on external agents, but also the internal agents within the schools - the cultural components and the subcultures that the changes affect.

Again, since in the final analysis, the subcultures in schools are to implement the externally initiated reform programs, involving them was crucial to effect changes. To alter people’s way of life requires their cooperation; therefore, ignoring them in change processes limits the success of the implementation of change initiatives. Understanding the organizational culture of the schools can allow changes to be effected in a way that generate positive outcomes.

The qualitative approach employed for this study was expedient in permitting the researcher to unearth and describe the organizational culture of the schools. The use of semi-structured interviews made room for the use of probes and follow-up questions, which allowed the pursuance of emerging themes. Three research questions guided this study and sought details about, and participants’ views on, the schools’ culture – significance of artifacts, patterns of behavior, beliefs and values, expectations, subcultural interactions as well as school leaders’ leadership approaches – and these variables’ influence on school outcomes.

Relevant literature on Ghana’s education was reviewed – indigenous education, missionaries and formal education, education during the colonial and post-colonial eras, educational changes of 1987, development of secondary school education, and the current state of senior high school education in the Ghanaian context. Furthermore, literature on
the concept of organizational culture; its definition; and its relationship with school subcultures, school outcomes, change, school leadership, school effectiveness, and culturally oriented strategies was reviewed.

The theoretical framework that underpins this study is Schein’s diagnostic theory of culture, which identifies three levels of culture: level one – artifacts, level two – espoused values, and level three – basic assumptions. The artifacts level comprises the visual, behavior, and verbal manifestations of culture. The espoused values level is made up of the mission, beliefs, values and expectations, while the third level consists of basic assumptions, which include the beliefs, values, and ideologies that are so ingrained that members often do not acknowledge them. The theory was used as a lens to explore components of school organizational culture and the interactions that existed among members. The adoption of the case study design, along with the theoretical frame and research questions, provided the opportunity for a thick description of the bonded case of the views expressed by schools’ participants.

In order to garner thick and rich data, school-based subcultures participated in the study. The sample size was 26 and included two school leaders, six teachers, two parents, two alumni, and 14 students. The study triangulated data via one-on-one and focus group interviews, observations, and reviewed documents, to ensure the validity of the study. This accumulated data was coded and analyzed using the reviewed literature and theoretical framework to generate categories and patterns, and was presented in themes. Tables, figures, and pictures were used to report findings and to make presentation of information easy. The findings of the study are presented below.
Major Findings

RQ1: Organizational culture influence school outcomes attainment. The ultimate goal of this study was to describe senior high school organizational culture as explained by participants and its influence on school and student outcomes.

Regarding the organizational culture, two major categories emanated from the RQ1. These are the tangible, discernible and the intangible, indiscernible culture. The themes that emerged from the tangible, discernible culture included the visual manifestation, behavior manifestation, and the verbal manifestation, while the intangible, indiscernible culture included the mission, values, beliefs, and expectations of the schools.

The visual manifestation of culture includes artifacts such the physical environment, infrastructure and facilities, symbols such as logos, mottos, anthems, monuments, and trophies and dress codes. The visible culture influenced school outcomes in several ways. The serenity and conduciveness of the school environment allowed effective teaching and learning to take place. Students and teachers were able to discharge their duties as required of them. Availability of, and access to, infrastructure and facilities provides adequate resources needed for teaching and learning. Inadequate facilities resulted in poor performance in certain areas such as sports.

Furthermore, schools logos, anthems, and mottos contained words that inspired students to learn. PRESEC’s motto: “In lumine tuo videbimus lumen” meaning “In Thy Light, we shall see light” undergirded all training manuals and efforts to produce Christian gentlemen. The AGISS motto: “AIM HIGH” underpinned students’ efforts to learn and excel in academics. The school members were aware of the school mottos that
guided the schools. Teachers constantly encourage students to use them as a guide. The prescribed school uniforms fostered uniformity and discipline among students. It removed barriers of social stratification and directed students’ focus to learning. The visual culture served as guides for members, and helped them to remain focused to accomplish their goals. Thus, it fostered high student achievement in all aspects of school life: academics, discipline, extracurricular activities, and religious interests.

The rituals, and ceremonies that took place in the schools constituted the behavior manifestation of culture. These events included the morning chores, devotion/assembly, classes and prep, dining sessions, rests periods, vespers, Sunday church services, opening and closing ceremonies, student government electoral processes, Speech and Prize Giving Days, sports festivals, pre- and post-examination rites, non-denominational groups meetings, clubs meetings, committees meetings, social and educational talks, and parents’ visits.

By engaging in these events and practices in a regimented manner, students acquired diverse skills, such as time management, self-discipline, self-dependence, leadership, and public speaking that fostered their holistic development for school and adult roles. The rituals and ceremonies seemed to facilitate students’ excellence in academic endeavors, extracurricular activities, religious and spiritual activities, and discipline.

In the same vein, the verbal aspect of culture also helped students to meet the expectations of the schools. The verbal culture was expressed through heroes and heroines, recognition and rewards, storytelling, and rules and regulations. Constant
expression of the verbal culture probably motivated students to emulate and adhere to
good practices that fostered academic success, discipline, excellence in extracurricular
activities, and religious growth.

Furthermore the intangible, indiscernible culture generated three themes: mission,
beliefs and values, and expectations. The school mission helped members to know why
the schools exist – to produce well-rounded students. The school mission helped them to
establish priorities and guided the decisions they make and actions they took. The schools
held beliefs and values that included producing well-rounded students. They valued
academic excellence, trust, discipline and compliance, uniformity and equality, religiosity
and spirituality, morality, the school family, professionalism and responsibility,
politeness and mutual respect, recognition and rewards, and hard work and determination.
These beliefs and values directed behavior and activities in the schools.

Every undertaking in the schools was to ensure the fulfillment of the schools’
missions, support of school beliefs and values, and achievement of school expectations.
Fostering these cultural components allowed the schools to achieve their expectations –
academic excellence, discipline, excellence in extracurricular activities, and religious and
spiritual growth.

The eventual effect of the schools organizational culture was its influence on
students’ accomplishment in academic endeavors, extracurricular activities, self-
discipline and morality, and religious and spiritual growth in school and adult lives. The
academic success reflected in their WASSCE scores, access to higher education, and job
type in adult lives. The excellence in extracurricular activities determined student achievement in various competitions.

The religious engagements contributed to students’ spiritual and moral growth. The Christian teachings provided moral lessons that help students to stick to the right way of life. Thus, students who seriously engaged in religious activities and observe the moral teachings do not only develop spiritually, but also became morally alert. This level of commitment helped students not only in school life, but also in their adult lives.

Furthermore, discipline determined students’ comportment, observance of rules in the various aspects of life – whether in or out of school. As students learn self-discipline, it reflected in their undertakings – academics, spiritual, discipline, and in extracurricular activities. The mission, beliefs and values, and expectations of the schools nurtured student development holistically – intellectually, socially, morally, emotionally, and spiritually. They provided the guidelines for the activities in the schools. The tangible and intangible culture influenced students’ holistic development: academic, spiritual, discipline, and extracurricular activities; hence the school outcomes.

**The Ghanaian high school day student.** Although organizational culture influenced students holistically, the day students’ benefits might not be comparable to the boarding students’ gains. The day students, who commuted every day to school and back, were not participants of the boarding house training. Although the high schools were to extend the school regimented training to every student, it was not easy to monitor day students’ progress while they were outside the school premises. Whatever went on in their lives after schools was beyond the jurisdiction of the schools. The day students’
training was more of the family responsibility. Thus, the presence of day students in the study schools was mostly focused on academic pursuits. Occasionally, some students engaged in extracurricular activities such as sports but the remaining aspects of their development were the family’s responsibility.

**RQ2: Subcultural involvement promotes school outcomes attainment.** The subcultural interactions, within the schools’ context, played significant roles in promoting the attainment of the expectations of the schools. The themes that emerged from this question included educational unit involvement, administrator involvement, teacher involvement, parent and community involvement, alumni involvement, and student involvement. The level of stakeholders’ involvement seemed to be critical to the attainment of the schools’ expectations.

The GES solely managed AGISS, while it managed PRESEC in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church. The GES contributions included recruitment and payment of workers’ salaries, formulation of policies, serving on boards. The GES and Presbyterian Educational units’ involvement in schools was not unique to study school; therefore, this was not extensively discussed in this study.

The administrator subculture (school leaders) was influential in the success story of the schools. They demonstrated three leadership styles: participative, supportive, and servant to run the schools. The school leaders involved other stakeholders in decision-making and in school governance, maintained good relationships with them, and created congenial school atmosphere for the schools.
Stakeholder involvement occurred through Board of Governors, academic board staff meetings, PTAs, alumni associations, committee Prefectoral Board, SRC, among others. Through the delegation of authority, school leaders created opportunities for stakeholders to share in decision-making and governance. Again, the school leaders nurtured violence free environment for teaching and learning and enforced rules and regulation to sustain discipline among students. They encouraged students to work hard and ensured that teachers did the work required of them. Leaders fostered good relationships with other stakeholders. Aside formal relationships, they maintained and encouraged cordial informal relationships with stakeholders. These approaches of school leaders seemed to positively influence the schools’ outcomes, as it pulled together the stakeholders’ efforts for the betterment for the schools.

Furthermore, teachers’ involvement in decision-making included their roles as housemasters/housemistresses, heads of departments, teachers on duty, form masters, committee leaders and members, chaplains, counselors, and club patrons. They served as foster parents to students, custodians of rules and regulations, and supporters for underperforming colleagues and students. In the process of discharging their duties in these capacities, teachers made decisions that influenced students’ learning and the general welfare of the schools. These responsibilities probably enabled students to excel in their academic careers, discipline and moral lives, extracurricular activities, and religious and spiritual endeavors.

Similarly, parents and community subculture was involved in making decisions that focused on improving the schools in order to enhance students’ achievement. This
subculture refers to the PTAs of the schools. They were the main financiers of the schools as they provided infrastructure and facilities. They participated in decisions that addressed students’ academic and disciplinary issues, ensured the security of schools, and motivated teachers to work harder by providing incentives. The contributions parents’ made probably helped the schools and students to meet their expectations, thus, advancing school outcomes.

Again, alumni participated in running the schools. Though differences existed in the level of involvement in the schools, their active involvement played key roles in the success of the schools. They provided infrastructure and facilities, chaired and honored events, served on committees, and provided administrative, career, academic, discipline, and religious counseling. Their contributions improved administrative transactions, teacher motivation, and student diligence, which probably enabled academic, social, moral, and spiritual growth as a result.

Finally, students participated in school governance through diverse ways. Their roles as Prefects, SRC executives, club executives, committee members, and seniors on duty provided opportunities for them to actively engage in decision-making. They made decisions that concerned the school, their teachers, and themselves. For example, the prefects monitored teacher and student absences in the classroom and helped ensure observance of school rules. Students encouraged and motivated each other at club and organization levels – in their academic endeavors and extracurricular activities, discipline, religious activities, time management, and diligence to work. In addition, SRC members liaised with administration to address issues that concerned students. By
engaging in these activities, students seemed to positively influence their outcomes and the attainment of school expectations.

**RQ3: Emergent leadership styles foster school outcomes attainment.** The approaches school leaders adopted to govern the schools played very significant roles in the achievement of school outcomes. Three themes emerged from this question: servant leadership orientation, supportive leadership orientation, and participative leadership orientation. These styles depicted the informal behavior patterns the school leaders exhibited aside the official and traditional roles ascribed to their positions.

With regard to the servant leadership style, the school leaders were approachable and receptive, empathetic, had foresight, and were goal oriented. They stressed staff and students’ personal development and created healthy school communities. The school leaders opened up to staff members’ grievances and suggestions – an effort that probably nurtured staff and students’ confidence in leaders’ commitment. The commitment seems to have affected students’ learning positively. The leaders showed empathy for staff members and students, identified with their predicaments, and helped find solutions, which possibly stimulated the spirit of commitment in teachers, subsequently initiating hard work among teachers and students.

Servant leaders sought for the personal development of teachers and students. The school leaders’ encouragement of staff members to pursue further education allowed the members to realize their academic and professional aspirations. Similarly, they persuaded students to adhere to rules, which helped students to develop time management skills, self-discipline, and diligence, and provided career counseling. These characteristics most
likely allowed school leaders to be flexible during difficult times, as they sought for the wellbeing of school members.

Furthermore, as servant leaders, the school leaders built healthy school communities and healthy relationships with school members. They maintained conflict free environment and promoted a ‘family minded’ school community, as they encouraged unity among members and fostered the socialization of students and teachers into the culture. This favorable school environment fostered a unity of purpose, which reinforced teachers’ collaboration, which in turn seemed to influence students’ outcomes positively. The servant leaders endeavored to attain students’ short-term and long-term goals and had good foresight that guided school members from trouble, both of which probably fostered school outcomes.

As leaders employed the participative leadership style, the characteristics they exhibited included the involvement of other stakeholders in decision-making processes. Teachers, parents, alumni, and students were involved in governance and had the opportunity to contribute to the planning and implementation of decisions that affected the school through avenues such as boards, committees, associations, and councils. The participation produced better quality ideas that improved the schools. These higher quality ideas probably promoted the output of students and teachers.

With regard to supportive leadership style, school leaders exhibited characteristics such as seeking members’ wellbeing, creating healthy, congenial relationships, and building conducive school environments. They sought members’ wellbeing by expressing concern for staff to have accommodation on campus, encouraging the professional
development of teachers, and giving direction to staff and students. All these efforts seemed to ensure that school members were in optimal shape to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

The leaders encouraged and built healthy relationships with staff members. This characteristic seemed to build confidence among staff members as they could freely approach the school leaders with their problems. This probably further fostered congenial relationships between school leaders and staff members and caused the staff members to work committedly to achieve schools outcomes. Finally, the leaders created appropriate school environment for teaching and learning. As the school environment made school members feel free and safe, they probably worked committedly and effectively to improve both teacher and student outputs.

The school leaders’ employed participative, servant, and supportive styles in the study schools. These emergent leadership styles enable the leaders to engage other stakeholders in decision-making, seek staff members and students’ wellbeing, and build healthy relationships and school environments, which were most likely fundamental to the performance of the teachers and students. Probably, students achieved success in academics, extracurricular activities, spiritual development, and moral sustenance through self-discipline as a result of these approaches school leaders used. These approaches also seemed to influence school members’ output, which served to achieve school outcomes.
Implications of the Study

**Government agencies, policy makers, educational organizations.** The study revealed uniqueness in each school’s organizational culture. Although congruence existed in certain components, the degree of availability of facilities, involvement of parents and alumni, and students’ achievement in academics, extracurricular activities, discipline, and religious endeavors differed. In addition, the study shows that the school leaders adopted informal leadership styles – aside the formal prescribed style – to run the schools. These results support the theory that school reform policies cannot succeed unless they are tied to the culture of the schools, because all schools have unique cultures. Therefore, understanding how a particular school’s participants react to a particular change initiative is critical for school outcomes.

Considering the fact that government manages all public senior high schools but variations still existed in the schools’ cultures, it is essential that government agencies, policy makers, NGOs, and international organizations interested in senior high school improvement appreciate the implications of this study. There is the need for careful consideration of school culture during reforms if they should succeed. Change cannot be possible if the people for whom the change is meant are not involved in the implementation of policies. This is in conformity with an organizational culture theorist, Sarason (1996) when he pointed out that well intended initiatives to improve student and teacher outcomes could be defeated when consideration is not given to change certain features of the school culture. Deal and Peterson (2009) concurred by indicating that things in schools can improve when school norms, values, and beliefs reinforce a strong
educational mission, a sense of community, social trust among staff, and a shred commitment to school improvement.

Educational reforms could experience the desired outcomes when the organizational culture of the school is taken into consideration, and the various subcultures are encouraged to participate in, and become owners of the various reform strategies. Members’ identifying with the strategies could inspire values, beliefs, and lifestyle changes that conform to the reforms. As subcultures imbibe reform strategies and make them their own, changing their values, belief, and behavior patterns to implement them is no longer a struggle, and this probably could promote sustainability. Reform policies that consider organizational culture could influence school expectations – students’ excellence in academics and extracurricular activities, spiritual maturity, and discipline, which are indications of a successful school.

**Administrators and teachers.** The study found that the parents, teachers, alumni, and students’ participation in decision-making fostered the achievement of outcomes. Although educational policies do not define the extent of parents’ involvement, with the exception of school fees payment, parents in the study schools were found to be actively involved in decision-making. Parents provided infrastructural facilities and participated in decisions regarding students’ academics, disciplinary and moral cases, and general wellbeing.

Similarly, it is not mandatory for alumni to give back to their schools, yet findings revealed that alumni contributed extensively to promote the schools’ success. Alumni frequently took up responsibilities; organized schools’ ceremonies, provided advice to
administration, and offered career and extracurricular counseling for students. The extent of these stakeholders’ participation depended on the school leaders’ approaches to school governance.

The absence of infrastructural facilities and other material resources could hamper school activities, teaching processes, and students’ learning and achievements. However, participants noted that the government alone could not shoulder the needs of the schools. Therefore for the schools to progress, the administrators and teachers needed to rely on the parents and alumni for material support. As such, it was incumbent on administrators and teachers to make concerted efforts to create good rapport between them and parents and alumni in order to get the concomitant benefits of those stakeholders being actively involved in the school governance.

Teachers were also found to be actively involved in decision-making in various situations. As housemaster/housemistresses, heads of departments, chaplains, counselors, form masters, committee and association leaders and members, patrons of clubs, and teachers on duty, they participated in making decisions that affected the school, teachers, and students’ learning and attainment of outcomes. School leaders need to consider it necessary to involve teachers in decision-making as their active and willing involvement creates compliance in the work environment, which influences school outcomes.

The study supports the theory that school leaders’ approaches impact students’ achievement. The findings showed that the schools leaders adopted three leadership styles – supportive, servant, and participative – to help run the schools. School leaders need to create healthy relationships with teachers that focus, not only on formal
transactional leadership attributes, but also on culturally oriented transformational leadership styles that foster staff wellbeing in order to crave their indulgence. Teachers may endeavor to cooperate with school leaders in their efforts to involve them in decision-making.

Teachers’ commitment to participation in the various avenues in the schools could yield valuable outcomes in the learning of students. Teachers and school leaders may place value on student government as their contributions in their various positions eased the work of teachers, improved the lives of other students, and helped students acquire skills that were useful to them in their later lives.

**Parents and alumni.** The study revealed that alumni and parents contributed immensely to improve the schools. Participants stated that government alone could not support schools as required. They believed that they had a responsibility to ensure their children’s security and provide the necessary resources that facilitate learning. They noted that when they support the schools to improve resources, it influenced student outcomes. They acknowledged that, at the end of the day, they stood to benefit as this paved the way for students to pursue higher education.

PTAs and alumni associations should be aware that if they wait for the government alone to provide for schools, the schools might not receive the support required, thus teaching and learning might suffer and students may not perform as is expected of them. Parent and alumni involvement is crucial not only for the schools but also for students’ achievement.
Implications for Practice

The study participants indicated that the mission, beliefs, values, and expectations guided school activities. In the process of implementing change initiatives to reform schools, there is the need for government agencies, policy makers, NGOs and practitioners interested in educational reforms to consider the organizational culture of schools. The school culture is responsible for the differences in and uniqueness of schools, and as a result, what pertains to one school may not necessarily be accommodated in another. A careful consideration of a schools’ status quo would be beneficial since it requires members to change their way of life and values.

Furthermore, participants stated that the PTA and alumni contributions sustained the schools’ development. They provided infrastructure and facilities that the government could not afford. Based on these findings, it is obvious that, without these stakeholders, the schools might not have improved as they did. Therefore, there is the need for school leaders to make concerted efforts to create and maintain a good rapport with parents and alumni and to encourage their participation.

Government can intensify a nationwide education to create awareness on the need for parents and alumni involvement in their children’s school and their alma mater respectively. This could be backed with a policy obligating parents to participate in their wards’ school. Government can recognize and reward alumni associations that committedly participated in the development of their schools to encourage further participation and motivate others to do so.
Additionally, parents and alumni in conjunction with schools may not only focus their attention on students’ academic achievements but also on the attainment of the other expectations of the schools – spiritual growth, discipline, and excellence in extracurricular activities – to produce well rounded students. In other words, schools should make every aspect of student development a priority. For AGISS lack of a sports field impeded students’ progress in that aspect of their school life. In this case if the school has a sports field student could improve their sporting activities as their predecessors. Ensuring availability of resources (human and material), would enable students to realize, develop, and keep their potentials alive.

Again, participants viewed the Christian spiritual engagements of students as a way of affecting every aspect of student development – academic, moral, social, psychological, and physical. Intensifying students’ involvement in spiritual activities to facilitate their personal and spiritual development instilled in them values that developed moral soundness and leadership skills; enhanced self-discipline, diligence in academic work; and fostered good interpersonal relationships. The government could formulate policies that obligate schools to reexamine the spiritual development of students by intensifying religious activities in public schools. The PTA, alumni, and school community can provide adequate resources to the school chaplaincy to nurture this course of action.

The study showed that school leaders adopted the servant, supportive, and participatory leadership styles to facilitate their work. In view of this, other school leaders can learn these other emergent leadership styles to enable them carry out their
responsibilities. Although leadership roles are assigned to their positions, dwelling on them alone may not help to obtain the maximum support and cooperation of other stakeholders. School leaders may be conscientized on various emergent leadership styles so that they can incorporate them into the formal transactional modalities prescribed for their positions.

Finally, the study could not find the existence of professional learning communities (PLC) in the senior high schools. School leaders could endeavor to initiate PLCs in the schools. This approach could serve as a check and provide oversight of what teachers teach. Leaving teachers to do things their own way could alone be detrimental to students learning. Although heads of departments helped the new and underperforming teachers, it is important that teachers participate in formalized PLCs, where they collaborate to research, discuss, and share ideas about their work. By this, individual teachers gain more insight into their work from the ideas of others. This collegiality fosters a better approach to teaching and introduces new skills that could improve teachers’ work and promote outcomes.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

This study took place at PRESEC and AGISS to explore school organizational culture and its influence on school outcomes. The results from the study inspires the researcher into the desire to do more study on organizational culture not only on senior high schools, but in other human organizations such the church. As a result of the findings of this study there is immediate motivation to pursue other researches to explore the organizational culture in more school settings.
A future research of organizational culture could be comparative – focusing on more mission based government assisted schools and government established schools. Another study could focus on private and public schools organizational culture. Thirdly, a future study of organizational culture could focus on rural and urban schools. Such studies could deepen knowledge about organizational culture and its influence on school outcomes in the various educational milieus. These future researches could contribute to educational policy, theory, and practice.

**Contribution to Literature**

This study helps readers to identify the various ways organizational culture is expressed in two Ghanaian senior high schools. It ascertains and appreciates culture’s importance during change processes and the attainment of school outcomes. In spite of its importance in implementing reform programs in schools, research on educational reform in Ghana barely gave attention to it.

The concept of organizational culture has been extensively studied in educational studies in developed countries and some sub-Saharan countries. In spite of these studies, this current study did not replicate previous studies. It adopts a different approach to studying organizational culture in the Ghanaian context and that makes it unique from existing studies.

Firstly, while previous studies looked at culture in general terms, this current study delves deeper to investigate the various cultural components and the peculiar ways each is expressed to influence school outcomes in Ghanaian high school context. The study delineates the schools’ intangible culture – values, beliefs, expectations, and
assumptions, and how their expression and demonstration influenced the tangible culture—visual, behavior, and verbal in the Ghanaian school setting. This makes the current research a unique one in the history of educational studies.

Secondly, the current study also describes the specific ways in which the schools’ subcultures participated to influence the attainment of school outcomes in Ghanaian context. Previous studies have described the existence and activities of subcultures but the uniqueness in this current study lies in the detailed description of the subcultures and the various ways they participated to help the schools achieve outcomes holistically.

Thirdly, this study provides a detailed description of school leaders’ emergent leadership styles and how they influenced the achievement of outcomes within the Ghanaian context. The study adopts a different approach to investigate the emergent leadership styles of school leaders and how it influenced their work to yield outcomes. The unique approach found identified three emergent leadership styles: servant, participative, and supportive, which helped them to obtain outcomes.

Having described the various components of culture in the schools, the contributions of subcultures, the leadership styles, and the influence of these on school outcomes, this exploratory case study makes three contributions to extant literature.

First, although numerous previous scholarly works appreciate the importance of organizational culture in the running educational organizations to achieve viable outcomes in many developed countries, (Burke 2008; Deal & Peterson, 2009; Fullan, 2001b; Hanson, 2001; Harrison & Kuint, 2006; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Sergiovanni, 2001a; Schein, 2010), few or no researches have investigated the
organizational culture in senior high schools or its contributions to school reforms in Ghana. The emphasis of this study makes it exceptional in the sense that, participants are school stakeholders, who have firsthand information about the way things are done, and have participated in the implementation of change initiatives.

The information provided in this case study fills the gap in the international literature about the importance of school organizational culture in Ghanaian senior high school. It also affords government agencies, policy makers, international organizations, NGOs, and other educational practitioner’s relevant insights about the need to incorporate the cultural aspect of schools into reform initiatives. Knowledge acquired can nurture high patronage and sustainability of change initiatives intended to promote school outcomes.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the literature base on subcultural involvement and interactions in school governance in Ghanaian senior high schools. Although some scholarly works appreciate the importance of parents involvement (Chapman, Barcikowski, Sowah Gyamera, & Woode, 2002; Epstein, 2011; Kruse & Louis, 2009; Sanders & Harvey, 2002), alumni involvement (Hayman & Patridge, 2013; Scully, 2012), and student government (Astin, 1982; Kuh & Lund, 1994) in schools, few research works have explored on the various ways of stakeholder participation in school governance in Ghana senior high schools. Filling this gap in the international literature about stakeholders’ participation at the local school level and its influence on school outcomes may contribute to existing literature on stakeholder involvement. It can also
provide the roadmap to school leaders on ways to engage stakeholders in decision-making and school governance in order to obtain outstanding outcomes.

Finally, school leadership styles have been identified as a leading factor to promote school effectiveness and students outcomes (Burke, 2008; Fullan, 2001b; Marzano, et al., 2005; Sergiovanni, 2001a; Schein, 2010). Despite the numerous studies on school leaders’ importance for school effectiveness, few attempts have been made to delve into this subject in Ghanaian senior high schools context. This study fills the gap in extant literature on leadership emergent styles, and provides insights about the extent of these culturally oriented leadership influence on school outcomes. These findings could serve as a catalyst for Ghanaian senior high school success when employed.

Epilogue

Human beings are born into a society that has a culture. This culture molds them from birth to adulthood. A favorable and positive culture endows its citizens with positive approaches and attitudes towards life. On the contrary, a demeaning and unwelcoming culture produces citizens of indifference. A child could rise up to his/her dreams if given the necessary support. The four main themes of this dissertation, the tangible, discernible culture, intangible indiscernible culture, subcultural interactions in school governance, and school leadership style provide milieus to nurture students to become responsible people not only in for life in schools but also for adult life. The components of the culture influence the lives of its citizens in diverse ways. I hope that societies and educational organizations invest positive attitudes about life into their populace, whose lives do not only impact the individual, but also give back to the organizations, societies, and nation.
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Appendix A: IRB Approval Form

The following research study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University for the period listed below. This review was conducted through an expedited review procedure as defined in the federal regulations as Category(ies):

Project Title: Exploration of the Organizational Culture of Selected Ghanaian High Schools

Primary Investigator: Grace Annor

Co-Investigator(s):

Faculty Advisor: Francis Godwyll

Department: Patton College of Education

Rebecca Call

Office of Research Compliance

Aug. 9, 2013

Approval Date

Aug. 8, 2014

Expiration Date

This approval is valid until expiration date listed above. If you wish to continue beyond expiration date, you must submit a periodic review application and obtain approval prior to continuation.

Adverse events must be reported to the IRB promptly, within 5 working days of the occurrence.

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
Appendix B: Letter of Introduction

Dear Headmaster/Headmistress,

My name is Grace Annor, a doctoral student studying at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. At the moment I am working on my dissertation. The topic of my research involves a study of secondary school organizational culture. This letter is to inform you of my interest to conduct the study in your institution. I chose this school because it was one of the institutions established either by missionaries, or is a GET school. In addition it is a same-gender and a boarding school located in Accra.

Kindly provide me with an approval letter in order to satisfy my Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. I have attached an Ohio University Consent Form providing the purpose and brief description of the study, though that will be needed when I am on the field.

Counting on your cooperation.

Thank you

Grace Annor
Appendix C: Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: Exploration of the Organizational Culture of Selected Ghanaian High Schools
Researcher(s): Grace Annor

**Background**
You are being asked to participate in this research study about school organizational culture and its implications for school outcomes. You will be asked to participate in an interview scheduled for 60 minutes. Before you decide to take part in this interview, you should understand what the research is about, what it involves, and the role you will play. Please ask the researcher questions about anything that is not clear to you and requires more information. Once you have read the information on this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

**Explanation of Study**
This study is being conducted to explore culture of the school and its implications for school outcomes. You will be asked to participate in an interview that will require your knowledge about the school organizational culture manifested in the school’s values, beliefs, customs, traditions, artifacts, behavior patterns of students, teachers, administrators, parents, old students (alumni), and other stakeholders. Your views will be sought about how these cultural components influence school outcomes. The research is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation for the Ohio University and the data obtained will be solely used for that purpose. However, information may also be disseminated in other settings such as academic conferences, journals, and other outlets. Care will be taken to ensure that your normal class routines are not disrupted as a result of participating in this research.

**Risks and Discomforts**
There are no known risks/discomfort. The anticipated risk/discomfort may be the time spent by participants for the interviews. The study is about the school culture and which all participants knows about, therefore they will be asked to remain focused on how things are done in the schools. All the students in the focus group interviews know each other and no confidential issues will be discussed. The study is about the general culture of the school known by all members. However I will entreat participants to keep everything that transpires during the focus group interviews within the group. Other adults may have to disclose the secret plans related to school improvement strategies. You may decline to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable or decide to terminate your participation at any time.

**Benefits**
Information obtained from the study may provide understanding of the concept of school organizational culture to all participants, create awareness of the role school
organizational culture plays in the achievement of school outcomes, assist participants to identify potential lapses in their school cultures, and guide them in their efforts to revisit and create appropriate school cultures that will enhance school work.

Confidentiality and Records
For the purposes of this research study, your responses will not remain anonymous except you request it to be so. I will maintain confidentiality by assigning code names for participants, keeping all field notes, interview transcribed notes, and all identifying records under lock and key, and which will be destroyed when they are no longer needed for research. Information from the study will be used exclusively for the purpose of this research and any publications that may emerge from it. Unless a participant requests for anonymity, the final publication will contain the names of participants of the study. Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

1. Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research.
2. Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU.

Compensation
There is no compensation for the participants.

Contact Information
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher, Grace Annor at e-mail: ga204308@ohio.edu; Phone: (740) 274-6033; Dr. Francis Godwyll; Email: godwyll@ohio.edu; Phone: 7405919168

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Jo Ellen Sherow, Director of Research Compliance, Ohio University, (740) 593-0664.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:
- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature:______________ Date___
Printed Name:_________________________________________
Appendix D: Interview Guides

A. For headmasters/headmistresses
1. Kindly tell me about yourself.
2. Please tell a brief history and the mission of this school?
3. What are the school’s core values and how do they influence school life?
4. What are your expectations for the school and how do you meet them?
5. How do you carry out decision-making and propagate change initiatives in the school?
6. What strategies do you incorporate into practice to boost your work as a leader?
7. How do you foster the collaboration among teachers?
8. In what ways do you nurture stakeholder participation?
9. What measures perpetuate acceptable behavior?
10. How do you address deviant behavior or indiscipline?
11. How do you resolve conflicts in the school?
12. What is the pattern of communication?
13. How do you encourage staff and student’s development and commitment?
14. What other things do you want me to know about your responsibilities?

B. For Teachers
1. How long have been in this school and what are your expectations?
2. What programs do you initiate to promote school values and mission?
3. How do you describe the school administrators’ leadership style?
4. How supportive is administration in your professional goal attainment?
5. In what ways are teachers involved in decision-making?
6. How do the school leaders relate to staff outside the formal school schedules?
7. How does administration respond to changes suggested by staff?
8. What aspect of the school leadership do you value most?
9. How do teachers relate to each other with respect to their work?
10. In what ways do teachers work together to achieve goals?
11. What programs are initiated to improve school and students’ performance?
12. What types of extra-curricular activities students engage in?
13. What are your achievements in such areas?
14. How do you promote discipline among students?

C. For PTA Chair
1. Who constitute the membership of the association?
2. What is the main purpose and goal of the association?
3. What are the responsibilities of stakeholders of this association?
4. Who makes decisions for the association?
5. How does the school benefit from the decisions and programs of the association?
6. How easy is it to work with the school leadership and teachers in terms of decision-making?
7. How do parents respond to the demands of the association?
D. **For Alumni**
1. How has this school contributed to your carrier and adult life?
2. By what means do the alumni give back to their Alma mater?
3. What roles do alumni association play to promote the school outcomes?
4. Please describe the relationship between the association and school leadership?

E. **Focus Groups Interview**
1. Describe the positive and negative aspects of the school life?
2. How would you describe the efforts of your teachers towards your learning?
3. What programs help to promote your learning?
4. In what ways has the school influenced your lives?
5. How would you describe your headmaster/headmistress?
6. How do you expect your school to be?
7. What accomplishments are you particularly proud of in your school?
8. What efforts do you make to create a positive image for your school?
9. What are some of your challenges as student leaders?