THE CONTRIBUTION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICES OF K-12 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: A STUDY OF THE AKAN PEOPLE OF GHANA, WEST AFRICA

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By

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Abstract

There is limited knowledge and understanding of school leadership development and practices beyond the Anglo-western Canadian context. University-based K-12 school leadership programs are not always portable across varied populations in this global world, particularly in rural Indigenous communities in the Global South. This study explored an avenue for generating rural Indigenous Akan knowledge to augment K-12 school leadership practices aimed at enhancing rural Indigenous school children's educational outcomes. The study focused on two sites utilizing an ethnographic approach undergirded by an Indigenist feminist epistemology. This study explores: a) how local Akan Indigenous leaders use African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) in children's education, as demonstrated by their child upbringing norms; b) how Ghana's K-12 school leadership development program implementers understand African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) and Indigenous leadership practices, as well as how this understanding influences their work, and; c) how the lack of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) in school leadership development impacts K-12 school principal leadership practices. Using the African Akan pedagogical symbol of Sankofa as a representation of anti-colonial theory African Indigenous feminism, this study explored the first and second stages of the African Akan Indigenous educational (AIE) leadership practices alongside the Eurocentric colonially bequeathed form of formal K-12 school leadership practices in Ghana. African Indigenist modes of knowledge generation required the utilization of culturally safe research strategies as showcased in the use of the Dwabo and Atsekuw Esoun principles of community data collection and analysis in this African community-based research (ACBR).

Findings from this research provided authentic contribution to knowledge relating to K-12 school leadership preparation in the field of educational administration and school leadership.

Findings also add to the current corpus of literature, and offer diverse understandings across cultural, gender, Indigenous research, feminist studies, and educational leadership development. Study findings have insights into the African Indigenous rural context of gender and school leadership and have implications for educational leadership practice. The findings of this study suggest that school leaders as educational policy implementers should engage in decolonizing their leadership praxis, which necessitates that they deconstruct not only how they lead, but how they think about leading and how leadership has been framed within educational settings. The study finally illustrates how African Indigenous feminism aligns and supports K-12 school leadership practices at the K-12 levels in formal education.

Additionally, the findings have implications for university-based ethics institutional review boards (IRB). The study brought to the fore how the IRB is required to uphold ethical knowledge and principles regarding Indigenous community data collection processes, to ensure that both researchers and study communities work within an accepted ethical framework that supports collaborative research and best practices. There exists a responsibility for IRBs to understand what it means to conduct research in a culturally responsive manner with communities whose ethical frameworks may stem from entirely different epistemological, ontological and axiological positionings. IRBs must be required to adopt culturally safety strategies in dealing with topics on community-based studies and participatory research with Indigenous communities within and beyond the Canadian context.

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Dedication

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Prologue

My name is Theodora Mary Aba Nkwefua Beeba Eshun. I am from Ghana, an English-speaking country in the Western part of Africa. Ghana is bordered by three Francophone countries: the Republic of Togo to the east, the Ivory Coast to the west, and Burkina Faso to the north. The blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean sit on the southern part of the country. I belong to the Akan tribe (one of the largest ethnic groups in Ghana and west Africa). Theodora Mary are my "Christian" names. Names occupy significant position in the belief systems in all Indigenous African societies. It is believed that names given to individuals have great influence in shaping one's character and personality. Names that a person bears in traditional African society provide information on the individuals, "socio-economic and cultural characteristics, family background, family occupation, place of origin and political and economic class. Thus, it is believed that one's name has the capacity of influencing his/her entire life" (Akinnaso, 1980, p. 276).

Every family member of mine has three types of names, a Christian or English name, a day name, and a family name. My Christian or English names were given to me by my parents at baptism and christening ceremonies. Since the impact of colonialism is so strong in Ghana, most of the people in that country have both local names and Christian or English names (Agyekum, 2006; Odoom, 2023). Christian or English names are the ones l used in schools and in all formal documents and ceremonies. The bearing of Christian names suggests that a person was converted to the Christian faith, as it was during religious ceremonies such as baptism that Christian names are given to native converts (Steegstra, 2009). My third name Aba is a day name which every Akan child is given based on the day that the child was born. This name has two forms, a masculine and feminine. My name Aba, Yaa, or Abayaa, means a Thursday born female from the Akan tribe (Agyekum, 2006: Arko-Achemfuor, 2018). Day name is also known as

“Kradin (Soul name)” (Akesson, 1965). The African Akan “kra din is a name derived from the soul (kra) of the day of the week on which an individual is born” (Adjaye, 2001, p.129).
Akan day names or akradin also have corresponding “mmrane” or appellations, for example, children born on Thursdays or (Yawda) have appellations such as ‘Preko’ and ‘Opereba’ as their appellation. These Akan words connote aggression or “warlike” behavior. The Akans are also of the belief that these day names have an associated god or deity. As such people are “influenced by the Spirit of their birthday” which tends to impact the personality of those born on that day. For example, “Those born on ‘Yawda’ (Thursday) are said to have a spiritual disposition, which makes them courageous, aggressive, warlike, and confrontational; their willingness to confront disorder can work for the good of society. A Thursday born is believed to be an individual with great insight, one who would give her life for the preservation of the social order. According to the Akan folklore, females born on Thursday are very calm, tolerant, and patient; they are also known to be very tough and courageous women. An example from this group is the legendary heroin of the Akan Ashanti Kingdom, Queen mother Yaa Asantewa of Ejisu in the Ashanti region of Ghana. This woman led the Ashanti war in “the last Anglo-Asante conflict (1900–1) and is now internationally celebrated as an epitome of African womanhood and resistance to European colonialism” (McCaskie, 2007, p. 176).

My second native family name is Nkwefua (the meaning of this name is similar to a female eagle). In the Akan tradition and folklore, the eagle is considered the most powerful of birds, and it symbolizes bravery and fortitude (Ross, 2004). In the African Akan communitarian concepts of personhood, bravery becomes one of the attributes of leadership. In Akan Adinkra symbols, an eagle’s talons (Okodee mmowere), represent strength, determination, and unity.

My third name is Beeba (the preserver of royal wisdom). As rightly noted by my PhD program supervisor, it is another attribute that comes with an honor, a burden, and a lot of responsibilities. I am the third born of my mother and the first of my father's daughters. I am the granddaughter of Kwabena Ampong, my paternal grandfather, and the first son of Aberewa (symbol of feminine wisdom) Esi (female Sunday born) Nkwefua of the Anona Clan (Parrot) of Asebu Kingdom in Ghana. The Anona lineage is the clan with the symbol of oratory in the Akan traditional set up. I was named after my father's paternal grandmother; this woman took care of my father when he lost both parents at the tender age of five years. Nkwefua's role is synonymous to the female leader of our kingdom because Nkwefua is the mother of two renowned rulers of this ancient kingdom: namely Okatakyi Amenfi Ansa (the 3rd) and Okatakyi Amanfi Enu (the 5th) of Asebu kingdom in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District in the Central region of Ghana in West Africa. (Okatakyi is an Akan title name which literally means the great one, Amenfi is synonymous to a giant) (Asante, 2018; Asante & Yirenkyi, 2019). Hence the title name and appellation of our kingdom: Okatakyi Amenfi, literally means the great ruler of the giants.

As a member of this ruling class, l was trained to be fearless, while eschewing injustice in all my dealings. Having been sensitized right from childhood about the place of my name in the family lineage, l was advised to act with caution (Opuni-Frimpong, 2021). Though there are siblings and other family members who are far older than myself, the ruler of the kingdom addresses me with the titles like "abrewa" (an old woman full of wisdom) and "Maame" (mother); these are titles that connote wisdom and respect in the Akan and Fante cultural setting. My last name Eshun (originally spelt Ashun) is my father's name. Surname is also known in my local language as "Egyadzin" father's name. This surname of mine is sometimes interpreted to mean the seventh born or an Anglicized version of Esoun that is a seventh born (Owu-Ewie et al., 2021).

Sekyi-Baidoo (2024), explains that "the family name reflects the society's higher values and how they are connected to individuals, and for its concentration on values, the family name becomes the main focus of the commemorability principle, helping to explain the basis for the selection of the concepts that represent the values considered acceptable for the construction of family names" (p. 2). The meaning and importance attached to my name strengthens me, as I have been made to live by the principle that l have been selected to achieve something purposeful for myself and my people. Though I initially saw my traditional names as markers of cultural identity, I am convinced that my names have been a great influence on my physical and spiritual life. I share the view that, there exist "some inherent power and linkage in names" (Agyekum, 2006, p. 231). Since I have experienced the positive influence of this ancestral name, I may legally discard my foreign names and maintain only my Indigenous ones.

My father was a surveyor by profession and my mother owns a restaurant in the city of Cape Coast. l am from a mixed African Indigenous ruling class and a 4th generation of a mulatto/ creole and European parentage. My maternal grandmother is a Fante who married an English merchant by name Daniels who came to trade in the Gold Coast during the latter part of the 18th century. My paternal grandmother, Charlotte Bart -Plange, comes from a mixed family of African and European descent. She is the elder sister of H. Bart-Plange, alias Nana Kweku Gyepi II, Akyempizuhin of Cape Coast. He was a member of the Cape Coast educated elite who capitalized on an opportunity created by the British colonial government "to promote himself into a position with 'traditional' financial responsibilities" (Gocking, 1994, p. 439).

I was born in Cape Coast in the Central region of Ghana, a place known to be the cradle of the country’s education, and the former administrative capital of Gold Coast, now Ghana. The Ghanaian city of Cape Coast is also known as “the town of beautiful nonsense”. Cape Coast is accredited for the inhabitation of Ghana’s educated elite. The Cape Coast educated elites reacted to the absence of Indigenous socio-cultural values in the curriculum of the then British colonial educational system. They became certain that Africans were to take control of their children’s education via the creation of a new form of schooling system that addressed their needs. Formal education was perceived to be a medium by which societal culture becomes inculcated. The protest of the Cape Coast elites ended with a proposal by which Indigenous studies was to be an important component of formal school curriculum. Local language, history, literature, and social institutions of the Fante people would form the core of the school curriculum (Kimble, 1963; Nti, 2002). But the Indigenous curriculum proposal initiative was short lived, as it failed to attain the intended aim due to lack of support from most of the population. However, the Cape Coasters’ initial attempt of integrating Indigenous knowledge into formal schooling explains the reason for the of lack of a clear curriculum policy in most independent African countries in general and Ghana in particular (Gocking, 1984; Sifuna, 2008). Personally, l believe this noble initiative of offering the best of education in Ghana failed because the elites’ initiators did not involve the local people for whom they were claiming to be working. For it is when people are made part of the decision-making process that they can willingly partake in community projects as their own. The success of any educational process cannot be forced on the people. Any form of education must be prescribed by the people themselves. It is when educational process is defined by the people that they can see the need for its subscription and patronage (Segura, 2009; Mfum-Mensah, 2003).

The people of Cape Coast are described as “cultural intermediaries” who partnered with the European colonizers to spread the Christian religion and alien civilization to their African counterparts located in the hinterland of the Gold Coast (Kimble, 1963). Yet these same Cape Coasters are also portrayed as a group of people who still cling to their traditional Akan culture and refused to abandon their supposed vicious and pagan institutional practices which professors of Christian faith and European civilization abhorred (Gocking, 1984). The entire nation exhibits these multiple belief systems as a result of Ghana’s encounter with Arabic and European conquest of Africa (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). For example, during community or state functions, there are three types of prayers that are offered, one from a traditional priest, another from a Christian representative and one from an Imam from the Muslim sector. Both Christians and Muslims partake in traditional African festivals in Ghana (Odotei, 2002). Although I initially considered the practice as a “double standard,” it helped me to appreciate and understand people from diverse cultures and different religious affiliations.

I started my basic and secondary education at Cape Coast in the Central Region and Sekondi -Takoradi in the Western Region respectively, before coming back to the Central region for my post-secondary education. My study programs at the K-12 and post-secondary levels were all in the Arts or humanities. The nature of the program l chose for my second cycle education took me to reading African and European histories, African Traditional religion, and Ghanaian language. My program of study led to my reading of scholars like Idowu (1973), and Mbiti (1990), whose works highlighted the practicability and the rationale for the practices of some of the beliefs, culture, and norms of Indigenous African societies. My study of the African religion led to the juxtaposition of the Indigenous African religion with the Judeo-Christian faith as demonstrated by the Christian missionaries and initiators of formal education in Africa. My program of study also involved the study of the synthesizing of the synoptic gospels of the new and the old testaments in the Christian Bible and the readings of the works of African historians (Boahen, 1975). l was impressed by the works of Ghanaian Akan scholars like John Mensah Sarbah whose work on Ghanaian Indigenous laws and customs laid the foundation for some of the native and modern laws of Ghana. Sarbah's (1904) work on Fanti Customary Laws points to the need for the consideration of the socio-cultural values of Indigenous communities when trying to introduce any form of legislature different from the existing laws of the people. The local language component of the program was integrated with an Indigenous knowledge base. This part of my academic training introduced me to a lot of information on the Akan customs and norms, and ways of knowing. It was the only area that linked the school (skuul) with the learner's location or home (fie). These Fante reading series included the study of science from archeology to zoology. These books, though written in the local Fanti language, covered topics which included the origins and makings of the African and European civilizations. One topic that made an indelible impression on me is the story about the Magna Carta as the origin of English Law. l remember that our teacher taught us to enact the event. l was then immature and could not find words to question why the English Kingdom decided to maintain its monarchy after resorting to a democratic system of governance but decided to deprive the local chiefs and leaders of the British colony of Gold Coast their political powers. l later learnt that the robbing of the local rulers of their political powers virtually erased the role of the local leaders as support agents of children in the various lineages in Ghana (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Laird, 2002). I also read a lot of books written by native Akan scholars like Annobil, Ebusuasem, Acquaah, Oguaa Aban, Craymmer, and Yehiahyia. All these Akan textbooks focused on Indigenous science and technology, history, legends, and traditions of Akan communities. My reading of these books helped me to analyse and understand some of the rationale for the institution of certain norms in the Akan communities. Other books with titles like “Yimdzee kwan” (ways of knowing) are some of the books that were used to teach me Indigenous ways of acquiring knowledge. Though l find some aspects of them questionable, l realize that the ideas and views raised by these scholars emanate from their conviction that social influences are determinant factors in the selection of local laws and norms. Some of the content dealt with the Akan culture, in which scholars like Annobil (1995), Mbebusem Nkyerɛkyerɛmu and Ebusuasem, discussed the pros and cons of the native customs and practices as well as the merits and demerits of modernism on the socio-economic lives of Ghanaians. What l noticed from the discussion of these Akan writers is that the scholars who questioned the sanctity of the Ghanaian Indigenous customs and practices used the English inheritance laws and family systems as areas of reference. Meanwhile, a further reading of these areas of reference revealed that the two contexts are different. I also noticed that little attention was given to children in the discussion of these traditional norms. Annobil’s (1995) and Mbebusem Nkyerɛkyerɛmu’s (1995) explanation of Akan traditional proverbs provided a cogent explanation for the establishment of most Akan socio-cultural practices and norms. These readings made me realize that the questioning of any practices or norms in the Indigenous sphere must first consider the background and rationale for the establishment of such practices. I came to understand that the Ghanaian educational system in which I was educated was similar to what Anuik and Gillies (2012) describe as a form of education perceived to free its learners from the shackles of bondage, but which in actuality deprive its learners from acquiring meaningful knowledge that can be utilized to solve their local social problems.

l perceived my K-12 formal education as a process of schooling that was meant to help me to acquire new knowledge to enable me progress (Okrah & Adabor, 2010). I inadvertently saw this knowledge as more superior to my own African Indigenous one. In other words, my previous education in Ghana prepared me to look beyond what is available in my immediate environment with the hope of achieving development, rather than helping me to use what l already have or can be found in my environment to attain the desired progress that formal education promises (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Serpell & Nsamenang, 2015). Hence, l went through schooling with an aim of learning for learning's sake. l moved through the instructive sessions of my formal education without questioning certain contradictions that were observed in the subjects taught by my instructors. I was, however, taught to question my African family members whenever l saw them pouring libation or saying prayers in the African way. I would disagree and question some of the underlying philosophies of my own socio-cultural practices and norms followed by my forbearers. Most of my questions went unanswered, as I was either hushed to keep mute or warned not to ask such questions again. I was, however, not perturbed by these threats and kept on asking questions whenever I felt the need to do so. But I was also reluctant to raise any question outside my family home, because doing the same thing in the classroom or Sunday school sessions at church would be tantamount to challenging the inviolability of the Christian religion and formal knowledge.

My initial professional education in teacher education was no different from my K-12 schooling. It started at a College of Education where the program of study was mostly based on the English model of schooling but focused on the teaching of the Akan Fanti language. The teacher education program had a course that focused on the history of education in Ghana and led to my learning about the Indigenous African education system. I noticed that the first and second stages of Indigenous African education paralleled what was described as culturally appropriate school leadership models and practices that are in conformity with the needs and values of the learner's community (Kanu, 2007; Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Seroto, 2011). This traditional African schooling has a feature that strengthens the link between the community and the school and provides the basis for the community's further integral development. But l admit that though I saw Indigenous knowledge to be important, l considered its usefulness and it usage in the academic sphere as cosmetic. Somehow, however, the lessons drawn from these studies influenced my thinking and career as a teacher and educational worker. It wired my opinion that students in formally colonized countries will become more academically inclined if what they are made to learn is linked to their own ancestral and local knowledge.

It was during 15 years of work experience in rural fishing and farming communities of Anomabo and Assin Manso in the Central Region of Ghana that l saw the usefulness of Indigenous knowledge in my career. The contexts in which I used my insight in Indigenous knowledge in the field of education were very diverse. I taught four years in an urban elementary school in Cape Coast, three years in a fishing community at Anomabo, one year in an urban mining city of Obuasi in the Ashanti region, and 12 years in a rural community secondary school at Assin Manso Senior High School. I did not really see the essence of this native knowledge in my five years of working experience in the urban school settings at Cape Coast and Obuasi.

My insight in Indigenous knowledge was fully utilized in my 15 years of work experiences in rural communities of Anomabo and Assin Manso, all in the Central Region of Ghana. For instance, I used my insights in Indigenous knowledge as a resource for cultural competence in my dealing with the rural communities with whom I worked. This cultural sensitivity provided me with an adequate knowledge on how to interact and relate to elders of Indigenous communities as l was aware of the various protocols required of people intending to visit or seek favour from Indigenous community leaders. It was the utilization of this native knowledge that helped me to work effectively in the fishing community of Anomabo in the Mfantseman District of Ghana where I had a lot of opportunities to work with the elders of the town and the community. The reliance on this corpus of information led to my active involvement in community activities which earned me the chance to link up with most of the influential members of my working communities. The gaining of access to these people offered me the chance to solicit funds to support brilliant but needy students to further their education.

I also relied on the information gained in my Indigenous lessons to efficiently work as a counsellor, and a teacher at a rural High School. For instance, I relied on my knowledge of the Akan Indigenous family and inheritance norms in my counselling profession. These insights helped me to know that the maternal uncles of children of matrilineal lineage can also be accountable for the upkeep of these children. Similarly, my reading of Akan customs and practices helped me to establish rapport with the local community leaders, as it also helped me to know how to convince these leaders to team up with school leadership in finding solutions to children’s schooling challenges which enhanced children’s learning outcomes. It became easier for me to gain insight into some of the problems that were brought forward by my students since the normative nature of the Ghanaian socio-cultural practices prescribe where and how to seek help in handling challenges of this nature. My possession of this knowledge helped me to gain additional knowledge on what it takes to work with rural communities. My ability to interact with the local people earned me their trust which offered me the opportunity to learn from members of the rural communities with whom l worked.

My experience of Indigenous knowledge helped me to understand why certain customs and practices were initiated and continued in Akan Indigenous communities. l was able to use the insights gained in my Indigenous studies lessons to analyse the pros and cons of the native customs and practices, as well as the merits and demerits of modernism on the socio-economic lives of Ghanaians in rural community. l was able to understand how the socio-cultural environment of learners from both urban and rural Ghanaian communities influence children's schooling. For instance, l realized that school children in rural communities find it difficult to do their homework offered by their teachers. The problem emanates from the series of household chores that they must do and the lack of the needed items like lanterns and rooms needed for such academic exercises at night. Hence, it is required of educators to arrange with parents how such children can be helped. This help can be offered by teachers spending a few hours of their time with students to do their homework in school with teacher supervision. It was during this period that l learned about some of the challenges that both students, parents, and principals' encounter. l realized that school administrators of different settings faced challenges unique to their working environments. For example, while parents in rural fishing and farming communities find it difficult to pay their children's school fees during lean seasons of fishing and crop farming, principals in urban areas like Obuasi have no problem with payment of fees. Instead, such school leaders are mostly confronted with student problems like drug abuse, and students' truancy/absenteeism and peer influence.

My academic venture and work experiences in Canada opened a new page in my life, whilst providing me with new theoretical and practical experiences different from what l had in Ghana. Having gone through a colonially bequeathed formal education system from K-12, a professional teacher training education to post-graduate levels, I initially thought I was coming to learn something new from the “White man’s” country of Canada in the global world because the African Ghanaian School child is socialized into taking anything that comes from the White man’s land as authentic and superior. I considered Canada to be the very home and source of the supreme White man’s knowledge as purported by the legacies of colonial education that is used in Ghana’s formal schooling system (Adjei, 2007, 2010). As an educational worker from a former colonized country in a presumed post-colonized developing country, my expectation of Canada was very high. l had heard that Canada has one of the best educational systems in the world. Since l started my doctoral education in my field as a mature student, l thought that what l would be learning would be the same as the colonial education that was taught back home in Ghana. I soon realized that teaching and learning in the Canadian context is entirely different from what happens in Ghana. Though I found this “real Canadian teaching and learning” experience to be very daunting, on comparing the Canadian and the Ghanaian teaching and learning situation, l now boldly say that what we do in Ghana amounts to nothing than rote learning.

As I intensely searched through the knowledge based in my field of study, l became convinced that l was in what can be described as an academic labyrinth. One course that required computer application in my doctoral program was like an Anglo-Canadian hieroglyphic to me. In fact, my initial attempt to get acclimatized to the Anglo -Canadian academic life was an experience that perfectly mirrored Albert Einstein’s widely cited statement that, “everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid” (Carminati, 2018, p. 7). The challenges encountered in my Canadian academic life acted as an epiphany and an eye opener in my own field of teaching and educational administration. I came to realize that what was happening to me has been the experience of some school children who move from their homes to continue their education in an unfamiliar setting. It can help to explain why most school children from rural areas perform poorly in urban schools. I then had the intuition that there was a missing link somewhere in the very curriculum used in the preparation of K-12 school educators and leadership programs, which was inhibiting their effective performance in rural communities (Preston et al., 2013). How teachers and school administrators are trained to treat learners as a homogenous group makes it difficult for them to see the varying needs of learners from different and unfamiliar locations and creates an inability to offer appropriate supports.

The frustrations that emanated from my academic hurdles were intensified with personal and domestic challenges. As l pondered over my situation, l concluded that many children who drop out of school might have gone through similar challenging situations and conditions that were difficult for educators to detect to offer the needed help. l also understood why the doctoral program was termed as an adventure that results in permanent head damage (PhD) of the academic explorer.

My waning hope of obtaining a doctoral degree was ignited by a course that I undertook for my doctoral program. It was during this Indigenous land-based leadership course entitled, *Onikaniwak: For Those Who Lead* that l was able to link the knowledge gained with my personal and professional experience, and that succeeded in changing my perception about schooling, and school leadership. It helped me to realize the worth of the previously acquired knowledge from my “holy African village” of Ghana. This course exposed me to the idea that l can achieve more meaningful learning by applying formal and informal education as the foundation to attain a meaningful academic laurel.

The lessons drawn from my doctoral adventure led me to conclude that most educational institutions of higher learnings in the supposedly post-colonial contemporary world fails to educate leaders on the value of the local knowledge held by learners and communities with whom they have been trained to work. If educators and school leaders are supposed to work with people who are different from themselves, they must be open to learning from the people if they hope to serve their needs. I also believe in the wisdom of the sages that, if there is a condition that can make gold to rust, then that same condition cannot be used to stop the iron from corroding.

The lessons from the above experiences led to my realization that the integration of Indigenous knowledge in the school curriculum has the potential of helping native learners to access education and become more successful. Consequently, I resolved to write my doctoral dissertation to suit my identity, experiences, and knowledge. Some scholars have cautioned neophyte researchers and doctorial students to desist from the continuing acceptance of "scientific dogma or paradigms" that trap them "…in the routinized, take-it-for-granted way of viewing the world around them" (Luse et al., 2012, p. 144). Armed with the above admonition, l started searching for alternative research approaches and knowledge that could be blended with the Anglo-American non-Indigenous research methodologies that would enable me to use a study process that would link theory with practice in the field of school leadership and administration. This initial determination was strengthened by the works of several African Ghanaian writers in Indigenous knowledge and leadership (Amoah, 2012; Dei, 2014; Haruna, 2009; Oppong, 2013, 2017; Quan- Baffour, 2008, 2012; Tagoe, 2012). These researchers of leadership, management, and adult education exposed the unsuitable application of the Anglo-American leadership models in the African Ghanaian context. The works of other western researchers further exposed me to Indigenous research in the field of education and school leadership who highlighted the characteristics and suitability of qualitative methodologies and approaches for the generation of knowledge, research, and practice (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & González, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2012; Reason, 1998, 1999; Smith, 1999). I was also fortunate to come across the application and suitability of several African Akan Indigenous constructs and perspectives in Patton's (2015) work on qualitative inquiry that confirmed my personal observation that my native Akan Fante local knowledge is the best foundation that can be used as the building blocks for the conduction of any meaningful research for my program of study.

Apart from my professional experiences upon which this study finds expression, this work is also linked to my African Ghanaian Akan socio-cultural values that I affirm by using my language as the medium of research method (Smith, 1999). As illustrated by the etymology of my African Ghanaian Akan Fanti language, each of the stages of the educational ladder has a corresponding responsibility for every individual, irrespective of age and social status. It is expected of the Akan Ghanaian educated person to be an individual responsible to herself, clan, and the entire society. It is in line with this train of thought that the Ghanaian Akan titles for people professed to have attained the various levels of education are acknowledged. I realized that these titles are very significant to leadership development as the mode of knowledge transmission at the various stages of the educational process can be vital in the preparation of K-12 educational leaders for work with Indigenous communities in rural areas. The first and second stages of the learning process is the initial learning or the "suahunu" stage (Amoah, 2012; Dei, 2012). Suahunu is an Akan word which literally connotes the idea that individuals need to learn in order to acquire the requisite knowledge to engage in responsible practices. The suahun session is used for both the first and second stage of the initial education of children and their leadership. This initial stage of education involves the introduction of learners to their history, and their socio-cultural environment. This is done through storytelling, legends, myth, fables among others. Story telling process in the Ghanaian Akan Indigenous context serves as an educational interpretative forum where these sessions provide the opportunity for learners to analyse issues that pertain to all aspects of human life. I hold that hese community stories can be used to offer analytical lenses in the training of K-12 school leadership. Stories from Indigenous communities can be used as medium through which information on the characteristics and behaviors of Indigenous people and their working environments can be gained. They also provide context to learn about the various resources and challenges that characterize the environment in which schools are situated (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012).

The higher phase of education from whose attainment leads to the award of a credential titled “Okunyin” is a doctorate degree. The Akan word “Okunyin” literally means “the one who kills to develop”. In other words, my Indigenous Akan society expects the holder of this “Okunyin” title to use his or her acquired knowledge to eliminate whatever might be keeping the society back from progressing. I see the meaning of this “Okunyin” word reinforcing Scott’s (1988) explanation that language imbues words with significance; the use of language is a way of unfolding meaning. It is via language that development is achieved when people make sense of their words. The examination of language offers an opening for the realization of social relationships, and how the understanding of social associations influences institutional organizations. Likewise, Gunter and Ribbins (2003) stated that the field of educational leadership and administration has been identified as an area that provides space for people who claim to know how to demonstrate the usefulness of their knowledge. The aforementioned viewpoint aligns with my own African Akan tribe's perception of the educated person since African Indigenous communities expect their highly educated members to use their acquired knowledge to help the society, the community, and their own family (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002, 2003). In other words, African Akan Indigenous communities, like their American and Australian Indigenous counterparts, expect that gained knowledge is used to the benefit of society (Hart, 2010; Kovach, 2010).

Fascinated by the responsibility of the title conferred to an individual with a doctorate degree in my native Ghanaian Akan Fanti language, l question what challenges impede the quest for best practices in educational leadership for children in rural Ghana. I see effective leadership as the key to setting up the conditions for the acquisition of children's positive learning outcomes, which leads to national development.

This important question is linked to my academic work as a doctoral student and my traditional role as a member of an Indigenous ruling family. I started with a self-examination that prompted me to question how children in my holy village in rural Ghana can be helped to access, retain and be successful in education at the K-12 level. It is in the light of my growing understandings of western and African traditional knowledge that I had the intuition that my doctoral work should reflect my people and my identity. The utilization of Indigenous knowledge is inherent within every activity of the African rural dwellers' life, as demonstrated by the communities with whom l interacted during my teaching days. What is necessary, yet lacking, is research that focuses on an understanding of schooling and educational leadership practices from the African perspective.

In view of this, my study involves the combination and application of an African renaissance theory, and post-colonial African feminist theory as analytical lens. I explore the understanding that the major stakeholders of Ghana's education make of the Akan socio-cultural values (child upbringing norms), as demonstrated by the Akan chieftaincy institution in the upbringing of children. Part of my research objective is to explain the unsuitability of colonial models of leadership practices in the African Indigenous rural context. This description involves the role that colonization played in K-12 school leadership development in Ghana. The research also explored how the understanding of the Akan child upbringing norms influences K-12 school leadership practices in rural Ghanaian communities, and how leaders make sense of these norms (MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2003; Segura, 2009; Shockley & Cleveland, 2011). Though children's retention and success in schooling thrives on effective school leadership, the success of school children's learning outcomes rests on the collaborative effort of all educational stake holders at national and local levels (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012). There also included an examination of the extent to which mainstream school leadership preparatory program designers perceive African socio-cultural values, and how this perception within preparatory programs supports K-12 school leadership practices in rural communities.

l have been inspired by educational administration scholars who insist that K-12 school principals in post-colonial African countries are to reject alien bureaucratic ways of leading and replace them with "a system of self-management that will require principals to lead in new, creative ways" by "using various evolving approaches that portray fundamental shifts in our concept of educational leadership" (Botha, 2012, p. 43). This vision is significant for the schooling challenges of rural learners in Ghana. An exclusive reliance on external or non-African means of solving our problems as Africans often aggravates situations rather than improves them. The solutions to school leadership problems lie in the utilization of Indigenous resources which are embedded in the socio-cultural values in all Indigenous communities (Dei, 2014; Oppong, 2013).

Moreover, my name and position in my lineage are within the rank of a female leader who mothers the Stool (throne) and acts as an advisor to the leaders of the tribal state (Stoeltje, 2003; Mensah et al., 2014; Owusu-Mensah, 2015). Though this seemingly prestigious role comes with a lot of responsibilities, it is also expected of me as an Indigenous African Akan woman of royal lineage to act worthy of my position. The Asebu Kingdom of which l hail is constituted of communities with fishing and farming as major occupations in Ghana. This means that the location of my kingdom in the rural area brings her under the umbrella of those communities where children have difficulties in their attempts to obtain formal education. Hence, my stance and course for transformation aligns with Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994) proclamation as echoed by Ebunoluwa (2009) that the aim of the Indigenous African feminist is "social transformation. It is not about warring with men, the reversal of role, or doing to men whatever women think that men have been doing for centuries, but it is trying to build a harmonious society. The transformation of African society is the responsibility of both men and women, and it is also in their interest" (p. 231). Hence, my utilization of feminism in this study is in line with that of an African feminism. Further, the African Indigenous form of feminism considers the lessons of colonization and the recognition of African socio-cultural values in the transformation of the African society, particularly, but not exclusively, for the wellbeing of females. l concur with the view that African Indigenous feminism must aim at helping the people of the African continent to free themselves from foreign domination (da Silva, 2004).

My personal and professional viewpoint in this study emanates from the fact that l see myself as a "consumer" of two different forms of education; these are the colonially bequeathed British Ghanaian formal education and the Akan Indigenous African education. l consider myself endowed with two forms of education that Akan describe as "fie na skuul nyansa" (native wisdom /knowledge and formal education). l have seen that Indigenous principles and information associated with the performance of Indigenous education and lifestyle can be tapped for significant benefit to the field of school administration and leadership. l am well positioned to understand and facilitate learning activities that equip school leaders to work with rural communities and learners of Indigenous origin (Howley, 1997, 2006; Moletsane, 2012; Howley et al., 2012) and to help find solutions to issues connected to school leadership practices and rural leaners' poor educational outcomes (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Segura, 2009).

These culminative experiences have led me to concur with Berger's and Luckmann's (1991) assertion that an individual researcher's background impacts greatly on his or her work. My understanding of societal culture has been shaped through the colonial norms and values as espoused by the formal education that l have acquired, as well as the training offered to me by the elders of my clan and community. It was against these two backgrounds that my earlier and latter teaching experiences offered me an insight into how context and societal culture impact on the work of educational workers in rural Ghana. These experiences have culminated in the realization that the Indigenous African knowledge that was inculcated in me by my Akan parentage is wisdom worth tapping for studying and supporting school leadership development.

In addition, my exposure in both Ghana and the "White man's country" have strengthened my idea that K-12 school leaders who decide to work in rural areas must be trained to wear the lens of a rural dweller. This view emanates from my belief that school leadership development programs in general must not offer a one size fits all program delivery (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012) but must equip leaders to work with students from varied backgrounds and from different socio-economic status (Dei & Opini, 2007). This idea resonates with the African Akan socio-cultural principles that upbringing and children's education are social or communal responsibilities that are the responsibility of the entire community (Swadener et al., 1997). It is this spirit of cooperation as espoused by the above Akan adage that l link to the preparatory training of K-12 school leaders.

This narrative about my personal, academic, and professional life shapes who l am, how l understand education, and my expectation of how school leadership practices ought to be enacted in the rural African Indigenous context. Reflecting on these experiences incites me to ask two questions that shape this study: "How do rural stake holders of Ghana's education system understand the influence of Indigenous socio-cultural values and knowledge on children's learning outcomes?" and, "how can K-12 school principals be prepared to engage in culturally appropriate leadership practices to enhance rural learners' educational outcomes?"

Chapter One

1.0 Introduction

There exists a huge difference in Ghana's precolonial and formal education systems in organization, purposes and leadership practices (Kwamena-Poh,1975; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). Formal education or the Western form of education was introduced into the (then Gold Coast) now Ghana between the 16th and 19th Centuries by European traders and Christian missionaries (Masemann, 1974; Kwami, 1994; Olivier & Wodon, 2014). There arose a search for a new form of education for children who were the offspring of European traders and their native commercial allies. The precolonial form of education premised upon Indigenous Africa child upbringing norms was deemed unsuitable for children from African and European parentage (Jagusah, 2001; Woolman, 2001; Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The circumstances that led to educational transformation in what is now Ghana has been critiqued since the objectives upon which formal education was planned and implemented were very different from that of the precolonial form of education, favored by the native African population (Graham, 1971; Kimble, 1963; Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Ghana's formal education was imbued with discriminatory features. Formal schooling could be accessed only by the wealthy class, as demonstrated by the first formal school which had its learning population from the wealthy class of the society (Asare-Danso, 2017; Kuba, 2016). Educational processes and delivery worked to the advantage of people in urban communities, and to the disadvantage of people in rural areas.

The circumstances that led to the introduction of formal education in Ghana resulted in the development of educational establishments only at the coastal belts and urban areas where foreigners first settled, which explains the clustering of second cycle educational institutions in the southern part of Ghana. Researchers like Mfum-Mensah (2003), Anyan (2011), and Senadza

(2012) identified the pattern of development as posing challenges to the country's educational sector because it rendered the bulk of the population located at the rural areas of the country to be marginalized in terms of access, retention, and success to schooling. It also led to calls by several scholars of Indigenous African descents (Pence & Shafer, 2006; Shizha, 2013) for the incorporation of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) in public school administration in post-colonial Africa. These scholars suggest that AIK can be used to augment the preparation of school leadership to enable them to enact culturally affirming leadership practices in African rural communities. These researchers further base their contention on the idea that school leaders must be trained to understand the cultural practices associated with the group who reside in these rural communities (Hoberg, 2004; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012).

In addition to the discriminatory features pertaining to educational access, formal education in Ghana was seen as an establishment that needed to be controlled and managed by non-natives or people aligned with foreign culture (Canagarajah & Coulombe, 1999; Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999; Lavy, 1996; Weis, 1979). This displaced the immeasurable roles that community local leadership (chieftaincy institution) played in community leadership and children's education (Addo & Addo, 2016; Donkoh, 2011; Simensen, 2000). Hence, the larger social culture of the area that characterized groups of people was not attended to in the management and leadership roles in these institutions (Jehoda, 1968). Considering the indispensable role that the subject of societal culture plays in the life of the Indigenous African, this negligence of culture in Ghana's formal educational initiative invariably meant that the native African would find it impossible to access this type of education without renouncing his or her own cultural values. This may partly explain the sparse participation rates in formal education by native Ghanaians in rural communities (Fentiman, Hall, & Bundy, 1999; Mfum-

Mensah, 2003; Opoku-Amankwa et al., 2015) despite the availability of schools in these communities. Rural settlers in Africa and most Indigenous societies are strongly tied to their socio-cultural values (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). Some researchers (Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004; Yeboah & Appiah-Yeboah, 2009) argue that negative cultural practices partly account for the lower educational attainment by rural dwellers and prescribed mandatory schooling with free meals, with government threats of legal sanctions on noncompliance parents as possible answers to the lower educational attainment of rural population. However, Fentiman, et al. (1999) and Nudzor (2014) maintain that despite efforts made by the government of Ghana to get children enrolled in school, the system is not yielding positive results because the wrong intervention strategies are being used to address perceived challenges.

Available research suggests that strategies to improve education must come from consultation with the local people themselves. Records of studies on school leadership partners with Indigenous community members show that community involvement in school management improves children's educational outcomes (Lovett et al., 2014; Ottmann, 2017; Segura, 2009). For instance, Sulemana, et al. (2013) contend that the goal of having children enroll in an education system and completion of their schooling cannot be attained by the implementation of government educational policies alone. It takes a joint effort of all stake holders to help children succeed in most rural communities (Brion, & Ampah-Mensah, 2021). Successful school leaders in Indigenous rural communities "have positive relationships with teachers and staff that in turn provides more job satisfaction for them, using a more democratic and participatory management style, and being able to liaise effectively with the community" (Brion & Ampah-Mensah, 2021, p. 4). Besides, the educational success of children is "influenced by many factors, including but not limited to perceived value of education, the availability of employment opportunities after completion, the direct and indirect costs of schooling, and the availability and quality of school facilities" (Sulemana, et al., 2013, p. 424). Likewise, other K-12 educational researchers have indicated that "the village and the school are fields, which shape and are shaped by the dispositions of those who practice in them. Within this analysis, social interaction is marked by tension between people with differential access to power. Fields are therefore relational spaces, sites for domination of the less powerful by the more powerful" (Pryor et al., 2003, p. 195).

Other scholars (Hall, & Bundy, 1999; Lavy, 1996; Weis, 1979) have added strength to the contestation made by several scholars interested in rural education that compulsory education cannot be enforced in rural settings, since most families rely on their children for either labor in support of their sustenance employment or income generated by these youngsters on their own. Hence the most appropriate response is to provide the rural learner with an alternative means of acquiring formal education by tailoring educational process to meet their needs. This alternative means of providing education to this group demands "a careful needs analysis undertaken in consultation with local families and local authorities" that "can help identify which adjustments, if any, could attract and retain working children in school" (Atchoarena & Gasperini, 2003, p.117).

The above suggestion of Atchoarena and Gasperini (2003) was justified by the result of findings of a research initiative dubbed as the Shepperd School Program (SSP), a model of school designed to cater to the needs of communities in the Northern part of Ghana who were having challenges with access, retention, and success in formal education. This study identified five main areas of school level impacts: "(a) provision of educational access; (b) school engagement; (c) fostering strong linkages; (d) pedagogical innovations; and (e) promotion of knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Mfum-Mensah, 2003, p. 668). The problem of proximity was identified as a major impediment to the rural children's educational enhancement. This link between learners' location and higher educational attainment indicates that, "the determinants of economic welfare are found to have much in common with the determinants of educational access and attainment while the evidence suggests that initial educational access disadvantage has diminished somewhat, while economic disparities related to access to higher levels of education have not. Poorer and less well-educated households are typically disadvantaged because of less favorable location factors, especially those associated with northern and rural areas" (Rolleston, 2011, p. 347). Several attempts have been made by previous and current governments to make education accessible to all Ghanaians as demonstrated by the provisions of the expansion of schools under the country's educational reforms, including the Accelerated Development Plan for Education in 1951, the abolition of school fees at the secondary level by the first president in 1965, and those of the current New Patriotic Party (N. P. P.) government. Despites these attempts, education access and retention continue to be problematic in Ghana since government intervention strategies have proved to be ineffective.

The seemingly unsurmountable challenge to poor educational outcomes for rural children in Ghana's K-12 schooling system has been traced to the country's continuation of a bequeathed colonial educational system. Educational strategies aimed at alleviating financial burden on the rural Ghanaians had an inequitable effect, as it ended in "subsidizing those who can afford the high boarding fees" (Hurd & Johnson, 1967, p. 77). Ultimately, formal education as crafted by the colonizers was not meant for Indigenous rural agrarian communities and is unaffordable for this class of people (Graham, 1971; McBeath, 2010; Segura, 2009).

The bequeathed British colonial educational system has not only proven to be unaffordable to rural people, but the policy of boarding / residential school system is another aspect of a borrowed educational policy that is doing disservice to Ghanaian youths and especially female learners in rural settings. This archaic system of boarding schools exposes learners to all sort of gender-based school violence (Agu et al., 2018: Boakye, 2009; Böhm, 2017; Sika-Bright & Nnorom, 2013). Scholars like Leach et al. (2003) and Dunne et al. (2007) have blamed the persistent increase in the school dropout rate of girls on the prevalence of gender-based abuse of female learners. Other educational scholars link the problem of girls' abuse in Ghana's K-12 school system to the differences that exist in the social class among the population. The very people who are to help in the provision of solutions are those who are out of touch with the realities that prevail in rural areas. This is because members of the "higher echelons of the modern economic sector are from those parts of the country which are themselves within the modern sector, that is, from the more developed south and from the large towns. Thus, the operation of the educational system maintains the imbalance which originally stemmed from the character and timing of colonial intrusion" (Hurd & Johnson, 1967, p. 68).

This calls for the reintroduction of precolonial African education strategies as the solution to Africa's education challenges. The second stage of precolonial African education equivalent to secondary education in the Eurocentric sense has much value, and its practices are in conformity with the needs and values of the learner's community (Kanu, 2007). Such solutions also call for school leadership practices in rural Indigenous African communities to be modeled alongside the helpful aspects of precolonial African education, which supports attendance, retention, and success of its learners (Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Seroto, 2011).

Unfortunately, Ghana is still struggling to find an ideal education system to meet its national needs. The relics of colonialism on Indigenous children's education is still having negative impact on schools in post-colonial Ghanaian contexts. This has resulted in the failure of the school system to meet the needs of its learners, as students from rural and remote backgrounds “persistently fall below the achievement ladder” (Niesche & Keddie, 2014, p. 510). African feminists like Wane (2008) have joined the crusade against the unsuitability of colonial education on African children by prescribing the employment of an anti-colonial strategies in the field of education in post-colonial African countries as the remedy.

In summary, the various attempts initiated by Indigenous nations in Australia, America, and Canada in seeking solutions to the challenge posed by colonial educational system on Indigenous learners must be supported by Africans too. The post-colonial struggle in the field of education continues in Ghana. The life of the nation’s future is determined by the type of education they are offered. In this sense, the incorporation of culturally affimring practices in educational leadership may go a long way toward the narrowing of the achievement gap between learners located in urban and rural Indigenous communities.

1.1 Background of the Study

Ghana’s schooling system with its accompanying educational leadership policies and practices were an inherited colonial legacy from her former British colonizers (Adjei, 2010; Akyeampong, 2004; Essuman & Akyeampong, 2011; William, 1964). Ghana’s colonial model of education has been found to be problematic for rural dwellers, whose lifestyles fail to align with tenets of colonial schooling (MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2003; Segura, 2009). The Ghanaian educational system is characterized with a continuing academic accomplishment gap between students in rural and urban centers (Fentiman et al., 1999; King & Orazem, 1999; Sofo & Abonyi, 2018). Several scholars have identified poverty, socio-cultural practices, and lack of social amenities as contributive factors to rural leaners’ attrition in education (Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Sabates et al. (2010) explain that the gross admission rate (GAR) of rural learners that is mostly 100% at grade one declines steadily as children climb the schooling ladder to Grade 6. Less than half of the total number of children at the entrance levels move on to the secondary school level. The above finding is reified by a meta-analysis of school enrolment in Ghana which revealed that, the "net enrolment rates amongst rural children are estimated at 18% compared to 33% for urban children" (Oduro, 2008, p. 11). Likewise, an analysis of gender enrollment rate at the basic to tertiary levels of Ghana's education shows the following:

> the primary GER of 94.9% compared with Junior and Senior High School GER of 80.6% and 33.9%, respectively, show a transition problem from primary to secondary education levels, which definitely affects the transition and progression to the tertiary education level. For example, during 2008-2009, the male to female primary GER was 97% to 92.8% compared with the respective GER of 83.9% and 77% at the Junior High School, and male to female GER of 36.7% to 30.8% at the Senior High School levels, respectively. (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013, p. 3)

The situation is worse for female learners who fall within this category of rural dwellers. The Federation of African Women Education's (FAWE, 1995) report on gender in sub-Saharan African region shows that 36 million girls were not in school in the early 1990s, while those who gained admission to school could not be properly catered for. In addition, girls are rarely retained to completion as 50% of such female learners drop out, with 64% quitting schooling prior to the attainment of literacy. This situation explains lower females' "completion rate of 34% at both secondary and tertiary levels. Only 10% of girls as compared to 36% of boys attend secondary school. Four times as many boys as girls continue to tertiary level" (Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004, p. 400). Clearly, there is a need to create and lead educational systems in rural areas that offer equitable access and culturally meaningful learning that supports retention and future success for all.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There exists a rural-urban gap in educational outcomes in Ghana's K-12 levels, prompting researchers to undertake studies in the area. Most of these scholars have attempted to explain the phenomenon by focusing on the socio-cultural differences of these learners as the cause of the learning deficits. Not much emphasis has been placed on the post-colonial educational structures which are impositions that ignore the cultural backgrounds of learners in the schooling process. These colonial educational relics include the structures found in educational settings, as well as the policies and leadership practices (Kanu, 2007). Many scholars have argued that educational policy makers and implementers contribute to the problems or challenges in their own field of practice by using curriculum content and assessment procedures that are dominated by western colonial cultural traditions which had very different cultural agenda that contribute to the poor state of formal schooling in many developing countries (Agbo, 2007; Aliakbaril & Faraji, 2011; Bartolome, 1994; Tafoya, 1995; Thomas, 2005). Although literature on schooling and rurality in Ghana explores reasons for rural learners' attrition (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013; Oduro, 2008; Shabaya & Konadu Agyemang, 2004), little literature exists on the contribution that school leadership preparation programs and practices make on the rural learner's attrition. There also exists scanty research as to how socio-cultural values influence school leadership practices, and how these affect rural leaner's schooling outcomes (Jawas, 2017; Tan, 2024; Zame et al., 2008). This scarcity of literature on the place of socio-cultural values in Ghana's education system that has been saturated with Anglo-American theoretical leadership knowledge (Amakyi

& Ampah-Mensah, 2013) might help explain the inability of the program framers to detect the differential needs that exist in the work settings of Ghana's K-12 rural school principalship.

Horsford et al. (2011) note that, the development of culturally responsive school leadership starts with the creation of school principal's awareness about the political nature of the social environment of the school settings since schools as educational organizations are part of the larger political platform that have links with the daily activities in which school leaders engage. Public school principals in Ghanaian rural communities face the challenge of responding to the cultural needs of their learners (Dei & Opini, 2007) as "the formal school system is not sensitive, responsive, and hardly organizes learning experiences to suit the social, cultural and economic contexts of its client" (Mfum-Mensah, 2003, p. 674). Rural African societies are strongly attached to their socio-cultural values, and any venture intending to improve the learning outcomes of these learners in these communities must be linked to their sociocultural values (Anlimachie, 2019; Nsamenang, 2005). As noted by Zhao (2018), "any attempt to borrow the educational policies, strategies, or practices is doomed to fail unless it also borrows the culture" (p. 71). Unfortunately, several neophyte principals assume school leadership positions with impractical or discriminatory viewpoints regarding rural communities, and about the nature of the principalship (Kitavi & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997). Leaders require a clear comprehension of societal culture and how it functions in "the socially mediated construction of reality" (Thomas et al., 2002, p. 39) to enable them to perform as school leaders.

The absence of a socio-cultural imprint in the country's school leadership preparation programs does not adequately orient school principals for work in rural settings (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2013; Tagoe, 2012). Although there has been a flood of literature on the need to reform school leadership training programs beyond the managerial Euro-American models

(Botha, 2012; Bush, Kiggundu & Mooros, 2011; Essuman & Akyeampong, 2011; MacBeath, 2010; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012), it is also difficult to access local resources on which school leadership development program designers can build programs that train K-12 leaders to enhance rural students' learning outcomes in Ghana. These challenges further reinforce the need to explore the various frameworks and practices within African Indigenous socio-cultural values wherein lie the capital for human resources capacity development for teaching and school leadership (Kanu, 2007; Quan-Baffour, 2012). As noted by Tagoe (2012), "Africans need an integrated, culturally coherent educational system to produce results" (p. 598). Thus, making culture the foundation for the development of all educational ventures in the African setting.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This research has a dual aim. First, it explores the understanding that designers, instructors, and implementers of K-12 school leadership programs and informal leaders (chieftaincy) make of Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms as an aspect of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK). Secondly, it identifies how this sense making influences K-12 school leadership practices in rural communities in Ghana. Essentially, the study seeks to consider how the Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing (child upbringing norms) as an aspect of AIK influences leadership practices. The study also seeks to explore how African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) on these socio-cultural values can be used to augment K-12 school leadership development for efficient work in rural Indigenous communities which would support school children's educational outcomes in rural Indigenous Ghanaian communities.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to find answers to two critical research questions: “How do rural stakeholders of Ghana’s education system understand the influence of Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values and child upbringing norms as an aspect of African Akan Indigenous knowledge (AIK) on children’s school experience? and “how can this knowledge better prepare K-12 school leaders to engage in culturally affirming school leadership practices that would enhance children’s learning in rural Ghana?”

To answer these questions, I detail how African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values are related to child upbringing norms and explain how K-12 school leadership, and community leaders (chieftaincy) make sense of them as they deliver leadership programs and/or enact leadership practices in schools. Two subsets of questions are relevant to this study:

1. What are Indigenous Ghanaian African Akan socio-cultural values related to child upbringing for boys and girls? What wisdom does the rural African Akan Indigenous chieftaincy offer in their descriptions of what constitutes effective leadership, and how could this traditional wisdom be applied in ways that might enhance boys’ and girls’ success in formal education settings?
2. How do school principals understand African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values related to child upbringing norms and their impact on children’s schooling experiences? How have their following experiences informed these understandings: a) personal life experiences; (b) initial work experiences; (c) and professional development? What value do school principals place on learning from and with rural community members as they work to improve school outcomes for boys and girls? What advice do they have to offer for the design of leadership preparation programs that prepare school leaders for working in rural Ghanaian schools?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research seeks to explore the prospects of AIK in the creation and adoption of leadership and child- upbringing knowledge and strategies that support rural Ghanaian K -12 school leadership practices, skills, management strategies and teaching approaches, and by extension, enhance rural school children's learning outcomes. Such knowledge can be used to develop or augment training programs for K-12 school leadership for effective leadership in rural communities. This study serves as the first educational research on the prospects of African Akan Indigenous Knowledge (AAIK) as a resource for the improvement of K-12 school leadership practices in Ghanaian Indigenous rural communities.

1.6 Limitations

Research limitations are inevitable issues that researchers envisage to encounter in the study process. Akanle et al. (2020) describe research limitations as the "issues and challenges that researcher faces during the study that may influence or impact the results and interpretations of those result" (p. 110). Hence the limitation and delimitation for this study were as follows:

1). The Indigenous study methods used in the conduction of this research result in the non-generalizability of the study outside this study population, though they may resonate with people in other places, particularly Indigenous peoples who have faced the consequences of colonial history.

2). Though it did not appear to be the case, it was possible that K-12 school leaders felt reluctant to provide information that concerned how they perceived, treated, and related with people from rural communities if the form of education and training that was used to prepare them for their jobs position was incompatible with the tenets of Indigenous knowledge and values.

1.7 Delimitation

Due to the large population of both formal and informal leaders in Ghana, and Akan communities in rural Ghana, the population for this study focused on two Akan rural communities in the Central region of Ghana.

1.8 Assumptions

The assumption for this study included the following:

1. Most K-12 school leaders in rural Ghanaian communities are not well prepared or aware of the varied responsibilities required of them as school leadership in rural schools, nor of the impact of socio-cultural values on leadership efforts.
2. Rural school leaders either learn how to overcome challenges by working with the community or they may enact poor leadership practices that can lead to poor educational outcomes for school children (Henderson 2018; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2015; Segura, 2009; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013).
3. The absence of Indigenous knowledge components in Ghanian school leadership development programs impede requisites skills needed by principals to work in rural Indigenous settings (MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2009; Segura, 2009).
4. Several K-12 school leadership development program designers and instructors who are to train principals have both experience and theoretical knowledge to teach new school leaders, but they may lack the requisite Indigenous knowledge needed to augment school leadership preparation for effective work in rural communities (Eacott & Asuga, 2014; Hoberg, 2004; Preston et al., 2013; Pryor et al., 2003). This calls for an alternative mode of knowledge that falls outside the orthodox field in educational leadership (Chino & DeBruyn, 2006; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Preston & Barnes, 2017).

1.9 Researcher's Reflectivity, and Positionality

Reflexivity is described as a conscious demonstration of a researcher's own influences and biases in the conduction of a study (Probst, 2015). The background, prior knowledge and experience of a researcher become the factors that are likely to influence the direction or outcome of a study (Berger, 2015).

I am an Indigenous Akan woman with an adequate training in African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) in my ethnic Akan culture. I have over 20 years of teaching experience in Indigenous Ghanaian rural settings. As such, l am conscious of the fact that my own culture conflicts with the Western form of knowledge with which I am currently engaging in the academy. Hence, I had to become aware of my biases that affected the conduct of this study. However, my occupation as a rural teacher and a member of the educational administration profession from a former colonized African country offered me a significant insight into the course and outcomes of this study.

Additionally, my background and career as a schoolteacher and a counselor in a rural Akan community enabled me to gain easy access to my prospective research participants in both the Indigenous communities and professional groups from the field of educational administration. This alignment of culture and profession helped me to establish rapport with all my study participants to gain the needed information for the study. Given the difficulties I faced in the ethical conduct of the study (outlined more fully in subsequent chapters), it was fortunate for me that the Akan Indigenous leadership with whom I interacted was cooperative and receptive to my work. Being a member of the Akan tribe helped to convince them to see me as one of their own. Being a member of the Akan tribe also provided me with an added advantage of being able to conduct the Dwabo interviews in the local language attentive to cultural practices.

The sharing of a common language and culture with my research participants offered me the chance to enter the study with a degree of cultural knowledge. This prior knowledge about my own culture and people helped to facilitate insights from some of the study participants. The familial bond that existed between the study community and myself helped participants see me as an insider, which also came with expecations to conduct the study utilizing appropriate protocols.

Despite being considered as a cultural insider in the first study community (Moree in the Asebu Traditional Area) of which l trace my Akan ancestry, I also qualified as a cultural outsider with the second community (Assin Kushia Traditional area) for the study. I was born in the urban city of Cape Coast. Though a native Fante speaker, I am highly educated. Though this professional experience served as an advantage, I had to condition myself not to take certain information for granted. I had to check my assumptions and, because of the difficulties that accrued with ethics, had to be focused and attentive to research informants.

As a former teacher and a member of the Ghana Education Service, I interacted with people with similar professional experience. The sharing of the same profession and experience with members of the teaching profession was useful in my conduct of interviews with the principals of the communities, but it also meant that I had to be conscious also not to let my Canadian experience as a PhD student influence my questions or lead to unequal power relations between study informants and myself (Berger, 2015). It was necessary to be aware of my presuppositions and participate as an active listener and observer.

1.10 Definition of Terms

- *African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK).* African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) is a "form of collective information used by the local people as strategies for their survival in their communities. It is tacit knowledge and therefore difficult to codify; it is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships, and rituals" (Hoberg, 2004, p. 42).
- *Chieftaincy Institution*: chiefs are locally and legally recognized leaders in all the various communities in Ghana. Chiefs also double as overseers, custodians, and implementers of Ghana's Indigenous culture, customary laws, Indigenous African religion, and traditions.
- *Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL)***:** for the purpose of this study, CRSL is defined as leadership practices that establish and encourage a school culture that acknowledges and addresses the needs of diverse students who are traditionally marginalized. School leaders can demonstrate CRSL by establishing and maintaining relationships with the communities the school serves, and by working collaboratively with the faculty in an ongoing manner to make certain curriculum and instruction meet the needs of those diverse students (Khalifa et al., 2016).
- *Culturally Responsive Practices*: refer to practices employed to establish and nurture a dynamic and synergistic relationship between the home and community cultures of students and the school's culture (Ladson-Billings, 1995). These practices "incorporate the history, values and cultural knowledge of students' home communities in the school curriculum to develop a critical consciousness among students and faculty to challenge inequalities in the larger society and empower parents from diverse communities" (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013, p. 15).

- *Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices* (CRTP): CRTP are dynamic classroom practices comprised of caring, communication, curriculum, and instruction that acknowledges, honors, and seeks to incorporate and develop the natural diversity and fluidity of competence among diverse student populations (Gay, 2018).
- *K-12 Schooling System*: the Canadian schooling system from kindergarten to grade12. The Canadian K-12 schooling process is equivalent to the Ghanaian first and second cycle school system. Formal school system in Ghana starts from 2-year kindergarten through class 1-6 (primary school). Then Junior High School (J.H.S), which is from form 1-3 which is equivalent to the Canadian (grade 7-9). And 3-year Senior High School (SHS), which also equivalent to the Canadian grade 10-12.
- *Traditional Indigenous Akan*: This refers to Ghanaian(s) from the Akan tribe "who despite the inroads of western civilization and religions such as Christianity and Islam, have still not abandoned the Indigenous religion bequeathed to them by their forebears" (Appiah-Sekyere et al., 2018, p. 18).

1.11 Organization of the Thesis

This chapter offered a background account of the research topic, the various reasons, and superpositions regarding the study topic, and reflexivity. I specifically provided an evolutionary history of Ghana's formal educational system, having made a case for the need for a reconsideration of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) in the country's K-12 school leadership preparation program, by drawing attention to its contribution to the understanding of how school leadership practices influence rural Indigenous children's educational outcomes.

This thesis is divided into several sections. Chapter One provides a summary of the thesis which describes the rationale for the study. It also describes the background to the problem that was the subject of this study. Chapters Two provides an extensive review of the relevant literature available on the subject of this study. Chapter Three introduces the research methodology that was utilized for the study and describes the theoretical and conceptual framework that provided direction for the study. A description of the application and implementation of the various philosophies that influenced the study's methods and practices are provided. The third chapter also presents the research process; the data collection and analysis strategies of the study data. It further offers an account of strategies used in the development of study findings into themes. Chapter Four presents a detailed analysis and discussion of the three overarching themes with ten subthemes derived from a thematic analysis of the study data. Chapter Five provides a discussion of study themes and situates these themes into existing literature. The chapter also advances a means by which AIK can be used in the development of K-12 School leadership practices through an African Indigenous lens. Chapter Six presents the final chapter, which details implications of the findings for educational administration, K-12 school leadership preparation, future feminist research on African Indigenous Feminism, and K-12 school leadership practice development. This concluding section also provides my final reflexive commentary, a summary of the entire study and an epilogue of my personal journey.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This study was crafted from a desire to explore an alternative means of knowledge that could be used in preparing scholars and practitioners in school leadership for work in rural Akan Indigenous communities. Hence, it attempted to ascertain the relevance of linking the Akan Indigenous leadership practices on child upbringing norms as an epitome of the first and second stages of African Indigenous education (AIE) and K-12 school leadership development programs. It was framed from an assumption that the colonization of Indigenous people resulted in the importation of formal school leadership practices that worked to the disadvantage of learners from rural Indigenous settings (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Bush & Oduro, 2006; MacBeath, 2010; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Segura, 2009).

The literature review has four sections. The first section provides a description of the various schools of thought about African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) and educational leadership. The second section uses this study lens to offer an analytical account of the nature of schooling and educational leadership practices from precolonial Ghana to date. The third section provides an analysis of school leadership development programs and how their accompanying school leadership practices effect the educational outcomes of children in Ghanaian rural settings. It also attempts to develop a contextual understanding of the course and patterns that create and impede rural learners' progress in education, and the challenges that culminate in the poor educational outcomes for K-12 children in rural communities in Ghana (MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2003; Oduro, 2008: Segura, 2009).

The last section details how African Akan Indigenous leadership practice relevant to schooling and children's education is enacted in rural settings. This section further provides an explanation of how a lack of this knowledge influences the work of designers, instructors and implementers of K-12 school leadership development programs. It advocates for cultural relevance in school leadership practices in Ghanaian Indigenous rural contexts (Mfum-Mensah, 2005; Pryor et al., 2003). This section argues that school leadership development programs designers, instructors, and implementers must have some knowledge of African Indigenous Knowledge (Hober, 2004: Preston, et al., 2013) given the crucial role that school leadership practices have on rural children's educational outcomes (Fentiman et al., 1999: King & Orazem, 1999; Sofo & Abonyi, 2018).

2.1 Indigenous Knowledge in School Leadership Development

Sources of Indigenous information for knowledge generation fall into three categories, namely: raw information transmitted from older generations unto younger ones, also referred to as ancestral knowledge (Simonds & Christopher, 2013); empirical knowledge accessed through formal and informal education, and revealed knowledge that can be accessed only through spiritual means (Botha, 2011).

Several scholars in administration and leadership have called for the integration of Indigenous knowledge in the study of organizational management and leadership (Amoah, 2012; Haruna, 2009; Oppong, 2017; Tagoe, 2012). Additionally, there has been a specific call in the field of educational administration and leadership literature for the incorporation of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) into the mainstream training program of school principals (Hoberg, 2004) so that Africans can be equipped with the needed resources to solve the continent's problems. Varied points of view are proposed by researchers as to how to attain this goal.

Obiakor (2004) advocates for an African based education with Indigenous knowledge as the key ingredient in the development of leadership that rejects continual endorsement and usage of all colonial organizations still in existence in social and political environments. In this view, since the retrieval of Indigenous voice and knowledge thrive on the process of decolonization, it is only through the reappraisal and usage of Indigenous knowledge that a desirable form of leadership could be attained. The above stance gains support from Hoppers' (2010) claim that innovation in education and learning must pave way for the participation of people from all classes of life. Institutions of higher learning must create space for these alternative and diverse knowledges.

According to Dei (2012), African educational success depends on the ability of the continent to redesign her own schooling system, though this cannot be realized until a better option to the current educational system has been discovered. This search for a better education system must find solutions to the inequities that exist in the schooling system. This idea is shared by a number of scholars who view the continual application of Western leadership models in leadership training in Africa as inappropriate (Blunt & Jones, 1997; Iwowo, 2015; Kirk & Bolden, 2006). Oppong (2017) advocates for a needs assessment on leadership development when researching in Ghana so that the unique traits of Africans and communal needs are revealed. Malunga (2006) notes that African Indigenous knowledge contains several principles that touch on all aspects of human endeavor: “collective responsibility for the organisation; importance of relationships; participatory leadership; patriotism, and reconciliation” (p. 9). Several African Indigenous scholars have also argued that good leadership theories and management training models that speak to the needs of Africa must be built on African cultural values (Khomba & Kangaude-Ulaya, 2013; Msila, 2008, 2009; Nabudere, 2005; Nussbaum, 2003; Nzimakwe, 2014; Oppong, 2017).

Other African researchers have proposed an integrative approach to leadership development based on various African Indigenous ideas and philosophies (Botha, 2010; Briggs, 2005; Tisani, 2004). These researchers share perspectives within the discourses of Africanization, Afrocentrism, reconstructionist, anti-colonialist, and post-colonialist theorists. Despite the diversity of thoughts, there is one conclusive idea that is emerging from the leadership discourses. This view is that leadership policies and practices on the continent must reflect the socio-cultural realities of Africans.

2.1.1 *Africanization*

Woldegiorgis and Doevenspeck (2013) define Africanization as the process by which African ideas and worldviews are identified, explained, and communicated via the promotion of African culture and a positive attitude towards the African worldview with an aim of establishing African institutions. These scholars further note that Africanization is aimed at the repositioning of colonial educational institutions on the African continent to "represent the needs, interests and values of African people" by creating "curricula, courses and academic orientations of African higher education institutions" (p. 38). Thus, Africanization is a means of clarifying and advocating for the promotion of African ideas and viewpoints as a replacement of European domination in the African higher institutions. In terms of leadership, this viewpoint acknowledges that leadership practices must be cognizant of the socio-cultural realities of its learners as Africans (Nekhwevha, 2000). According to Ezeanya-Esiobu (2019), the continual dominance of European thoughts in the post-independence African academy leaves the entire African continent in perpetual bondage (Pinto, 2019) since the importation of the European system of education into the African continent twisted Indigenous African understanding of the realities situated within their own environments. Formal education as a major weapon of colonialism is still spearheaded by the academy and aims to curb the distinctive and uniqueness of Africans by reducing them to social classes. Hence, the Africanisation perspective as upheld by Horsthemke (2004) explains that reverting to Africanisation involves the affirmation of the continent cultural values and uniqueness in a global community. A call for the Africanization of education and educational systems in Africa is a demand for the adaptation of policies and practices that seek to recover whatever Africa lost as a result of colonization. This group of scholars align with the African renaissance stance on formal education, perceiving that the Western model of schooling practiced in post-colonial Africa is colonialism in disguise.

Proponents of Africanization agitate for a return to the old African way of education prior to colonialism and thus prescribe a redefinition of the current education system as a means of generating a meaningful education for Africans (Msila, 2009, 2012; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Obiakor, 2004; Omotoso, 2010; Dei & Opini, 2007). Other African scholars like Botha (2010) and Letsekha (2013) offer an alternate view of Africanization. They argue that the sole focus on an African knowledge base may prove unworkable since such an understanding would prevent deficits in the Africa’s own cultural understandings from being corrected. Botha (2010) points to the need for the recognition of multiple knowledges and varied cultures in the generation of knowledge while recognizing the home culture as a significant aspect of any development venture. Thus, though there has been a call for Africans to use their own resources in the planning and development of the continent’s education, a total rejection of other knowledges in the planning process may prove unrealistic or even unwise.

An extension of the Africanization view point into the educational administration sphere of education means that, though there is the need for a recognition of African values and culture in the core business of teaching and learning, African institutions of higher learning can help develop the very society that they belong by getting culturally close to their communities, and "intellectually linked to wider scholarly and scientific values of the world of learning" (Mazrui, 2003, p. 140). This means that Africanization of education can be functional and meaningful only if only the process of teaching and learning uses or add local African community resources in the development, teaching and learning processes.

2.1.2 *Afrocentrism*

Several African researchers have advocated for an Afrocentric approach to school leadership practices by which educational policies and practices of teaching and learning centers on the African learner's identity (Asante, 1991; 1992; Dei, 1996; Shockley, 2008). The Afrocentric perspective demands that educational leadership practices be accommodating and flexible to cater to the needs of non-western learners of African descents. For instance, Dei's (1996) work on Afrocentric thought on the Canadian educational scene portrayed it as a construct whose application provides a cultural space for African students in the diaspora.

According to Lomotey (1992), African centered education is found on the philosophy of Independent Black Institutions (IBI) in which educational leaders and teachers perceive learning institutions as an extension of the big African family. In this sense, learners are asked to reciprocate the love received from their educator with that of a consanguinity bond. This perception supports the Indigenous African view on child upbringing that advocates for social responsibility in the education of children, and in which the child is perceived to be a member of its African community (Swadener, 2000). The Afrocentric notion of schooling and educational leadership practices has the act of care as its focus of practice. The act of care has been linked to the field of educational leadership and has been emphasized in many leaderships' preparation programs and school curricula. This act of care "must be reflected in the standards, policies, and procedures for school leader preparation, certification, and evaluation. And it must be a focus of opportunities for ongoing professional leadership and development provided by school districts and other entities" (Smylie et al., 2016, p. 26). In this way, schools are to become sites where the primary aim of leadership is geared towards supporting all learners to attain success in education. This act of care is perceived as the nurturing component of Indigenous feminism, as expressed by the conception of the African Akan feminism terminologies like "abadai" "ɔbaatan" as an epitome by their motherhood traits of Africans (Odamtten, 2012). Afrocentric education can also be described as a form of educational practices that links the formal school process to the African culture by ensuring that learners as African are connected to their African culture through an establishment of a lasting relationship with their own African culture.

In summation, an integration of Afrocentrism into K-12 school leadership development is indispensable in African children's education. Hence, it is incumbent on school leadership preparation program designers to recognise the significance of caring in the training of school principals for work in rural settings. In other words, Afrocentrism as an extension of care, can be used to help Indigenous learners in rural communities to thrive academically.

2.1.3 *Reconstructionist*

A third group of scholars call for modification in educational policies and practices to better fit African needs and perspectives (Jagusah, 2001; Kanu, 2007; Marfo et al, 2011; Ndofirepi, 2011; Sibanda & Young, 2019; Tagoe, 2012; Woolman, 2001). For these scholars, formal education on the African continent needs to be restructured or reconstructed. The reconstructionist group posits that the ideal education for Africans must be comprised of a blend of both the western and the African models of schooling. Among these scholars are educational administration researchers like Bush and Jackson (2002), Mfum-Mensah (2003), Oduro and Macbeath (2003) and Walker et al., (2006). Also included are management science practitioners and scholars (Haruna, 2009; Oppong, 2013, 2017) who share the opinion that the demand of the contemporary global world makes it imperative for nations to learn from each other's cultures. As such, Africans are to incorporate other people's knowledge into theirs (and vice versa) in order to be abreast with the global world. The reconstructionist idea is crucial to the educational success of Ghana since the initial design of the country's formal educational system led to dysfunctionality at all tiers of the education system (William, 1964). This is because the introduction of formal education into the then Gold Coast now Ghana by the European colonizers restricted education development and education decision making to a small sector of local urban dwellers. According to many researchers, this early arrangement of educational management in Ghana initiated the creation of what is known as the urban-rural disparities in educational resources and learning outcomes that favoured the urban group who has the power to influence educational policies (Akurang-Parry, 2007; Graham, 1971; Dei, 2005). Scholars like Kimble (1963) and Graham (1971) offer reasons for the consistent perpetuation of colonial educational policies in Ghana's schooling system by noting that the European colonizers' aim of offering Africans "the civilizing" educational system would guarantee Africa's development was crafted on discriminatory principles and practices. This has persisted and works to the disadvantage of people in Indigenous rural communities to date. Indigenous learners' attrition in formal educational settings can also be connected to failure of schools to include cultural safe measures in the schooling process.

Kodjo (1979) connects rural leaners' educational attrition to school leadership practices arguing that the colonial educational policies made the training and development of school leaders and teachers the prerogative of people who are out of touch with the realities experienced by the larger part of Ghana's population. It is in the context of this unworkable but continual use of the bequeathed foreign educational systems that Woolman (2001) proposes a reformation of the continent's educational system. Jagusah (2001) and Mawere (2015) share the view that the study of African Indigenous knowledge must be geared towards the study of Africa's pre-colonial institutions because the lessons drawn from the study of Africa's Indigenous institutions may offer ideas on best school leadership models and practices for contemporary Africa.

Several scholars (Mfum- Mensah, 2003; MacBeath, 2010; Dei & Opini, 2007) have observed from their studies on schooling experiences of learners in the Ghanaian rural context that the nature of the school curriculum as a model of Western educational leadership practices has proved unfavorable and unworkable for Ghanaian learners in rural settings. Fentiman, et al. (1999) revealed that, though the number of females who enrolled in basic schoolings outnumber their male counterparts, a larger number of females drop out of school before making it to these higher levels of education. Factors accounting for female attrition in education were attributed to the non-accommodative nature of the school curriculum as practised by school leadership in rural Ghana. Hence, reconstructionists argue that education must be restructured to reflect the needs of societies on the African continent (Assie-Lumumba, 2012; Beugre & Offodile, 2001; Kanu, 2007; Tedla, 1992; Woolman, 2001). For instance, Tedla (1992) indicates that, "in the process of incorporation and identity formation, Indigenous learning plays a crucial role as a transmitter of social rules and values" (p. 8). This supports Oppong's (2017) proposition that, since the distinctive features of African societies make her different from other non-western

Indigenous societies, Africa must be examined to seek prospects for needs relevant to these groups. Oppong adds that Indigenous thoughts have been uprooted in managerial practices in Africa, thus paving way for management practices to assume neocolonial coloring on the continent. In view of the unsuitability of non-African administrative knowledge in the development of Ghana's formal education leadership, it is required of Africans to uproot any form of neocolonialization in management practices by refusing to apply non-African managerial practices in the training of leadership (Harris & Jones 2021; MacBeath & Swaffield, 2013).

African Indigenous leadership views are based on co-operation and nonbureaucratic techniques, community involvement, partnership and teamwork, and leadership as a contextual act that needs the cooperation of each actor in a group (Haruna, 2009). This view strengthens the research findings of several educational administration scholars, whose work on rural Indigenous communities revealed the unsuitability of the Western concept of management in schooling, and on Indigenous children's learning outcomes (Babaci-Wilhite et al., 2012; Breidlid, 2009; Krakouer, 2015).

It is in line with the reconstructionist viewpoint that Haruna (2009) advocates for leadership that is in tune with the socio-cultural values of the people, taking into consideration the varied distinctive features that characterize different regions or peoples in sub-Saharan Africa. This supports Newton's and Riveros' (2015) assertion that the best studies of educational administration must focus on "an exploration of the social and material configurations that are brought into existence as school actors interact in their contexts of practice" (p. 332). Newton and Riveros (2015) speak to the point that there is a certain futility of the application of alien epistemology and ontology in the study and practicing of techniques of Western educational administration in an African context. Context is key to designing curriculum for educational leadership training needs. Thus, the reliance on alien models of school and leadership theories leads to the situation where school leaders gain a myopic and cultural bereft understanding of what it takes to lead in a real schooling context. Moffitt's and Dunford's (2021) study of Indigenous First Nation teacher candidates revealed that, formal educational activities and settings can be reconstructed to enable Indigenous students to excel through enacting relationality as an aspect of culturally responsive school leadership. The above strategy can be implemented when school leadership upholds local peoples' socio-cultural values in the school setting and by helping Indigenous students to feel accepted and respected within the school environment.

In conclusion, the reconstructionist debate over the choice of educational policies that influence school leadership practices points to a single direction that highlights the need to search for an alternative means of K-12 school leadership. It also makes claims for researching education leadership practices that enhance children's educational outcomes in rural Indigenous communities.

2.2 Educational Systems and School leadership Practices in Precolonial Africa

Socio-cultural values as an aspect of AIK have been found to be very significant in holding prospects for all aspects of national development in Africa (Ogundokun, 2015; Sabri, 2004; Van Wyk, 2014). This understanding has prompted educational researchers like Kwamena-Poh (1975) and Tedla (1992) to advance the exploration of socio-cultural values in the field of educational administration and school leadership. Several Indigenous scholars (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2008; Mawere, 2015; Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2012) have argued that the provision of education in pre-colonial societies was an efficient means by which Indigenous societies got equipped with the skills and knowledge required to flourish in their physical environments. Pre -colonial Ghanaian education was directed from an African Indigenous knowledge base of socio-cultural values from which came guiding principles that ordered and dictated their developmental trajectories (Kwamena-Poh, 1975). It is in the alight of the above debate that Anyidoho (2000) equates the value of place and societal culture as indispensable elements used by Indigenous groups for sustenance and survival. Education in precolonial societies was perceived as an act of intergenerational conversation that, by its practice, ensured intergenerational continuity. Kwamena- Poh (1975) connects the essence of socio-cultural values to schooling and educational leadership by positing that the precolonial African model of education followed the "ancient custom" of schooling where children studied under the tutelage of their forebearers. Indigenous educational leaders known as the sages (Assie-Lumumba, 2016; Chilisa, 2005) oversaw the schooling system for their communities as the older generations were perceived to be the repositories of societal values and wisdom. The culture of the society epitomized the "curriculum" of the African native school system and was used "as a conduit of traditional social rules and values by which individuals were incorporated into the African community to form their identity" (Tedla, 1992, p. 21).

Education in precolonial Africa was embedded in the Indigenous knowledge of the society and tailored to meet the needs of the society. Educational leadership policies and practices were in tune with societal cultural values, and what it meant for one to be a learner, teacher, and leader (Igboin, 2011; Kanu, 2007; Kwamena Poh, 1975; Nsamenang, 2005; Woolman, 2001). Several African scholars (Assie´-Lumumba, 2016; Jagusah, 2001; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Shizha, 2013; Soreto, 2010) have identified that this Indigenous understanding of education and knowledge can offer benefits and solutions to current schooling and educational leadership in Africa. For example, Oppong (2017) notes that orality as a distinctive feature of African societies makes Africa different from the non-western countries in Asia and the Arab world but could offer possibilities for demonstrating learning outcomes. Socio-cultural values reflected in communalism, spiritism, respect for the aged, rural local knowledge, among others, must be considered when creating leadership development programming since they are prevalent within the actual work context. The neglection of these features in leadership training is tantamount to the abandonment of locally salient information in the development of leaders for local schools.

Similarly, Eybers (2019) notes that the study of precolonial institutions is one of the means by which modern institutions of higher learning can incorporate diversity in organizational studies. This scholar further states that it is when precolonial organizations and communities are studied that teaching models with varied epistemologies can be borrowed to increase knowledge production. The integration of Indigenous knowledge into mainstream program of study such as a university-based program via the study of pre-colonial societies exposes learners to both the epistemic and ontological worlds of the society in question. This can propel learners to utilize the fundamental values and rules to which they have been exposed along with their individual sub societal and communal knowledge. Such an attempt can contribute to an innovative means of producing knowledge since universities are sites where individuals from varied cultures and societies converge to seek knowledge. This proposal is shared by several African scholars (Botha, 2011; Chilisa, 2012; Chilisa et al., 2017; Dei & Kempf, 2006; Salawu, 2012) who support the view that knowledge can be generated by utilizing varied sources, and methods. Other scholars like Emeagwali,(2014), Fomunyam and Teferra (2017), and Odora (2017) have posited that precolonial African knowledge which is embedded in socio-cultural values can be studied to generate new theories and practices that may help in altering the mode of teaching and learning in higher institutions on the African continent.

Dei (2010) and Quan-Baffour (2008; 2012) draw attention to the link between Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous peoples' principle of self-determination by positing that education and knowledge in the Indigenous sphere aims to help societies design their own conditions, helping them to be self-reliant in all their endeavours. This perspective of using Indigenous knowledge for the attainment of Indigenous peoples' self-determination is shared by researchers like Oppong (2013; 2017) and Tagoe (2012) who are of the view that local Ghanaian culture must be used as a lens to guide the planning of the country's developmental projects, of which education and school leadership developments are inclusive. Educational and school leadership development programs can be tailored to meet the demands of contemporary Indigenous Ghanaian learners in rurality by using the pre-colonial Indigenous model as a starting point.

2.3 The Colonial Ghanaian Educational System and School Leadership Practices

Formal education was introduced to pre-independent Ghana by alien trade partners as an appropriate form of schooling for their mulattoes' children (descendants of European and native parentage) and children of the wealthy class of local native Africans (Berman, 1974; Kimble, 1963; Kwami, 1994; Masemann, 1974; Masemula, 2015; Olivier & Wodon, 2014; William, 1964) because the form of education operated by local people was deemed to be unsuitable for these new generations. Education in the then Gold Coast now Ghana was in two forms; informal education patronized and managed solely by the local people (Kwamena-Poh, 1975), and formal schooling attended by children of higher social economic status families and operated by the Europeans. Formal education plans for meeting the educational needs of the mulattoes varied from that of the native African population. Likewise, the accompanying leadership policies and practices of formal schooling were based on the English school model system (Graham, 1971; Kwami, 1994). Colonial formal school initiators established schools at the southern urban parts of the country, with the northern and rural locations left to their own devices. This discriminatory initial educational leadership policies and practices is the major factor for the existence of unequal infrastructural establishment and educational logistics distribution between the southern and norther sectors in Ghana (Mfum -Mensah, 2003; 2009).

Formal education as initiated in colonial Ghana thus became a dominant feature of colonialism (Adjei 2007; Nsamenang, 2005). The colonial rulers initiated another form of governance described as the Indirect Rule by which the local native rulers were made to be subservient leaders to the European colonizers on their own land. Formal education delivery under the British Indirect Rule system of governance in the Gold Coast now Ghana was managed by both the Christian Missionaries accountable to the British Crown. Likewise, school leadership management became the responsibility of European governing officials (Ekundayo, 2018). This development disrupted the traditional social structure of the Ghanaian community, as the colonial educational policy of residential schooling system, known in Ghana as the Boarding school system, shifted families' control over children into the hands of educational missionary leadership (Graham, 1971). Formal education was used by the British colonial officials to advance cultural imperialism, a practice that explains the strong link between formal educational leadership practices in colonial and contemporary Ghana and "traditional English educational practice" (Whitehead, 2007, p. 162). Christian missionaries played a leading role in the delivery of formal education in the then Gold Coast colony and made it possible for African children to be brainwashed about their own culture. It also succeeded in preventing learners from linking what they learned to the realities in their social environment at the same time as they were encouraged to accept and appreciate alien cultures (Dei Ofori-Attah, 2007).

Educational administration in the Gold Coast was managed by the Central government stationed in England with non-native representation in the colonies. Africans played no significant roles in leadership decision making (Graham, 1971). This habit of preference to alien culture as initiated by the missionary educators was extended to the application and adoption of leadership policies and practices in the management of schools. For example, the introduction of colonial educational management directives like the Grants in Aid and the Payment by Result policies by the colonial educational management systems led to the introduction of rote learning and corporal punishment which were major traits of English educational leadership policies and practices during the colonial era (Kimble, 1963). The above description of education and school leadership were found to be detrimental to learners' educational outcomes. Fortunately, the use of corporal punishment in formal school has since been condemned (Agbenyega, 2006; Dupper et al., 2008) as an act that impedes the progress of teaching and learning, stimulates fear in children and prevents retention of learning.

Likewise, Haruna (2009), and Eacott (2017) connect the inappropriate use of the idea of scientific management with leadership in the field of school leadership. Colonial leadership policy has seeds in a conception of management in the industrial field which originated in what became known as the theory of scientific management which advocates for competency, economy, and effectiveness as a means of maximizing production. The above view of leadership as management takes away decision-making authority from any other person than those in formal leadership positions and prescribes a top-down approach to organizational management. Ghanaian historians and school leadership scholars like Bonney (2022), Esia-Donkoh, (2014), Essuman and Akyeampong, (2011) and Graham (1971) have likened educational administration of contemporary Ghanaian schooling system to that of the colonial era. They suggest that Ghana’s pre-independence bureaucratic form of school leadership practice and educational decision making became formalized, standardized, and forced upon all sectors of the educational system, developing into a Weberian bureaucratic administrative policies and practice over time (Lumby, 2019). A careful analysis of these past experiences hold lessons that can be used to formulate better school leadership practices which may help improve both school leadership practices and children’s educational outcomes in rural Ghana.

2.4 The Post-Colonial Ghanaian Educational System and School leadership Practices

The various policies made in colonial Ghana known as the then the Gold Coast were all replicas of the English educational system. The socio-cultural preferences and contexts of the native African learner were never taken into consideration (D'Souza, 1975; Graham, 1971). Studies that examine the impact of societal culture on schooling and learning reveal that Indigenous communities yearn for recognition of their own cultures in Eurocentric school curricula. Native communities are cognisant of the fact that the foreign culture that came with formal schooling alone does not equip native learners to succeed in the global world. A bi-cultural education becomes the best option of schooling for this group of people (Agbo, 2002; Ogbu, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1995a, 1995b). According to Agbo (2011), the modelling of Ghana’s formal educational system after an alien system of schooling is detrimental to most learners. It has signalled a call by Indigenous scholars to advocate that schooling for all people of Indigenous origin must reflect the social, economic, and political traits of their societies (Agbo, 2011; Assie-Lumumba, 2000; 2012; 2016; Dei, 2008; Dei & Opini, 2007; Kanu, 2006; 2007; MacBeath, 2010; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Segura, 2009).

Yet education in post-colonial Ghana still possesses features of colonial schooling in both leadership development programs and practices (Bonney, 2022; Graham, 1971; Oduro et al., 2007). Ghana's formal education system is a legacy of British colonialism premised on discriminatory features which make it possible for the population in urban areas to receive higher education whilst rural counterparts significantly lag behind in learning outcomes (Anwaruddin, 2014; Oduro & MacBeath, 2003). The subject of context remains significant in the African schooling terrain. Researchers like Bush and Glover (2016), Oduro and MacBeath (2003) and Oplatka (2004) claim that context makes it impossible for any Anglo-American theory or leadership model to be workable in different settings. The Ghanaian educational context lacks the requisite educational resources to assure quality teaching and leading. Added to the above challenge is that the bulk of the population in rural Africa struggle with poverty and access to modern education is complicated by structural barriers. Similar opinions of inadequacies in teaching and learning logistics in rural Ghanaian educational settings have been expressed by researchers who identify common problems facing principals in rurality as the inability of parents in agricultural professions like farming and fishing to pay school fees, continued use of child labor, and inadequate qualified teachers (Abaya, 2016; Ng & Szeto, 2015).

Nsamenang and Tchombe (2012) however offer an alternative perspective on the unavailability of resources for teaching and learning in rural African communities. They suggest that challenges to teaching and learning in rural areas can be alleviated if both teachers and school leadership are trained on how to adopt local strategies and locally made resources for teaching and learning. In their view, the supposed inadequacy of resources in rural African communities is not the problem, but rather the challenge is the inability to identify and use available local resources in communities. This confirms studies by educational administration researchers like Oduro et al. (2007) who claim that K-12 teachers and school leaders are ill-prepared to teach and lead in rural Ghanaian schools. For instance, Donkor's (2015) study on school leadership readiness at the Basic school level in Ghana revealed that several principals are recruited based on experience or long term of service. Comprehensive knowledge of school leadership is absent in Ghana's teacher training institutions, since courses relating to school leadership are handled under a branch name of "Trends in Educational Management" (p. 235). In other words, the subject of leadership has received only cosmetic treatment within management courses at teachers' colleges. Donkor's (2015) study also found that most basic school principals are ill equipped in handling what it means to lead effective educational organizations. Additionally, "organisational theories of educational management originating in Europe and America are often simply transferred to and adopted in African research and training institutions" (Harber & Dadey, 1993, p. 147). This practice of using alien policies in the Indigenous contexts deters stakeholders of education from realizing the negative impacts of foreign policy adaptation (Salazar, 2007; Wanasika et al., 2011).

There exists a dearth in research that advocates for the use of Indigenous knowledge to explore solutions to school leadership challenges in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. This lack of interest in the use of Indigenous knowledge for research into educational leadership is reified by scholars who suggest that that studies on the school principalship in Africa are geared towards investigations on academic and practical advancement which neglects core areas that deal with the daily challenges of the principalship (Bush, 2007; Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2012; Tagoe, 2012). For instance, a literature review of the various school leadership models used in the training of both teachers and school leadership by Bush (1995; 2003) revealed a conspicuous absence of African models of leadership or what can be described as an Indigenous model of leadership, though there exist "an emerging recognition that African models also have much to offer in interpreting management practice and in understanding the behaviour of school leaders and communities" (Bush, 2007, p. 402).

Hence, many African researchers (Haruna, 2009; Amoah, 2012, 2014; Chilisa, 2017; Oppong, 2017) have argued for the rejection of non-African educational policies and practices. They argue that these alien modes of schooling perpetuate alien ways of life and thinking, and thus, fail to equip leaders and other workers with the requisite knowledge to attain competency in leadership in the African context. Using the negative impacts of the colonial boarding system on Indigenous learner's identity, these scholars (Igboin, 2011; Jagusah, 2001; Masemann, 1974) argue that negative influences of colonial education are extended from children to adulthood. This has been found to be the case with individuals with residential school experience who are not able to perform parental roles. Some people with residential schooling experiences become deprived of their ability to train their children to fit into the norms expected of them by their Indigenous society. Boarding schools perpetuated a "legacy of a lack of control over choices about education, the school environment…[these] negative boarding school experiences [become] a recipe for youth substance abuse" (Heart, 2003, p. 9) across generations. These researchers further note that the current schooling system in Africa justifies a miseducation situation where the structured process of socialization teaches learners to help, preserve and reproduce unequal and inhuman social order, leading to "a schooling process through which Black people are taught to think and act in European ways, resulting in an appropriation or colonization of the consciousness of the oppressed" (Rashid, 2012, p. 37).

The above school of thought aligns with other scholars of Indigenist preference like Sefa Dei and Opini (2007) who contend that the application of an anti-colonial lens in the analysis of students’ learning experiences and educational leadership practices leads to the unravelling of differences demonstrated in the forms relationships that exist within the formal schooling system. The colonial encounter is associated with varied forms of social exclusions, due to distortions in the representation of the marginalised. Hence, the destruction of colonial connections requires the examination of hegemony, the opposition and questioning of accepted practices, and the examination of the history behind current advantaged and disadvantaged positions in society. The schooling experiences of the marginalized needs to be understood in order to address the challenges that come with differences in schooling that resulted from the colonial encounter.

A cursory literature review on a counter narrative of the Canadian First Nations residential schooling experiences can be borrowed to address the aftermath of alien schooling models in the African context. Lessons of the consequences of the Canadian colonial schooling system revealed that educators and school administrators “felt a sense of betrayal at the inexplicable turn in the public understanding of the schools and their roles in operating them” (Niezen, 2016, p.992). An analysis of the Canadian colonial schooling experience becomes relevant to the African quest for appropriate school leadership practices in the context of this study since the lessons of the counter narrative of the Canadian First Nations residential schooling experiences offer hints to the nature of both preservice teacher and K-12 school leadership programs that were in place at that time. It also sheds light on the conspicuous absence of the need for the designers of educational leadership preparation programs to recognize the importance of students’ cultural values and perspectives in their training and delivery.

As Adbi (2007) rightly observed, “when people’s identities that were locally generated, and over millennia locally maintained and, where necessary locally modified are suddenly torn asunder, the level of lost confidence that follows is so powerful that the recovery, if ever there will be one, will be slow, situationally fragile, susceptible to trends that could reverse any progress and will, above all else, take so many decades or even centuries more than the time it has taken to destroy the primal self-perceptions” (p. 53). Colonial education has caused untold damage to the African educational system via the application of unsuitable teaching, learning, and school leadership practices. Hence, African scholars like myself have the belief that decolonization research strategies can become a recipe for curtailing the harmful effects of colonialism on children’s schooling in rural Indigenous communities in Africa.

2.5 School leadership Preparation Programs in Ghana

Historians attest to the fact that the birth of educational administration in Ghana was initiated by the British colonial government’s decision to take control of the educational activities of the missionaries (Graham, 1971; William, 1964). Educational management was centralized with Boards of Education who ensured that missionaries complied with the stipulated terms of government to receive financial support (Kimble, 1963). This practice of educational leadership in colonial Ghana relied on recruitment policies that were not tied to an expectation that leaders enrolled in leadership development programs (Aissat & Djafri, 2011).

After decades of independence, Ghana’s education system has paid little attention to leadership training and practice that suit the African context (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Jull et al., 2014). Though colonialism ostensibly ended in Ghana in 1957, the legacy of European cultural practices and the adherence of policies and practices introduced by the colonizers in the field of educational administration and schooling linger on (MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2003;

2004). The consequences of the unsuitability of school leadership models and theories founded on the mainstream western knowledge have led to the failures of several educational reforms in Ghana (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016; Bingab et al., 2016; Jones & Chant, 2009).

Scholars like Bush et al. (2011) raise concerns about the concentration of managerial skills as the only needed areas for principal's proficiency in programs in K-12 school leadership preparation. They call for meaningful programs that seek to equip school leaders with the requisite skills to lead schools. The search for a befitting K-12 school leadership preparation program for the African context emanated from the condemnation of Euro-American forms of leadership development theories and models for their lack of universal generalisability (Bush, 2007; Kitavi & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997). Literature on managerial studies in Africa indicate that "many African managers have the intellectual capacity to understand the logic underlying Western management principles and practices but revert to their pre-training behaviour after participating in several training programmes, indicating fundamental weaknesses in the Western management-oriented training programmes themselves" (Kuada, 2010, p. 10). Kuada's (2010) observations suggest that educational leadership preparatory programs offered by the mainstream universities are not in the best interest of people in the African communities. Rather, there exists a demand on Africa's higher institutions to provide courses and programs that cater to the socio-cultural needs of people. Added to the above challenge is the non-availability of consistent professional development program for both teachers and school leadership. An examination of school leadership appointment procedures in Ghana reveals that school principals "...are appointed because they have been good teachers, spotted and persuaded by the authorities to take up the appointment" (Bush & Glover, 2016, p. 454). This type of recruitment process has been the norm for recruiting school principals in Ghana and most post-colonial African countries (Kitavi & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997).

A literature review of studies on school leadership development in Africa identified deficient preparation and development programs as causes of poor performance of school principals in African countries of Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania (Asuga & Eacott, 2012; Esia-Donkoh, 2014; Onguko et al., 2008). The deficiency in K-12 school leadership preparation is extended to the lack of Indigenous knowledge component in the programs (Zame et al., 2008). Likewise, an analysis by Amakyi and Ampah-Mensa (2013) on school leadership development programs in Ghana spoke to the incompetency of Ghana's K-12 school leadership training due to the fact that courses that constitute the Ghanaian university-based school leadership development programs offered at the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) at the university of Cape Coast are devoid of Indigenous knowledge components. The void created by the absence of Indigenous knowledge integration in Ghana's K-12 school leadership development programs point to the inability of school leaders to acquire knowledge related to the societal groups and communities with whom they are being prepared to work (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Khalifa, et al., 2016). Additionally, "studying both school and societal cultures help in the offering of a wider understanding of how school knowledge intersects with Indigenous knowledge and provides a meaningful examination of how this intersection relates to educational practices" (Semali & Stambach, 1997, p. 5). The indispensable role that Indigenous knowledge plays in the field of school leadership development makes relevant Sperandio's (2010) calls for attention to the need for a study into the nature of societal culture and its impact on the field of school leadership and educational administration in general. Cross et al. (2019) indicate that "educational institutions can also help legitimize Indigenous knowledge through providing field learning that affirms their worldview" (p. 111). Sperandio (2010) offers that this absence of societal cultural imprint in the knowledge base in the field of educational administration and leadership has roots in Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 1994) work on corporations that led to the understanding of culture as organizational efficiency and forms of practice, thus explaining how and from where the frame of reference and understanding of culture in most circles of educational administration is drawn.

Ekeh (1980) warns against a rapid attempt to transform Africa's colonially bequeathed leadership models, since these dysfunctional colonially bequeathed organizations are considered by many in power to be sacrosanct entities that need no criticism nor modification in their management. Any attempt to kick away colonial forms of education will be met with varied reactions from diverse areas of the African population. Yet other Indigenous scholars are of the opinion that what is necessary is for "leadership, and educational practitioners to acknowledge and re-examine the foundations of their cognitive dependencies on Eurocentric ideologies, opening themselves to a wide range of knowledge and perspectives drawn from diverse experience and cultures" (Battiste, 2008, p, 169). The saliency of Battiste's (2008) recommendation finds strength in assertion that "worldview differences influence how people acquire and process information, knowledge, and wisdom" (Cross et al., 2019, p. 108). An inclusion of African Indigenous knowledge in school leadership preparation programs will result in school leadership practices that reflects the African culture and worldview.

Ghana must create an alternative form of school leadership preparation that resonates with the realities that prevail in the African context. It is in tune with this aim that, this study aimed to understand the ways in which Ghanaian Indigenous culture can improve leadership preparation programs to better support school leaders to work with learners in rural schools.

2.6 School Leadership Practices and Children's Schooling Experiences in Rural Ghana

K-12 school leaders in rural Ghana face prospects and challenges associated with the physical location of their schools and workplaces (Akyeampong & Stephens, 2002; Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009; Fentiman, et al., 1999; Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; Lavy, 1996; MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2003, 2004; Oduro, 2008). Onwauchi (1972) accounts of the unsuitability of European educational leadership practices in Africa by noting that, "the impact of Western culture led to the introduction of the regimented, schematized system of Western education known as 'schooling.' The school curricula were formulated, fashioned, and relished with Western cultural ideals and values" (p. 242). Likewise, Boakye-Boaten (2010) offers a detailed account on African Ghanaian child upbringing norms, and their incompatibility with the colonial schooling system. This researcher explains that the activities of the British colonizers in the economic sector undermined the African concept of childhood and led to the development of an economic structure within which child labour has become a necessary aspect of family survival though it leads to poor educational success. British economic activities in the Gold Coast led to the introduction of cash crops like coffee and cocoa, which required large scale labour operations for growing and tending crops. This mode of survival shifted the focus of living which in turn altered the conception of the child in the African context by forcing them to become active economic contributors to the household. Older children were expected to contribute toward the upkeep of their families by working. The colonial encounter between Africans and their European counterparts had a ripple effect on the socio-cultural lives of the people of Ghana. The arrival of Europeans was accompanied by a monetary economy that replaced the non-monetary exchange system which focussed on subsistence in precolonial agrarian Ghanaian societies. Daaku (1972) argues that the practice of child labor in Ghana had seeds in colonialism since it was the aftermath of the colonial activities in the Gold Coast that led to the introduction of child labor in that country.

Other researchers provide a socio-cultural rationale for children’s involvement in income generation ventures of their families. For instance, Seroto (2011) and Woolman (2001) suggest that Indigenous African education is tied to the child upbringing practices that connect learning to the realities of the immediate environment. In this view, childhood is not detached from the historical and the cultural values of the people (Jenks, 2004). The above viewpoints align with Sam’s (2001) observation that African parents’ particular expectations for children aimed at the insurance of stable familial social support. As such, orientations for children in these societies are directed toward the fulfilment of their culturally recommended obligations as dictated by socio-cultural values vividly captured by the following Akan adage: “se wawofo hwe wo ma wo se fifir a wo nso hwe hon ma hon se tutu” (Darteh et al., 2014, p.1). In translation, this phrase means that if parents take good care of their children from childhood till maturity, then children are also required to cater for their parents in their old age. This proverb points to the reciprocal responsibility of parents and children in the Akan traditional context, in which children are the social insurance of their parents and the entire clan (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012).

African Indigenous educational researchers like Nsamenang (2005) and Nsamenang and Tchombé (2012) have argued that the idea of children’s involvement in income generating ventures to supplement family income is not necessarily ominous to the wellbeing of the African child, and in fact, often helps the child learn to be responsible and resilient and endurant. This idea of inculcating resilience and communal responsibilities as enshrined in the child upbringing norms of Africans is what has been termed as “child labor” by some researchers whose “alien gaze” found expression in the Adinkra symbol of “nkyimkyim” or the zigzag sign that literally means the “twists and turns” of life” (Kuwornu-Adjaottor et al., 2016, p. 27). This adinkra sign captures the idea of endurance as a useful trait that needs to be inculcated into the African child, and which is an attribute of African Akan child rearing norms. The African landscape is a terrain that demands a corresponding preparation to equip younger ones to get accustomed to its features to enable them to survive. Hence the African Akan child upbringing practices are inclusive of strategies that enable the child to work against challenging conditions that characterize the very environment from which its livelihood is dependent.

Scholars of Indigenous African descent (Pence & Marfo, 2008) have observed that many researchers made the mistake of using an Anglo-American middle-class perspective on child upbringing as a universal stance, leading to erroneous assumptions that children worldwide have equal opportunities in their various environments, and often overlook the socioeconomic circumstances of different regions. The above description of the African child upbringing norms demonstrates a significant difference between the Euro-American and African mode of child upbringing that must be better understood in order to improve the educational conditions for many children in the country since “problems and issues relating to the lives of children in family, community, and national contexts are the basis for an African child development research enterprise” (Marfo et al., 2011, p. 107).

In addition, Ghanaian educational policy tends to be built upon the country’s constitution and international laws as reference (Laird, 2005, 2011; Windborne, 2006). Such policies fail to be cognizant of the fact that “rights belonged to non-natives, not to natives. Natives had to live according to custom” (Mamdani, 2001, p.654). For instance, the cultural rights provisions of Africans as stated in the Organization of the African Union’s (OAU) *Charter* demonstrates the lack of attention to ambiguities that characterise regional and national laws. The OAU *Charter* stipulates that “the African States recognize that African cultural diversity is the expression of the same identity; a factor of unity and an effective weapon for genuine liberty, effective responsibility and full sovereignty of the people” (Appiagyei-Atua, 2012, p. 78). The above illustrated section of the African human rights laws provides just an iota of the discrepancies, and confusions, when African Indigenous customs and norms are interpreted through an Anglo-American lens.

Similarly, the laws of Ghana that speak to children’s welfare make no mention of cultural diversity. The1992 Constitutional laws of Ghana indicate that customary laws and national laws are integrated. For instance, the *Children’s Act* 1998 mandates and provides rights and responsibilities to all Ghanaians irrespective of the varied ethnic customary laws and conventions that exist in the country. This is because “there can be substantive conflicts between duties and corresponding rights under customary law as against those granted by statutes passed by the Ghanaian legislature” (Laird, 2011, p. 228). The Ghanaian legislature on children as discussed above makes the implementation of the children’s law in a pluralistic state with 17 ethnic groups very challenging.

The value and stance of the above argument is demonstrated by the challenges associated with the implementation of legislative instruments that concern the welfare of children in Ghana. For instance, Laird (2011) observes that the 1998 *Children’s Act* of Ghana is worded in a rigid language which makes it difficult for implementers to identify who should take responsibility of child maintenance, which exposes the drafter’s ignorance of the Ghanaian Indigenous child upbringing norms and customs. In essence, the formulators of legislation have not factored in the realities and knowledge of child upbringing practices that exists in the Ghanaian Indigenous context. Rather, legislation should provide room for varied customary practices to be in operation, while also compelling those who try to avoid these laws to subscribe to them when custom behooves them to do so. As Allwood and Berry (2006) suggest, human activities are dictated by the very culture that characterises their settings, thus making it difficult for human beings to be understood as fixed ethnic entities. Marfo (2011) comments on these differences in African Indigenous norms and statutory Ghanaian laws by indicating that the socio-cultural values of the various ethnic groups on the continent of Africa have also been influenced by the Arabic and European invasion of Africa resulting in the creation of Africans affiliated to Christianity, Islamic and other religions practices and worldviews. These religious affiliations have compelled Ghanaians to identify with the triple heritage of an African Indigenous worldview, the Judeo-Christian worldview, and the Islamic way of living (Njoh, et al., 2017). Hence, it becomes expedient for school leaders in African societies to be familiar with these knowledge bases to enable them to understand the communities with whom they are working (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012).

Additionally, the alien occupation of Africa has impacted the social stratification and cultural undertone of the continent. This is because the educated elites from which most scholars of African descent originate are part of the dominant group in the social stratification ladder. As a consequence, what becomes the accepted “ideal environment” required for the Indigenous African child’s development may be influenced by the ideas emanating from a group of people who lack knowledge about the realities of the environments in which children live. To that end, at least part of the solution lies in educating scholars on the realities faced by people living in rural settings (Haas & Nachtigal, 1998; Howley, 1997; Theobald & Howley, 1998).

The practical implication of African Ghanaian Akan child upbringing norms for the field of school administration and school leadership development in the African context is that both teachers and school principals are to be sensitized on Indigenous child upbringing norms, particularly since strict adherence to the observance of these upbringing norms is expected in rural communities (Ndofirepi & Shumba, 2014; Serpell et al., 2011). Because the rural section of Ghana is predominantly agricultural, this norm is reflected in the greater reliance on children’s labor for family support. The complex nature of this child dependence becomes evidenced in the fact that although the practice can impede children’s educational access, retention, and success (Akyeampong et al., 2007; Dunne & Ananga, 2013), it also helps parents finance their children’s education in the money economy (Mfum-Mensah, 2003; MacBeath, 2010; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Oduro, 2008; Segura, 2009). Though the current impact of modernity may limit the level of the community involvement in child upbringing, the “proverbial accolade of the child being raised by the whole village” (Boakye-Boaten, 2010, p, 114) is still in existence in rural Ghanaian communities.

Attention has been drawn to the contribution that K-12 school leadership practices have on children’s educational outcomes in rural Ghana. The rigidity of the school system has proven to be unsuitable and has put rural dwellers at a disadvantage (Fentiman, et al., 1999; Mfum-Mensah, 2003; Oduro, 2008). For example, Segura (2009) observes that rural dwellers do not see the worth “in the structures of the Western school’s child-centred teaching methods, strict rules of time, and competitive testing. They see the symbolic and exchange value of education, but not the values in the everyday structures” (p. 49). Even though they may place some value on the education of children, parents find it unreasonable to allow their children to leave home as early as 7am, when the services of such children are needed in the morning to help put food on the table. They also are able to justify their decision when they see in the community a number of school graduates who have little hope of gaining further employment. Other reasons for school drop-out include school-based factors such as the use of corporal punishment, poor attitudes of teachers, poor academic performance, and teacher absenteeism (Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009).

Many scholars also speak to the fears of parents to send their female children to schools for fear of sexual abuse (Bhana, 2012; Dunne, et al., 2007; Leach et al., 2003; Ruto, 2009; Quist, 2001, 2003; Shumba, 2011). To that end, some of the rationale for school dropout stems from parental fears, but it also emanates from the failure of the colonial school system to deal with sexual abuse issues in schools, which is similar to what was found for residential schools in the Canadian colonial context (Corrado & Cohen, 2003; Elias et al., 2012). There has been a focus on girls' education leading to calls for recruitment of female teachers in rural areas who can serve as role models for school completion (Ombati & Ombati, 2012; Shabaya & Konadu-Agyemang, 2004). Other researchers advocate for the inclusion of school uniforms and sanitary protection for menstruating girls (Odaga & Heneveld, 1995) since parents find it expensive to provide these items for their wards. Access to feminine sanitary provision becomes more difficult for families in rural areas.

An analysis of the above reasons for schoolgirls' absenteeism in rural Ghanaian Akan communities through an Indigenist lens unveils a different perspective to the phenomenon in question. This is because most African Indigenous societies, including the Akan of Ghana, consider menstruations and menstrual blood to possess the most potent power that can offset other supernatural powers. Hence girls and women in their menses are sensitized to stay clear of any sacred locations and objects. Though this taboo may not be strictly enforced in the Akan communities in modern times, adherence to this restriction is still maintained in sacred locations and places, especially in rural communities (Boni, 2007; Crentsil, 2015; Oppong, 1973; Walker, 2014). Most schools in rural spaces are sited at the outskirts of villages where sacred groves and streams are located and from which females in their menses are prohibited from getting into contact. As such, female learners might find it uncomfortable to attend school when in that state, going to school would mean crossing a stream, or passing near a sacred grove. These factors impact the low turnout of girls in school at certain times of the school session. In addition to this reason, the issue of menstruation is a subject that is discussed in euphemistic terms in the socio-cultural settings in African societies (Walker, 2014). Hence, any discussions with menstruation as a topic in a typical Indigenous African community calls for caution and sensitivity since most educational workers and researchers lack contextual knowledge on the location in which they work, they may find it difficult to understand these factors that significantly impact girls' learning opportunities (Preston et al., 2013; Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995). Hence, the provision of the free secondary education in Ghana may obscure the educational challenges of rural learners that go beyond admission to schooling because it fails to respond to how children in rural settings become marginalized by the structure of the country's educational system (Nudzor 2014). This requires successful school leaders to respond appropriately to the changing demands placed on them. Hence, school leadership development programs ought to be crafted to suit the needs of real school leadership tasks (Salazar, 2007). Since school principals in rural communities are besieged with challenges unique to their work settings, they must be provided with educational leadership development programs that respond to rural conditions (Preston et al., 2013).

African Indigenous knowledge can be utilized to design school leadership development programs and strategies that may lead to school community cohesion and thus enhance children's educational outcomes in rural Africa (Hoberg, 2004). However, the persistent rural-urban gap in educational attainment in Ghana can be attributed, at least in part, to a lack of leadership proficiency in handling socio-cultural incongruence between the colonial school system and local community values (Dei & Opuni, 2007; Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah, 2009; MacBeath, 2010).

2.7 Akan Indigenous Leadership Practices on Child Upbringing Norms in Rural Ghana

The Akans of Ghana, like most African societies in post-independent countries, are governed under a “dual system of authority,” as there exist both hereditary rulers and elected officials who exert similar administrative powers in their area of jurisdiction. Yet despite the existence of the two seemingly opposing rulers with equal powers in control, they co-exist in relative harmony (Logan, 2009). The structure of the Akan society is organized in a “centralized pyramidical structure (modified by semi-democratic methods for selection and deposition of chiefs) with regional devolution of authority from kings or paramount chiefs (omanhene) to subordinate or divisional chiefs (Ohene or Odikro), to village headmen--all of whom ruled with the aid and advice of hereditary councils of elders (mpaninfo)” (Dumett, 1974, p. 76). These councils of elders (kurow mpaninfo) seek to promote the welfare of the town or cities by dealing with pertinent issues that affect the wellbeing of the people (amansem). The amalgamation of several villages results in the creation of a town or (kurow) whose leader is the chief (Ohen). The capital town which is bigger than the town becomes the (Kurowpon or Ahenkurow), and the seat of the paramount chief or the king (Omanhen) whose official residence or palace (ahemfie) is located at the capital town, after which the ethnic state is at times named (Arhin, 1983; Crentsil, 2015; Ubink, 2007).

At the town and village level is the chief or (ɔhen and odzikro) who administers the people with the help of the elders (mpanyimfo). Next to the Odzikro is the elder of the clan (ebusuapayin). The clan head is followed by the elder of the household or the lineage elder known as the (ofie-panyin) who is in direct supervision of the household, takes care of the family, presides over all family disputes (afisem) and oversees the general welfare of the household. The household head may constitute a member of the village head's council of elders (kurompayimfo) (Arhin, 1983).

The chieftaincy is an Indigenous leadership position, functioning through customs and norms embedded in the traditions aimed at preserving societal and ethnic heritage in modern Ghana. The chief as the local Indigenous leader has the responsibility of defending their subjects by ensuring peace in their area of jurisdiction (Adjei, 2015). In their bid to ensure the welfare of their people, the chief as the leader and custodian of the laws, customs, and norms of the society, sees to the enforcement and regulations of these guiding values since the nucleus of every culture lies in its values or "the implicit or explicit socially standardized concept of what is desirable or undesirable in the culture" (Onwauchi 1972, p, 241). Similarly, Ghanaian Indigenous societies expect their chiefs to perform duties and responsibilities as a leader and custodians of these socio-cultural values. As Lutz and Linder (2004) rightly explain, pre-industrial societies like the Indigenous rural communities in Ghana have a structure which includes the extended family and the lineage systems and tribes as the foundation for it function. The household serves as the main source of production and is guided by "inherited rules". These inherited rules are bequeathed norms, when strictly adhered to, act as social support for both the young and the aged. Hence the educational trajectory of all pre-industrial societies involves an in-depth knowledge of the basic norms of these societies.

The education of the African child is the priority of the chief in the Ghanaian Indigenous society, since the failure of chiefs to ensure that the young members of the community are offered the right education would be tantamount to their failing to continue with the ancestral link upon which the entire society's survival depends (Boateng, 1983; Kwamena- Poh, 1975; Igboin, 2011; Kanu, 2007; Kuba, 2016; Tedla; 1992; Woolman, 2001). The Akan perception of good headship is based on the tribe's awareness that successful rulers or leaders are those who share their wealth and greatness with the society or group of people that they govern. Hence, Akan chiefs demonstrate this act of leadership by ensuring their actions contribute to their subjects' well-being (Crentsil, 2015). This philosophy is captured by the following Akan adage "Sika peredwan da kurom a, ewɔ amansan" (which means) "any capital in a town belongs to all the townsmen," and Sika frɛ mmogya, "money brings all blood relations together." Hence, the guiding principle underpinning the actions of an Akan chief is based on the exhibiting of practice linked with "the honor of being generous" (Daaku, 1972, p. 247). In other words, the interest of the community becomes the priority of the leader in the Indigenous African Akan understanding of leadership practices (Yamada, 2009).

Chiefs are very powerful in most post-colonial African countries, as they are noted to be imbued with spiritual powers, of which "the government would not want to offend. In fact, post-colonial civil governments often lack the administrative and political means to assert their presence and authority throughout the country and therefore, conveniently follow the models provided by their predecessors, the colonial states, in relying on the chiefs in certain cases" (Atiemo, 2006, p. 368). Since the strong link between Indigenous societies and religion makes chiefs governors and custodians of community norms and religion. In the sense that Indigenous leaders or Chiefs are accountable to people (the living), the ancestors (living dead) and the unborn (eggs) as symbolized by the inclusion of eggs in all religious ceremonies of local Akan people of Africa (Kwamena -Poh, 1975; Mbiti, 1990; Odotei, 2002). This makes the violation of spiritual customs and norms by the chief to be considered as enough grounds for their rejection as political leaders.

It is the duty of the chieftaincy institution to ensure that younger generations are socialized to continue with the norms and socio-cultural values of the community as it only by so doing that the survival of the tribe can be assured. To that end, the Akan cultural concept on child upbringing presumes that the community is invested in the "schooling" of children (Assie-Lumumba, 2012; Boateng, 1983; Boni, 2007; Kanu, 2007; Kwamena Poh,1975; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Seroto, 2011; Woolman, 2001). Ghanaian rural dwellers, like all African Indigenous communities, share a common child upbringing philosophy that recognizes child raising as a social responsibility (Boakye-Boateng, 2010).

This shared responsibility of child upbringing is demonstrated by the contributions that some Ghanaian chiefs made towards children's education from the colonial era to date (Addo & Addo, 2016; Donkoh, 2011; Simensen, 2000). Notable among these local rulers and the first to initiate such a feat was Nana Ofori-Atta 1 the king of Akyem (Okyenhene) and the leader of the Akyem Abuakwa State in Ghana. This Ghanaian Indigenous leader demonstrated the significance of education in nation building. Branded as a "modernising chief" this local leader was very outspoken in demanding the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and culture in formal education in the then Gold Coast, now Ghana. Nana Ofori-Atta 1 questioned the work of the Gold Coast Educational Commission in the 1920s on why the colonial authorities should collect taxes from the natives without asking for their input in government administration. This local leader actively showed interest in formal education, by "the establishment of his own 'independent' basic and secondary schools at his capital town Kyebbi" (Simensen, 2000, p.6) Other local leaders like the Konor of Manya Krobo (Addo & Addo, 2016), and Nana Agyeman

Prempeh, and Nana Opoku Ware of Ashanti followed suit by establishing schools for their people (Donkor, 2011). Nana Ofori-Atta 1's plan and actions incurred the displeasure of the Christian Missionaries whose aim was to have sole control of formal education in the Gold Coast (Simensen, 2000). Nana Ofori-Atta 1's display of an unshaken loyalty to society's cultural heritage in an era of colonization does not only mirror an African local ruler's resistance to European cultural imperialism, but sheds light on the significance that local African leaders attached to the importance of child upbringing. It also demonstrates the role that the chieftaincy institution plays in advocating for children's schooling, and what Africans expect of formal schooling from educators and school leadership. Moreover, the story of Nana Ofori Atta and the British colonial educators' points to the reason why Indigenous peoples resisted formal alien education. The chief's attitude towards formal education is illustrative of the fact that local African leaders are generally skeptical of the form of education been offered to their children. Anticolonial theorists have asserted that the schooling system is a medium by which the European world is transmitting its social values, aims, education, and structure of governance to the people of Africa (Coe, 2005; Segura, 2009; Smith, 2010), yet it has done little to equip the Ghanaian child to lead a responsible independent adult life after schooling (Adjei, 2007; MacBeath, 2010; Quan-Baffour, 2012; Segura, 2009).

The activities of the colonial authorities and the Christian missionaries thus resulted in a conflict between the chieftaincy institution and civil rulers in the then Gold Coast and current Ghana, as exemplified by the restrictions imposed on the chieftaincy institution via the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance (NJO) during the Indirect Rule era of the British. The Gold Coast chiefs who refused to be made puppets of the colonial powers were stripped of their position as punishment for noncorporation (Atiemo, 2006; Issifu, 2015; Odotei, 2002). Whilst both colonial and post-colonial civil government saw the activities of the chiefs as an impediment to modernization in Ghana, the chiefs noticed that formal education as an appendage of colonialism was being used to brainwash the local school children to scorn their own culture (Kodjo 1979; Simensen, 2000). As a measure of resistance, local Ghanaian chiefs like Nana Amoako Atta I, of Akyim Abuakwa and Okyehene refused to allow converted Christians to be part of his local administration. Other local Ghanaian chiefs, however, relinquished their positions on conversion to Christianity in the 19th century (Atiemo, 2006).

The chieftaincy institution in post-independent Ghana was not in a good relationship with the first president Kwame Nkrumah. This estranged relationship led to the enactment of several laws that ripped the chiefs of their powers. The securing of ultimate power by the central government gave the state authority to install and unseat a chief. This development totally rendered the chieftaincy institution powerless, and ineffective (Dzivenu, 2008). Today, relationships between the two groups are cordial because Ghanaian chiefs "have openly identified with Christianity and have formed an organisation known as the Association of Christian Chiefs" (Atiemo, 2006, p. 366). This action may signal the readiness of both parties to work together in achieving peace and development for the entire nation. It also signals assimilation to the colonial idea after the use of colonial power to quash Indigenous resistance and traditional power. This means that, despite the strong allegiance that the chieftaincy institution possesses, its power to influence school leadership can be limited, as the efficiency of the chiefdom as a local administrative organization has been made redundant by modern statecrafts in Ghana (Asamoah, 2012).

Although the colonial history of Ghanaian education is ripe with contention, local leadership can make positive impacts on children's education and the entire schooling system.

Ubink's (2007) study on the Chieftaincy institution in peri-urban area Ghana led to the conclusion that the allegiance to chiefs is founded on cultural identity. Support for the chieftaincy as a form of local leadership is mostly based on the ability of a chief to meet the cultural expectation of his people. Rural communities in Ghana rely on their local chiefs for governance. Chiefs as local leaders are accorded the highest respect, and their words are considered law. This means that chiefs as Ghanaian local authorities have significant roles in the promotion of whom and what "they represent and project the values of the culturally diverse communities that make up the country of Ghana" (Atiemo, 2006, p. 365). To that end, the chieftaincy institution plays an active role in the dissemination of national policy directives and extending development to peoples and locations that the central government finds difficult to reach (Dapilah et al., 2013).

According to Marfo and Musah (2018), chiefs are the right channel through which change and other development ventures about rural communities can be attained. They represent the calibre of leadership rural communities in Ghana recognize and trust as preservers and defenders of their socio-cultural values. The reliability and the resilient nature of the chieftaincy institution in the Ghanaian political sphere therefore may offer valuable possibilities for improving rural school outcomes and leadership training for these contexts. Chiefs can serve as a link between the central government and local people in agendas for change because they hold and enact the socio-cultural values of their people and are endowed with local and human resources in the development of their communities. This makes the chieftaincy institution an area that can be tapped for the improvement of schools and children's education in Ghana.

Serpell and Nsamenang (2015) argue that African socio-cultural values are resources that are readily available in communities since the emphasis on joint responsibility and collaboration among members can be deployed to enhance teaching and learning in rural communities.
The chieftaincy can have significant influence on school leadership in rural Indigenous communities (Yamada, 2009). Since it is from the African culture that the African finds direction for the attainment of a meaningful life, the chieftaincy institution as custodians of African Ghanaian Indigenous culture can partner and support school leadership in the delivery of culturally responsive leadership practices in rural Indigenous communities.

2.8 Indigenous Culturally Responsive School Leadership Practices

The literature review for this section focuses on two educational ideas: culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) preparation for Indigenous learners and CRSL with Indigenous communities in rural settings. Literature on CRSL advocates that school principals should be familiar with the cultural milieu and identity of the communities in which their schools are located (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Figueiredo-Brown et al., 2015; Ottmann, 2017). Unfortunately, literature on CRSL inclusive of Indigenous people and their knowledge is scanty and often inaccurate (Dei & Adhami 2022; Oppong, 2013; Shear et al., 2015; Smith, 1999).

CRSL is defined as the "practices and actions, mannerisms, policies, and discourses that influence school climate, school structure, teacher efficacy, or student outcome" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 3). A review of literature by Marshall and Khalifa (2018) identifies CRSL as covering areas of self-awareness, community participation, school location and the use of culture to influence both teaching or learning and school leadership practices. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) however added into this conceptualization the need to recognize the effects of racism, Indigenous sovereignty, self-determination, and Indigenous epistemologies in school leadership development programs to enable principals to acquire skills to offer culturally responsive education for Indigenous learners. Castagno and Brayboy (2008) make a compelling argument that school principals must first attain cultural competence, so that they are able to translate that knowledge into practicing CRSL.

Bush (2018) proposed three stages of school leadership socialization processes, which include training intended to help principals change their personal values and accept their new roles as leaders. A second stage includes “organisational socialisation”, which entails preparation that helps school principals to work efficiently in specific educational settings. Although not explicit in this work, if school principals are to be successful in specific educational settings, they must have the cultural competence necessary to work with communities of differences. Higher institutions have a role to play in enabling preservice teachers and school principals to understand the school settings in which they are meant to work. Learning more about Indigenous knowledge can serve to be the conduit for developing cultural competence (Hutchison & McAlister-Shields, 2020). Cultural competence in educational leadership involves the understanding of the significant roles that socio-cultural values play in students’ behaviour and learning styles, the interplay of these issues at the various levels of the schooling system, and the measures taken to guarantee quality educational delivery for diverse learners at the local levels (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). It includes a demonstration of care and trust towards learners and school communities and entails reshaping school curriculum to reflect learners’ cultural values (Hussen et al, 2020; Khalifa et al., 2016). The findings of Peralta et al.’s (2016) study of school-based service-learning experiences (SLE) revealed that, cultural competency is displayed when teachers and leaders have the ability to respond to students needs, when they acknowledge and appreciate diverse cultural practices by translating this information into teaching and learning activities, and when they question rules and accepted stereotypes that may be found to work to the disadvantage of students (Pewewardy, 2002). Likewise, Hussen et al. (2020) posit that the practice of cultural competence is intertwined with the exercise of cultural humility.

Ylimaki and Jacobson (2013**)** maintain that the development of CRSL practices requires school leaders to undergo four stages in their preservice training. The fist includes learning how to recreate schools as sites for learning. The second includes allotting periods for deliberation of the school's role in the local setting. The third important elements include the practicing of networking by school leaders with local community members, and the fourth element includes the constant support of serving school leadership. In order to achieve these ambitions, Bustamante et al. (2009) suggest that principal preparation programs must be geared towards the realization of personal biases and worldviews, whilst identifying the disparities and privileges within school settings. Preservice school leaders and teachers can be trained to exercise CRSL by including learning activities that include issues that focus on "race, culture, language, national identity, and other areas of difference is necessary but not sufficient in developing a critical consciousness" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 10) for culturally responsive school leadership practices. The magnitude of such an engagement calls for collaboration among all the key actors within the school community (Brown et al., 2019). To that end, any attempt to create a school leadership preparation program that would successfully lead to the implementation and practice of CRSL calls for the development of an individual group member's (school principals, teachers, and university-based scholars and teachers) own critical consciousness and their sense of agency in the field of educational administration and leadership.

The development and exercise of CRSL for Indigenous learners in rural communities call for change in the behavior of all individuals, and particularly leaders, in the entire teaching and learning organization (Bush, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016; Ottmann, 2017). Figueiredo-Brown et al. (2015) indicate that the integration of cultural competence and change in school leadership preparation must emanate from the ability of preparation program designers and instructors to question their own assumptions, biases, and values about people of varied cultures and race. It includes sharing of experiences on topics related to diversity in preparation programs to enable preservice school leaders to learn and accept differences as an inevitable reality of good school leadership practices.

According to Bustamante et al. (2009), preservice K-12 school leaders should learn how to engage in a cultural review of schools that requires them to use the information gained in their review to develop a program meant to improve cultural competence in schools. Likewise, Chance and Segura (2009) identify school context, school management performance, and school structure as some of the required areas of principal training. They suggest that any attempt to build a collaborative caring community as an initial measure by K-12 school leaders could lead to the creation of a familial form of relationship between school and community which may help principals establish rapport and gain trust from the entire members of the school community. The development of cultural competence of preservice principals requires them to learn about whole community engagement approaches that involve family engagement and engagement with sectors and services that traditionally may sit outside of the education realm, including Indigenous community-controlled organisations and local government.

In practice this means that university preparation programs must create programs that support a “more accessible, outward reaching, and inclusive society where universities and communities work together to monitor partnerships, measure impacts, evaluate outcomes, and make improvements to their shared activities” (Frawley et al., 2017, p. 8). Similarly, Mendiola et al.’s (2019) study on the challenges faced by rural school principals and a search for strategies to offset these problems via principal preparation programs recommended courses with a focus on teaching principals how to be prepared to use innovation, creativity, and social networking in their leadership practices.

Ylimaki and Jacobson (2013) indicate that both preservice school leaders and teachers can be trained to exercise CRSL by including learning activities that focus on social disparities, and the integration and uses of locally produced community resources as teaching and learning materials. The use of Indigenous languages and cultural materials in K-12 school leadership learning programs may help connect learning to students’ cultural values (Beaulieu, 2006; Gay, 2002). For instance, both Eppley (2015), and Ottmann, (2017) recommend the utilization of learning materials derived from the tribe’s system of inheritance as well as topics on Indigenous leadership roles as suitable resources for K-12 school leadership development programs. They explain that educational leadership development operates within specific economic, political, and socio-cultural settings, and therefore leadership training must respond to the needs, worldviews, and cultural traditions of those settings.

According to Gay (2002), the imposition of Western cultural norms in formal education is the major barrier to non-European students’ educational outcomes. Khalifa et al. (2016) stress the need for inclusion and application of Indigenous knowledge in the training of K-12 school leadership for CRSL to occur. Black and Simon (2014) suggest that school principals need to be taught how to exercise their own and others’ critical self-awareness of values and prejudices that might impact their interactions with members of the school community.

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) note that developing school leaders for work with Indigenous communities requires a critical inward examination of both personal (Bailey, 2014) and official or institutional biases and inequities (Riehl, 2000). The color-blind stance (Shiller, 2020) and the colonist educational assimilationist agenda (Paris & Alim, 2014) of contemporary K-12 school leadership development programs needs to be dismantled. This makes the requirement for self-reflexivity in the study of school administration practice to be in line with Riehl's (2000) assertion that efficient school leadership practices are built on the understanding that stems from the individual leader's own background and socio-cultural values. The practice of CRSL involves the integration of community "history, values and cultural knowledge of students' home communities in the school curriculum to develop a critical consciousness among students and faculty to challenge inequalities in the larger society and empower parents from diverse communities" (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2013, p. 15). Likewise, Furman (2012) draws on the work of many scholars (Brooks & Miles, 2006; Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002; Shields, 2003) to argue that school principals should be prepared to become change agents. As such, they are to be sensitized on disparities and segregations that characterize schools and the needed strategies to change them. The above recommendations align with the tenets of Indigenous principles of self-determination and the need to recognize Indigenous societies as sovereign states. The preparation of school principals for the practice of CRSL demands that school leaders be trained to work with local community members to realize the significant role of Indigenous culture and values in the schooling of Indigenous children. As Castagno and Brayboy (2008) assert, "parent and community ownership over schooling is an important aspect of actively engaging tribal sovereignty and realizing the goals of self-determination" (p. 152). The foregoing discussion is in consonance with Warren et al.'s (2009) observation that educational institutions are sites where community members can contribute their aspirations and needs towards their children's schooling. It is the school leader's ability to be cognizant of important roles and imputes that community members can make toward the success of their children's education which could contribute to successful school leadership (Mfum-Mensah 2003, 2009). Likewise Riley and Webster (2016) recommend the "both ways" involvement of formal and informal members in the managerial positions in the school community. This notion of learning "both ways" is described by Munroe et al. (2013) as an idea "which encourages learners to see from one eye with the best in the Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the best in the mainstream ways of knowing, and most importantly, learning to see with both eyes together – for the benefit of all" (p. 327). This notion of "both way" learning thus becomes significant when developing preservice school leadership program since leadership practices with Indigenous communities connotes the idea of a synergic effort by which groups handle and address their own identified issues (Kiamba, 2008).

Rural schools which are often characterized by a small population offer the chance for principals to establish trusting ties with formal and informal community members (Chance & Segura, 2009). Fraise and Brooks (2015) indicate that the knowledge used to develop school leadership must come from different sources, and the approach must be flexible enough to allow products of such programs to join hands with their instructors to co-create suitable and beneficial programs. For instance, the incorporation of a rural lens in leadership program planning would enable both planners and implementers of educational curriculum "to consider the distinctiveness of rural and remote communities in order to rethink ways in which appropriate educational leadership can be nurtured with these environments" (Brown, 2007, p. 7). Several scholars focusing on rural education have suggested that one of the most-often unrecognized mistakes of K-12 school leadership preparation programs has been the lack of attention to contextual knowledge and its impact on school needs and practices (Kutsyuruba.et al., 2017; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Noman et al., 2018; Preston et al., 2013).

Encouraging communities to participate in school leadership planning might help address the educational needs of students in rural schools whilst helping school principals meet the demanding workloads specific to rural school leadership (Forner, et al., 2012). Hildreth et al. (2018) prescribe the building of collaborative ties among university based principal preparation program designers, practicing principals and school communities as the recipe for building a sustaining support system which could be utilized to respond to the needs of schools in rurality**.** Similarly, Chance and Segura (2009) maintain that school principals should be familiar with the cultural milieu and identity of the communities in which their schools are located, in order to incorporate resources from the community into the educational programming of the school.

Beaulieu (2006) calls for the integration of culturally based education in the form of native cultural enrichment into K-12 school leadership programs through the incorporation of learning materials on the tribe's system of inheritance and topics on Indigenous leadership roles. The inclusion of an Indigenous cultural component in the mainstream university-based school leadership development programs would encourage K-12 principals in rural communities to display cultural responsiveness when it "respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all parts of human life" and embraces the "idea that humans have naturally developed a range of different ways of life, customs and worldviews" (Brown et al., 2019, p. 5). In addition, rural school principals can learn how "Indigenous staff and school principals work together in leadership roles within schools and engage in mutual learning and teaching, to create a shared sense of identity and purpose between school staff and community members" **(**Riley & Webster, 2016, p. 7).

School leadership preparation programming that fosters collaborative partnerships between schools and communities can support the purposeful induction of novice instructional leaders while emphasizing equity, diversity, and context (Figueiredo-Brown et al., 2015; Hildreth et al., 2018). Ottmann (2017) accounts that systemic barriers can be offset when Indigenous epistemology and Indigenous cultures are affirmed and valued in learning programs. Lenski et al. (2005) also note that school workers and educators of all kinds must be prepared to cultivate the habit of valuing both community and learners' culture by acknowledging the impacts of socio-cultural values in teaching and school leadership practices because schooling with its accompanying leadership practices occurs within specific socio-cultural contexts, associations, and human behaviours.

For instance, studies on Indigenous students' learning styles advocate for teaching, learning and leadership practices that focus on concrete activities and natural settings that connect learners to their background (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ottmann, 2017). The concept of location or territory significantly influences through and action in Indigenous communities and serves to question the one size fits all models of curriculum currently used to prepare K-12 school leadership preparation programs. Current models fail to respond appropriately to both the advantages and disadvantages of local school settings (Eppley 2015). Per Smith, (2016), the application of Indigenous knowledge in education is synonymous to studying how to establish relationship in context.

Hence, school leaders intending to practice CRSL in Indigenous rural schools are to be prepared to establish relationships with local community members**.** For instance, Riley's and Webster's (2016) work on community involvement in school leadership revealed that Aboriginal students' success in formal education is linked to the establishment of good ties with people who demonstrate care and trust toward them. Thus, some of these unique characteristics of both rural settings and their accompanying Indigenous student populations are what designers of school leadership program must address to support K-12 school leadership success in these settings.

2.9 Summary

The literature review for this proposal has described how African Indigenous knowledge can be used to influence school leadership practices. It provides an account of educational leadership in precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial Ghana and how Akan child upbringing norms are strongly tied to the socio-cultural values of people in rural Ghana. The section concludes by arguing that the incorporation of African Indigenous knowledge in K-12 School leadership development programs holds promise for culturally responsive school leadership that is needed to enhance rural learners' educational outcomes in Ghanaian rural Indigenous communities.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Perspectives Research Methodology and Methods

3.0 Introduction

This study explores how African Akan Indigenous knowledge of leadership practices and child-upbringing norms can influence K-12 school leadership practices in ways that enhance children's educational outcomes in rural Ghanaian Indigenous communities. This chapter thus elaborates on the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings in the inquiry, and how they impacted on the researcher's methodological preference for the study. The chapter reports on the justifications and suitability of research methods, and provides a description of research instruments, and processes for data collection and analysis. Attention was drawn to the description of study sites, recruitment of study participants, the observance of Indigenous study protocols, and ethical considerations, and strategies taken to ensure study trustworthiness. A qualitative study methodology incorporating an Indigenist feminist epistemological lens is articulated in this study. Methodologically, an interpretivist theoretical framework that incorporates a blend of focused ethnographic and Indigenous research methods were used for the study. Data collection and analysis strategies are also discussed.

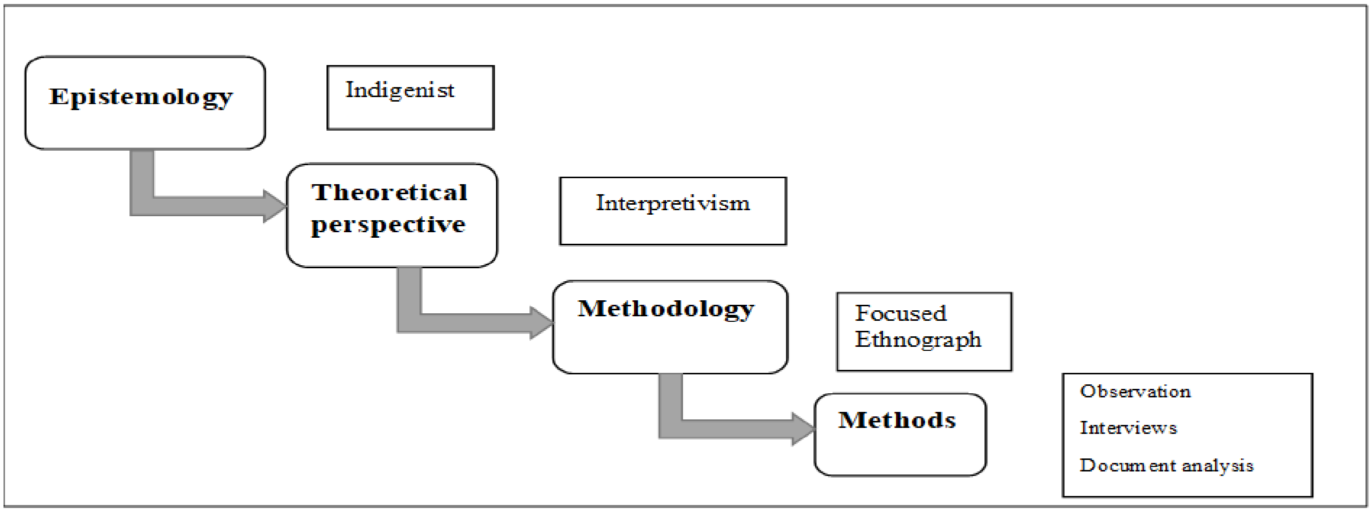
Qualitative research is an interactive and detailed process of inquiry by which researchers study participants in their natural environment with the aim of gaining an in-depth insight into how people make sense of their world, and how this understanding influences their behavior (Creswell et al., 2007; Ritchie et al., 2003). Using a qualitative research approach, I attempted to "understand the meaning of social action" (Schwandt, 2001, p.133). My aim was not to predict what may happen, but "understanding the particular context within which the participants act and the influence this context has on their actions" (Maxwell, 2008, p. 221). I thus chose to utilize a qualitative framework because I wanted to understand how Akan Indigenous communities in rural Ghana could apply their African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) to enact Indigenous culturally responsive leadership. My research objective was to describe phenomenon in a particular setting in real life situation to present “a socio-cultural account” of leadership. Merriam (2002) concurs with Creswell and Creswell (2017) to indicate that the process of qualitative research starts with the researcher’s philosophical assumptions that align with particular theoretical lenses that lend themselves to the process of learning about societal problems and human behaviour. This process of research is perceived as creative, and evolving, whilst the knowledge acquisition or epistemological lens in this form of research is practical in nature. It is knowledge drawn from naturally occurring actions, interactions, and conversations (Cunliffe, 2011).

Plack (2005) aligns with (Crotty, 1998) to define qualitative research processes as being bounded by four questions of:

> “(1) How do we know what we know (i.e., theory of knowledge or epistemology)? (2) What philosophical stance addresses the assumptions the investigator brings to the process (i.e., theoretical perspective)? (3) What is the research plan and rationale that links choice of methods to outcomes desired (i.e., methodology)? and (4) How will data be collected and analyzed to answer the research questions (i.e., methods)?” (p.226).

Figure 1

Research Framework (Adopted from Crotty, 1998)


Epistemology
Indigenist
Theoretical perspective
Interpretivism
Methodology
Focused Ethnograph
Methods
Observation
Interviews
Document analysis

3.1 Indigenist Epistemology (African Akan Perspective)

Epistemological assumptions are based on how knowledge is created, accessed, and explained. It further sheds light on the various rules used in the generation of knowledge (Scotland 2012). The researcher's philosophical or theoretical positioning refers to those ideas of personal experiences, and knowledge that are factored into a particular research process. The very discipline in which the research is located can also be considered as an area that influences the study (Caelli et al., 2003; Eakin & Gladstone, 2020). This study with a focus on Indigenous knowledge and culture adopted an Indigenous research process which provided flexible research methods consistent with Indigenous community's research principles of respect, communalism, and spirituality (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009; Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015; Pidgeon et al., 2002).

This research was guided by the African Akan Indigenist epistemology, drawing attention to specific tribal knowledge systems (Kovach, 2010). African epistemology necessitates an application of African centered ideas with Africa as a focal area. African Akan ways of knowing perceive knowledge as located in human bodies and cultural memories (Khupe & Keane, 2017; Keane et al., 2016). To the Akan, knowledge is not gained by mental detachment from the study process, but through "a consciousness of knowing and coming to engage knowledge….it is "about engaging in action and transformation" (Dei, 2012, p. 834). The African Akan epistemology aligns with constructionist understanding in which knowledge is purposely generated for the benefits of the entire society, kinship, and the individual (Raelin, 2007; Dei, 2012; Thomas et al., 2002; Ward et al., 2015). Hence, the study allowed the researcher to borrow and use both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge construction in the study process. The study as African Indigenous epistemology driven research bears the traits of an African community-based research (ACBR). ACBR incorporates Indigenous community-based knowledge into current knowledge systems, whilst introducing Indigenous research participants to scientific knowledge generation and dissemination that are congruent with local community values and worldviews. ACBR offers legitimacy to local Indigenous community leadership as stakeholders and active members of the research process (Higgs, 2010).

The Akan Indigenous epistemology supports constructivist approaches, as both equip learners with the requisite "knowledge and conceptual power needed to deal with complex and ill-structured problems" (Ertmer & Newby, 1993, p. 64). It also perceives knowledge as culturally and historically located, having multiple sources, subjective in nature, and where meaning making is recognized as being context specific (Kovach, 2010; Raelin, 2007). Additionally, both Indigenist and constructionist perspectives perceive knowledge creation as a process which can be attained through interactions with individuals in the social world. Human dialogue becomes the needed medium for the construction and reconstruction of subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann,1991; Guido, Chávez & Lincoln, 2010; Dei, 2012; Udefi, 2014). The choice of Indigenist epistemology was merged with anti-colonial and post-colonial feminist theories as study lenses within the scope of diverse African Indigenous socio-political spaces and terms. The application of multiple lenses helped in the capturing of local Indigenous community members' experiences and succeeded in the examining a diverse population whose importance cannot be determined by a "singular definition" (Aniekwu ,2006). African Indigenous feminist epistemology supports its cultural heritage and inclusion. The African notion of schooling "is defined by its philosophical grounding rather than its racial characteristics. The school is defined more by its principles rather than by who goes or teaches in the school" (Dei, 2010, p.42). Formal educational systems in most post-colonial countries like Ghana have maintained their colonizing educational policies and practices. Students' "retention and success in school has been linked to students' achievements in the hidden rather than the formal curriculum…that 'oils the wheels' for the smooth running of the school and of the classes of students within it" (Cohen et al., 2010, p. 102). The study with an Indigenist feminist epistemology naturally requires this study to conform to an Indigenous research method. As such, the use of an Indigenist epistemology enabled this research to be situated in a "journey of academic contradiction…. from colonizing…to the decolonisation of Indigenous peoples' lives'' (Rigney, 2001, p. 8). The above strategy allowed me to participate in the study without reinventing the hegemonic colonial imagination about Indigenous people while permitting me to situate the study within tensions, conflicts, and counter oppositional research methods that also centred gender (Chalmers, 2017;

Rigney, 2001). I acknowledge an anti-oppressive and anti-colonial stance to position this research as the needed platform for change (Ray, 2012).

The use of both anti colonial and post-colonial theories as analytical lenses for the interpretation of the research data is also suitable for this research given the need for Indigenous knowledge to offer solutions to societal problems faced particularly by Indigenous colonized peoples, of which I am a member (Keane et al., 2016; Kovach, 2010). The use of African Indigenist feminist epistemology requires the employment of “Afrocentricity” which is a deliberate act of situating African Akan viewpoints as the focus in examining all study processes (Blay, 2008). Thus, the employment of the African Akan feminist epistemology for the study enabled me to provide an insider/emic non-positivist means of undertaking cultural study in school leadership (Morse, 2013; Schedlitzki et al., 2017).

Thésée and Carr (2012) offer the hint that western educational researchers have contributed immensely to making damaging impressions of African people and their culture. African cultures and ways of being were tainted with negative imagery in the eyes of these colonizing researchers. The damaging effects of colonization must be brought to bear by contemporary Indigenous researchers when engaging in research with Indigenous people. This has necessitated a need for Indigenous research epistemology to provide “a transformative agenda” that rails against perceived unfavorable research methodologies of the colonizers and argues for the use of innovative approaches which result in the creation of ground-breaking research questions, new methodologies, new research relationships, deep analyses of the researcher in context, and analyses, interpretations, and the making of meanings that have been enriched by Indigenous concepts and language (Smith, 1999). The above recognition highlights the need for the decolonization of the mainstream institutions and their epistemological foundations from which these hegemonic tendencies emanate (Smith, 2005). Hence the use of an Indigenist epistemology for this study aligns with an assumption that the act of leadership can be understood by examining and engaging in Indigenous activities and ceremonies that inform and shape the enactment of leadership practices. In turn, these leadership practices can serve as teachings from which I can draw understandings of how school leadership preparation programs may better serve Indigenous rural communities as they teach principals how to: “critically reflect on what constitutes leadership behaviour; Develop culturally responsive leadership practices; Promote culturally inclusive school environments, and Appropriately engage students, and parents in Indigenous contexts” (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 13). I have additionally centred girls’ education as a key component given the research on Ghanaian rural schooling. It is through such means that school leadership preparation program designers, instructors, and implementers might learn from Indigenous communities’ experiences as to how culturally responsive school leadership for Indigenous children in rural communities can be enacted to enhance the rural learners’ educational outcomes.

3.2 Sankofa: Indigenous Epistemology and Ontology Through Community-Based Research

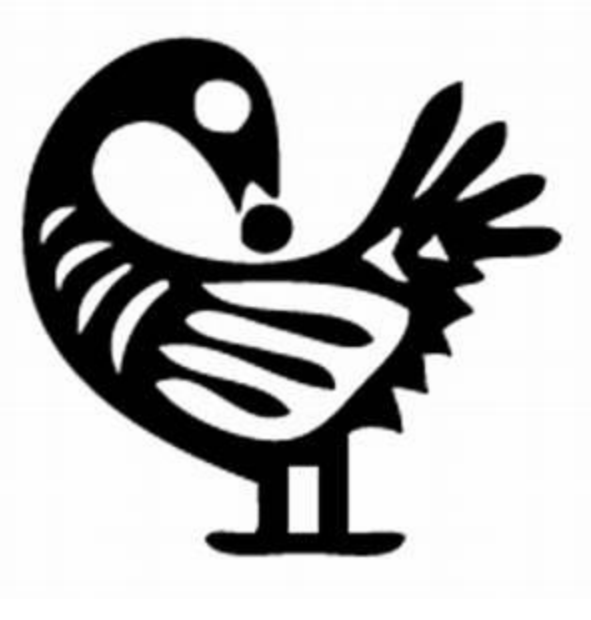
Used as a symbol of the general history of Africa, the concept of Sankofa is expressed visually and symbolically as a mythic bird that flies forward while looking backward with an egg (symbolizing the future and the wisdom of the past) in its mouth to take stock (Adjei & Dei, 2008; Quan-Baffour, 2008, 2012). The Sankofa perspective captures the spirit of the African Akan epistemologies by which individuals, groups, and communities are reminded to look back in order to reposition themselves to move forward more strategically (Kuwornu-Adjaottor et al., 2016). The significance of African renaissance (AR) in the academy of research can “open avenues for scholarly research, for theory, and for an effective practice. A Sankofa research driven process must unleash a thorough interrogation of our own Eurocentric scholarship and the entire panoply of Eurocentric scholarship, to shake it from its contented hegemonic pose into an arena of meaningful contestation" (Ntuli, 1998, p.18). Sankofa offers both an epistemological and ontological understanding that is realized through relationality.

3.2.1 *Epistemology*

The African renaissance approach as epitomised by the Sankofa ideology treats history as a spherical event by which AIK is used as resources for the generation of new insights that are integral for human flourishing in contemporary Africa (Kanu, 2007). The Sankofa concept (Figure 2) thrives on Indigenous methodologies and is anticolonial in outlook (Dei, 2000: Kanu, 2007; Kuwornu-Adjaottor et al., 2016).

Figure 2

The Sankofa Bird of African Renaissance Theory (Adapted from Adjei & Dei, 2008)



The Sankofa concept is counter-oppositional in approach, as it calls into question the traditionally accepted colonial educational experience as well as its consequences (Dei, 2012). Anti-colonial theory argues that the encounter between the colonized and the colonizer led to a marginalization of African peoples. The Western imposed educational curriculum virtually told Africans “to amputate a part of themselves” (Tafoya, 1995, p. 27), becoming culturally circumcised to be able to walk on imported Western clutches, which were not in the first place culturally built for them (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013).

The African Indigenous idea of leadership is that of a collective activity rather than an individual responsibility (Assié-Lumumba, 2012; Boakye -Boateng, 2010; Oppong, 2017; Quan-Baffour, 2008, 2012). It is important to be knowledgeable of Indigenous social constructs like the extended family system, chieftaincy, and Indigenous African socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms to foster culturally responsive leadership practices to create the needed conditions to improve educational outcomes for children in Ghanaian rural Indigenous communities (Hewlett, 1991; Lutz & Linder, 2004).

This study uplifts the ideas of Sankofa to enable the gaining of an in-depth understanding of interplay of practice and power. The Sankofa theory thus can be equated to a practical theory whose application becomes a groundbreaking means of undertaking studies that can offer better K-12 school leadership (Kuper et al., 2013). Sankofa as a socio-cultural theory for this study provided a new window for capturing how the African Akan reality can lead to the social transformation of educational administration (Kuper &Whitehead, 2013). My application of the Sankofa ideology as a practical theory in this study finds strength in the fact that the idea of “relationality” has significant meaning through the translation of theory into practice, instead of attempting to provide meanings to their “innate” characteristics (Fieldman & Worline, 2016).

3.2.2 *Ontology*

Ontology or the nature of being within the African Akan Indigenous domain constitutes an intertwined relationship between human and spiritual beings (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015). As such the processes of the ways of being in the African communities' place emphasis on a relational ontology in which interrelationships between both the living and the nonliving components of the universe are deemed key to the understanding of studied reality (Chilisa et al., 2017). The entire process of knowledge creation within the African Akan Indigenous worldview is founded on the belief that knowledge is relational and is shared among all entities within the cosmos (Wilson, 2001). In the words of Chilisa et al. (2016), this African way of perceiving reality comes out more clearly when addressing the nature of being. The common answer on what is being comes out in the adage, "I am because we are, I am a person through other persons, I am we; I am because we are; we are because I am, I am in you, you are in me" (p. 318). The African Akan understands that there is interdependency between the creations of the spiritual and the physical worlds (Antwi, 2017). Figure 3 demonstrates the researcher space in relation to the triune relationship between researcher, the environment and the transcendant. Figure 4 speaks to the ontological nature of being in an African Indigenous ontology.

Figure 3

Researcher in a Triune Relationship (Adapted from Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015)

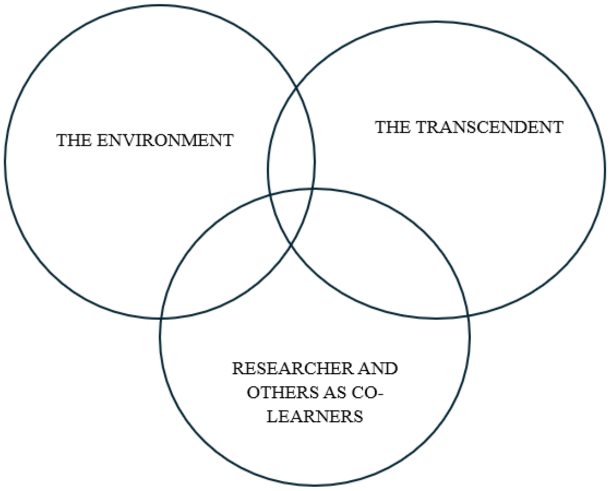
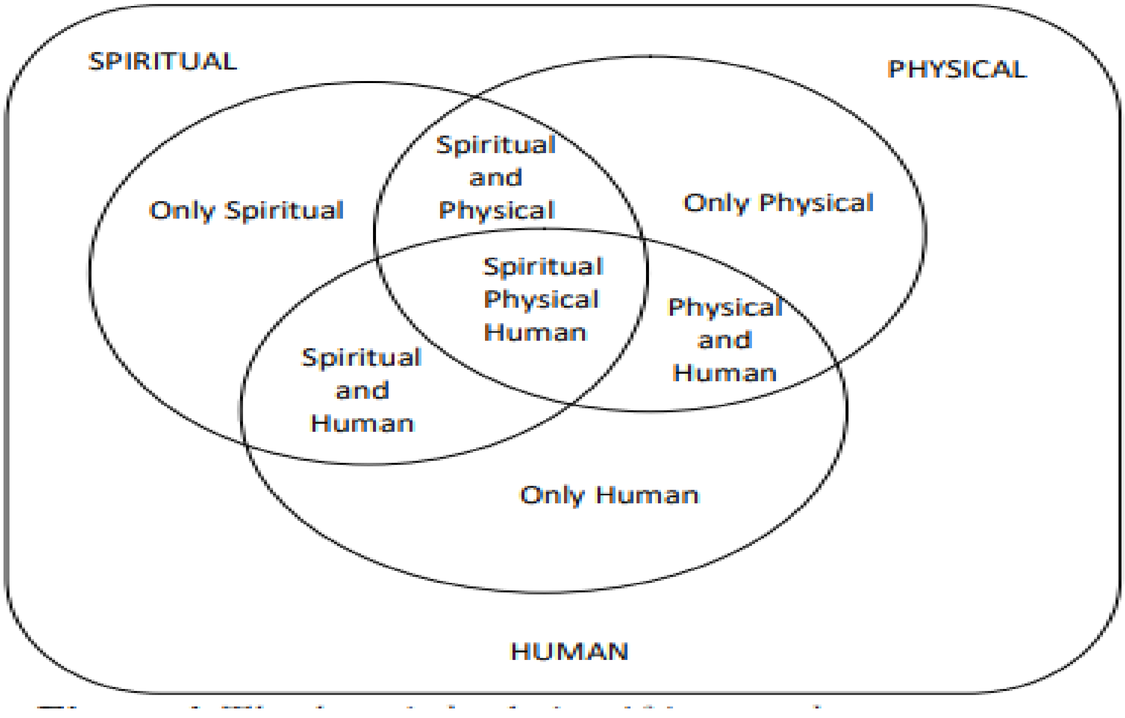

THE ENVIRONMENT
THE TRANSCENDENT
RESEARCHER AND OTHERS AS CO-LEARNERS

Figure 4

The Nature of Being in an African Indigenous Ontology (Source: Tchombe & Wirdze, 2023)


SPIRITUAL
PHYSICAL
Only Spiritual
Spiritual and Physical
Only Physical
Spiritual Physical Human
Physical and Human
Spiritual and Human
Only Human
HUMAN

The ontological stance of the African Akan Indigenous society is based on the premise that to grasp the nature of being or what exists is to have absolute understanding of all those components of the society and their interconnectedness into the whole. As such "knowledge is seen as cumulative and as emerging from experiencing the social world. Practice and experience are seen as the contextual basis of knowledge" (Dei 2000, p. 124). Hence, this study employed all the tenets of the African community-based research (ACBR) and recognized the existence and participation of both the physical and the non-physical entities of the African Indigenous community. The individual who employs African community-based research (ACBR) is not perceived as an individual entity on a knowledge exploration. In the Akan worldview, the sacred and the secular are intertwined to the extent that the world of the physical or living human beings and that of spiritual or the sacred are inseparable. The interdependency of these two entities permeates all activities of the traditional Akan social activities. The Akans emphasize the need to ensure a peaceful co-existence between the secular and the sacred for the assurance of mutual benefits in their communities (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009).

The African Akan Indigenous community shares the beliefs that their cosmos is made up of multiple groups of beings. As such it is required of researchers to be in relation with these physical and spiritual beings throughout the study process. These groups of spiritual beings occupying the African Indigenous environment with their human counterparts have the Supreme Being at the apex followed by the Earth goddess and the Ancestors/ the living dead, and the lesser deities (Koranteng-Green, 2018). Hence, the acknowledgement of the existence of "a non-physical reality (theos or transcendent) beyond the human and physical world" (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath 2015, p. 6), was enacted through the performance of libation pouring (Aborampah 2004) which served as a mediation channel to get connected via the human spirit/sunsum and the

Okra as “a speck of the divine substance” (Wiredu, 1992, p. 219) to the other physical and spiritual entities as co-researchers within the African Akan Indigenous cosmos (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015). The act of libation pouring is the prayer link by which mortal beings gain temporal access to interact with sacred beings (White, 2015). The inclusion of the libation ceremony then amounts to a formal recognition of relationality and serves as a very significant aspect of Indigenous research process since “libation pouring signifies an apparent recognition by those who engage in it that they are under the control and direction of forces far more ‘powerful’ and ‘wiser’ (Ayim-Aboagye, 1996, p. 9). These relational aspects of the African community-based research process results in the creation of a “unity of being” (Mazama, 2002).

Libation pouring in the Akan ceremonial practice comes as an individual and communistic invocation meant to link the living humans with their spiritual descendants. Thus, it is this invocation of the spiritual entities via the libation pouring that connects the researcher’s spirit to all the various entities of the African cosmos (Kilson, 1969) which explains why Indigenous modes of knowledge creation works in harmony with the research community’s socio-cultural values. The application of Indigenous research methods connects the mental, spiritual, and physical components of all research participants to avoid the Eurocentric “Cartesian split” which emphasizes a detached/ objective approach practices to research processes (Dei, 2012). Attention to spirituality thus becomes significant in knowledge creation, as knowledge comes in three forms, namely, ancestral, empirical, and revealed (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015).

The African Akan ontology or the nature of being/ what it means to exist emanates from the “intense religiosity” of the knowledge keepers and researchers, coupled by the religious/ spiritual worldview of the Indigenous Akan communities (Golo et al., 2022). This unity of being is the spiritual component of relationality in the African Akan Indigenous setting (Tynan, 2021), and its implementation in the ACBR helps in gaining access to relational data for the study (Mbah et al., 2023). This unity of being also endorses both community members as study participants endowed with knowledge, capability and interested in the facilitation, translation, interpretation, and evaluation of community research data (Koster et al., 2012). This relational aspect of the community-based research means that the success of any meaningful community based participatory research with Indigenous communities calls for collaboration of researchers with different stakeholders of such communities whereby "relationships are formed, nurtured, and reformed throughout the research process in genuine respect and appreciation, preferably with the aim of forming lasting bonds between researchers and community" (Victor et al., 2016, p. 424). Knowledge generation within the Indigenous domain comes in three forms namely, traditional/ancestral knowledge which is handed over from older generation to the younger, empirical knowledge which in derived from research, and revealed knowledge gained via spiritual means like visions, trance, and dreams (Botha, 2011). Hence the process of African community-based research ACBR prepares all researchers in linking up with all the three sources of their community knowledge as indicated above (Adjei 2014; Kilson 1969).

3.3 African Indigenous Feminism

The scholarly work of feminism has been saddled with multiple challenges that make it difficult to form a united front (Kolawole, 2004; Tyagi, 2014). Indigenous females in countries all over the world have varied histories and experiences that are linked to the impacts and vestiges of colonialism. Colonialism and patriarchy have been closely entwined historically, but an end to the formal colonial empires and colonial domination has not meant an end to the oppression of women in colonized countries (Kolawole, 2004; Mishra, 2013). African feminists therefore attempt to bring to the fore the ways in which women continue to be stereotyped, oppressed, and marginalized. African feminism focuses on the unique socio-cultural condition of African females, whilst considering how socio-cultural, and other environmental factors account for their daily challenges in Africa (Aidoo, 2005; Nnaemeka, 2004). African females are to be perceived not only as the very epitome of their socio-cultural values and practices, but also as key actors in the development and maintenance of their ethnic and societal socio-cultural initiative and engagements (Mama, 2011). The above premise from which the Indigenous African feminism is evolving makes the African Indigenous socio-cultural values the basis for theorizing from an African geographical and political setting, and from an African philosophical worldview (Aniekwu, 2006; Chigwedere, 2010; Msila, 2021; Nkealah, 2016).

African feminists have called for a more African centered form of female solidarity/ feminism that seeks to focus on the social and economic transformation of females in Africa. For to the African Indigenous female, gender advocacy is not about fighting with males for gender equity, nor the imbibing of the notion that males are enemies of female progress. Rather gender advocacy in the Africa Indigenous realm must ensure a harmonious relationship between male and female with a common aim of decolonization, since societal transformation demands a collaborative effort from both male and females within the African community (Ogundipe-Lesile, 1994). An African feminist view requires men to play an indispensable role in the family and community and in all spheres of the African women’s life (Aidoo, 1996; Blay, 2008: Ebunoluwa, 2009).

African feminists have called for a reconceptualization in research on gender in Africa that demands an inclusive involvement of females on the margins of the social ladder, particularly from rural areas, as they constitute the bulk of female population in African society

(Blay, 2008; Oduro, 2008; Tyagi, 2014). They argue that research aimed at the gaining of knowledge intending to solve African problems must be made to assume an African perspective in its course (Ntseane, 2011). It should be "historically and culturally specific, and practical and solution-oriented…with a theoretical paradigm grounded in the cultural and historical experiences of African people. Given the hegemony inherent to Western, Eurocentric paradigms, research conducted under its guise has often yielded results that position Africa and her people as inept, abnormal, and dysfunctional" (Blay, 2008, p. 61).

This search for an African Indigenous feminism stem from the failure of the mainstream White feminists' groups to speak to the unique needs and challenges facing females on the African context (Ebunoluwa, 2009). Despite the diverse nature of the African socio-cultural values and ethnic differences, Indigenous rural females on the African continent do not consider themselves as having the same cultural practices and values with their female contemporaries of different race and culture (Nkealah, 2016). As such, African females are determined to go with a form of feminist ideology that aligns with their historical realities and socio-cultural practices. According to Aniekwu (2006), "the African variant of feminism has grown out of a history of female integration within largely masculine and agrarian-based societies with strong cultural heritages…and customary practices that are culturally accepted in many non-Western societies" (p. 149). Yet these socio-cultural values which the African feminist basically sees as a medium for "cultural consensus" becomes contested and an avenue for reinterpretation of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) and values at times.

This study tows the feminist line from the Akan matrilineal tribe of Ghana in the West of Africa. This study also shares and identifies with the African Akan socio-cultural specificity as its guiding principles and framework. Gender norms and feminism traits of the African Akan matrilineal tribe of Ghana demonstrates a unique form of gender advocacy where both male and females jointly share power, responsibilities, and roles without displaying any signs of divisive tendencies (Akyeampong & Obeng, 1995; Farrah, 1997). The African Akan Indigenous gender is biologically determined, but roles are socially constructed, and females are mostly considered the leaders and implementers of their basic Indigenous education (Adjei, 2014). Thus, it is required of me as a researcher in Africa to be cognizant of the diverse socio-cultural, socio-economic, religious, tribal, and political differences and values that characterize the African social milieu. As a female Indigenous African, I believe that an African feminist positioning is well-suited to the socio-cultural values of Indigenous Africans. It must be for African women researchers to realize the essence of their culture, to display their "Africanness" and African female traits, in the advocacy for a transformation of the African female and African children's' conditions.

Vital truth lies in the notion that a delve into the cohesion that characterized the traditional African perspective and understanding of gender roles can serve as the panacea to the social transformation and its onward sustainable development of females in Indigenous Africa (Afisi, 2010). African communal living as epitomized by their socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms, interdependency between male and females, and cooperation among all living and non-living entities have been the hallmark of the people of Africa (Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015). Hence, the ability to attain a well-ordered African society demands a revisit to these ancestral/ pre-colonial and socio-cultural values that found expression in our African Indigenous knowledge and practices (Antwi, 2017: Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012).

Sankofa in the Ghanaian Akan language means go back (San ko), and take (fa) (Okrah 2008, p. 26). Nowhere in Ghana is the above description truer than the education field which has continued to be structured to the disadvantage of females in general and females in rural

Indigenous communities in particular (Oduro, 2008; Segura, 2009). The bequeathed colonial Ghanaian educational system is characterized with vestiges of oppressive colonial educational leadership policies and practices which make it difficult for girls in rural communities to thrive in formal education (McBeath, 2010; Segura, 2009), and where there exists continued abuse of female students especially at the second cycle schooling system where young women are made to attend residential schools (Agu et al., 2018; Dunne & Ananga, 2013; Leach et al., 2003). The anti-colonial traits of both the Sankofa ideology and African Indigenous feminist theories thus become appropriate frameworks for the exploration of African Akan child-upbringing norms as an aspect of AIK for the preparation of K-12 school leadership for efficient work in rural Ghanaian schools (MacBeath, 2010; Nfum-Mensah, 2009). Thus, using the above information as the study's theoretical framework served as a "webs of interlocking concepts that facilitate the organization of empirical material by providing explicit interpretive frameworks that researchers use to make their data intelligible and justify their choices and methodological decisions" (Bendassolli, 2014, p. 166). These chosen theoretical framework can support an analysis of how western non-Indigenous school leadership practices have impacted upon Indigenous rural students', and particular schoolgirls' educational outcomes (Mishra, 2013; Tyagi, 2014).

In addition, these two lenses provided a means to develop culturally appropriate strategies that could be adopted to curtail or remedy school children's attrition in Ghanaian Indigenous rural communities. This type of research demands grassroots methodological approaches based on community-engaged research intended to elicit a critical understanding of how Indigenous epistemologies can support rural Ghanaian educational experiences and minimize inequity (Anlimachie, 2019).

The African Ghanaian K-12 rural schooling population consists of learners from over 17 diverse ethnic groups with varied socio-cultural values. African Indigenous knowledge is the social capital, a "cultural fund" on which individual and community members rely and use as strategies for survival (Mfum-Mensah, 2003, 2004; Pryor, et al., 2003; Segura, 2009). In the African Ghanaian rural educational setting, this socio-cultural capital exists in the form of "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for households' wellbeing" (Anlimachie, 2019, p. 50). AIK is embedded in the socio-cultural values, customary practices, and norms of the local people (Oppong, 2013, 2017; Quan-Baffour, 2008, 2012). It is enacted as locally available resources that can be tapped by Indigenous African Akan community leaderships, teachers and principals for effective management of schools in rurality (Dei, 2012; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012), with females playing a major leadership role (Adjei 2014; Farrah 1997).

3.4 Interpretive Inquiry

My choice for the interpretive framework for this research is in consonance with the claim that theoretical views of any social research (of which educational administration is inclusive) must not be prescriptive. The purpose of choosing a theoretical perspective "should be to provide researchers with a sense of stability and direction as they go on to do their own building; that is, as they move towards understanding and expounding the research process after their own fashion in forms that suite their particular research purposes" (Crotty, 1998, p. 2). An interpretive framework thus became suitable for this research topic since the study of the African Akan Indigenous child upbringing norms as an aspect of an AIK calls not only for an observation and description of human behaviour, but the offering of an inscription "that is itself a second or third order interpretation of respondents' interpretations" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 232). Hence this study provided a contextual account of how African Akan Indigenous community leaders understand, interpret, and enact leadership “in a way that captures their inherent nature” (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 28). My preference for the interpretivist approach for this study assumed that societal culture must be studied as an explanatory science aimed at meaning making, and not like an experimental practice bound by scientific laws (Schwandt, 1994). This supports Smith’s (1999) recommendation that, though study investigators using Indigenous methods are to focus on Indigenous values and adhere to Indigenous research protocols, “Western methods and theories may be adapted if deemed appropriate and beneficial by the local community” (Simonds & Christopher, 2013, np). Interpretive researchers approach reality from the perspectives of the subjects, “typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group or culture” (Thanh & Thanh, 2015, p. 25).

The choice of an interpretive framework for this study is based on three main reasons: (1) it enabled me to capture the sense making of study participants (Merriam, 2002); (2) it made it possible for study members and myself to engage in an interactive activities as co-constructors of knowledge (Hollstein, 2011), and; (3) it aligned with my aim of offering “a rich, contextualized understanding of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases” (Polit & Beck, 2010, p. 1452). The above viewpoint aligns with the study purpose and objectives since school leadership practices can connotes different meanings in varied languages and cultural practices (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Schedlitzki et al., 2017). The study with a purpose of exploring of K-12 school leadership development policy structure, language, and practices alongside with socio-cultural values of Indigenous groups was well suited to interpretive research on educational policy study.

My preference for the interpretive approach supports the chosen Indigenist feminist epistemology, research objective, and the study's discipline of educational administration. Positivists and postpositivist inquirers assume objective non subjective value free approach to research whilst distancing themselves from research and phenomenon understudy. An interpretive approach permits study investigators to immerse themselves in the study process by engaging their study participants in situ and aiming at the gaining of a holistic understanding of the phenomenon understudy (Ospina et al., 2018). The interpretive approach supported my involvement with the study participants, and the gaining of relational data in support of the propose Indigenist methodology for the study (Mbah et al., 2023).

3.5 Research Methods

As noted above, this study utilized an Indigenous feminist methodology focused on community-based research methods. The following sections outline the methods utilized in the study, focused on the participants and communities engaged in the research, data collection strategies, and data transcription strategies.

3.5.1 *Participants and Communities*

The rationale for the selection of participant groups must be congruent with the ways of knowing, ways of being, and the values that comes with that choice of study, in this case, with Indigenous research in rural settings (Campbell et al., 2021; Hart; 2010; Koch, 2006: Reimer, 2012; Smith 1999). The criteria for the selection of the study sample, research sites, and recruitment of research participants ought to be in alignment with the study's purposes and research practices (Beck, 2013; Chilisa et al., 2017).

The Central region of Ghana was selected for this research because this was where Ghana's formal education system began, and the area that agitated for the adoption and inclusion of local knowledge in the country's educational system (Adjei, 2007; 2010; Graham, 1971; Kimble, 1963; Nti, 2002). Ghana's Central Region includes two universities that train the country's K-12 school leaders. This region also includes one Indigenous (Akan) group living in rural areas with agriculture (farming and fishing) as the main occupation. Hence this region became the preferred choice for the purpose of the study because I was able to access K-12 school leadership principals in rural areas, and Indigenous local community leaders loyal to their socio-cultural values.

Two (2) Indigenous African Akan chieftaincy institutions were invited to participate in the study. The fieldwork took place at the two rural communities of Asebuman and Assin Kushia man, all in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese and Assin North Districts in the Central Region of Ghana West Africa respectively. Though the two communities of Asebuman and Assin Kushia man are located about 104 kilometers apart, they can be described as relatively homogenous, as they are made up of one ethnic (Akan) group and share the same socio-cultural practices and values.

Within those chieftaincy institutions, two individual participants (school principals in each chieftancy) were interviewed and two Indigenous Dwabo community meetings were held to collect data for the study. These two principals were selected based on their having undergone a university-based preparation for K-12 principals through the Ghana Education Services (GES) principal preparation program. Both principals were of an Akan tribal lineage and had worked as a K-12 school principal in a rural Indigenous Akan community for a minimum of three years. The intent of the interviews was to gather principals' experiences and understanding of African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms, and how this understanding impacted their work in rural Ghanaian communities.

The participants of the Dwabo data collection activity constituted participants from Ghana’s chieftaincy institution, and recognized members of the Ghana National House of Chiefs (GNHC). Akan Indigenous community leaders from the chieftaincy institution were recruited for participation in the Dwabo data collection for the study, consisting of two paramount chiefs, two Amankyeame/State linguists, one Paramount Queenmother, and one Indigenous Female chief. Traditional rulers are the custodians and implementers of local Indigenous knowledge and practices related to Akan child upbringing norms (Boakye-Boaten, 2010; Frimpong-Manso, 2014; Laird, 2002). Their participation as members of the chieftaincy institution in the research process was crucial since they are leaders and custodians of the country’s socio-cultural values, and responsible for formulating policy and its implementation at the local community levels. Questions were aimed at eliciting Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing and how this could improve culturally responsive leadership. The chiefs also deliberated and contributed to the rationale and the relevance for maintaining these African socio-cultural values in their communities, and how Akan Indigenous knowledge can be used to augment the preparation of K-12 school leadership for efficient work in rural Indigenous communities that would enhance rural school children’s educational outcomes.

3.5.1.1 Research Site 1: Asebuman. Asebuman has Asebu also known as Sabou is the capital town/ Korowpon of the Asebu Kingdom located in the Central Region of Ghana in the West Africa. The Asebu Kingdom is in the Abura/Asebu/Kwamankese District of the Central Region of Ghana in west Africa. The Asebu Kingdom is bounded on the east by Nkusukum Traditional Area, on the west by Cape Coast Metropolis, on the north by the Abura Traditional Area, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south. The people of Asebu were among the first Etsii group of Ghana who migrated from Pharaonic Egypt under their able leadership of two great giants

Amenfi (a farmer) and Kwegya (a fisherman). These two great giants were generals of the pharaoh's army from ancient Egypt (Asante & Yirenkyi, 2019). Hence the overlord of this kingdom goes by the title Okatakyi meaning the Great Ruler. This ancient Fante Kingdom of Ghana is noted for being one of the first Indigenous groups in the Gold Coast to get into contact with the European Dutch as trade allies in 1612. The association of the European Dutch culminated in the establishment of a trade link which led to the Treaty of Asebu signed between King Sabu of Asebu and the Dutch European merchants in 1657. This trade link between the people of Asebu and the Dutch, resulted in the building of Fort Nassau at Mouri (Doortmont, 2002). The Asebu Kingdom is therefore recognized as being a home to one of Ghana's oldest trade relics that the Europeans' called Fort Nassau located at the Kingdom's fishing village of Mbowure/ Mooree (Doortmont, 2002; Svensli, 2018; Van Dantzig, 1975). The Asebu Kingdom has seven states namely, Akonoma, Amosima, Brabia, Ekuroful, Mbowure (Mooree), Putubew, and Asebu Amantsindo. The Asebu Kingdom is one African Akan Indigenous groups with a unique leadership succession practice in the form of a Republican Stool system of Indigenous leadership known in Akan as Kwasafogua. This unique Indigenous Akan well-organized form of leadership succession norm makes it possible for any member of the above seven states to qualify as a paramount king of the Kingdom (Acquaah, 1968). The economic and social life of the Asebu people is dictated by their location and agrarian lifestyle. As a group of people with both farming and fishing as a major means of livelihoods, Asebu group at the Coastal belt of Mooree are predominantly fishing, whilst those in the inner part of the kingdom located away from the coast are farmers. The farming communities like Akonoma and Amosima are noted for producing one of the tastiest delicacies- kenkey (Mfante dokon) also known as "wona de okyia wo" (greetings from your mother) in Ghana. Abangye, Apayem, and Kae Ako festivals are some of the festivities celebrated in the various communities. Apayemkese is the grand festival which is held in the month of November every year, and is celebrated by all members of the Kingdom, and led by their Omanhene- Okatakyi Amanfi.

3.5.1.2 Research Site 2: Assin Owirenkyiman. Situated on a branch road of the main Cape Coast Kumasi highway, Assin Owirenkyiman is in the Assin North District of the Central Region of Ghana in west Africa, with Assin Kushia as the capital town. The people of Assin Owirenkyiman are members of the larger Assin society of Assin Atandansu, Assin Apimenim and Assin Afutuakwa. As a branch of the Pro-to Akan, history has it that Assin Owienkyi group was identified as the right wing or Nimfa division of the Assin Atandansu Group before attaining a paramountcy status under the able leadership of Ehunabobirem Pra Agyensem VI, the current leader, and overlord of the Owirenkyi State in the year 2008. The people of Owirenkyiman celebrate their annual Kantamanto Festival in the month of October, and it involves a week-long activity that highlights the unique culture and traditional socio-cultural values of the group. As a group of people located in a geographical community with very good arable land, the main occupation of the Owirenkyi people is farming, hence cash crops like cocoa, citrus, and other food crops like cassava, maize, and vegetable of all kinds are cultivated in the area. The location of this community around the Pra River basin in the Central region of Ghana makes them good farmers in the cultivation of tiger nuts and rice and highly nutritious organic food crops from the evergreen Ghanaian farming community in the central region. Though Owirenkyi indigens are rural dwellers with farming as their main means of livelihood, their quest for knowledge has made them one of the best rural dwellers who are also well advanced in formal education. This Indigenous African rural community can boast of a private university and the sponsoring of school children’s education by the well-educated and wealthy members of the community.

Known as the neatest town in Ghana, Assin Kushia is also noted for being the home of the biggest palace in the whole of west Africa. The palace of Owirenkyiman in Assin Kushia is what this researcher described as the "Buckingham Palace" of West Africa, in Ghana.

Ehunabobrim Nana Pra Agyensem VI has done an incredible act by building a tomb for an unknown slave. Yes, a Paramount Chief who decides to honor an unknown slave is unheard off!! I personally see this act as the greatest respect displayed towards humanity by this Great African Akan Indigenous leader. For unlike the anti-slave trade monument at the Elmina castle that read never again; in response to the greatest atrocities committed towards humanity through the Trans -Atlantic Slave -Trade, this monument of an unknown slave at the place of Owirenkyiman can be interpreted as an antithesis of African involvement in the human trade, and as a demonstration of the act of respect and dignity to humanity. May this monument by a member of the African Akan chieftaincy institution continue to create a positive indelible impression on anyone who visit the Owirenkyiman Palace, piaaow, Owirenkyiman!.

3.5.2 *Data Collection*

Community researchers collect their study data "in natural settings to document beliefs and practices from people's own point of view" (Riemer, 2012, p.170). Information on culture is owned by the group and not the individual, and research can focus on socio-cultural cultural practices such as "… traditional rituals or childrearing beliefs" (Brenner 2006, p. 358). Data collection included a semi-structured individual interview with the school principal, a community-based research conversation stemming from an Akan Dwabo communal gathering held with the chieftancy institution, and participant observation in each rural community. Each method is described in the sections below.

3.5.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews. Interviews with principals were conducted in the community and lasted for approximately one hour. An interview guide was used in the collection of data for the individual interview sessions. The inclusion of the interview schedule in the principal interviews helped me to make maximum use of the interview time and kept participants from swaying from the study research questions. The interview guide also helped in providing me with the opportunity to modify study questions periodically to ensure the inclusion and exclusion of both salient and unimportant questions (Hoepfl, 1997). Notes and recordings of the principal interviews were taken which permitted me to detect the evolving areas of the interview process that needed further probing.

3.5.2.2 African Akan Indigenous Dwabo Community Leadership Data Collection. The Dwabo (Amoah, 2012) Indigenous Akan means of collecting community data and analysing information was "… tailor made to fit specific research designs to help in building a set of data related to the research question and, helps in applying the appropriate analysis techniques" (Swanson & Chermack, 2013, p.105). The adoption of the Dwabo as a data gathering tool for this research ensured congruence in study design and data collection, and analysis, for the study to qualify as African Akan Indigenous community-based research. My adoption of the Dwabo became the channel by which the various Indigenous philosophical stances could be studied (Mertens, 2014). The application of the Dwabo for the data collection enabled me to use existing community members conversant with their own rules and conventions for gathering their own community data (Nyumba et al., 2017). This made it possible for me to team up with my own African Akan Indigenous community members to undertake research since local Indigenous community leadership were in control of the study's data collection and analysis stages. This enabled me and the African Akan community leadership as informal/ Indigenous organizational leadership members of chieftaincy institution of Ghana to be considered as co-researchers and knowledge keepers. All study participants gained equal opportunity in participating in the study process whilst using our own unique ways of knowing in the reclaiming of African Akan Indigenous knowledge on educational leadership (Beeman-Cadwallader et al., 2012). The Dwabo Indigenous community mode of data collection enabled me to not only adhere to the employment of the basic tenets of African community-based participatory research, but also to be consistent with the African community-based research (ACBR) processes (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015; Stanton, 2014).

The topic of the study has African Akan Indigenous knowledge and leadership practices as the focus, which collected the glamour and aggrandizement that aligns with African Akan royal events. The choosing of the palace or (Ahemfie) as the venue for the Dwabo directed the event to assume a royal African linguistic (Ahemfie kasa) form of communication (Agyekum, 2004; Asare, 2020). Ahemfie kasa is in a formalized, honorifics, politeness, and indirections. The use of Ahemfie kasa as the “linguistic unit” of socio-cultural characteristics featured in the activities that come with the enactment of the Dwabo ceremony helped in the interpretation and understanding of the African Akan knowledge and culture of leadership.

The ground rules of the Dwabo set the stage for the display of an anti-individualistic communal spirit that characterizes the Indigenous African Akan culture (Agyekum, 2011; Antwi, 2017; Yankah, 1991). Dwabo events follow a prescribed traditional protocol by which participating members are mandated to adhere to decisions that had already put in place by the elders (Tsekpoe, 2020). All communicators at the events are to demonstrate cultural competence relating to Indigenous Akan royal communication patterns, socio-cultural norms, and customary practices. All partakers in the events are required to show respect, cooperation, and high degree of politeness to guarantee their involvement in the proceedings. Failure to comply with the above ground rules may result in a member's expulsion from the event and sanctions from the leadership.

Two Dwabo group discussions were held solely for the collection of the study data, and deliberations followed an African Akan royal communication proceeding. The study's two Dwabo events were enacted in the form of a mini community durbar by which leaders of each paramount traditional area assembled to have a formal discussion on African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms. Two Traditional Akan Paramount States, made up of over 29 community leaders participated in the discussions. Each community was presented by a leader with an accompanying group of aides and other traditional functionaries collectively identified as chiefs and their entourage. Each leader and entourage consist of about five to ten persons.

An important aspect of the Dwabo ceremony is the unique role of the Okyeame and State linguist whose involvement and role in the event for the research data gathering changes the status of the study and its questions from that of an ordinary study to attract a deeper attention of the leadership of the research communities. This convention of passing the initial questioning session through the Okyeame and State Linguist to the audience gave the study a focal status, and I was granted permission to proceed with my inquiry. The permission proceeding is followed by the conventional phrase "Nana Kyeame wo wɔ hɔ?" (Is Nana Kyeame present?). This official dictum is used to gain attention during formal communication proceedings. The channeling of research questions posed by the interviewer and researcher through the Okyeame enabled the linguist to perform an African Akan Indigenous royal artistry proceeding by which the communication process gets formalized, edited, embellished, amplified, and enlivened. In this sense, the Dwabo gathering took the form of a delegated conversation from the interviewer to the community leadership, by which the Okyeame performs a "royal speech act," in which turn takings are organized to show who speaks next (Agyekum, 2011; Yankah, 1986, 1989, 1991). The Okyeame thus became the real interviewer voice for the study, as he relays and places emphasis on the core areas of those questions deemed crucial for answering study questions related to African Indigenous knowledge and Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms (Agyekum, 2011; Yankah, 1989, 1991, 1995).

The Dwabo strategy thus enabled an adoption of a spiral method form of data collection for the study (Mkabela, 2005). The two Dwabo group gatherings offered collective insight into the varied meanings and constructions into African Akan Indigenous leadership practices. The Dwabo group events for the study were thus significantly different from a focus group interview where participants interact with peers (Kitzinger, 1994, 1995). The unique role of the Okyeame in the Dwabo minimized my impact and influence on study participants' behavior in the Dwabo (Mero-Jaffe, 2011).

3.5.2.3 Participant Observation. Ribeiro and Foemme (2012) describe participant observation as “a method in which an observer takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of the people being studied as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their culture” (p. 377). Participant observation as a data collection strategy aligns with my African Akan socio-cultural value of observing community actions for learning. Application of participant observation as a method of data collection for this study allowed me to live and act as a community member of the larger Akan community. Hence, I became closely attached to study participants which provided an opportunity for me to have a shared experience of the study topic with my study community members. The adoption of a participatory approach helped me to gain a firsthand experience of the researched phenomenon and solidify my understandings of the researched phenomenon (Sandiford, 2015).

In the Dwabo, an interview guide is soon forgotten as the application of culturally safe strategies inherent within the Dwabo provide an advantage for Indigenous community participants to take charge and be in control of the data collection processes. The cultural safety measure via the Dwabo data collection thwarted my control of the interview session and enabled Indigenous community leaders to set and follow their own rules and terms in obtaining Indigenous community members' responses. The utilization of the Dwabo strategy allowed me to obtain more detailed results and responses from research participants. I was able to ask study informants fundamental study questions, whilst having the liberty to probe further with a focus on the answers provided by study participants.

3.5.3 ***Data Transcription and Transcripts Conventions***

The study data from interviews, memos and field notes were manually transcribed. The initial verbatim transcriptions were completed concurrently together with the community Dwabo members during data collection. The second transcription was completed with the community linguist and Akyeame of the study's Dwabo data gathering (Bailey, 2008). Per Eakin and Gladstone (2020), data from interpretive inquiries was made meaningful by factoring in the context, circumstances, and settings from which they were derived. The above prescription demands that "the analytic process needs to include a means to take context into account in assigning meaning to data. But every phenomenon of study is situated in multiple different types and layers of context— immediate social interaction, organizational, institutional, societal, cultural, historical to name just a few—all of which frame the object of inquiry in a different way" (p. 3). In the light of the above, data transcription for this study was done using responses from research participants, with the intention of capturing all the required characteristics assumed for an inquiry with Indigenous communities (Kovach, 2010; Chilisa et al., 2017; Higgs, 2010; Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015). The adoption of the above strategy enabled me to capture study participants' perspectives and provide them with enough space to make their voice more visible in the data analysis (Pool, 2017). This dominant visibility of participants' voices and space helped me in the development of study themes since research context, settings, language, terminologies, gestures, symbols were accurately captured in the verbal transcriptions (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Raelin, 2020; Widodo, 2014).

3.6 African Akan Indigenous Community Leadership (Atsekuw Esoun) Data Analysis

The study adopted the African Akan Indigenous leadership way of analysing community data on all community related issues including Dwabo deliberations known as the "Atsekuw Esoun" process. "Atsekuw Esoun" literally means hearing/listening groups of seven. Members of the groups are made up of the prime members and lead community leaders who are charged with advising and conferring with the Omanhen of paramount chiefs and acting as cabinet ministers of the various offices of the paramountcy. The group work with what can be described as the Seven Indigenous Community Leadership Principles (SICLP). The SICLP is the accepted and formal mode of deliberating on all community issues that require a collective decision by local Akan Indigenous community leadership. The SICLP mode of discussion is followed until a consensus decision is attained. The whole process of the African Akan Indigenous community data processing method or "Atsekuw Esoun" described in this study as the SICLP method aligns with Diekelmann's, Allen's, and Tanner's (1989) seven stages of Heideggerian hermeneutic analysis (Dibley et al., 2018; Guenther et al., 2014; Harding & Whitehead, 2013; King et al., 2015; Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). The rationale for the selection of the above mode for the study data analysis ensured that local Indigenous community leaders as study participants were engaged in the analysis of the study data as well. Constructionist approaches to research require a co-construction of knowledge via the involvement of the research participants in the entire study processes (Ward et al., 2015). Hence, the adoption of the "Atsekuw Esoun" method of data analysis permitted local Akan Indigenous leadership to join hands with me to partake in the data analysis process as co-researchers. The seven stages of the African Akan Atsekuw Esuon principles of the Dwabo community data analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

African Akan Atsekuw Esuon Principles of Data Analysis

Stages	**Action taken by the researcher**	**Action taken by the study participants**
Stage one	Wrote and read aloud each of the research questions of the study and their corresponding answers again to the hearing of all Dwabo audience.	The moderator of the Dwabo is the person of the Omankyeame or State linguist, reaffirmed both question and answer by making a formal repetition of the question to the researcher.
Stage two	The interviewer then confirms the question as a true reflection of what she wants to ask and know.	The Okyeame then throws back the question to the audience by asking members of the Dwabo who have been prepared to provide responses to each of the research questions submitted to local Indigenous leadership.
Stage three	The researcher is offered the chance to listen attentively, ask more questions to seek clarifications, and probe further into the ongoing dialogue and responses to the questions at stake. Because "it is often within these storied experiences that questions arise, and the questions serve to direct the interpretive dialogue" (Holroyd, 2007, p.7).	The Okyeame sums up the responses to the question and presents the responses in formal Akan language to the researcher, but to the hearing of all the audience. The summary comes in the form of adage, proverbs, wise sayings, metaphors, folklore, Indigenous artifacts,

		appellations, drum language an African Akan Indigenous allegory, Indigenous groit song, appellations, etc. This allowed the entire Dwabo proceedings which contain local community data to be presented in a very condensed language form. This brought an end to the Dwabo proceeding for this study.
Step 4 four	The researcher rewrites the responses of the Dwabo proceedings with all the formal or palace language used explicitly) as offered by the Okyeame and State linguist. The researcher schedules a meeting with Okyeame for an initial discussion of the documented Dwabo proceedings for the study.	The Okyeame, or linguist takes the pain to decode all the coded language (formal or palace language (Agyekum, 2011) of the written data as documented by the researcher. This reframing of official palace diction or coded languages in plain and understandable words enabled me to get a clearer understanding of the study data as to how local Akan community leadership relied on their shared knowledge in the development of culturally responsive leadership.
Step five	The researcher looks for explanation and clarifications that comes with the explanation of the raw information provided by the Dwabo members. The researcher rewrites the Dwabo proceedings for the second time and takes it back to the Okyeame and State linguist for another examination of the collected data by the research community leadership.	Conferring with all the individual leading members of the Dwabo ceremony, the Okyeame and State linguist, joins hands with local Indigenous community leadership to scrutinize the second documented Dwabo proceedings provided by the researcher. The entire leadership deliberates on the documented or written version of the Oral Dwabo proceedings until they arrive at a consensus as to whether the presented document by the researcher is truly what

		transpired at the Dwabo session for the study. Okyeame then asked each of the individual Dwabo members to append their signature to the final version of the Dwabo proceedings to indicate the acceptance of the copy deliberated on as true reflection of the Dwabo proceedings held for the study.
Stage six	The researcher goes back to rewrite the gathered Dwabo data in transcription form. She must indicate how she has come to know how community knowledge is generated via the African Akan Dwabo proceedings. She must indicate her own understanding of the researched community's documented data on culturally responsive leadership (Keane, 2023). The researcher then sends Dwabo transcription back to the two Omankyeame and State linguist for verification of facts and accuracy of words used in the documentation.	The Omankyeame and State Linguist then acts as the legal and formal representative of the local Indigenous community leadership, worked together with researcher for an examination of an agreed third version of the Dwabo proceedings as documented community data. The researcher is then allowed to use the third version as co-created documented community Dwabo data transcribed for the study.
Stage seven	Researcher and the two Amankyeame go through the completed report on thesis and fix a date for the presentation of the scrutinized completed version of the thesis.	Researcher presents study emblem and copy of thesis to research community leadership in a final Dwabo for the study.

Sources of information for the analysis of this study data were derived from interviews from two Dwabo Indigenous community leadership discussions, and individual interview transcripts from two K-12 school principals, field notes, Indigenous Akan palace regalia, proverbs, Indigenous griot language, African Akan formal palace language and speeches. The analysis was done manually, as I share the belief that "no software can replace the human mind when it comes to interpretation of textual data" (Oplatka, 2021, p. 1885). A thematic analytical

(TA) approach was adopted for the interpretation of the study data in both the principal and the community Dwabo data Thematic analysis was preferred, since "TA "is not inbuilt, and needs a theoretical underpinning" (Terry et al., 2017, np) in its utilization. The above fluid nature of TA enabled me to effectively use the Sankofa Indigenous feminist perspective in the analysis and interpretation of the study findings.

Bozalek and Zembylas (2017) make a case for using theory in the analysis of study data with Indigenous research methods by indicating that, the use of theories in qualitative research is an attempt to shift from making mere conjectures to theoretically sound premises. I employed the Sankofa Indigenous feminist approach to determine "what counted" as good and appropriate findings for the study (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014) that started with culture as the primary resource because "as an Afrocentric methodological practice of historical recovery, then, Sankofa is not simply the collection of data but also a critical analysis of meaning from an African-centered standpoint" (Karenga, 2006, p. 413). I found it difficult using the English language to express meaning to most of the Indigenous African Akan formalized Akan palace language used in the Dwabo events (Wan, 2018). The study's conceptual framework became an area of importance for the data analysis, as it became the significant study index for the identification and explanation of "the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories' supporting and informing the research conducted" (Mayer, 2015, p. 59). Thus, data analysis processes for the study followed the same decolonizing agenda using an African Akan Indigenist epistemology as it did as a decolonizing agenda for the study.

Data analysis involved the use of an inductive approach through the employment of a key- words-in-context research method (KWIC) in combination with other strategies (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008; Ryan & Bernard, 2003; Manning, 2017) that depend on the study's text data in developing themes for making sense of the entire work. I engaged in five steps of data sorting prior to presenting the findings. These are listed below.

Step 1. The data immersion stage included conferring with research participants for clarifications of facts on collected data set. I read over the data to get familiarized with them. I listened multiple times to recorded audio and re-read documented interview texts throughout the period of April to September 2023. I took turns continuously listening and reading recorded interview text during the period of data analysis so as to prevent disconnection from the study field.

Step 2. The first stage was followed by the removal of all repeated questions, interjections, comments and responses from the entire set of individual interviews and Dwabo conversations. The study's research questions must be "focused (which tends to limit responses to a known situation or experience" (Brown, 2018, p. 2). Each of the study questions was matched with their corresponding responses. The process brought out the interview questions and study participants' responses to manageable transcribed data. Key African Akan Indigenous words on socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms were identified to describe what was said to capture the connotation of these words (e.g., Mbayen or child rearing, Mbahwɛ or child monitoring, and Mba ntse tsee or child upbringing).

Step 3. The third step involved the identification of themes and sub themes as demonstrated by Dwabo participants with major attention being focused on the meanings that Indigenous community leaders as collaborative research participants attributed to leadership (Richards et al., 2018) in the Dwabo events. Selected words/ terms were connected to the study context, settings, using the Sankofa Indigenous feminist perspective as the theoretical lens. The above process helped in the identification of latent meanings of these concepts. Understanding of these latent meanings were linked to the study questions and purposes to check their saliency and effectiveness in the interpretation of the study data. Other materials like the memos and field notes were used together with data to interpret and make sense of study data.

Step 4. Identification of Indigenous sayings and words relating to the study topic as major concepts and themes were culled from the group data. These Indigenous words and concept were used as emerging ideas, plot, themes, and sub themes for the write up of the study. Interpretation of these concepts were linked to the study topic once again to make sense of the data. The adoption of the above strategy aided me to incorporate multiple methods into the study, as I analysed this study as holistic research whilst providing “a contextual understanding of the complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour” (Brock-Utne, 1996, p. 609). Other materials like the memos and field notes were used together with the collected data.

Stage 5. Themes generated from the community data were compared with those from the K-12 school principals to enable me to get the differences and similarities of themes and understanding between school leaders and community leadership. Developed concepts/ themes were used in reporting the findings of the study.

Three overarching themes with ten subthemes were derived from a thematic analysis of the study data. The first theme related to the ways in which AIK was embedded in Akan socio-cultural values and child upbringing norms. This umbrella theme had four sub-themes related to AIK in Akan socio-cultural child upbringing norms: (1) the importance of place; (2) foundational constructions of gender roles; (3) the role of spirituality, and; (4) its relationship to and impact on educational leadership. The second theme highlights the impacts of colonial models of schooling on the African Indigenous context, whilst justifying the need to decolonize it. This second theme is premised on four sub-themes that developed in the data related to principal training, communal leadership, the impacts of borrowing and/or sharing knowledge, and gender advocacy as a form of colonial imperialism. The section attests that current K-12 school leadership practices exhibited by principals in rural school in Ghana shadow the colonial knowledge inherent in the design and delivery of preparation programs, noting this is not only insufficient, but is most often detrimental for the rural Akan context (Dei, 2012; Dei & Adhami, 2022; Gomba, 2017; Higg, 2010). The third overarching theme recognizes that the inclusion of cultural knowledge in K-12 school leadership preparation programs is a necessary ingredient for the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices in rural Ghanaian schools. This theme demonstrates where it may be possible to integrate AAIK into the preparation programs of K-12 school leaders; how K-12 school leadership preparation programs can be responsive to rural contexts, and; the complexities inherent in culturally responsive school leadership practices around gender.

3.7 Trustworthiness

The value of qualitative research is demonstrated by its trustworthiness. Cresswell (2013) notes that the criterion for assessing the value of qualitative research is the degree to which the research findings are trustworthy, and researchers can attain trustworthiness by maintaining rigor in their study processes. Forero et al. (2018) cite Lincoln and Guba (2000) as outlining “four-dimensions criteria” for qualitative research trustworthiness, as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Morse et al. (2002) however argue that strategies for the insurance of trustworthiness in qualitative enquiries must be geared toward building and maintaining rigor throughout the entire stages of a study, and not only at the final stage, thus, justifying the need for new criteria other than the “four-dimensions criteria” for the assessment of rigor/ trustworthiness in qualitative enquiries. Morse (2007) further indicates that setting standards for qualitative analysis rather weakened rigor attainment in qualitative practice especially at the field level, hinders “unique observation” and thus makes it impossible for researchers to gain access to hard-to-reach data. Likewise, scholars like Bryman (2004), Cunliffe (2003) and Pratt (2008) from the discipline of organizational studies call for a deviation from the often-quantitative shadowed based criteria in the evaluation of qualitative inquiries. Pratt (2008) makes the case that the application of the four-dimension criteria in qualitative evaluation hinders human problem focused researchers to thrive in their chosen fields. This increases debates on the value and usefulness of qualitative inquiry in the field of human services disciplines of nursing, organizational studies, and educational administration. Quality in qualitative inquiries is dependent on the implementation of the appropriate research methods and the application of good practices in ensuring rigor in the process. Since “in qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the primary instrument and the credibility of qualitative methods, hinges to a great extent on the skills, competence and rigor of the person conducting the field work” (Patton, 2002, p. 14). This pivotal role of the researcher has led to recommendations by scholars to define what criteria determine good qualitative inquiries in leadership studies (Bryman, 2004; By, 2021; Kempster et al., 2011; Knapp, 2017). Since the attainment of credibility or dependability of inquiry demands the application of some standardized verification as stipulated by the four-dimension criteria indicated above, I used research strategies like audit trail, member checking, prolong field work, reflexivity, transferability, and triangulation to ensure trustworthiness.

Establishing rigor for the study was done by paying attention to Easterby-Smith et al.’s (2008) prescription of the hallmark of qualitative inquiry within the organizational research based on the following criteria outlined below:

- Demonstrate self-awareness/ reflective practice;
- Exercise a high degree of competence and knowledge in the researched discipline;
- Extend or link knowledge in research discipline to practice;
- Offer theoretical and practical evidence on studied area to support views, and;
- Clearly show how study can contribute to practice (p. 422).

As a marker of trustworthiness, the dependability of qualitative inquiry involves the verification of the study's result to ensure that they are consistent with "the acceptable standard for a particular design" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 122). Dependability as equivalent of reliability in qualitative research process is concerned with the consistency and repeatability of a data gathering, and examination of the study data. Generalizability of qualitative research is the replicability of study processes and outcomes in similar settings (Morse, 2015). Dependability of qualitative inquiry refers to the "employment of "overlapping methods"; and in-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated" (Chowdhury, 2015, p. 150). Dependability in this study was ensured using multiple strategies of audit trail (Carcary, 2009; 2020), member checking (Bitsch, 2005: Morse, 2015), prolong field engagement (Vaismoradi et al., 2013), transferability (Hays & McKibben, 2021; Pellatt, 2003), and triangulation (Fusch et al., 2018; Pandey & Patnaik, 2014).

Daniel (2019) equates an audit trail with a transparent documentation of qualitative research process. Hence the provision of an audit trail is one means of how credibility can be ensured in a qualitative inquiry (Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Carcary (2009, 2020) an audit trail in qualitative study offers a transparent descriptive record of how the study process was carried out, and how research conclusions were arrived at. The audit trail thus helps readers to follow the researcher's train of thought and come out with the merits of the study by themselves. An audit trail directing the course of this study was made available via the prologue through the epilogue stages of the study. The prologue at the beginning detailed those underpinning occurrences that led to the initiation of the study to the final reflection followed by the epilogue segment (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The audit trail also included the careful outline of the entire research process by which the various strategies used in the design, collection, interpretation of study was delineated, the engagement of the study communities in all parts of the study, and the delivery (and review) of a final report to each community.

Member checking is another strategy used to guarantee rigor in this study. The application of the African Akan Dwabo strategy for the study's data collection of data, and the application of the Atsekuw Esoun principles as an analytical strategy for the data interpretation facilitated member checking as I analyzed community information with and through Indigenous community leadership validation at all steps along the way. Indigenous community leaders are not only considered as "'epistemic authorities' and important informants, but also as research colleagues with critical perspectives on the issues under scrutiny" (Higg, 2010, p. 2419). In the case of this study, a copy of the finished analyzed data and reported interviews in the form of the researcher's copy of the thesis was provided to the leadership of researched communities as partners of this study. The use of member checking for credibility assurance in qualitative inquiry becomes effective "only in the reporting of the outcomes" (Birt et al., 2016, p. 21). The prolonged field work did not only lead to trust building between myself and study participants, but it also provided a means for testing and confirmation of information provided by participants (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Prolonged field engagement and the long stay with research participants also helped me in the construction of the context from which the study data were interpreted. The understanding of the study context offered the bases for the development of framework for the analysis of the study data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Reflexivity is described as the "process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, 'the human as instrument" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 183). Reflexivity is another strategy used to ensure rigor in this study. Merriam and Tisdell (2009) emphasized the need for researchers to make explicit their biases to their readers to help them follow the train of thoughts on how study data were interpreted. Both the prologue and the various assumptions stated in the study research design, framework, study practices, the first, second and third chapters of this study and the epilogue indicate my reflection and self-reflexivity in this study. As an African Akan from the leadership lineage, I was able to access the cultural implicature and proverbial expressions displayed at the Dwabo meetings. I was at times caught in a loop as l came to the realization that I was a novice and to some extent a stranger in my own Indigenous culture and kinship deliberations. Such reflections exposed the limitations of my cultural knowledge, yet it lent strength to the fact that the study is a good means of preparing me to gain the cultural competence needed in both Indigenous and nonIndigenous school leadership.

The design of the study also assured the securing of thick and rich data. The combination of constructivist and Indigenist world views, driven on a pragmatic approach provided the means for obtaining thick and rich description of its outcome. Though "a blended design is an excellent way to obtain rich and thick data" (Korstjens & Moser, 2018, p. 25), the utilization of "dialogic inquiry" through the Dwabo community data collection enabled me to employ research methods that incorporated many voices and perspective into the study whilst capturing "polyvocal meaning making of both the participant and the researcher" (Raelin, 2020, p. 9).

I demonstrated my belief in the value of the Indigenous theory of Sankofa by showing how the Sankofa theory was exemplified by the research participants' behavior, whilst linking the studied phenomenon to the research context (Morse, 2016). Rich data sources were obtained, and the framework provided the platform for local community members to partake in the study on their own terms which reflects my belief in the importance of decolonization in the African context. The use of the Sankofa ideology as the study's driven theory helped in mirroring the socio-geographical space as well as the socio-cultural context by which the study topic and objective were situated. The application of the African Akan Sankofa Indigenous feminist ideology was influenced by my discipline of study and research purpose (Nguyen et al., 2021) that offered clues to the "ideological commitments" that I and the study participants hold towards the inquiry process (Levitt et al., 2018; Wilson & Chaddha, 2009). While attempting to answer my research questions, I employed self-reflexive questions and strategies to help me understand my own positioning, minimize bias and present the final analysis:

- Why am I interested in certain information and not consider others?
- Made notes on generated ideas and information on the study topic.
- Examined my own biases and viewpoints as I underwent data interpretation.
- Drew out the similarities and differences between the new information as derived from the study data.
- Took account of the patterns I was finding in the entire data.
- Sought for similarities and differences among study findings.
- Consider why these similarities and differences might exist.
- Complied noted findings and illustrations together to catch a clearer view of the study findings.

- Examined the form of the new findings, as to how I could use the new information in my discussions, study problem, and my final analysis for the study.

As a final means of establishing trustworthiness, I attempted to introduce transferability in my qualitative research as the replicability of study processes and outcomes in similar settings. Transferability in qualitative research refers to how the outcomes of the study can be used in other settings with similar research participants (Morse, 2015). Qualitative inquiry has been described as a research process that does not aim at a generalizable outcome (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Yet researchers like Beck (2013), Hall (2013), Morse (2015, 2020) ascribe to the plausible generatability of qualitative inquiry with the contestation that findings from qualitative inquiries within the applied research disciplines can be generalized across similar settings to enable practitioners to utilize such findings to improve practice in their fields. Likewise, Torrance (2013) from the field of educational administration have also indicated that, the context bound nature of qualitative inquiries can be transferable/ generalized through “a context of application” (p. 35) in pursuit of best educational policy implementation. Hence, the data analysis and the development of the themes in a context bound study, and its furtherance linkage with contemporary text via the situation of study findings in literature, helped me to move the study to the practical level with the hopes that findings might resonate with other Indigenous rural communities in Ghana and beyond. The engagement in the above strategy helped in the gaining of the conviction that study themes can be (generalized) as a frame of reference (Raelin, 2020) to other settings of similar context in the field of practice (Hall, 2013; Morse, 2013).

3.8 Storying the Journey: Entering the Field

It would be unfair on my part to say anything on the study context, settings, and findings without first providing information about my Holy village in Africa. This section offers a thick description of Indigenous African Akan Indigenous community daily activity, followed by palace proceedings to welcome one of their own who is back to her roots in search of new wine of knowledge from an old wine pot. This will create a feeling of presence as expected of a descriptive anthropological practice or ethnography (Geerzt, 1973) as I journey back home to relearn about African Akan Indigenous leadership practices which Kwesi Kɔkɔɔ calls a field of research.

The paramountcy of each of the traditional councils consists of various towns and villages. Most of the villages are located far away in the heart of the thick tropical forest and can be reached only by trekking on foot, bicycle, or a vehicle. The houses in these remote villages are mostly made of hand molded mounted blocks with raffia leaves roofing, and with trees of fruits and medicine planted in-between the house to offer shade and healing to their native inhabitants. These remote communities have striking differences from the busy buzzing, noisy, and air polluted cities of Cape Coast and Kumasi. The natural serenity that occupies the general atmosphere of these villages is occasionally interrupted with a cockcrow at dawn, midday or evening. The time from November to January is for cocoa harvesting, and this was the time that the villages always look deserted from dawn to dusk. The seat of the paramountcy of the traditional council is in the bigger villages and towns. The vicinity of the capital town or Kurowpon share characteristics modern city with well structed cement buildings, and other social amenities like electricity, pipe-borne water, and Paramount palace or Omanhene Ahemfie. These capital towns and cities have a major paved road running through the length and breadth of the town. This main road is often linked to unpaved inner ring roads which connect all lanes within the capital. The last time I visited the place was about 10 years ago before my departure to the Whiteman's country. I realized that the unpaved road that joins the capital town to the main highway has been paved with gravel and bitumen. This ushered me into a very pleasant initial trip to my Holy village. I however experienced a real journey into an African village when we turned from the highway to the unpaved dusty road for the rest of the trip. This was a rickety rackety sort of experience as we journeyed through the uncountable potholes that come with riding on this old road. I had spent the previous night at my own native village of Abaka Ano in the Abura Asebu Kwamankese District of Ghana. I decided to leave for the paramount town of Assin Kushia the following morning. It was nearing the chilly dry hazy annual harmattan season of the tropic African region. The cold night that comes with the harmattan season compensated the heat associated with the African weather that I was used to in my Holy village. Though the night was very quiet, there were occasional noises of koo -dwiii –dwiii- dwiii –koo-oo and chiiii –chiii—kaa- kaaa sound probably from a fleet of obraku birds and other nocturnal creatures of the African forest. I couldn't tell the exact time that I fell asleep, but I was awakened by a loud cry of Allaaaaaahu Alkubahr; the sound was made of Arabic words from one of the leaders of the Islamic religious group. The noise is a call signaling the time for the observance of their morning religious rites. I looked at the time on my phone and it was exactly 5 o'clock in the morning. The serene night was followed by a rather bustling and busy morning as l could hear constant streams of greetings and exchanges of pleasantries and handshaking amongst neighbors and all inhabitants of the village. The morning was charged with sounds of the Indigenous Akan morning greeting of "maakyeoo," and with responses of "ma agye wo do, na wo mpow mue"? There were series of prolonged greetings from everyone asking about how a neighbor was faring and the welfare of other extended family members. Such is the norm, as each person happens to meet a neighbor upon waking up every morning. That is how a community becomes connected and recharged with unity and cohesion every day by its members in the Indigenous African settings. I really enjoyed the sense of unity and commitment exhibited by members of my own tribe and wished this sense of care and compassion could be passed on to the unborn members of the tribe in this untainted form. I got out of the vehicle and asked a passerby for directions to the Queen mother's private residence. A young girl of about 14 years old immediately approached me and asked me to allow her to carry my luggage for me. I asked the girl, "Have you not been sent, it might take a while for you to get back home, your parents might be waiting for you?" She replied, "no, I would rather be branded as an ill cultured child by anyone who sees me following you without helping." She explained further, "Where I am going is closer to the Queen's house, and my mum will understand upon hearing that I helped an elderly person who was on her way to the local leader's house." Though I initially felt reluctant to do so, I quickly gave the luggage to her upon remembering that I am in the vicinity where children are taught to behave in such manner as demonstrated by the young maiden. I finally had the chance to see the local leadership of the paramountcy. It was my first time meeting the new Queen mother who got installed when I was away learning in the Whiteman's country.

The African Akan Indigenous Palace formality requires people intending to hold a meeting with the chief and community leaders to accompany their verbal permission with drinks to formalize their request. Recruitment for the Indigenous community components of the study participants was to be done through the consultation of the gatekeepers of the two study communities. Indigenous research gatekeepers are the people in charge of furnishing researchers with the requisite culturally appropriate protocol in an Indigenous research process. The involvement of gatekeepers helps with the establishment of trust and rapport between researchers and study participants (LaVeaux & Christopher, 2009).

Chiefs in Akan Indigenous settings speak through an intermediary or Okyeame in formal situations and ceremonies. The Okyeame serves as a spokesperson for the chiefs. The African Akan Indigenous palace formality requires people intending to hold a meeting with the chief and community leaders to accompany their verbal permission with drinks to formalize their request. (Agyekum, 2011). The presentation and acceptance of the above items to the Okyeame would formalize the granting of permission to undertake the proposed meeting and any accompanying ceremonies with the two Indigenous Akan leaders. These Akan Indigenous leadership protocols find expression in their dictum, that no concrete knowledge can be obtained without going through the appropriate protocol ("wonsan kokorbastir ho mbo po"). When translated into English language, this phrase means that the thumb cannot not be left out when tying a knot. By extension, a person would never be allowed to engage in any meaningful venture in an Akan Indigenous community without going through the required protocol set up by the Indigenous community. Hence, the African Akan Indigenous formality requires people intending to hold a meeting with the chief and community leaders to accompany their verbal permission with drinks to formalize their request. Akan palace protocol requires that researchers follow palace rule with the utmost civility as "custom even demands that the person seeking permission from the okyeame ought to wait until permission is granted before initiating the formal greeting. Sometimes guests at the palace must wait for a longer period either because permission had not been sought or because certain transactions had to be dealt with first" (Agyekum, 2011, p. 586). Hence, I followed the Akan customs expected of any enquirer to a chief's palace by presenting bottles of alcoholic drinks (aromatic schnapps), two to each Okyeame (spokesman) of the two local leaders of the intended study communities upon arrival in Ghana, whilst asking for their permission to undertake research within their communities (Kilson, 1969; Yankah, 1999). When permission was granted, I then presented another set of drinks amidst traditionally prescribed items that need to be presented by all enquirers to the Akan chief's palace (ahemfie). The above protocols of the Akan Indigenous leadership find expression in the adage "womfa nsapan nkɔ Ahemfie" (You cannot go to the chief's palace with empty hands) (Agyekum, 2011)._These items would be presented to the two Okyeame (spokesman) of their two leaders, upon being granted permission to undertake research within the communities.

As a member of the Indigenous African Ghanaian Akan ruling class, I capitalized on my already established rapport with the overseer of the two Indigenous leadership of my research communities. Though I had already contacted the paramount chief about the project, it was necessary to have several meetings with the leaders to ensure their clear understanding of the project about to take place in their communities (Clark, 2011; Kurtz, 2013).

I was also expected to answer a lot of questions on the study. I realized the wisdom in McAreavey's and Das's (2013) premonition statement on how gate keepers can "have the power to deny access to the researcher and they may also influence whether individuals opt in and out of a process. By negotiating directly with prospective research participants, gatekeepers can speed up the recruitment process" (p. 116). I was very careful in my dealings with my research communities and was ready to adhere to all cultural protocols by ensuring cultural sensitivity to good working relationships with study participants. The observance of cultural sensitivity in research ignites "consciousness concerning the impact of a culture on 1) the persons and/or phenomena being studied, 2) on the research process itself and 3) perhaps most importantly, on the researcher" (Kowalsky et al., 1996, p. 270). As such I found it very necessary to adhere to the Indigenous research protocol in its minutest detail.

At some points in the conversation, I noticed a sense of suspicion as I seemed not to answer certain questions well to my research community's satisfaction. Though speaking the same Akan language with them gave me a sense of comfort and security, I soon found out that this sense of serenity of mind and trust was gradually evading me. I was found wanting in answering questions about what it meant for the project to be "sponsored" by the university in the Whiteman's country of Canada. This question on funding and sponsorship was treated as "asem sɛbɛ" or as being suspicious and needed probing. This phenomenon of "funding and sponsorship" dented the cordial relationship that was initially established with the communities to the extent that my own family members could not believe that University of Saskatchewan had not offered me money for the data collection. Their counter question was, "whom do you expect us to believe" because the language of sponsorship was in my ethics forms? When I tried to explain this misinterpretation of funding and sponsorship on my ethics approval form, I found solace in the second community, as the female paramount Queenmother became very convinced about what was happening to me. She noticed a drastic change in me and realized how the project was having a toll on my health as well. This act of compassion by the other community stabilized me, as I became somehow composed with the hope and assurance that the gaining of data from even one community could be used to help me finish my thesis. I then decided to engage an insider who happened to be my younger uncle to play the role of a personal helper. Thereafter, a series of meetings were held with the Queen mother, female chief, Palace registrars and Akyeame of the two States. My request to have the Dwabo for the study was finally granted in our last meetings at the end of February 2023, after which the date, venue, and time were fixed for the meeting with the communities (Dwabo ceremony) in March 2023. The other meetings that took place between the Akyeame, and other local leaders and the researcher were scheduled to take place at six weeks intervals. These meetings took a lot of time to go through the iterative data examination process and the Dwabo community leadership consent forms demanded by the IRB Committee of the University of Saskatchewan.

3.9. Storying the Journey: Leaving the Field

The way ethnographic researchers end their data collection exercise is rarely discussed in their studies (Iversen, 2009). The time for me to exit from the research communities was signaled by my last stage of the field work which was marked by the need for me to have signed community consent forms from all leaders who participated in the study's two Dwabo data gatherings. This community consent took a long time for me to get each of the leaders to endorse the form. I had to wait for the scheduled time that the community leaders have their own local meetings before I was able to get all the participating members to append their signature to the form. I took advantage of visiting the communities for the signing of the forms to also inform them of my intention to come back to Canada. The usual comment that followed my intending trip back was, so when are you coming back to visit us again? I promised to come back to them upon the completion of my study. I sensed that my long engagement with my Akan research communities had resulted into my melting into my own African Akan socio-cultural values once again (Smith & Atkinson, 2017). This explained the realization of my continual psychological attachment to my own people at the time of my departure from the field. The departure scenes occurred with the Queenmothers and were characterised with moments of conversations based on the projects and a further probe into my personal future. I was touched by the confidence and care granted to me to the extent that I became very sad that I would be coming back to a

Canadian community where nobody seems to care about me. I again promised to continue to communicate with them and notify them about my plans when I came back to Canada. I realized that disengaging in field work with Indigenous community members needs to be done in a very sensitive manner. The research process can lead to an emotional dependency of researcher and study participants (Morrison et al., 2012).

The last departure scene was initiated by a need to meet the overlords of the two Omanhene / paramount chiefs of communities for final endorsement of their consent forms. The Omanhene of the second community was the first to sign the overall consent form. As a renowned Lawyer and an Indigenous community paramount leader, Nana took time to caution me on the need to ensure that study participants voices are accurately presented without any distortions in the final reports. He then signed the form with both his traditional name and legal names and gave me his blessings. Similar Indigenous farewell blessings were pronounced on me when I went for the final consent form from my own Omanhene/ paramount chief of my own kingdom in the month of September 2023. I kept on reflecting on my journey back home for the data collection and the reunion and establishment of new links with family and tribe (Batty, 2020). I concluded that my ending of this initial research with my Akan Indigenous communities is going to be a starting point in my career as a researcher in the field of African Indigenous feminism in educational leadership.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Approval from the Ethical Review Board from the University of Saskatchewan was sought before the commencement of data collection for the study. Consent forms were developed and duly explained verbally to research participants before the commencement of the interview session of the study. See Appendix C for the ethics approval certificate.

Recruitment of research participants was conducted after IRB Institutional Ethics approval. Permission was also sought from the Ghana Education Service Central Regional Directorate for the conduction of the study in K-12 schools in the Central Region of Ghana. See appendix E for GES approval letter. Written consents were then sought from every study participant who agreed to partake in the research process. All individual research members were offered verbal and written explanation as to their right to withdraw their consent at any time in the study process. Research participants were also made aware of their right to withdraw at any point in the research process without any penalty. No study member withdrew from the study upon agreeing to participate in the study's data collection. An interview guide was developed for use with all study participants, though as mentioned prior, the guides were more effective with individual interviewees as the Dwabo took on a life of its own as the multiple layers of meetings beforehand, as well as the cultural safety and structure of the Dwabo moved the data collection process into the hands of the community.

3.10.1 *Consent in African Indigenous Community-based Leadership Research*

Consent for the African Akan Indigenous community leadership data collection was sought within the framing of each local Indigenous community's own cultural safety terms and community data collection proceedings (Drawson et al., 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2014) since the data were intended to emanate from the chieftaincy institution and leadership of the two communities. The chieftaincy institution is an African Indigenous institution with its own formal laws and customs (Agyekum, 2011; Ntiamoah, 2018: Opuni-Frimpong 2021). Every member of the chieftaincy institution is elected by a group of people namely, household (ofie panin) clan (abusuapanin), village/town head (Odikro), Sub chief (Ohen) and paramount chief or state head (Omanhen) (Kendie & Guri, 2007). This makes the information provided by any member of the

Dwabo to be considered as community information, gathered as a collective responsibility, not an individual endeavour. There is no perception of individualism in the Dwabo. As Drawson et al. (2017) note, “Indigenous communities have maintained the right to select their preferred method of data collection” (p. 1). This study is African community-based research (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015) characterized by the African Akan Indigenous communities’ knowledge, interest, needs, and protocols that are specific to the research communities (Bull et al., 2020; Kovach, 2010) since “places have practices. In some definitions, places are practices” (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 14). Hence, this study’s data collection proceedings deviated from the University of Saskatchewan Institutional Review Board’s (IRB) typical standards of considering each African Akan Community Dwabo member as an individual research participant who ought “to be informed of the conditions of their participation as individuals, and their rights as participants”. This process reflects a western liberal form of thinking that promotes “the discrete and stable rights of research subjects as autonomous individuals who are isolated from one another and whose interactions with researchers are unidirectional and standardised” (Butz, 2008, p. 245). This research had to confront this misassumption (Tauri, 2018), because in the African Akan tradition, the gathering of permission from the overlord and paramount chief and Omanhene of the study community serves as formal consent for any individuals who partake in the Dwabo. Information provided by an individual Dwabo member without the leader or linguist approval cannot be treated as community data (Hill & May, 2013). African Akan community information can be properly accessed only when routed through the required palace protocol as directed by the Oman Kyeame or State linguist (Adjei, 2015; Agyekum, 2011).

It is this conception of the individual as a communal entity that makes this African community research unique (Higgs, 2010). “Dwabo” is an African Akan term for having a meeting by the entire community to deliberate on important community issues. Hence the Dwabo ceremony demonstrates the democratic and communal nature of the Indigenous Akan leadership structure. The Dwabo ceremony permits the majority to partake in the decisional making process when deliberating on issues that affect the community. The Dwabo ceremony makes it possible for leadership to act on consensual decisions “rather than through the majority principle, which does not always reflect the commonweal” (Amoah, 2012, p. 399). The Akan Dwabo ceremony can be described as an Indigenous cultural dialogue, with a culturally ascribed process. The ceremony follows a language protocol and ends up with the gaining of new meanings (Agyekum, 2011; Yankah, 1995). In the Akan traditional leadership set up, the Dwabo ceremony is always preceded by a libation pouring rituals, which makes this ceremony to be considered a distinct aspect of the Indigenous way of life that is connected to spirituality (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009; Kilson, 1969; Yankah, 1991). Both the physical (living) and non-physical entities (spirits) are called to have communal meetings in such Indigenous social gathering as the African Akan community Dwabo. The use of the Dwabo ceremony was an appropriate data collection opportunity for this study since “...all sources of data derived from research in Native communities are ethically questionable if their methodology does not include appropriate attention to a Native cultural and social approach to contemporary research” (Stewart, 2009, p. 61). It was required that the IRB recognize this sensitivity and “the accountabilities of researchers as storytellers, documenters of culture, and witnesses of the realities of Indigenous lives” (Smith, 2005, p. 90).

The distinctiveness of the Dwabo is unique from any community leadership meeting since the African Akan Dwabo is conducted with an aim of seeking imputes of knowledgeable community members who may fall outside the leadership division of the community. The Akan

Dwabo thus provided a platform for the collection of community information via a formal community agreement. The Dwabo ceremony was enacted in a way that made it possible for community information to be gathered from all community members, with an approval from all members of the entire community leadership (Amoah, 2012). This made data gathered from this ceremony the epitome of knowledge emanating from the entire community, of which authenticity cannot be discredited. The Dwabo process perfectly demonstrated that "democratizing in Indigenous terms is a process of extending participation outwards through reinstating Indigenous principles of collectivity and public debate" (Smith, 1999, p. 156). Additionally, the use of the Indigenous African Akan Dwabo as a data gathering method for the study helped me to apply a cultural safety measure in the collection of research data. The application of cultural safety is a significant requirement of Indigenous research methods application (Macbeth, 2001). The adoption of the Dwabo ceremony for this study's data collection provided an avenue for research participants to control and filter the information that was shared with the study investigator (Agyekum, 2011; Yankah, 1995). The application of cultural safety is a significant requirement of Indigenous research methods application (Macbeth, 2001).

For the study to meet the cultural and spiritual aspect of an Indigenous research Kovach (2010), study participants were (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015) ushered into the Akan Indigenous prayer ritual performed through the act of libation pouring (Agyekum, 2011; Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009; Kilson, 1969). The application of the Dwabo with its attending spiritual ceremony helped me to meet the spiritual and relational standards within Indigenous research methods. An ethical way of research conduction ends in a just outcome. The Dwabo ceremony, a traditionally accepted means of collecting community information in the African Akan

Indigenous setting therefore became the preferred mode of data collection for the study (Agyekum, 2011; Drawson et al., 2017; Yankah, 1991).

The various individuals that constituted the chief entourage and Dwabo participants were leaders and representatives of their clans, households, and communities. Hence, all members of the Dwabo ceremony acted and made decisions for their groups and people. Members of the chief's entourage were not selected based on their personal identities but in terms of their role and position in the leadership setup of the community (Agyekum, 2011; Kendie & Guri, 2007).

Members of the Dwabo committees are required to adhere, and act on a "collective responsibility » (Bull et al., 2020). Hence the adoption of the principle of individual informed consent for the study would mean that the researcher would have negated cultural protocol and potentially acquire information which "may be divulged by other people who are not recognized by the community leaders as being 'legitimate informants' or as having the authority to talk about certain topics" (Piquemal, 2001, p. 68). Thus, using Dwabo for collective data collection in the African Akan Indigenous setting precluded individual consent and ensured the cultural safety of study communities (Drawson et al., 2017).

All enquiries and procedures regarding the African study's data collection, analysis, and presentation must and was done in collaboration with the study communities with the State linguist and Okyeame leading the negotiations (Cronje et al., 2015). However, I offered a verbal explanation on the issue of consent and outlined the parameters of the study to each linguist and Okyeame of the study communities in my initial meetings. I then conferred with the Akyeame and negotiated with each of them to meet the would-be members of this particular Dwabo for the study. This initial meeting was followed by a proposal for another meeting by which an onward explanation of the study purposes and issues of consent was deliberated with the would-be members for this study’s Dwabo. The preliminary meetings with the potential Dwabo members also offered me the opportunity to provide a detailed clarification on the voluntary nature of their involvement in this Dwabo session for the study. Resorting to this act of relying on individual inform consent means that only the individual study participants were protected by the IRB ethics approval thus, affirming the erroneous view that “human subject protocols establish that individuals must be protected, but not communities. Individuals are empowered to give away the community’s stories” (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 812). The form of consent that was sought for this study’s data gathering was that of community/ collective consent from all the Indigenous community participants. Hence, the names of all individual members of the Dwabo for this study inclusive of the Akyeame and paramount chiefs of the study communities with a corresponding position of all members of the of the local chieftaincy institution in the study’s Dwabo was what was used as community consent documents.

3.10.2 ***Confidentiality and Data Protection***

Compliance to Indigenous communities’ socio-cultural values and societal norms is central to the undertaking of ethnographic research within the Indigenous domain (Chilisa et al., 2017; Drawson et al., 2017; Kovach, 2010; Lee et al., 2022). Protecting data is required of all individual researchers by the IRBs but how communities are protected is not explicitly captured (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Community based participatory research thrives on the establishment of rapport and the maintenance of good relationships with community members (Drawson et al., 2017; Kovach, 2010). Hence, I find the IRB’s requirement that researchers are to destroy all collected data after recording/ transcription very disturbing since the above requirement makes no provision for verification of what has been transcribed by researchers as a true reflection of how Indigenous community members respond to research questions. As rightly observed by Pool

(2017), ethnographic researchers are carriers of both the soft and hard copies of their study data; the hard copies are what usually goes into data transcription, and the soft being the memories of the researcher. The above requirement and practices of the IRB on data protection, thus makes Indigenous community members unprotected and vulnerable to researchers thus, justifying Cross et al.'s (2015) observation that the IRB fails to attend to ethical facts but rather works with rules on policies. The above IRB practices pose a challenge for Indigenous researchers, and investigators engaged in community-based research. There can occur an ethical conflict between researchers and community leaders if "qualitative researchers destroy recordings after transcription and then destroy the transcriptions after analysis in the name of confidentiality – an unethical requirement if such destruction is not what study participants agreed to or expected when they told their stories, and because it prevents the very verification that such committees should be defending" (Pool, 2017, p. 285). Hence, I recommend that the IRB must restructure their working policies to curtail some of the problems that community based participatory research investigators like me faced when undertaking research with Indigenous communities. Some community members demanded that no recording be undertaken, and that all interviews were put into writing for them to ascertain what was documented in their communities by researchers. Community leaders in this study refused to remain anonymous and want their community names to remain visible in the study.

Yet confidentiality in research is necessary as study participants can be liable for disclosing sensitive information. Hence, I ensured confidentiality by applying pseudonyms to all individual data to protect their identity. Field notes and memos were securely protected by storing them in a locked cabinet.

3.11 Limitations of Research Methods

This research has three limitations. This study was restricted to only African Akan Indigenous communities in Ghana within the Ghana National House of Chiefs (GNHC). As such the data collection deviated from studies that do not capture the entirety of Indigenous communities of the GNHC. The study was limited to K-12 school leadership and excluded studies of educational leadership of institutions like vocational, special education, and tertiary institutions. Hence, further research ought to be done in these areas to ensure the visibility of Indigenous research and practices in these areas. The Sankofa research as exemplified by this study requires expertise in Indigenous knowledge to undertake such studies. Researchers of this form of study need to be conversant with the language and culture of the study communities since most of the highly formalized African Akan language, gestures, artifacts, and terminologies used in the Dwabo palace proceedings require an insider's understanding. The undertaking of the study requires a local African/ Indigenous educational knower who can develop a trusted and perhaps a lasting relationship with the study communities. The study was found to be very expensive and time consuming given the need to fund Indigenous ceremonial protocols with local community leaders, trooping within research communities, and working with Indigenous community leaders whose consultation and meetings require significant fund and time to undertake.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology and the choice of qualitative research approach for the study. The process for selecting the research participants and the reasons for selecting study participants were also outlined. The chapter included a description of the research sites, participants, data collection, analysis procedures, ethics application and approval procedure. The chapter also provided a brief overview of the measures that were undertaken to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process. The process of and stages of thematic analysis used in data interpretation was duly described. Constructive criticisms on ethical challenges on community data protection were discussed. The next chapter describes the data findings in the thesis.

Chapter Four

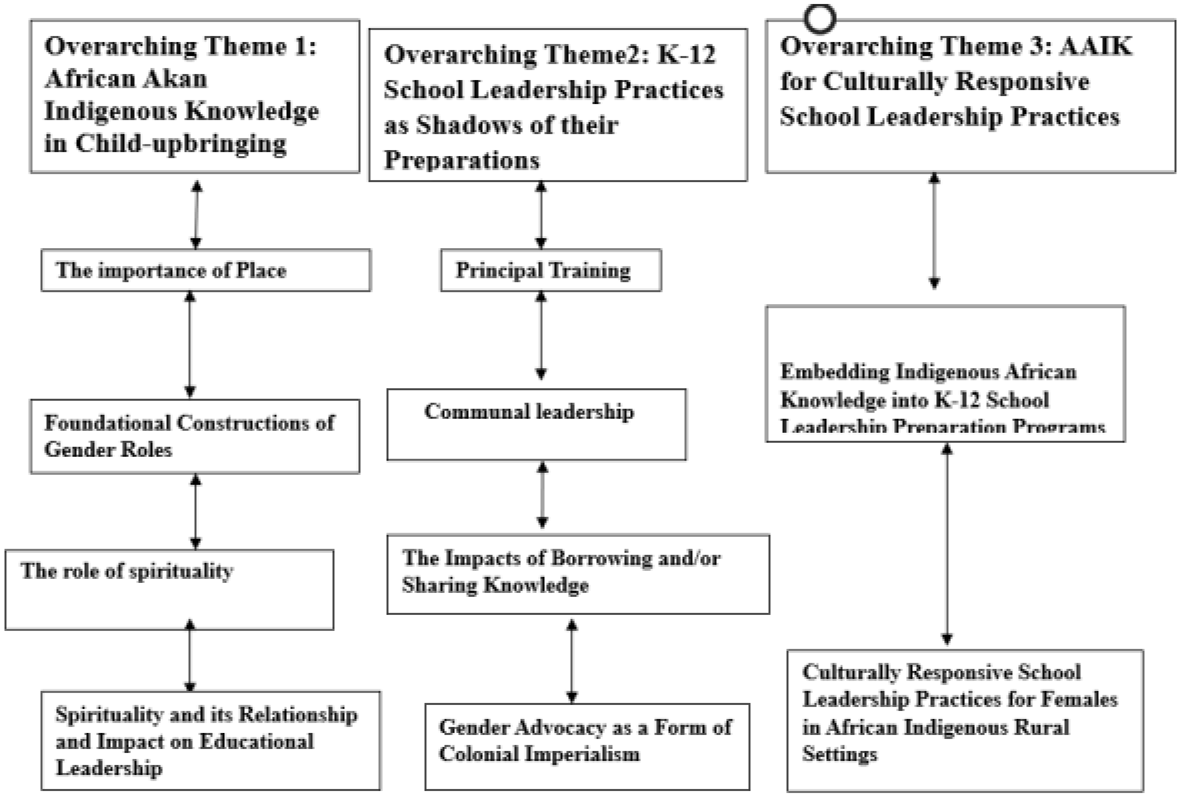
Findings

4.0 Introduction

Three overarching themes with ten subthemes derived from a thematic analysis of the study data. Figure 5 offers a visual of the themes that developed from the thematic analysis.

Figure 5

Study Themes


Overarching Theme 1: African Akan Indigenous Knowledge in Child-upbringing
The importance of Place
Foundational Constructions of Gender Roles
The role of spirituality
Spirituality and its Relationship and Impact on Educational Leadership
Overarching Theme2: K-12 School Leadership Practices as Shadows of their Preparations
Principal Training
Communal leadership
The Impacts of Borrowing and/or Sharing Knowledge
Gender Advocacy as a Form of Colonial Imperialism
Overarching Theme 3: AAIK for Culturally Responsive School Leadership Practices
Embedding Indigenous African Knowledge into K-12 School Leadership Preparation Programs
Culturally Responsive School Leadership Practices for Females in African Indigenous Rural Settings

The first theme related to the ways in which AIK was embedded in Akan socio-cultural values and child upbringing norms. This broad theme acknowledges that socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms includes a wide scope of African Indigenous cultural knowledge that impact the work of K-12 school principals in rural Indigenous communities. Four sub-themes related to AIK in Akan socio-cultural child upbringing norms fell within this broad theme: (1) the importance of place; (2) foundational constructions of gender roles; (3) the role of spirituality, and (4) its relationship to and impact on educational leadership.

The second theme highlights the impacts of colonial models of schooling on the African Indigenous context, whilst justifying the need to decolonize it. The findings of this theme make visible evidence of Sankofa Indigenous feminist ideology as typified by the African renaissance theory (Asante, 2015; Dei 2013). This section is premised on four sub-themes that developed in the data related to principal training, communal leadership, the impacts of borrowing and/or sharing knowledge, and gender advocacy as a form of colonial imperialism. The section attests that current K-12 school leadership practices exhibited by principals in rural school in Ghana shadow the colonial knowledge inherent in the design and delivery of preparation programs that is not only insufficient, but is most often detrimental for the rural Akan context (Dei, 2012; Dei & Adhami, 2022; Gomba, 2017; Higg, 2010). Participants' words demonstrate that there exists resistance to the vestiges of colonialism within educational institutions in former colonized countries like Ghana (Blay, 2008; Gomba, 2017; Tyagi, 2014).

The third overarching theme recognizes that the inclusion of cultural knowledge in K-12 school leadership preparation programs is a necessary ingredient for the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices in rural Ghanaian schools. This overarching theme considers the need for distinction to be recognized in both Indigenous and rural contexts in the preparation of school leadership. It further sheds light on the various factors that draw community leaders to work together in African rural community settings. This theme demonstrates where it may be possible to integrate AAIK into the preparation programs of K-12 school leaders; how K-12 school leadership preparation programs can be responsive to rural contexts, and the complexities inherent in culturally responsive school leadership practices around gender.

4.1 Theme One: African Indigenous Knowledge in Child-upbringing Norms

This section will outline findings related to the four sub-themes inherent within the primary theme that suggested that African Indigenous Knowledge is embedded in child-upbringing norms. The four subthemes are developed further in the following subsections.

4.1.1 *Importance of Place*

The research findings established a link between geographical locations, or places, and AIK. The geographical location of the community influenced the socio-cultural values and practices on child upbringing in rural Indigenous African communities. One participant noted that AIK associated with these socio-cultural values was dictated by place as well as by the form of livelihood associated with members of those communities (Dwabo Interview 20). An Indigenous African Akan community leader described key African Akan socio-cultural values associated with child upbringing norms as follows:

> We know children are not little adults and may need to be handled with care. That is what Indigenous communities like us subscribe to. We see children as our future that is why we see the need to guide them to enable them to find themselves on the right path right from childhood. The entire community is responsible and becomes the source of guidance for a growing child within the African Indigenous community. The community helped in moulding the child to fit into the society. Adults are mandated to nurture the child to conform to the tenets, conventions, and customary routines in the community. For instance, a child who indulges in theft is paraded as a thief throughout the principal

> street of the community to serve as a deterrent to other children. Thus, we do not rear children like animals, but we train both boys and girls to assume their respectful place in their own society. (ɔkyeame/ StateLingust Dwabo Interview 1)

An Ohembaa and Queenmother of an Akan State explained that Indigenous community's socio-cultural values are in congruence with their environment, as these societal norms serve and provide them with the necessary strategies that enable them to survive as Indigenous people and community (Dwabo Interview 11). For example, the first socio-cultural practice associated with child upbringing of Akans is the first rite of passage; a religious ceremony by which the newborn child is entrusted into the care of the entire community through a naming ceremony. As such, African Akan Indigenous education starts with the birth of the child and their relationship to community and place. As vividly explained by a school principal:

> I admire the Akan socio-cultural child rearing norms associated with naming ceremony by which water and alcohol are used to hammer the inculcation of truthfulness in the child raising values of the Akan socio-cultural practices. This child naming ritual reinforces the integrity of the child's parents and guidance, and thus any misconduct on the part of the child is linked to the extended family and the entire community. And which makes every community member to be responsible for raising the African child to fit into the African Akan Indigenous community. (School principal Interview 17)

It is required of every Akan to teach their younger generation to adhere to the customs and norms of their community. These are the very practices and norms that have acted as a binding force in sustaining the Akan tribe and social institutions for millennia. This knowledge is ancient and place-based, and the Akan society has depended on these norms for its very survival:

> Please let us know that the act of child upbringing in the Akan Indigenous community context is characterized by Do's and Don'ts. The Do's are the socio-cultural values by which children are trained with, and of which the entire society expect children to exhibit. The Don'ts are taboos or unaccepted behaviours and practice whose violations come with punishments. We don't subscribe to any teaching that makes children feel as if they are individuals with commitment to only themselves, and not to their families, nor other members of the community that they form part of. That sense of communal living and commitment is the unique feature that distinguishes the African Akan people from other tribes, or race. This is not how our elders asked us to do and shouldn't be mentioned among us. (A female Indigenous leader Dwabo Interview 11)

The perpetuation of these practices reminds Akans of their continued survival as a people with a heritage to preserve. The adherence to these practices opens social networks for children, as the younger generation's ability to learn and engage in these practices helps the individual to enter into the larger social world on the land that sustains them. The child's knowledge and awareness of these socio-cultural values becomes the foundation for social bonds for every African child and moves into adulthood (Dwabo interview 12). In the view of a State Linguist, these understandings are akin to achieving the notion of "the good" for the entire society:

> Listen to the real meaning of how all Akan people of Africa address a human being whether young or old. We call such an entity "oyimpa "(that is an individual who knows what is good). The word "good "that acts to the prefix used in addressing every human being in the Akan language is meant for the good of everyone in the community, the society, and the entire universe at large. Hence, the Akan raises up a child to demonstrate a life and behavior that seeks to the good of everyone in the community. We raise human

> beings to become conscious of the need for him or her to exhibits traits that conform to the expectations of the society, and which are the "Good" that we are referring to. We Akans uphold some of the highest forms of human rights as embedded in our language, and customary practice. (Kyeame Dwabo Interview 1)

A school principal noted that these child-raising norms can clash with government policies related to western understanding of children's rights when African socio-cultural values are deeply rooted in the daily lives of the community members. The perception of children's rights as they relate to child labour laws, for example, is problematic in rural Indigenous communities. Local community members feel that school children in rural areas are made to think that helping their parents at home amounts to a human rights abuse. This is antithetical to African Akan socio-cultural child upbringing norms that require children to partake in household chores as well as undertake economic ventures to support their families. It becomes problematic when the school principal attempts to reconcile the African Akan socio-cultural values on child raising and government policies on child rights and child labour in the African Indigenous community (School Principal Interview 19).

Perhaps one of the most humorous but also profound notions of the importance of place was noted in a discussion on the importance of community members and school leaders to work together in culturally responsive ways to enhance children's learning:

> Okyeame: The location and context that school principals' work determines what they are required to do.
>
> Theodora: That is very, true....

> Okyeame: Okunyin Osuanyi. Mepe se meka saa abebu wei wo borofo kasa mu ama ne nkyerease anyera wo nea woresua yi mu. I would like to say this proverb in the English language so as to retain its meaning, giving the saliency of this proverb in this study topic of yours. (Standing up to put on his traditional cloth on again, he gets hold of the linguist staff (Akyeamepoma on which sits the Sankofa symbol firmly. Then looking straight into my eyes, he spoke intensely to me with these words). "If you dress a donkey as a racehorse, on the day of the race, it will reveal the Ass that it is"! (there was a loud applause and uncontrollable laughter from the entire Dwabo team). I was sitting down on my seat not knowing what that proverbs means or how to relate it to the topic in question).
>
> Theodora: Nana Kyeame, I don't understand what you are trying to tell me. What is the meaning of these words, how does it relate to what we are doing here?
>
> Okyeame: Oh yes, those words are a true reflection of how current school workers like teachers and principals are prepared to teach all children irrespective of their location, and background as a homogenous whole. Both school principals and teachers find it difficult to work efficiently in most rural communities. Not because they are not capable, but because they are not adequately prepared for work in such areas like rural locality. Hence, they are found wanting in their school administrative duties and responsibilities. So let the university-based school leadership preparation program designers continue to use alien leadership models to train principals for us. But their true efficiency would be exposed when they come to the field of work.

As evident in the above sections, AIK informs how children are to be raised and educated in Akan society. These understandings sometimes align with local notions about effective school leadership, but at other times clash with government policies, laws or regulations that school principals are required to uphold. In the next section, norms related to child raising, and African Akan Indigenous education are discussed.

4.1.2. *Foundational Constructions of Gender Roles*

The subtheme of gender roles in African Akan Indigenous education captures African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values related to child upbringing processes and the education of boys and girls. Gender plays a significant role in the Africa Akan Indigenous cosmology and knowledge system (Dwabo Interview 3).

Females occupy a very significant position in the African Akan Indigenous matrilineal leadership hierarchy (Field Notes 1). The Ohembaa and queen mother's position in the Akan chieftaincy is one of the most powerful leadership roles. She is considered to be both the mother of the State and mother of the paramount chief. Though the queen mother shares position with the Paramount chief as a co-leader, she is also the only person with the right to nominate a chief for installation. She can also unseat the paramount chief from the throne (Field Note 3). The Queen mother as Obaapanyin or mother of the State mostly directs the affairs of females and children within the State.

African Akan Indigenous education, known in the Akan language as mbofra ntsestse or child upbringing, is spearheaded by females. Traditionally, females offered formal and informal education to children from infanthood and even in adulthood (Dwabo Interview 1). As such the routines and practices, and major decisions that characterized the African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms were mostly handled by the Queen mother. Although these gendered practices are ancient, they are not static. For instance, the Ohembaa and Queen mother of one of the research communities hinted that the Bragoro or puberty rites of passage that used to be mandatory for all adolescent girls has been abolished in her paramountcy because the rites was considered obsolete (Dwabo Interview 13).

In the African Akan cosmology, the Earth deity known in the Akan language as Asaase Efuwa/Yaa, is considered to be a female and the goddess of fertility in traditional Akan religion (Field Note 1). The Earth goddess, like the queen mother in the physical realm of the Akan chieftaincy institution, is the next to receive recognition during libation pouring in all religious undertaking in the Akan cosmology (Field Note 3). The Earth deity performs her Indigenous feminine and motherly roles by feeding the mortal occupants of the environment with food by her provision of fertile soil for a bumper harvest. The Earth goddess also repeats her motherly duty by accommodating the human body into her bosom as burial ground at the end of life.

A female is the first person that every African child encounters at birth as the woman and the mother of the child. The first education that the child receives as a member of the community comes in the form of an initiation rite by which the child passes from the non-living world into the living world via a child naming ceremony. The naming ceremony is performed with the mother assuming the position of a co-parent of the child, and as a key figure who ensures that the newborn is nurtured and grown by following the Do's and Don'ts or social norms of the tribe (Dwabo Interview 11).

> Besides childbearing, women are charged with raising children. The naming serves as a first form of Indigenous education by which the child's mother becomes the first teacher of the child. Thus, the first stage of African Indigenous education similar to the preschool education is run by females. Females in African Indigenous education exhibits their roles as implementers of socio-cultural values through child upbringing norms and as teachers in the second stage of African Indigenous education (School Principal Interview 6).

Females as mothers direct children to assume the requisite behavior as per their gender that is expected of them as a reflection of socio-cultural values. Hence both boys and girls are guided by their mothers to partake in gender appropriate jobs and activities within the community. According to a school principal in one of the research communities, African Akan females within the matrilineal system of inheritance play an important in ensuring that African children conform to socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms at both home and school.

Though the first stage of African Akan Indigenous education comes with general norms for both boys and girls, the second stage comes with gender specific rules and norms. A female sub chief of an Indigenous Kingdom provides an insight into the gender roles at the second state of African Indigenous education:

> The Indigenous African Ghanaian socio-cultural values relating to child upbringing is structured in a hierarchical order, and it’s strongly linked to our tribal customary practices and conventions. As such, we have the father as the head of the family, who leads all deliberations with no consultation from the child. Family consultations are done within the extended families. Young females are strongly tied to their mothers who guide them on how to relate to the members of the opposite sex. The rationale for mothers’ guidance is to curtail any incident of premarital sex, and out of wedlock children in the family, and in the African Akan Indigenous community settings. African Akan Indigenous societies emphasised premium on the perpetuation of family lineages through marriages. The Akan tribe is predominantly matrilineal in inheritance. Procreation is valued but not outside the confines of customary marriage. These are some of the socio-cultural values central to the upbringing of children in the Akan Indigenous communities. (Dwabo Interview 1***)***

A school principal acknowledged that these gender roles are reaffirmed in school, noting that girls are taught to assume domestic roles and that leadership roles are the prerogative of males:

> The gender role is another key area that children are taught to know. For instance, our young females are to be taught to accept and assume domestic roles at home. Though, I also believe females can be groomed to be at the forefront of community leadership roles as well. Hence, the motherly roles that females are required to take as per their socio-cultural norms need to be hammered throughout their childhood till adulthood. Likewise, males are to be trained for leadership roles. (School Principal Interview 5)

A community elder insisted that, though the path they have chosen in raising female children may sound discriminatory to alien eyes and thoughts, they see it to be in the best interest of the community, the tribe, and its people:

> We are not suggesting that females are to be made to assume motherly roles and take after only female professions. We are not saying females are subordinates of males. Neither are we saying females are not to be highly educated to assume higher positions at the economic and social ladder of the state. It is just that we do not want to subscribe to this type of child rearing principles whose implementation are found to be very problematic in this our Indigenous context. We as Africans know what is good for us and our children. (Dwabo Interview 11).

A female leading member of an Akan community explained that leadership roles for each gender are designated and adequately described in Akan society (Dwabo Interview 3). Using her own position as an example, she indicated that she has been installed as female Sub-chief of her Indigenous Akan Kingdom. Thus, females can be trained to assume masculine roles as chiefs and occupy other community leadership positions, noting that, “For instance, I am a woman, but I am the chief (Gyaase hen) of this Kingdom, and not a Queen” (Female Chief, Dwabo Interview 1).

The gender roles and rules associated with socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms seem to discriminate to an alien eye. They offer an erroneous impression that Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms prevent females from assuming leadership roles. A school principal explained these cultural norms by suggesting they exist for spiritual and safety reasons:

> Yes, I know that the demands of contemporary life in Ghana require both male and female to rub shoulders with each other. I share the sentiment that both boys and girls are to have equal opportunity in all life’s endeavor. But please listen, in the African Akan Indigenous setting this rule does not hold here. It does not mean we are relegating females to the background; we care for our female counterparts. Females are not bread winners in the family. There are so many practices, duties, and areas that females are not encouraged partaking in the African Akan Indigenous set up. The rational for these prohibitions are either for spiritual or security purposes. You may not understand, but I will say that this is how culture influences societal behavior and community norms as well. (School Principal Interview 5)

Though females as care takers of children can contribute to the family income, they are not considered as bread winners in the family (Paramount Female Indigenous Community Leader Dwabo Interview 1). As such, females engage in shared roles with their partners as mothers and nurturers of the family. An Indigenous community chief maintained that females are to be brought up to accept an Indigenous female role of a mother and home keeper:

> Males have their assigned roles and duties as indicated by our customary norms and practices. For instance, at home girls are mostly taught how to cook, whilst their male counterparts are mostly taught to do other things than cooking and home management. Though boys are expected to know how to cook, it is mandatory for girls to be trained to know how to manage their own homes. A man who doesn't know how to cook is no news, but it's a disgrace to have a grown-up daughter who doesn't know how to cook, nor manage a home. (Indigenous Community Leader and Dwabo Participant 1)

Thus the Indigenous fatherly role and that of breadwinner that the African male child is trained to assume becomes the main reason for the maintenance of these gender roles in the African Akan Indigenous sector. As exemplified by the following female Indigenous leader:

> Gender roles in the Akan Indigenous sector is normative in the sense that, it dictates behaviour and goes ahead to prescribe the role required by each of the genders. Roles for male and females are assigned along gender lines, whilst boys and girls are required to play distinctive roles. Males are taught to assume fatherly roles and trained to acquire masculine traits like bravery, and to take after Indigenous fatherly roles and responsibilities. Boys are to be taught to appreciate their given African names in the lineage. (Queen mother and paramount female Indigenous leader)

One tribal leader explained that in the Akan tribe, gender roles exist to ensure that females are protected, and it is a form of respect when they are prevented from undertaking certain activities reserved for males. This does not mean that females are not respected or suppressed by their male counterparts within the Akan tribe (Dwabo Interview 1). The argument associated with those who resist the gender rules inherent within the African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms is that they neither understand the teachings offered to them by their own tribe, nor appreciate the wisdom inherent in these tribal teachings. Those who uphold the idea that these gender rules are discriminatory are perceived to have lost their ability to exhibit their feminine traits as Indigenous mothers, and their sense of communal living as Africans (Dwabo Interview 3). Gender role knowledge is premised on an in-depth knowledge of spirituality, the African Akan matrilineal system of inheritance, and Indigenous hereditary laws. A lack of knowledge on the above areas may lead one to make a blanket judgement on these gender norms that is not sensitive to this ancient knowledge (Dwabo Interview 11). In the words of a state linguist, African Akan children who accept other forms of knowledge to the detriment of their own Indigenous knowledge become lost and lose their ability to be resilient in their own community and society:

> The end result is that Indigenous African children who forego their own African Indigenous education end up as individuals who seem to lack analytical skills in all their decision-making process in life. As the products of such education are mostly tempted to flout their own socio-cultural values without considering the rationale and the contexts from which these socio-cultural values were established in their own Indigenous communities. Enye wawa se nkodaa yetsetse won saa kwan yi so faara yine danee nimpa wonim fie nyansa kakra mpo. Sebie nkodaa yetetsetse omo fa saa kwan yi faara ntumi ngyina obra nkukuhweas mu nko nko omo ennim (There is no doubt that Indigenous children who go through nonIndigenous form of child up-bringing process (western formal educational systems are made to lack the possession of resilience by which all well-trained Indigenous adults need to brave the storms of life). (ɔkyeame/State Linguist Dwabo Interview 13)

It was realized that the major aim for instituting these gender rules and norms is to maintain the safety of women and children in a non-welfare state like Ghana (Dwabo Interview 13). The unique role played by females in the education of children and their adherence to these supposed discriminatory gender roles do not place the African Akan Indigenous community in a backward position. Rather, these norms shift over time. As explained by a paramount leader from the chieftaincy institution, Indigenous norms considered to be irrelevant and unhelpful are abolished by the custodians of these socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms:

> Yoo, mpanin se sɛ mere danie a wo danie wo ho. (our forebearers have the saying that time changes call for changes as well). Culture they say is very dynamic, so we are not adamant to the changes in what is now been described as the global world. The chieftaincy institution in Ghana is very much abreast with time. As such, certain cultural practices which we deem obsolete have been either abolished or modified. For instance, customary rites like the Bragoro, has to be abolished due to the idea that it exposes the nakedness of the girl child. We have also banned menstruating women from visiting the local stream for hygienic purposes. (ɔhembaa /Queen Mother, Dwabo Interview 13)

The seriousness attached to gender and its links to spirituality indicate the complexity that comes with gender studies in the African Akan Indigenous rural communities. The various perspectives on child upbringing norms around gender call for further studies into these unique practices of the Akan tribe in Ghana.

4.1.3 *The Role of Spirituality*

This section provides insights into the spiritual aspect of AIK that influences effective school leadership in African rural Indigenous communities (Dwabo Interview 13). This subtheme also explains the rationale underlying some of the prohibitions and taboos that characterized the African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms. The form of AIK leadership knowledge employed in the African Akan child upbringing process is influenced by the African Akan world view and perspective that is understood in terms of communalism and spirituality (Field Notes 1 and 3). For example, a school principal spoke of how his leadership is influenced by spiritual understandings that are manifested in the living conditions of the present:

> We the people of Owirenkyiman pride ourselves to be the neatest town in Ghana. As a school within this environ, we ensure that we inculcate this concept of neatness in all the school children here. The concept of neatness does not boarder on only the cleanliness of the physical environment, it is linked to the spiritual as well. There must be decency in all our actions and mannerisms. We are to live in harmony with all creatures both physical and spiritual entities in this environment of ours. As indicated in our Akan language (ahonide) literally meaning imbibing knowledge to attain a better living condition. So, these are things that I consider to be very useful and incorporate them in my school leadership practices in this community. (School Principal Interview 22)

Spirituality is fundamental to leadership in the African Akan Indigenous belief system. In the Akan worldview, community life is made up of both physical and spiritual entities which need to be acknowledged. The African Akan Indigenous acknowledgement of the existence and worshiping of the Supreme Being existed before the Arab and European invasion of Africa (Field Notes 3). An Indigenous leader explained that the Don’ts of child upbringing are taboos or unacceptable behaviours and practices whose violations come with punishments. Consequences of violating these community Don’ts or taboos may result in the bringing of bad luck or calamity in the form of strange diseases or fatal accidents to not only the violator, but also to the entire community. The appeal to spiritual belief connected to ancestral knowledge is a primary means by which community norms and other socio-cultural values on child upbringing were enforced by local community leaders. As an Indigenous community leader explained:

> We consciously educate our community members to come to the realization that, the acknowledgement and observance of these Indigenous norms links us to our ancestors. As such, there are both spiritual blessings that come with their observation, as well as curses and calamities that accompany the community's failure to observe these norms. The observation of these customary practices is part of our heritage as a people. (ɔmankyeame/State Linguist Dwabo Interview 4).

Another participant talked about the appeal to spiritual belief as a strategy for ensuring the enforcement of community norms:

> You know what, the leaders of this community ensure that, any community member who violates these socio-cultural values are dully punished for serving as deterrent to all potential violators. The fear of being punished, and also the fear that a violation of these social norms comes with a spiritual harm does the trick. Thus, we are able to use spirituality as our main strategy for ensuring the continual observation of these cultural values in our communities. (Dwabo Participant 6, Interview 4)

A third local Indigenous community leader justified the appeal to potential spiritual harm as a means of law enforcement by explaining that the failure to recognize the existence of spiritual entities in the community may render the entire society vulnerable to law breakers and criminals. The appeal to the potential spiritual harm curbs those who otherwise may do the wrong thing without fear of punishment (*Dwabo Interview 14).*

A school principal offered an alternative perspective, focusing on spiritual benefit rather than potential harm. He suggested that spirituality is linked to the significant benefit it brings to people in distress, which helps school principals deal with stresses in the school. Spiritual happenings in the community can be handled only by a designated individual in the office of the Sumannkwahene / the local Indigenous priest or priestess who has the sole prerogative and responsibility to undertake such rituals and religious ceremonies in the local Indigenous communities. The performance of such religious rites and ceremonies leaves a sense of serenity in the people when they are performed which permeates into the school, helping to provide a serene learning environment for everyone in the school community (School Principal Interview 23).

4.1.4 *Relationship to and Impact on Educational Leadership*

African Akan Indigenous educational leadership differs significantly from other forms of leadership. School principals cannot provide culturally responsive school leadership until they come to understand some of the tenets of African Indigenous education. In the view of community members, the education of the African child does not take place only within the confines of a classroom, nor does it take place under the direction of an individual. The education of the child is perceived as a communal responsibility, governed by communal conventions, and regulations (Dwabo Interview 2). It is this communal connection and expectations that directs the aims and purposes of education. In fact, the term “child rearing” has no synonym in the Akan language, and the phrase was seen to be inappropriate by participants in the study. They suggested that applying the word “rearing” to the nurturing of human beings places local community members’ roles in child upbringing in an inactive and irresponsible position that disrupts the meaning and authority invested in Indigenous community culture and language. The term “child rearing” seems to portray the view that children are left to grow up physically without being guided to learn and conform to any social order. A State linguist, and spokesperson of a paramount Indigenous leader saw it very necessary to comment on this anomaly at the outset of the study as follows:

> The basic tenets of the African Akan child upbringing norms are the inculcation of culturally appropriate behavior and practices in our children to enable them to fit well into their own society. (Akanfo tsetse mbofra, na yenyen nyimpa) Akans raise children to acquire these socio-culturally requisite norms. We do not rear our children, but we raise children to fit into the community, and the society as a whole. Hence, we teach children to acquire traits like the belief in the Supreme Being (God), showing respect to people especially the elderly in the community, the appropriate use of language, the need to partake in household chores, ways of preparing local Akan dishes etc. till these become part and parcel of the growing child. Girls are brought up to be well equipped to be able to perform their God given roles as mothers. Likewise, boys are to be groomed to behave like typical African Akan men with the responsibility of being the bread winner for the family. (ɔkyeame/ State Linguist Dwabo Interview 11)

These socio-cultural values served as an Indigenous form of education in pre-colonial Africa before the advent of the Europeans. A school leader who had been prepared with a Western form of education shared the perspective that the African Indigenous form of education that uplifts socio-cultural child upbringing norms must be maintained:

> As an Akan Fante my view about our own socio-cultural value is to train a child to fit into the African Indigenous Akan community and the society at large. The socio-cultural values of our communities dictate how children are to be raised. Traits of our Akan socio-

> cultural values like obedience is one of the key areas where children are required to follow. Obedience to elderly members of the household is the first and important community norm that every Akan child has to know. (School Principal Interview***)***

The conception of leadership in the Indigenous African domain is that of a collective one. A school principal of an Indigenous community explained that he applies African Akan socio-cultural values that are found in Akan proverbs, conventions, and customary practices:

> I believe in the African Akan socio-cultural values related to child upbringing as embedded in the Akan proverb, tsir kor mpam. (No individual takes collective decision). This African Akan adage helps me to confer with all stakeholders when taking decision at the managerial level in my role and responsibility as a principal of this school. I will say that the adoption of these African Akan socio-cultural values on child rearing in my life as an Akan has influenced me a lot, as it has helped me to improve my work as a school leader. Because the application of these Indigenous values in my school leadership practices helps in effective goal setting. (School Principal Interview 18)

This principal mentioned that the African Akan adage helped him to confer with all stakeholders when making decisions. He believed that the adoption of African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing has helped him improve his work and goal setting as a school leader. A second school principal explained that opening oneself to community leadership teachings is the first test that every school leader located in a rural Indigenous community needs to pass (School Principal Interview 4). A third rural school leader in an Indigenous community suggested, “It takes a joint effort of the school principal and the community to improve school children’s educational outcome in rural Indigenous community” (Indigenous Community Leader, Dwabo Interview 19**).** This perception that leadership is a collective effort stems directly from understandings on child raising norms noted in the first section whereby the entire community is responsible for moulding children to take their place in society. Essentially, the Do's and Don'ts of child raising are expected to become a major criterion for student learning within Indigenous African rural communities (Okyeame/ State Linguist Dwabo Interview 11).

Principals noted that they benefitted from this way of understanding collective leadership:

> The realization that, the whole community is behind me as a school leader and a person who has been given the mandate to help raise children for this community makes me feel and see myself as a team member of a larger community that has been entrusted to the raising of society's children into their care. It makes me see the work of the principal here as some sort of, we are all involved kind of job. Something not meant for only the school head and the teachers but all community members. (School Principal Interview 18)

Another school principal demonstrated how the showing of respect for the elderly was translated into all spheres of human activity in the school, from principal to teachers, among teachers, even within student peers. The local Indigenous community leadership is also accorded the highest respect by which they in turn reciprocate by enlightening the school as to how Indigenous norms and protocols can be appropriately followed. This trait of respect as an aspect of African Akan socio-cultural practice is translated into school leadership practices and becomes the foundation on which discipline among teachers and student is built (School Principal Interview 9). For instance, the showing of respect by school members, including school leaders, to local Indigenous community leaders and members is foundational for school community collaboration. This showing of respect assures the community that the school and its leadership value and are willing to accept community views and suggestions at managerial meetings and other decision-making ventures. Likewise, parents establish trust with school leaders when they realize that they will be welcome when they come to the school with an issue concerning their children's education. It is through the demonstration of respect that local community leaders become attached to the school and show a great sense of commitment in teaming up with school leaders to support children (School Principal Interview 21).

The degree of AIK employed in child upbringing was dependent on the level of knowledge shared between school leaders and local Indigenous community leaders. One school principal noted that inevitably, neophyte school principals recognized their inability to lead in rural Indigenous communities unless they opened themselves up to the tutelage of local community leaders (School Principal Interview 4). Another principal recognized the immense local practical knowledge held by community leaders that helped them in their own school leadership practice (School Principal Interview 24).

Principals also acknowledged that the unique and place-based nature of AIK made it very difficult for school workers and principals to learn this knowledge outside the confines of the local community knowledge holders. A school leader and principal explained why and how such knowledge should be acquired by principals:

> You know one thing that we need to understand is that each and every community has its own unique way of adhering and observing their own Indigenous socio-cultural values. Hence, there are cultural ceremonies and protocols that go together with the transmission of their knowledge as well. And which means that we will need one of such persons or group of persons with an Indigenous eye for an effective transmission of such knowledge. (School Principal Interview 21)

Participants suggested that school principals could adopt AIK child upbringing norms at parent teacher association meetings, school performance appraisal meetings (SPAM), local festival celebrations, school community interactions, and observations of interactions between students and their parents in the school and in the community. As one school principal noted:

> The school's involvement in the various Indigenous festivals of this community becomes an avenue for another learning opportunity for teachers, school leaders, and students in this community to engage in the various Indigenous socio-cultural activities that comes with the celebration festivals in the whole traditional areas of this community. I must say that it's from the celebration of these festivals that the local community leaders devote time to teach the school about their own African Akan socio-cultural values. (School Principal Interview 15)

An Indigenous community leader explained that leading and teaching in rural Indigenous settings differs significantly from urban areas (School Principal Interview 20). As such, there should an avenue for local community leadership to prepare teachers and school principals to understand how children in Indigenous communities are to be taught and led from a local Indigenous perspective (Indigenous Tribal Leader and Dwabo Member Interview). School principals acquire leadership knowledge by opening up to learning local community views of leadership, understanding local community child raising norms, and incorporating Indigenous perspectives into their own leadership practices.

This section focused on the first overarching theme related to how African Akan Indigenous knowledge (AIK) is embedded in socio-cultural values on child rearing norms and its impact on school leadership. It emphasized the place-based nature of AIK and child-raising norms, gender roles in African Akan Indigenous education, spirituality evident in Indigenous educational leadership understandings, and the ways in which African Akan Indigenous knowledge informs understandings of educational leadership. The next section discusses the second overarching theme of formal schooling educational leadership practices as shadows of their preparation programs.

4.2 Theme Two: Impacts of Colonial Models of Schooling

The second broad theme discusses the impacts of colonial models of schooling on rural Indigenous communities and schools. There exists a desire and an expectation of Indigenous community members to perpetuate Indigenous education through the leadership practices of formal school leadership in the African Akan Indigenous rural settings (Dwabo Interview 13). This expectation of Indigenous community members is thwarted by the imposition and perpetuation of colonial knowledge and practice in the preparation of school leaders. K-12 school principals in Indigenous rural communities have become focused on translating the colonized knowledge into colonized practices as it exists and is delivered to and through them in their preparation programs.

4.2.1. *Principal Training*

Participants in the study presented that current K-12 school leadership practices as exhibited by principals in Ghanaian rural schools shadow the knowledge content used in the design and delivery of these preparation programs that neglects local knowledge and context (Dei, 2012; Dei & Adhami, 2022; Gomba, 2017; Higg, 2010). A principal recounted that current expectations of the principalship sets the school leader as an overseer for all daily activities of the school with responsibilities which include the observation and monitoring of teachers to ensure effective teaching and learning. Principals work with School Management Committees (SMC) to support the school in relation to the things that the Central government is not able to do, including organizing community and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings to deliberate on how school children can be supported to achieve academic laurels; guaranteeing a safe environment for everyone within the school premises, and scheduling meetings with and reporting to the Christian Church (School Principal Interview 1). Another school principal indicated that his leadership preparation equipped him with the expectation of leading the affairs of the school in ways that are accountable to national expectations (GES) and local community leadership, including ensuring that teaching and learning occur in a conducive atmosphere in the school, ensuring that teachers and students are regular and punctual in attendance, monitoring daily activities, providing guidance to students, teachers, and parents, serving as a link between the school and local community, and providing recruitment services for the GES and the community to help serve learning needs in the community (School Principal Interview 13). Only one school principal separated the work of school principals from local engagement with communities. This school leader suggested, “I believe the hallmark of an efficient school principal is that the school leader must ensure that instructional hours are used effectively, and that both teachers and learners are regular and punctual in attendance. That’s all” (School Principal Interview 1).

Although the above perspectives position principals as experts of their field, most individuals noted dissatisfaction with the limited knowledge they received in their preparations due to a lack of emphasis on cultural responsivity and context. A principal explained that his ability to undertake a culturally responsive leadership practices was shaped by relearning from the local community leadership (School Principal Interview 14). A local community leader described the inadequacies of principals’ work by indicating the following:

> Culturally responsive school leadership can only be effectively implemented in the school, when principals know, and understand the culture of the very community that the school is located. This is because the African Akan Indigenous culture is normative and thus dictates human behavior. Hence, school principals can be helped to understand why, and how their students, and community members behave in certain ways and manner, and thus, enable them to be efficient in their dealing with local Indigenous educational clients in rural communities. (Indigenous Community Leader Dwabo Interview 13)

The content knowledge used in the preparation of K-12 School leaders was deemed to be woefully inadequate as it lacked the requisite knowledge needed to lead in an Indigenous rural location. One K-12 school principal of an Indigenous community school explained that the inability of school leaders to team up with local leadership in leading the school is due to the fact that principals are not equipped with the needed strategy on how to work with local community leaders in their preparation programs:

> I went through a series of in-service training organized by the GES after my formal principalship preparation program. But it is sad to know that no training was offered to principals on issues related to cooperation with rural community leaders in our preparation programs. This mean that all these formal trainings barely provided principals with the requisite knowledge or training needed to provide effective learning environment for children in rural Indigenous communities. Hmmmm, we have a long way to go. (School Principal Interview 14)

Another school principal mentioned that he was able to navigate his role and establish very good relationships with the community because he was a native of this locality and was considered as “one of their own”. Notwithstanding the advantages that he had as a native, he felt that it was necessary for leadership preparation programs to better educate principals on how to establish rapport with community members. He also noted the need to engage in continuous learning from the community after formal training (School Principal Interview 4).

4.2.2 *Communal Leadership*

After receiving training, a school leader within an Indigenous community described his leadership appointment by suggesting:

> I became the principal of this school as result of becoming successful in The Ghana Education Services (GES) application and selecting processes for K-12 school principals. I since then have been offered series of in-service course by the district directorate of the GES upon my appointment as school principal. (School Principal Interview 1).

This school principal's explanation sheds lights on the non-local orientation of the principal recruitment process. There is no ability for the local rural Indigenous community to support the recruitment process or to help train the principal once they move into the community. This lack of involvement in the formal recruitment process managed by the national central government to whom the school principal becomes accountable runs antithetical to a worldview whereby the community leads the upbringing of children. One principal suggested that the influence of colonization has impacted the design and practices inherent in the entire schooling system and makes it difficult for the Ghana Educational Services (G.E.S) to soften some of its stance on the inclusion of local knowledge and culture in the country's educational policies and practices (School Principal Interview 19). Local Indigenous community leaders indicated that community leaders are mostly left out of decision-making processes during school leadership policy formulation and implementation processes (Dwabo Interview 19). An Indigenous elder observed that:

> The discussion on the school seems to be suggesting that their leaders know what socio-cultural values are and have been actively doing what is expected of them by the local Indigenous community leadership on these community norms. But I am of the belief that the effort being made by the school leadership is not enough. For me the school needs to do more to support the observance of these socio-cultural values in our communities. The schools are well known for singing only the Ghana National Indigenous Anthem- (Yen Ara Asaase ni). This is our own Native Land. (Dwabo Participant 7, Interview 5)

Participants felt that local Indigenous community leadership and the Chieftaincy institution has been sidelined in the educational policy formulation and implementation in the country, noting "It is pathetic to say that the chieftaincy institution does not engage much in matters of this nature with the schools in this community…we can also say that the chieftaincy institution seems not to have much control over the schools" (Dwabo Interview 5).

Local community member's dissatisfaction with the school principal's leadership practices stems from the fact that knowledge content used in the designing of the principal's leadership preparation fails to factor in the unique needs of rural schools. A local Indigenous community leader hinted that the practice where the chieftaincy institution is left out at educational policy formulation and decision making reinforces the idea that school leaders can pay little attention to the implementation of Indigenous community's socio-cultural values in the education of children in the community (Dwabo Participant Interview 19). It is therefore not surprising that these principals mimic the training they have received and engage in leadership practices that ignore or dismiss local cultural knowledge.

Given the African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing, Indigenous community leaders tended to oppose any form of education that fails to recognize the need for the larger community to influence the upbringing of children. In the words of one school principal:

> Parents in rural communities and mostly mothers in especially those of us in matrilineal system of inheritance have this notion that, children who acquire Western form of education, or formal schooling which is devoid of African socio-cultural values results in the production of individuals who aligns with alien family life values. And by which grown up children are not required to cater for their aged parents. This explains why formal school leaders who are Africans need to encourage and train African Indigenous children in their schools to listen and obey their own parent's take on African community socio-cultural values. As the unconscious inculcation of Indigenous socio-cultural values becomes the school's means of ensuring that African children are raised to fit well into the continent's society. (School Principal Interview 6).

The need to align with appropriate child upbringing norms pervaded all aspects of the people's lives, including expectations in school. One school principal acknowledged this stream of thought by suggesting, "The community is perceived as an extension of the larger school body. As such, the teaching and training of the schoolboy or girl is the duty and responsibility of everyone in the community" (School Principal Interview 6). A school principal identified that the failure of school leaders to recognize rural community leaders as stake holders and key members of the school's managerial body is at the crux of conflicts that often arise between school and community leadership:

> People are usually accommodative to new things when they are recognized as part of the decision-making process. I am convinced that these are the major causes of the

> misunderstandings that usually crop up between school leadership and rural Indigenous community leaders. (School Principal Interview 4)

School leaders' tendencies to sideline local community leadership accounts for the often-cold relationship that exists between the school and local community leadership (Dwabo Interview 8). This divisive tendency does a great disservice to school and community members, including the children both hope to mould. An estranged relationship between a school principal and its community members also leads to a situation whereby the community is no longer willing to impart its knowledge to a principal who is dismissive or unwilling to learn from them.

The study findings revealed that Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings served as a form of community forum where Indigenous community knowledge could be accessed by the school. PTA meetings provide an informal platform for both school principals and teachers to interact with community leaders and parents. This interaction of the school, parents and community provide a means of enhancing exchanges of knowledge between the school and the community. It could be a mechanism for learning how to engage in culturally relevant school leadership practices (School Principal Interview 3**)**. As school and community members interact, they create familiarity between school and community and enhance knowledge sharing which impacts positively on leadership practices as new information is gained through group interactions to improve professional knowledge (School principal interview 16). Unfortunately, however, one school principal related a situation whereby parents have decided to dissociate themselves from working together with schoolteachers by forming an all-parent association (PA). The severing of the parent association from the teachers speaks to the mistrust inherent in the relationship and serves as a threat to the development of culturally responsive school leadership. This unfortunate separation truncates the reciprocity needed for gaining knowledge and feedback related to socio-cultural child upbringing norms that support children's schooling experiences (School Principal Interview 4).

An Indigenous leader offered, however, that many school leaders are not oblivious of the socio-cultural values of the community. This leader suggested that most formal educational leaders are Ghanaians who support most African Indigenous socio-cultural values like respect for elders, observing communal greetings and customs, and stand against taboos like profanity, incest, among others. One participant provided an example whereby a school principal changed its practice from drumming to the use of bells to accommodate times when there are community bans on noise making (Dwabo Participant 6, Interview 5). Members of the Dwabo suggested that Ghanaians themselves have helped to create these preparation programs and have been blinded by colonial foreign knowledge that has gone unexamined for its lack of respect for local Indigenous rural knowledge. This acceptance and even preference for foreign knowledge has led to the neglect of local knowledge in school leadership preparation that is followed by leadership practices in schools that frown upon or exclude local community leadership in decision making (Dwabo Interview 7).

4.2.2 *Borrowing and/or Sharing Knowledge*

Knowledge borrowing and learning from others was considered vital to the development of leadership and the advancement of community. Both community and school leadership acknowledged the importance of incorporating new insight into an existing corpus of Indigenous knowledge, with an aim of making social progress for local community members (Dwabo Interview 3). As noted by one female Indigenous leader:

> We are not living in isolation from the rest of the world as a people and community. Though we continue to uphold our socio-cultural values that have been passed on from

> our ancestors to the current generation, we also have not lost sight of the fact that certain practices need to be abolished or modified. Since some long held socio-cultural values and practices can be found to obsolete in the course of time. In as much as we make room for modernity we have also been imparted with the negative impact of modernity. (ɔhen/ Female Indigenous Leader)

However, the study finding revealed instances where borrowed knowledge created challenges for the K-12 school principal’s work. A primary example included contentions around children’s rights that made it difficult for the principal to advocate for children’s right according to national law while also respecting community values around the role of children in supporting the family (School Principal Interview 7). As another school principal explained:

> The rights of the child conflict with my own African Akan socio-cultural values where the child is not supposed to have such rights. The work of school principals requires them to play advocacy roles for the children by ensuring that children’s rights are not violated. The same school principal is mandated by the local community leadership to inculcation and adherence of African Indigenous socio-cultural values into these school children. (School Principal Interview 7)

As a second example, the well-intentioned supply of sanitary pads in schools has caused challenges for waste management and cleanliness in communities. A local leader indicated that the switch to the use of sanitary pads instead of the amonnse (cloth used by Indigenous Akan female for underwear) provide avenues for rodents and wild birds to bring these from the refuse dumps and display them at unacceptable public places. They also place financial constraint on females. In this way, locals believed that Indigenous community members are desecrating their own culture through the mimicry of an alien culture (Dwabo Interview 3). School leaders cautioned that knowledge borrowing must be done by examining the suitability and applicability of such new ideas to the existing ones before its adoption (School Principal Interview 6). Accepting the technologies of modernity must enable Indigenous community members to function as a people whilst maintaining their unique cultural practices:

> We don’t need to only think about how we can catch up with the so called modern or global world. We should also find a means of solving some of the problems that accompany these changes. It will be good for Indigenous researchers in health and technology to come out with a modernized form of amonse which can be washed and worn by our young women. This will solve the problem of having used sanitary pads been disposed at unacceptable public places in our communities. We can forward this idea to the female wing of the Ghana National House of Chiefs (Queenmothers) to take it upon themselves to initiate the moulding of our own Indigenous sanitary pad (amonse) that we are talking about to ease the challenges that our young women go through during that time of their lives. (Female Chief Dwabo Interview)

Hence, they proposed a form of learning which will lead to the invention and creation of new knowledge that would be customised to suit the African setting (Dwabo Interview 3). Indigenous community members have noticed the unsuitable adoption of certain knowledge and lifestyles which may not help them to maintain their unique way of living which they consider to be a major survival strategy for Indigenous societies.

4.2.4 *Gender Advocacy as a Form of Colonial Imperialism*

The study unveiled fascinating findings on feminism and gender within African Akan rural community settings. African Akan Indigenous community members perceive gender advocacy as strongly intertwined with colonialism concealed in Euro-American forms of formal education. In their view, this results that most of these females who receive this form of alien education end up in flouting their own socio-cultural child upbringing norms. Some of the practices of highly educated women cited and dubbed as classic examples of females with higher formal education was considered appalling and exploitative by Indigenous females in rural communities. Great attention was attached to what Indigenous community leaders described as a negative wave of feminism advocated by highly educated female residents of bigger cites in the country. An Indigenous female community leader and a chief articulated her views:

> I want to add that, we Indigenous African women in rural communities have our own reservation about how gender advocacy is handled in Africa, and in Ghana, in particular. Our observation shows that, our own highly educated females who seems to be championing the course of female development and success in the society becomes the very people who recruit adolescent females as house helps and housekeeping workers in the big cities. Such young females who are recruited from rural Indigenous areas for work in the cities end up truncating their schooling immediately after their Basic education. Most highly educated females have inadvertently become enemies of progress to their female counterparts in rural Indigenous communities through these very practices that we are talking about now. So how can such a group of people turn round to claim to be fighting for the course of progress and social development for Indigenous female in rural African communities like ours? (Female Chief and Indigenous Community Leader)

This perspective on feminism entwines with colonial practices that reify classism, continue to marginalize and exploit local rural Indigenous knowledge and people, and further undermines rural Indigenous women’s education and progress in particular. African Akan Indigenous society is predominately matrilineal, which makes the role and position of females in this Akan society one of wealth, and honor. African Indigenous females within the matrilineal Akan society thus enjoys a high degree of stability, as they do not exchange their status and identity through marriage (School Principal Interview 17). Matrilineal Akan females receive social protection from their male counterparts to the extent that females are not expected to work alone at home (Dwabo Interview 1**)**. The term feminism was dismissed as a form of shrewd alien ideology intended to lure rural Indigenous African females into a new form of cultural imperialism. A spokesperson and an Indigenous State linguist explained the rationale behind these gender norms:

> I also want to add that we the Akan people of Ghana, in the West of Africa share the belief that African feminism cannot be read through an alien colonial eyes, as done by our so called highly educated females. African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values relating to gender places emphasis on the family. So, what we have to learn and put into practice is that African Indigenous issues on gender is flexible to the inclusion of male counterparts and is extended family friendly. We do not believe females are inferior to men but recognize the male as the head and bread winner of the family. This is because the Indigenous African feminism is strongly tied to the African Indigenous culture and thought) Nyɛ dɛm na Obɔadze hyehyɛe) that is not how the Creator ordered us to do. (Ba basia wotsetse no dɛ basiaba, ma ɔgye to mu dɛ obeyin ayɛ maame. Dɛm ara so na bayimba so yɛtsɛstsɛ ma ɔyɛ mbayindze) we train each of the genders to accept its God given role and status in life. (ɔmankyeame/State Linguist)

African Akan Indigenous rural communities share a communitarian form of living, by which kinship and lineage ties play a significant role. The people's socio-cultural values exhibited in societal mores, customs and conventions are female and male friendly, and inclusive of extended family. Hence any form of gender advocacy that seems to present males as oppressors of females is perceived as a form of disruption to the very foundation of the African Indigenous communal living (Dwabo Interview 11). The communal perspective of females does not identify them as being subservient to males:

> I want us to be clear of the fact that, the employment of culturally responsive school leadership practices in the African Akan Indigenous communities is not dependent on gender but thrives on methods and strategies. As such, we African Indigenous females share the notion that, both males and females are to be consulted in areas relating to the development of our communities and society at large. We don't subscribe to the divisive notion that males are responsible for the woes of females in our communities! We believe that it takes a whole community to raise the child in An African Akan Indigenous community. This is exactly the idea that formal school leaders are to be made to assume when working in an Indigenous rural community. (Female Indigenous Community Chief Dwabo Interview 3)

Female and male roles are perceived to hold God-given roles. The links of those roles to spiritual understandings has made it possible for females and males to co-exist peacefully. Rather than focus on oppression and inequality, participants suggested that gender advocacy in African Indigenous communities should be geared toward the aim of improving the socio-economic standard of the people (Dwabo Interview 3). In their view, culturally responsive school leadership practices aimed at the advancement of females can be attained in an African Akan Indigenous community only by the inclusive efforts of both males and females. Ultimately, female Indigenous community members in particular suspected their formally educated counterparts in urban areas as people who were not ready to help them to attain social and economic development, and in fact, by their colonial imperialistic actions demonstrated that they undermined those ideals.

4.3 Theme Three: Culturally Responsive School Leadership Practice (CRSLP)

The third overarching theme recognizes that K-12 school leadership preparation must include culturally and contextually responsive training. Preparation must be sensitive to the unique contexts of rural communities, as well as understanding Indigenous culture. It further sheds light on the various factors that draw community leaders to work together in African rural community settings and discusses avenues for integrating AIK into K-12 school leadership programs so that they can be enriched by Indigenous knowledge and support culturally responsive school leadership practices in rural communities. The section is organized into three sub-themes, including the need for local Indigenous knowledge to inform K-12 school leadership preparation: uplifting rural contexts as resources for developing culturally relevant school leadership practices for Indigenous peoples and females in African Indigenous rural settings.

4.3.1 *Embedding Indigenous Knowledge into K-12 School Leadership Preparation*

Participants suggested that Indigenous cultural knowledge was a vital ingredient for K-12 school leadership practice in rural Indigenous communities. A local Indigenous community leader explained that culturally responsive school leadership can be effectively implemented in the school only when principals know and understand the culture of the community in which the school is located (Dwabo Interview 6). A school principal who grew up in the community spoke of how much the community valued his place-based knowledge:

> I must say that it would have taken me longer time for me to study the community and its people had I not been a native of this locality. You know the leadership of this rural community was so happy when I got appointed as the principal for this school. Hence,

> they supported me by consciously sensitizing me on the behavior of the community once again. I was educated on how to establish rapport with community members as a K-12 school principal in a rural Indigenous community. (School Principal Interview 3)

Requisite knowledge as to how principals can incorporate local Akan Indigenous knowledge alongside traditional school leadership knowledge was lacking in formal preparation. Principals must reach out to the sources of this local knowledge to better understand how it can enhance their leadership practices:

> African Indigenous knowledge on school leadership needs to be acquired from the very people who serve as knowledge holders in their own communities. Because these knowledge holders are the very people who can help school principals to learn and effectively apply what they learn from them in the rural Indigenous community. Akanfo se koman koto, Wonka de koman kesin meaning (as goes the Akan adage, when you go to any community you do what the local community members do, you do not try to overdo whatever the community members are known for doing). (School Principal Interview 22)

Because AIK as a form of local knowledge is associated with place and the very people who hold this knowledge **(**Dwabo Interview 20), it cannot be transported and inserted into generic leadership programs. As noted by a school principal, “I have the belief that such knowledge needs to be offered by Indigenous community leadership, who have adequate knowledge on their land and language, and how the interactions of these two entities influence community members’ behaviors as well” (School Principal Interview 17). It also must be requested from local knowledge holders from a position of humility and an authentic willingness to learn and act upon those teachings:

> My first observation is that school leaders are to place importance on how to show optimum respect to the rural community environment and its members, which is the test that every rural school leader needs to pass. As the realization of the above attitude from the principal by the local community members will convince them of the principal's readiness to work with them and also learn from each other. And thus open all the communication avenues for the school to establish rapport with the local community. (School Principal Interview 9)

Over time, this learning will prepare them to enact culturally responsive school leadership practices:

> I have realized that rural Indigenous community members and leadership play an indispensable role in ensuring the success of K-12 school principals in rural communities like ours. The Indigenous community leaders know what it means to lead in an Indigenous rural community. From how we communicate with Indigenous leadership and how to engage in fruitful relationship to enable them offer school principal the needed support. This we as formal school leadership need to learn, not from any formal education trainings and workshops. (School Principal Interview 17)

Making a conscious effort to understand Indigenous socio-cultural practices helps to create conditions for success. As noted by a school principal:

> The entire community and its local leaders have been my source of knowledge and learning. Frequent interactions with local leaders have helped me learn how to lead in a rural Indigenous community school. The PTA meetings became my avenue for learning from the community members. Parents' discussions from their meeting offered me a lot of insights into the various areas of the community's socio-cultural values that requires

> me to learn from as a school leader of this locality. The knowledge gained in my interactions with local leadership helped me to deal and solve the numerous problems that were brought to me. (School Principal Interview 8)

However, learning about child- upbringing norms from local community members through school community interactions is not enough. Providing opportunities for local community members to explain the rationales for Indigenous conventions, customary child- upbringing practices, norms, and taboos can improve understanding and enhance the rural principal's leadership practices. The findings from this study revealed that local Indigenous community leaders were excited to support school leaders in this aim. A female Indigenous community chief welcomed the opportunity by sharing:

> We share the opinion that, the chieftaincy institution can be used to offer an on-the-job training courses for all neophyte school principals and school workers posted to rural Indigenous communities. Such an in-services orientation will be in the form of helping these new educational workers to get acclimatized to the new environment that they find themselves in. It is through such an Indigenous platform that Nananom will have the chance to reorient educational workers to know the various socio-cultural values and cultural norms (Do's and Don'ts) in their working communities. The chieftaincy institution can also add other areas like the exploration of available community-based resources in their local communities to what we term Indigenous in-services courses for formal educational workers in rural community. Nanamon can even help in training teachers as to how to use these community-based resources to facilitate teaching and learning in the schools. For we have what we call the Bamboo orchestra which an

> Indigenous music academy in some of our rural communities here that the school can use in their music lesson. (Dwabo Interview 10)

Another community leader alerted the group to the diverse nature of socio-cultural values and practices akin to each of the varied ethnic Akan groups. The implementation of culturally responsive school leadership by K-12 School leadership cannot be taught as a one size fits all sort of training or learning activity. Indigenous communities have similar socio-cultural values, but they also have their own unique ways of observing and adhering to these Indigenous social-cultural norms. As such, school leaders are required to learn and understand how the observance of these norms impact upon children's learning habits, teachers' teaching methods, and their own leadership practices within the African Akan Indigenous rural communities (Dwabo Interview 10). Learning about the nature of African Akan Indigenous forms of education and child-upbringing practices in rural communities can greatly benefit the school leader, but participants noted that it will also open the door for reciprocal learning with cultural leaders. Principals and community members learn to work together as new ideas are shared and a common vision is developed (School Principal Interview 9). As one school principal shared:

> I see the learning activities that occur in these settings as being mutually beneficial to both school leaders and the community leadership as well. You know that is how adults learn from each other. Yes, school principals can learn local community's socio-cultural values, but that is not enough, the principal must convince local community leadership to see the school principal as individual who can team up with them and help in the development of their communities. This is because the ability of the school to relate well with the local community makes the school principal's job of improving educational outcomes for the children brought to school very easy. Because it will take a joint effort

> from both the school principal and the entire community to improve school children's educational outcome in rural Indigenous communities. (School Principal Interview 21)

As the teachings on child upbringing suggest, culturally responsive school leadership practice necessitates that the community and the schoolwork together to improve education.

4.3.2.1 Preparation for Rural Schools and Communities. A school principal participant noted a significant lack of attention to the needs of rural Ghanaian contexts in principal preparation, teacher training, curriculum and educational policy:

> Training in managing schools in rural community as well as working differs significantly from that of the urban area. This necessitates preparatory program for principals to be tailored to meet the needs of the various communities that they will be working with. Likewise, consideration of any government policy on school leadership program must be designed with the rural population in mind. The above concept must be extended to teacher training programs, so as to train teachers to meet rural learners' needs. And which means that national K-12 school curriculum and assessment designers must also include the rural factor in their work. This means that K-12 school curriculum must be designed to meet specific Region, and District needs and not the entire nation. These specific curricula will help rural Indigenous learners to relate what they are taught to in their immediate environment. The curriculum must be tailored along a training course so as to enable both teacher trainees and aspiring school principals to translate whatever they learn into practice. (School Principal Interview 24)

Rural Indigenous communities are well endowed with both human and nonhuman resources for supporting the development of culturally responsive school leadership practices. Rural Indigenous community members and leaders play an indispensable role in ensuring the success of K-12 school principals in rural communities because they know what it takes to lead in their rural communities. They can guide new community members on how to engage in fruitful relationships to enable them offer school principal the needed support (School Principal Interview 17). A local Indigenous leader described how rural school personnel can take advantage of the varied resources located in their rural community by accepting that there are different ways to teach and to lead that can be community driven. Local community leaders are willing to support school leaders to be successful in their work if principals demonstrate that they are willing to learn and understand local community members' ways of life and living. This learning and understanding of rural living can only be made possible through interactions with the community outside the immediate school environment (Dwabo Interview 20). Another local Indigenous community leader provided direction as to how school principals can be led to team up with community leaders to support education:

> We are not asking the school community to change overnight and adopt the native way of living. But we want to state that, new members in this community can easily make the best out of this place by tapping the resources located here to your advantage. Linking up with community leadership and learning to make sense of the knowledge system through engagement with local leadership makes the work of the principal very easy in most rural Indigenous communities. (Dwabo Interview 20)

Participants suggested that both teacher preparation programs and school principal preparation programs need to include an aspect that touches on the realities of rural community education. A State linguist and a local community leader stressed the need for all school personnel to be formally trained to know the differences in practices and resources that exist in rural Indigenous communities compared to their urban counterparts and how local resources can be leveraged to help children excel in Indigenous rural communities (Dwabo Interview 20). A school principal noted, however, that rural realities should be messaged in a way that offers a positive image about the lives and conditions that exist in rural communities:

> K-12 school principal preparatory programs must have components that seek to sensitize school leaders on the realities that pertain in rural Indigenous communities. Additionally, neophytes school principals must be prepared to know the resources available in rural Indigenous communities, whilst training them on how to work with local community leadership. As such preparatory package for K-12 principals will help them to be able to establish rapport and enable them to build good relationships with local community leadership. And thus provide a means for principals to gain the needed community support, and community collaboration which is the necessary ingredient for K-12 school principals' efficiency in rural Indigenous communities. (School Principal Interview 23)

Deficit thinking about rural communities and people was perceived as an impediment for the development of culturally responsive school leadership practices in rural Indigenous communities.

4.3.2 *Culturally Responsive School Leadership for Females in African Indigenous Rural Settings*

Gender roles and issues are diverse across African Indigenous rural communities. Study participants explained that these understandings are dependent on the location and unique needs of the people in each community. As such K-12 school leadership preparation program developers intending to groom school leaders for work in rural Indigenous community settings must factor in gender norms when designing school leadership training programs (School Principal Interview 10). Rural African Indigenous communities do not treat male and females as a collective homogenous group. Each gender has prescribed socially assigned roles and accompanying norms that are embedded within the spiritual understandings of the community. It is required of school principals located in these Akan rural communities to be conversant with the AIK on gender to enable them to respond appropriately to the learning needs of school children. As an Akan Indigenous chief noted:

> What I want to emphasis is that the Akan Indigenous community leadership is still tied to their Indigenous culture and still endorse our own cultural practices like extended family system, polygamy, kinship, large family size, just to mention a few. As such we are not in favour of the idea of teaching females to see males as people not interested in the advancement of females. We still hold those aspects of our socio-cultural values that allow males to be heads and leaders of house in high esteem. We do not view and treat our own female counterparts as subhuman. Our females are to be cherished and protected. Females have very significant roles to play in our Indigenous leadership and occupy one of the most significant positions in our Indigenous community leadership hierarchy. (Dwabo Interview 1)

Females and males have their assigned roles and duties as indicated by the Akan customary norms and practices, and these are to be respected in schools. Females are expected to engage in more household chores than their male counterparts which is intended to enable the Akan female to manage her own home. Likewise, the Akan male is supposed to learn how to be a breadwinner who can maintain family support (Omankyeame/ State Linguist Dwabo Interview 11). The tensions and complexities inherent in differing points of view on gender issues was elaborated upon by a school principal who grew up in one of the communities in the study:

> Yes, I know that the demands of contemporary life in Ghana require both males and females to rub shoulders with each other. I share the sentiment that both boys and girls are to have equal opportunity in all life's endeavors. But please listen, in the African Akan Indigenous setting this rule does not hold here. It does not mean we are relegating females to the background; we care for our female counterparts. Females are not bread winners in the family. There are so many practices, duties, and areas that females are not encouraged to partake in the African Akan Indigenous set up. The rationale for these prohibitions are either for spiritual or security purposes. You may not understand, but I will say that this is how culture influences societal behavior and community norms as well. (School Principal Interview 5)

In the view of the participants, the differences in gender roles and norms within the African Akan Indigenous rural communities and by extension, how boys and girls are to be educated, cannot be taken as gender discrimination. A female Akan rural Indigenous community ruler cautioned school principals located in rural communities to desist from perceiving the local AIK on gender as an oppressive measure used by males to suppress females:

> I want us to be clear of the fact that, the employment of culturally responsive school leadership practices in the African Akan Indigenous communities is not dependent on gender but thrives on methods and strategies. As such, we African Indigenous females share the notion that, both males and females are to be consulted in areas relating to the development of our communities and society at large. We don't subscribe to the divisive notion that males are responsible for the woes of females in our communities! We believe that it takes a whole community to raise the child in An African Akan Indigenous

> community. This is exactly the idea that formal school leaders are to be made to assume when working in an Indigenous rural community. (Female Indigenous Chief)

School principals are caught between maintaining local community conventions on child upbringing norms in the school and the application of non-Indigenous practices advocated by their formal preparation programs or dictated by national standards (School Principal Interview 7). Local Indigenous Akan community leaders are interested in the maintenance of the African Akan socio-cultural child upbringing norms which necessitate sensitivity and culturally responsive school leadership practice within Indigenous rural communities.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The findings related to the three overarching themes described in this chapter provide a rich descriptive account of the complexities involved within, and interconnections among, African Akan Indigenous knowledge, socio cultural values and child upbringing norms, educational leadership practice and K-12 school leadership preparation. African Indigenous education is aimed at community-drive inculcation of tribal values in the young generation reflective of societal norms, customs, and taboos, particularly around gender roles. The first and second stages of the African Akan Indigenous education is led by females and involves strict spiritual duties. These norms often conflict with formal colonial principal preparation programs that have historically marginalized rural Indigenous knowledge. Participants advocated for stronger representation of this knowledge in formal preparation as well as in local practice to support culturally responsive school leadership, but also to improve opportunities for knowledge sharing and growth respectful of communal leadership and child-rearing norms. Chapter five discusses the three themes in relation to the literature.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

When situated in the literature, the three overarching themes developed from this Indigenous research provide a clearer understanding of African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms and their possibilities for supporting K-12 school leadership practices. The first overarching theme, Embedding AIK in African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms aligns with literature that speaks to 1) the importance of place; (2) foundational constructions of gender roles; (3) the role of spirituality; and, (4) its relationship to and impact on educational leadership. The second overarching theme included four subthemes focused on principal training, communal leadership, the impacts of borrowing and/or sharing knowledge, and gender advocacy as a form of colonial imperialism. The last overarching theme, cultural imprints for culturally responsive school leadership, highlights how K-12 school leadership preparation programs can be responsive to rural contexts, and the complexities inherent in culturally responsive school leadership practices around gender.

5.1 Embedding AIK in African Akan Socio-Cultural Values on Child Upbringing Norms in School Leadership

This section opens a discussion on elements important to ensuring AIK in African socio-cultural values on Child Upbringing norms can become part of school leadership practice. The section focuses on the importance of place, foundational constructions of gender roles, the role of spirituality and African Indigenous education and educational leadership.

5.1.1 *The Importance of Place*

In Akanland, there was no intrinsic relationship between gender role differentiation and gender subordination. Gender subordination occurs when a society attaches power and prestige to men’s work and devalues women’s work or vice versa. The Akan state relied on built-in customs and practices, and a system of gender differentiation with a high degree of balance in power to contest patriarchy. The high degree of checks and balances within the political system undermined the expression of hegemonic male domination. This situation also enabled women and men to work together as partners, with their roles complementing each other (Adu-Poku 2001, p. 162).

Within this theme, the scope of African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms was captured as a knowledge rich area with prospects for the development of culturally responsive school leadership. These study findings are in alignment with Indigenous research studies that show that geographical location (i.e. place) influenced the development of African Indigenous education (AIE) and necessitate culturally responsive school leadership practices CRSLP (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). This influences of place or geographical location on the Akan people of Ghana is captured by Aborampah’s (2004) observation that “all groups of the Akan people have developed distinctive ways of believing and of doing things largely in response to the physical environments in which they live” (p. 115). The above assertion of the link between place and people also aligns with theories that support place-based learning. For instance, Semken et al. (2017) note that place-based learning and education are rooted in ancient cultures that recognize the interconnectedness of people’s culture and geographical location. As such, these Indigenous habitations are identified as areas of “local cultural knowledge” Aborampah (2004, p. 125). African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms fall under a wider umbrella of AIK. The classification of this form of knowledge as "Indigenous" points to a form of knowledge that is akin to specific group of people in a defined location and who share a common way of life (Njoki et. al., 2015; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). As shown in the study findings, African Akan Indigenous community's knowledge on child upbringing norms is unique to the people and their culture. This reifies the view that rural Indigenous community members' knowledge is inseparable from the places where that knowledge is centred. People have a strong attachment to a place as they view such habitation as part of the "setting and scale" of their daily activities (Johnson, 2012). This community alliance to a sense of place as demonstrated by African Akan rural Indigenous communities sheds light on the fact that the varied views or subjective feelings that a group of persons attach to a geographical location demonstrates who they are, and impacts the varied roles they play to maintain their identity. Rural Indigenous community members take delights in demonstrating to the outside world who they are, why they uphold certain worldviews, how their culture influences their behavior and how their unique culture differs from other people outside their geocultural space (DeFeo & Tran, 2019). For example, Waterworth et al. (2016) emphasised the need to study Indigenous communities from an Indigenous cultural perspective when studying factors that affect human behavior. Likewise, Khalifa et al. (2019) advocated for an incorporation of Indigenous community members' ways of learning when attempting to engage Indigenous members in any meaningful educational activities. Extending the notion of place to school principals' work, Budge (2006) indicated that the provision of critical leadership of place requires school leaders to help community leadership in the cherishing of local socio-cultural values, heritage, and the environment of the located school. Diamond and Spillane (2016) note that K-12 school principal's leadership practice is situational and is shaped by the institutional structures that influence their interactions and the socio-cultural contexts in which they find themselves. In short, the recognition of this sense of place and unique identities that go with Indigenous communities' behavior and ways of life must be acknowledged when dealing with Indigenous community members.

The findings that Indigenous community members are tied to their sense of placed further defines the rural K-12 school principal's work. The job responsibilities become tied to the cultural contexts of remote and hard to reach Indigenous communities where a principal may be required to live within an all-new environment and people. Further evidence from Lock et al. (2012) suggests that rural school principals often find themselves in remote communities and may not share social and cultural ties with community members. This dislocation of the rural school principal from traditional leadership norms requires them to link up with community members to help co-manage the school and support the rural principal (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). This unique nature of the rural principal's job is replicated by Preston et al.'s (2013) observation that the works of the K-12 school principal is multifaceted, unique and place-conscious. Hence environmental factors like geographical locations of schools become a prescriptive force in determining how principals should be prepared to enable them to lead in rural communities. Bustamante et al. (2009) emphasized the significance of the place factor in school leadership by stressing that effective school leadership practices derived from constructs like cultural competence, culturally responsive school leadership, informal leadership, cultural relevant pedagogy, etcetera, are associated with place. Likewise, Eacott and Asuga (2014) advance the case for the importance of place in school leadership preparation by noting that there must be a place focused studies in leadership preparation since context becomes very significant in school leadership effectiveness. Considering the significant role of context or place in both leadership research and preparation would help in the avoidance of the replication of unworkable universal constructs of leadership in school leadership preparation and practices in these contexts. FitzGerald and Militello (2016) recommend that the community and its people must be used as the “laboratory” in which K-12 school principals must engage for hands-on experiences and information about the communities in which they will be working. Hewitt and Rumley (2020) also proposed place-based learning for schools located in communities with a sense of place.

School leaders who find themselves in such locations can immerse their students in the socio-cultural practices and heritage knowledge of the community. Local Indigenous knowledge of these place conscious locations can be adopted as the basis for learning in these communities. School principals can adapt the unique knowledge and context of the local communities and teach local school children to live a life relevant to their unique knowledge found in their own community. School leaders can spearhead place-based education by offering professional development on the local knowledge and using local community resources in school curriculum development, planning, and evaluation. Paris (2012) adds that the recognition of a sense of place in formal school must impact teaching and school leadership. This requires schools to help learners in sustaining their native language and culture in formal learning processes through the principle of culturally sustaining teaching and learning strategies. Culturally sustaining teaching aims to maintain and adopt learners’ language and varied cultures as an aspect of formal democratic schooling venture. Hewitt and Rumley (2020) extended this influence of place on teaching and learning by adding that the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) moves formal school instructional activities away from the Eurocentric focus towards culturally significant teaching practices like showing respect to community values, building supportive learning relationship with students, and helping students to examine power and oppressive tendencies within their societies. Faircloth and Tippeconnic (2015) claim that the context, place and space in which school leadership development and practices occur have great implications for program design, and delivery, including institutional/organizational type, the educational composition and objectives of programming, staff competence and learners' support systems.

Geer et al.'s (2014) work on the impact of including internships for K-12 school principal preparation programs led to the revelation that the use of place or sites as training fields for school leadership development helped trainee principals learn how to connect theoretical knowledge on leadership to practices. Sanzo et al. (2011) reified the necessity for the inclusion of this place concept in leadership development by noting that there exist differences in geographical locations (urban, rural and the semi-urban) that influence school leadership practices. In addition, positive results are attained when school leadership development programs designers include the inter-relational aspects of place (districts/ regional) that combine university K-12 school leadership development program designers, trainee principals, school contexts, and theoretical knowledge. Context specific experiences in K-12 school leadership preparation offer trainees the opportunity to more deeply understand challenges and the requisite strategies that strengthen their leadership skills, knowledge and behaviours (Sanzo et al., 2011). Preston et al.'s (2013) study of common challenges encountered by school principals in rural Canadian communities led to the recommendation that K-12 school principal preparation program designs ought to factor in a place-based policy strategy with a rural lens. They found that traditional university-based school principal preparation program designers mostly rely on urban bureaucratic forms of theoretical knowledge in the creation and delivery of K-12 school leadership development programs. These researchers contend that including a rural strategy for the design of leadership programs would enable graduates of such programs to be equipped with an understanding of both rural and urban context forms of leading. Hardwick-Franco (2019) also links place-based concepts to the school principal's professional development by advising that school principals in rural areas are to be prepared for the principalship via the application of co-created content within school leadership program design. Incorporating this flexibility in programming creates realistic school leader field experiences. Hardwick-Franco (2019) asserts that dominant cultural school leadership development models utilize a "pedagogic authority" that imposes normative assumptions best suited for urban community context and thus become ominous when applied in the rural or Indigenous context (Khalifa et al., 2019; Segura, 2009). These imposed leadership models are devoid of both local leaders' and community members' voices and as such fail to provide the needed knowledge, skills, and support required of the school principals to become efficient in leading rural or Indigenous community schools. Other researchers have noted that self-learning models by which the school principal can study the leadership terrain of the school community and collaborate with community members has been found to work for rural school principals (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Mfum-Mensah, 2009; Ottmann, 2017).

In conclusion, the use of place in school leadership development and practices can be seen as an indispensable component in k-12 school principal's preparation, professional developments, and practices.

5.1.2 *Foundational Constructions of Gender Roles*

The vital role that culture plays in determination of gender roles within the African Akan Indigenous context pervaded the study's findings. Culture directs and dictates the behavior of African Akan rural Indigenous community members, as culture becomes the very lens by which the entire community perceive reality (Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015). African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms are gender specific and socially assigned. Gender is considered when assigning roles and responsibilities within the African Akan Indigenous context. The handling of gender issues within the African Indigenous context pays significance attention to both male and female roles, as focusing on only female roles is considered inappropriate (Ukpokolo, 2019). Attention must be paid to the varied ways by which gender identity affect students' experiences within the school setting. Akan society socializes females and males to assume their God given roles (Apusigah, 2008). Gender-specific means of Indigenous knowledge transmission was the strategy adopted in the first and second stages of African Indigenous education (AIE) process (Pfeiffer & Butz, 2005). For instance, boys are trained to assume fatherly roles as bread winners and leaders of their own households and the extended family, whilst girls are taught how to manage their own home as wives, home keepers and good mothers. Girls are also made to undergo gender specific training that comes in the form of puberty rites known as Bragoro in the Akan Ghanaian language (Wiafe, 2023). Boys and girls are socialized to behave differently even with regards to language; men are to demonstrate aggressive language by displaying masculinity, and women are to demonstrate tenderness in their language and mannerism as signs of their femininity (Agyekum, 2010). There is no space for individuals with orientations linked to other sexual preferences, just as sexual orientation like polygamy is not permitted in most Western cultures. It is the society, which is made up of both the human and nonhuman entities of the land, that constitute the originators, arbiters, executors, and enforcers of these societal/ communal sexual norms. For within the African Akan society as shown by their oral traditions, "marriage, both monogamous and polygamous, is heterosexual in the Akan folktale. There is not even the most indirect hint of sexual relations between members of the same sex" (Opoku-Agyemang, 1999, p. 120). The African Indigenous community norms thrive on the idea that native people are sovereign societies located on their own land. As such, they live harmoniously with each other whilst using their own institutional norms, customs, and Indigenous conventions in guiding people's behavior, a condition that does not need them to be guided by rights. In the native domain, "the language of rights bounded law. It claimed to set limits to power. For civic power was to be exercised within the rule of law and had to observe the sanctity of the domain of rights. The language of custom, in contrast, did not circumscribe power, for custom was enforced. The language of custom enabled power instead of checking it by drawing boundaries around it. In such an arrangement, no rule of law was possible" (Mamdani, 2001, p.654).

In this sense, an individual can be perceived as fitting into the community, not fitting into the community or failing to fit into the community through the observance or violations of community norms. Violators of societal norms are perceived as social misfits who is considered to have broken a taboo through an involvement or commitment of an unacceptable act or behavior abhorred by the entire society and community. Hence "a person who breaks a taboo will be tabooed himself or herself, because he or she has the dangerous threat of luring others into following his or her examples" (Madu, 2002, p. 65). A violation of any norm is considered to have spiritual implications, which can come in the form of calamities like epidemic and natural disasters upon all members of the entire community. This is because Indigenous Akan communities' "belief in ancestral spirits and their power to sanction the behavior of their living kinfolk has implications for social control" (Adinkrah, 2016, p. 144). Enforcement of taboos is the most effective strategy for the maintenance of social order in African Akan Indigenous rural communities (Essel, 2018). Additionally, the African Akan Indigenous societal orientation is geared toward communalism by which community values may take precedence over an individual preference (Appiah, 2004). Antwi (2017) argues in tandem with Matolino (2011) that the African Akan concept of an individual preference and personality traits are intertwined with the ability to be committed to the community, which is why the community is responsible for the upbringing of the individual. Within the African Akan society, queen mother as mother of the state is a leading figure who sees to it that all her children in the community subscribe to their own community norms. Ababio (2019) indicates that communal norms act as a form of societal moral codes that are employed by societal leadership to ensure harmonious existence between spiritual and sacred entities and human beings who constitute the African Akan Indigenous cosmos (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009). Amo-Agyemang (2021) avers that "the Akan believe the ecosystem and the environment has a strong spiritual meaning for humans and hence must be treated as sacrosanct" (p. 12). Hence human acts like adultery and incest are examples of unacceptable sexual behaviors, and community members assume supervisory roles to ensure the observance of these community norms. The sacred beings abhor behaviors that disrupt the harmonious existence between human beings and their non-human counterparts within the community. Thus, making the Akans of Ghana to consider their Indigenous religion and morality as the most important areas of their civil society (Anarfi & Owusu, 2011). It must be noted that this belief and respect for the Supreme Being, the Ancestors and the lesser gods as an aspect of the African Akan Indigenous culture has survived colonialism and modernity to date (Adomako & Ampadu, 2015; Clapham, 2020).

This African centered form of gender socialization is akin to the "motherist debate" since females' role and responsibility as carriers and nurtures of children as created by God can never be changed or taken away from females (Msila, 2021). The training of females to be housekeepers and good mothers is considered as norms that forms part of the division of labor between male and females, and not as oppressive socio-cultural practices (Mouchref, 2016). Females within the African Indigenous settings are not breadwinners of their families and clans. The African Akan matrilineal female does not relinquish her extended family ties and her own (maiden/family) name for that of her husband's name upon marriage. Though the children born out of her marriage bears their father's name, the children belong to the woman's family and clan. Nzegwu (2005) indicates that the matrikin or matrilineal system of inheritance as practiced by the Akan people of West Africa help females to be self-dependent since the matrilineal system of hereditary eliminates women's dependency on men by diverting females' resources and efforts from their husbands to the building of their Ebusua (clan), wealth, and personal identity (Hanson, 2004). This purpose is in tandem with Gearon's (2021) work on feminism as Indigenous culture by which the writer made a clarion call on the need for Indigenous communities to go back to their roots and continue with the socio-cultural practices that identify females as mothers and keepers of the home (Debele, 2023). Matriarchal systems use gender principles to sustain Indigenous culture and thus kick against the imposition of other people's worldview and culture imposed by colonialism on Indigenous people (Msila, 2021).

All hierarchies within African Akan Indigenous settings had both male and female counterparts (Farrah,1997). The African Akan Indigenous culture thrives on the idea that "Good leadership combines 'hot' and 'cold' qualities: reason balanced bravery, compassion balanced inflexibility. A Twi proverb emphasizes that obarima, woye no dom ano, na wonye no fie ("the hero shows his courage on the battlefield, not in the house" (Akyeampong & Obeng, 1995, p. 490). For instance, the Ebusua or Clan has Ebusuapanin or male head, and Obaapanin female head, making the overall administration of the Clan to be governed by male and female leaders

(Nukunya, 1992). The Supreme Being (Onyankopon) is a male, and the Earth deity (Asaase Efua) a female. According to Pfeiffer and Butz (2005), even plants are gendered, and certain herbs can only be picked by their corresponding gender.

The harmonious living that characterized the African Akan Indigenous communities and educational organizations under the leadership of the Queen mother made it impossible for females to come under the dominion of their male counterparts. The above findings point to the notion that some African Akan Indigenous societal norms and gender roles do not downgrade their female counterparts. Hence the problem of patriarchy cannot be applicable to all societies, since some Indigenous community members do not share all the features of a discriminatory patriarchal system (Mkasi, 2016). In fact, it was colonial administrative authorities who marginalized female leaders and Queenmothers by recognizing the male chief as the overall leader (Adu-Poku, 2001). Additionally colonial authorities utilized gender identity as a yardstick for the determination of all state policies, and even religious proceedings.

African Akan community members ascribe spiritual reasons for their subscription to these gender norms. This interconnection between male and female gender, and their implication on the belief system of the African Akan rural Indigenous people therefore has great significance for school leadership development and practices. This aligns with Hewitt and Rumley (2020) who emphasised that the school must be presented as a safe place for all students irrespective of their religious, social, and gender identity. It is the responsibility of school leaders to ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity.

5.1.3 *The Role of Spirituality*

The meaning and essence of life to the African is spiritual in nature. To be human is to behave as someone who believes in spirituality (Ntseane, 2011). It is this belief in spirituality that connects humanity to a Higher Being and further links them to a higher consciousness. Spirituality unites humans with nature and connects human to all other entities within the cosmos (Sisk, 2016). Hence, African Indigenous societies place emphasis on communalism, spirituality, community engagements, family ties, and societal norms and obligations (Aborampa, 2004; Akinsola, 2011). The concept of spirituality is demonstrated by the strong belief in the ancestors and the spiritual entities within the Africa cosmos (Antwi, 2017; Merriam & Ntseane, 2008). Indigenous African Akan communities share the view that their cosmos is inhabited by both visible and invisible beings (Husien & Kebede, 2017). Africans' belief in the Supreme Being and other spiritual entities has led them to translate these beliefs into religious practices, which has also ended in the labelling of Africans as being notoriously religious (Mbiti, 1990). The strong presence of spirituality has succeeded in influencing all aspects of the African lives (Awuah-Nyamekye, 2009). The Akans of Ghana share the belief that humans being have both physical and spiritual components. The Akan conception of man is described by Appiah (2004) who notes that an individual is made up of the nyimpadua (the biological makeup) which one inherits from the mother's family or the Ebusua or clan; an extended family comprised of the living, the dead and even the unborn generation (Antwi, 2017) the sunsum (that is the personality traits inherited from the father at conception) and; the Okra which is perceived as the sources of life derived from the Supreme Being and the Creator of life. The African Akans believe that descendants who have passed on have influence on the lives of the living (Chiorazzi, 2015). The African Akan Indigenous community members' demonstration of their spiritual orientation is often shown in the act of libation which precedes every Indigenous community leadership gathering or Dwabo. The act of libation pouring has four "megastructural" characteristics. The first includes the invocation aspect which calls on the Supreme Being, Earth goddess, and the lesser deities.

The second is the purpose of the invocation; the third is the supplication section or blessing component, and finally the curse section, which consists of a call for evil to befall all evil wishers and evil doers (Aborampah, 2004). Hence Indigenous community leadership practices have a spiritual component as well. This influence of the spirituality is expressed in the belief in the Supreme Being, the living dead or the ancestors and the lesser deities. The belief in spiritual entities influences the Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values and practices. For instance, female biological functions like menstruation, lactation, and gestation are considered when determining gender roles and participation in ceremonies (Ukpokolo, 2019). Certain days of the week are dedicated to community deities and local community members are not permitted to farm or work on these days. Menstruating women are also banned from visiting certain areas like the sacred groves or the local streams. Females are recognized as strong religious leaders and "spirit-possession cult leaders" in most Indigenous societies (Pfeiffer & Butz, 2005). Likewise rural African Akan rural Indigenous communities perceive gender as a major factor in determining differences in socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms which is considered to be integral to family and community survival (Adu-Poku, 2001).

The source of Indigenous African Akan wisdom is believed to be with females, who are literally called the oldest female or the "Aberewatia" in the Akan language. In the African Akan folklore, the Aberewatia (oldest lady) is a mythical figure who is presumed to embody the wisdom and knowledge of the community. The Aberewatia is seen as the binding force and link between the ancestors and the living (Adjei, 2014). Hence, the spiritual role of females in the African Akan Indigenous realm is expressed in terminology like "yenkobisa Aberewatia" (let us seek the counsel of the oldest woman of the clan). Adjei (2014) and Odamtten (2012) notes that the Aberwatia becomes a source of good counsel when community leadership are dealing with issues that demand crucial leadership decision making. The Aberwatia or senior female of the clan is believed to be endowed with “abadai” or a feminine nurturing power and qualities akin to servant leadership (Odamtten, 2012). Though females played dominant social roles, lineage, and political activism in the African Indigenous Chieftaincy institutions, it is only those females who are past the stage of menopause and considered as “ritual men” who were allowed to assume spiritual roles. These females are permitted to drink liquor and pour libation just like men. Childbearing females were however banned from participating in state affairs due to religious and security reasons since the reproductive power of women and their association with menstrual blood were seen as a threat to the spiritual security of Akan Indigenous State (Akyeampong & Obeng, 1995). The banning of some groups of females from participating in leadership activities may somehow sound discriminatory to an alien mind. However, Elsaid and Elsaid (2012) explain that group cultural values and beliefs which get reified through spirituality and rituals can be used as a binding force in the development of leadership models that work to the advantage of the entire group.

This spirituality as demonstrated in all facets of life within the African Akan Indigenous community has implication for school leadership practices as well. Hence, K-12 school leaders located within Indigenous communities are to be trained on how spiritual beliefs affects human behavior within the school setting.

5.1.4 *African Indigenous Education and Educational Leadership*

The chieftaincy institution as the custodian of the African Akan culture is mandated to ensure the maintenance and perpetuation of the tribe’s norms, customs and conventions. The inculcation of the Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values into the younger generation has been a major concern of the tribe’s local leadership (Farrah, 1997). The African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms are family friendly, polygamy friendly, and community inclusive (Ntseane, 2011). The main purpose of the first two stages of African Indigenous education AIE is to inculcate the tribe's socio-cultural values in the budding members of the tribe to ensure their continuity. Tribal socio-cultural values on child upbringing are strategies packed as mores, conventions, customs and taboos on which local communities relied for survival. These socio-cultural values are found in Do's and Don'ts that serve as norms for regulating human behaviour (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003). African Akan Indigenous community's socio-cultural values related to child upbringing is characterised by the unique role of gender which is made visible in their gender specific socially assigned norms (Farrah, 1997). African Akan Indigenous culturally responsive educational leadership practice is led by a female leader who happens to be a ruler and "the Queenmother" of the entire community. The Queen mother as the overseer of the first and second stages of African Akan Indigenous education presides over local Indigenous educational activities like child naming, puberty rites, ceremonies, and is also charged with the moral education of the budding community members and the entire community (Akinsola, 2011; Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003; Farrah, 1997; Woolmann, 2001). The Queenmother or Obaapanyin also shares power with the male Paramount chief of the tribal State. The Ohembaa or Queenmother has the sole prerogative to nominate the Paramount chief for enthronement or dethrone him (Adjei, 2014). This harmonious display of shared power in leadership between the Queenmother and the paramount chief as male and female leaders in the same community, and the coherence that exist in the chieftaincy institution as a local leadership organization is a reflection of the conceptual framework discussed in this study. Opoku-Agyemang's (1999) work on the gender role perceptions in Akan folktales demonstrates how Ananse the protagonist and a male of these Akan folktales relies on the counsel of the wife

Okonore in the crafting of plans in the display of societal wisdom. Thus, reifying the notion that, there is the need for both males and females to work in cohesion to enable the realization of any significant venture within the African Akan Indigenous society. African Indigenous feminism thrives on Farrah's (1997) observation "that women should have exclusive authority in the world of activities that was primarily female was 'common sense.' That some female authority figures should exercise their powers over men as well as women-over the entire populace-was entirely acceptable" (p. 591).

The African Akan Queen mother's role in K-12 educational leadership in Indigenous African communities differs significantly from that of their counterparts in the formal education sector as introduced into Ghana by the alien colonizers prior to independence (Graham, 1971; Jagusah, 2001). African Akan Indigenous educational leadership is seamless with the larger community membership and is more concerned with the maintenance of their tribe's socio-cultural values. This study's finding on the primacy of the Queenmother's role as the leader and the general overseer of the first and second stages of African Indigenous education AIE may provide a theoretical framework that serves as the basis from which African Indigenous knowledge can support the development of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) for K-12 school leaders in rural Ghanaian Indigenous communities. This aforementioned suggestion works in tandem with Khalifa et al.'s (2019) proposition that the development of CRSL requires K-12 school principals to engage school children, families and Indigenous community members in located schools in culturally appropriate ways. K-12 school leaders located within Indigenous communities must take cognisance of how leadership is constructed in these local contexts and endeavor to uplift those practices. The suggestion also aligns with Akinsola's (2011), Nsamenang's and Tchombé's (2012), and Woolman's (2001) assertions that African Indigenous communities' means of managing K-12 schooling processes can be adopted by formal school leaders to help ease rural learners' educational challenges. This aligns with Castagno's and Brayboy's (2008) and Castagno et al's (2022) contention that local community members' cultural norms, conventions, mores, and worldviews influence the development of culturally responsive leadership practices within Indigenous rural communities.

In conclusion, local Indigenous community socio-cultural values must be used in the generation of the local knowledge needed in the development of K-12 school leadership for CRSLP in rural Indigenous communities.

5.2 Impacts of Colonial Models of Schooling on the Rural African Indigenous Context

This section is premised on four sub-themes that developed in the data related to principal training, communal leadership, the impacts of borrowing and/or sharing knowledge, and gender advocacy as a form of colonial imperialism. The section attests that current K-12 school leadership practices exhibited by principals in rural school in Ghana shadow the colonial knowledge inherent in the design and delivery of preparation programs. This is not only insufficient but is most often detrimental for the rural Akan context (Dei, 2012; Dei & Adhami, 2022; Gomba, 2017; Higg, 2010). Participants' words demonstrate that there existed resistance to the vestiges of colonialism within post-colonial educational institutions in former colonized countries like Ghana (Blay, 2008; Gomba, 2017; Tyagi, 2014).

5.2.1. *Principal Training*

K-12 school principals' preparation has a profound impact on school leadership practices in rural Indigenous communities. Indigenous African community's preference for their own form of education stems from their quest for a form of education that supports their own cultural values in its delivery processes. Study findings attest to the fact that the compatibility of K-12 school leadership practices with local Indigenous community socio-cultural practices have resulted in the higher educational outcomes for rural K-12 school children (Bonney, 2022; Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2012). Indigenous school children's educational enhancement can be maintained by recruiting and training K-12 school principals to be culturally proficient in Indigenous community members' socio-cultural values and belief systems (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2013). This is why African Akan community leadership's request for an African centered education would also require formal educational school leaders in Indigenous communities to be prepared to have a sense of attachment to local Indigenous community's culture and commitment to community as the basis of their leadership practices (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ottmann, 2017). This demand of African Akan Indigenous community leadership aligns with the view that both culture and schooling share like features in process and policy planning, and both come with a dual aim of enculturation and socialization (Jagusah, 2001). Eurocentric models of school leadership policies and practices have been found to work to the disadvantage of the African child's success in formal education (Segura, 2009). Khalifa et al. (2019) connect school leadership practices to colonialism by criticizing colonized models of K-12 school leadership models that center knowledge and expertise within the school leader and disregard local community leaders' knowledge in policy implementation, accountability to the central government, and colonial curriculum that erases local Indigenous community knowledge and resources. Rather, school leaders who intend for work in Indigenous communities must be prepared to resist the inherent racism and colonization that characterises formal educational leadership practices. Indigenous knowledges on leadership must be included in ways that reflect tribal norms and heritage values (Ottman, 2017). Rural African Indigenous communities are well endowed with the knowledge and resources needed for the preparation and development of K-12 school principals for efficient work in their localities (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). Western forms of educational policy and practice lack the requisite knowledge and experience to solve African educational problems and have instead fractured educational outcomes. Masemula (2015) for instance indicates that a consideration of African values, knowledge, and the utilization of an African epistemology have been found to be the recipe that can be used to address the educational challenges that confront Indigenous African school children in rurality. An extension of the above train of thought to the field of educational administration calls for a second look at how K-12 school principal preparation programs can be designed to meet the rural learners' needs. K-12 school principals' preparation must aim at the debunking of Eurocentric mode of leading and school leadership practices. School leadership preparation program content should respect and adopt Indigenous epistemology and ways of teaching rural Indigenous children (Faircloth & Tippeconnic, 2013). The use of local knowledge and resources in the preparation of K-12 school principals would help school leaders to learn how to collaborate with local community members and help shift the focus of school leadership preparation from centering on individual leaders, to the communal contexts in which principals work (Orr, 2011). Developing and enacting community leadership thus becomes an essential component of the K-12 school principal's preparation program package.

5.2.2. *Communal Leadership*

Study findings support the need for school principals to work with local Indigenous community leadership to ensure efficiency in the principalship. School principals' ability to join hands with community members in the daily running of the school impacted positively on their work as formal school leaders. Burton et al. (2013) indicate that traits of rural school communities include feeling communal bonds, serenity of environment, security, and caring for one another. Wieczorek and Manard (2018) hint that leading in a rural locality requires school leaders to be visible to the entire community, hold a willingness to engage in a variety of community activities, create acquaintances and develop trusting relationship with community leadership and members during the early tenure of the principalship. This is because the administrative concept of the African community involves advice seeking from community leadership, community engagements, and consensus with an objective of working together to solve community problems. The principal's community leadership practices must involve the adoption of strategies that would make it possible for the utilization of a hybrid of modern and local needs alongside bureaucratic and community socio-cultural values in advancing community and human development (Haruna, 2003). Central to the above orientation is the rationale that school leadership can capitalize on community leaders' local knowledge and managerial skills and extend these human resources to the managerial domain of the school (Adjei, 2014; Farrah, 1997).

Western Anglo-American school leadership preparation programs tend to center on the role of a single person endowed with the ability to lead groups of people. This perception of school leadership, social institutions, and schooling system pertaining to the Western world differs significantly from understandings of leadership in African Akan Indigenous settings, and across countries and schooling systems (Oplatka, 2004). In contrast, rural Indigenous communities conceptualize western leadership and its enactment to be incongruence with the historical and African traditional customs. Rather, African Akan Indigenous perspectives emphasize how contextual, socio-cultural values and other historical experiences influence the leadership roles within the African Indigenous context. These factors of influence differ significantly from the peculiarities that pertain within the Western Anglo-American school leadership domain (Eyong, 2017). This dissonance led Diamond (2015) to move from the individual perception of leadership to that of distributive leadership, with the reason that effective leadership is made up of a coalition of actors such as teachers and community specialists whose collective efforts get translated into effective leadership and by which context is treated as having a significant constitutive role in leadership practice. The assertion or proof that school principals can single-handedly execute leadership roles and responsibilities has been difficult to achieve (Hallinger, 2018). African Akan Indigenous communities suggested that leadership is found in the ability of the school principal to create and influence relationship networks to execute core organizational tasks. This leveraging of relationships, skills and local knowledge translates into leadership performance that emerges out of the interactions between community leadership and formal school leaders (Diamond, 2015). In this way, leadership is described as the activities that are linked to the core task of an organization that are co-created by the organization members as well as by people with no formal leadership responsibilities within the school. The above perception of school leadership aligns with Bauch's (2001) recommendation that school leaders are to recognize community members as partners in school leadership and management.

Developing community leadership goes together with a corresponding theoretical framework that reflects the socio-cultural setting of the community. The adoption of socio-cultural viewpoints of leadership helps in the gaining of a clearer understanding on how community's socio-cultural values impact on leadership practices in each context. Thus, affirming the claim that effective school leadership preparation program design, development, and implementation must be linked to a consideration of the practicing context (Slater et al., 2018).

Community leadership development starts with an understanding that the act of leadership thrives on “collective relational” circumstances centered in nature. The cultured nature of the phenomenon is derived from the setting, whilst permitting varied stake holders to engage in leadership tasks through group interactions (Kirk & Shutte, 2004). This perception of community leadership is in contrast to Yukl’s (2012) description of leadership by which an individual exclusively makes managerial decisions for organizational members to follow. Organizational managerial decision making is contingent solely on this individual leader, and devoid of organizational members’ interactions in the decision-making processes. The school principal’s ability to undertake community leadership requires the school principal to relinquish this Anglo-American view of the sole heroic leader endowed with knowledge and right to execute leadership tasks.

Instead, it is expected of the school leader to act as a facilitator and collaborate with community leadership in the attainment of organizational goals. A consultative process by which community leadership imputes are also taken into consideration is adopted in advancing the common good of the community (Haruna, 2003). Per Diamond and Spillane (2016) leadership performance and efficiency become visible when core tasks of the organization influence leadership actors’ knowledge, practices, and motivation. The K-12 school principal in the African Akan rural Indigenous communities must be engaged in leadership activities with local community members for the realization of CRSL. Formal school leadership in Indigenous communities entails transforming the schooling system from that which privileges colonial beliefs and practices into that which values Indigenous communities’ beliefs, epistemologies, and socio-cultural practices (Regmi, 2022). It takes the joint efforts of a whole community and school leadership to educate the African child within the African Akan Indigenous community setting (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). As indicated by the school principals in the study, the involvement of the entire community in the daily running of the schools made the work of the school principal easier and more effective. Wieczorek and Manard (2018) advised that rural community expectations of school principals can be met, if school leaders get connected and interact with community leadership by making time to get to know their staff and the community members very well. This long-term study of their community enables them to be conversant with their "scale and scope" of the school principal's roles and responsibilities within an Indigenous community.

Eyong (2017) however warns that the environmental and socio-cultural values which have been disrupted by colonial models of educational leadership practices have retained their uniqueness in rural African communities despite modification through formal educational policy implementations. As such rural African Indigenous communities have maintained their own basic principles of cultural-self and Indigenous community unified identity. The above viewpoint is expressed by African Akan Indigenous community leadership Akan proverbs like 'Tsetse wo bi ka, tsetse wo be kyere which translates as 'The past has something to tell and teach.' This Akan philosophical proverb puts premium on digging deep into the past to bring out useful lessons to inform the present and the future" (Essel, 2023, p. 1476). Thus, offering the hint that a shift from the K-12 school principal's perception as a lone school leader to that of a co-leader of a school in an African Akan Indigenous community is the recipe for successful K-12 school leadership in rural African Indigenous community.

The study outcome on the need for K-12 school principal's engagement with community leadership reflects FitzGerald's and Militello's (2016) study findings that K-12 school leadership preparation programs must be designed to have diverse communities as fields of study. The communities in which these principals are located for work is the very text that they use to learn to enact school leadership practices with community members. Such an approach leads to the honoring of community wisdom for the enactment of school leadership practices that is bound to enhance schoolchildren’s educational outcomes in their own communities. The form of community leadership enacted by the K-12 School rural principal takes on a communal quality performed by both community and school leadership (Haruna, 2009).

5.2.3. *Borrowing and/or Sharing Knowledge*

Borrowed water never quenches thirst- African proverb. The above African proverb speaks to the inadequacies of loaned western knowledge in the field of educational administration and K-12 school leadership practices within the rural African Akan Indigenous communities (Mawere, 2015). Knowledge borrowing is frowned upon within the African Indigenous context, though knowledge sharing, and knowledge integration is cherished and appreciated by African Indigenous community members (Higgs, 2010). The field of education and educational administration has been practicing knowledge and policy borrowing as a practice that can offer better outcomes for Ghanaians since the inception of formal education in the country, but the translation of this supposed best practices always proved unworkable in Ghana (Bonney, 2022; Graham, 2013). K-12 school principals of the study learned about culturally responsive school leadership from international knowledge sources like the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), but nothing of the local knowledge from the Ghanaian community was included. No wonder this borrowed knowledge and policies have failed to improve schooling outcomes for children in rural communities. The failure of this borrowed knowledge and policies to address the Ghana’s K-12 educational challenges have been blamed on the inattention given to the preparation of school principals as drivers of formal educational instructions within the formal school settings (Harris et al., 2016). The field of educational administration in particular and the Ghana Education Services (GES) in general have always minimized the significance of context and culture as factors for explaining the varied pedagogy, leadership, and system performance (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2013). Transplanting borrowed knowledge into the loaned setting through copying does not achieve success (Alexander, 2012).

What is needed in the African Indigenous communities is the co-creation of knowledge; a practice that helps people to learn from each other's knowledge by sharing and learning new knowledge to enrich their local knowledge (Higgs, 2010). Knowledge sharing principle acknowledges that, lessons can be drawn from "better performance systems" elsewhere to help improve local conditions. The habit of knowledge borrowing has led to a situation by which international knowledge and policies have been used as the sole criteria of reference for the analysis of national needs and circumstances. This has led to the inability of loaned knowledge countries to factor in their own socio-cultural values, economic, and demographic considerations when determining educational policy formulations and implementation at the national levels. Borrowed international knowledge has determined national education curriculum.

Ibhakewanlan and McGrath (2015) rightly indicate that socio-cultural values and spirituality are the very foundation from which the African societies draw their strength. This perception makes culture an indispensable component in the lives of people located within rural Indigenous African communities. Culture plays a dominant role in the lives of every learner, though cultural influences occur outside the confines of formal schooling. Socio-cultural values affect every individual within the community with the result that cultural values inadvertently create a sort of hidden curriculum for all members of the Indigenous community. These factors make learners from varied cultures have different experiences which they bring into their formal schooling trajectories. For example, menstruating schoolgirls in rural African Akan Indigenous communities are restricted from visiting the local streams which may be the only sources of water in their vicinity. The observance of the above socio-cultural values may offer ideas as to why schoolgirls in their menses may be compelled to skip classes during that period (Agyekum, 2002, 2010).

As indicated by the study findings, the borrowing of foreign knowledge into the Africa context without weighing its implications is perceived as a threat to the very security of the entire Indigenous society (Zhao, 2018). Culture, unlike policy or strategy, cannot be borrowed or readily transplanted into another contextual setting (Harris et al, 2016). Knowledge utilization without the needed cultural competence for its sound implementation is bound to be a failure (Zufi, 2018). Forestier and Crossley (2015) offer prescriptions as to how caution alien knowledge can be adopted by insisting that international league tables must not be used as the criteria for the transfer of educational policies. Instead, countries who wish to use borrowed knowledge must first test the viability and successful use of this borrowed knowledge in other alien settings. Whilst adding that, those who consider borrowing the knowledge should consider the various schooling systems, the history and contexts by which that knowledge was in operation. Nguyen et al. (2009) add to this claim by suggesting that Western educational practices come with “unidirectional” passage of culture from their end to the rest of the world. By so doing the western world places laws, contracts, and norms that seek to affect all countries who decide to use their loaned knowledge and thereby succeed in getting all countries who apply such cultural norms irrespective of their regional and cultural differences. Akena (2012) adds volume to the disadvantages of borrowed knowledge usage by noting that, borrowed knowledge comes with strings attached to cultural norms that favour the knowledge producer. Hence knowledge acquired through such means can be termed as hegemonic and tends to work to the disadvantage of the borrowed country and people. The implication of this borrowed knowledge for K-12 school principal preparation means that they are prepared with theoretical orientations that are based on alien philosophies and ideologies which may work to the disadvantage of local people (Oplatka, 2004).

Although knowledge borrowing may not be useful for post-colonial countries like Ghana, knowledge sharing which tends to use local knowledge as resources for the development of other knowledge may offer more help in dealing with schooling challenges of the African child in rural Indigenous communities. Knowledge borrowing has not yielded the best result in the African context, because knowledge transfer within the administrative system and practices was insensitive to cultural demands of the people that failed (Haruna, 2009; Segura, 2009). Available information on loaned knowledge attest to the fact that development management which informs educational administration has been a discipline with foreign ties. This makes it difficult for administrative science to serve non-western institutions to the maximum capacity (Brinkerhoff, 2008). This unsuitable, unviable and unsustainable nature of borrowed knowledge in the field school administration points to the fact that, K-12 school principal preparation program must include a component that teaches how to adapt and use borrowed knowledge to improve local educational leadership practices in the African rural Indigenous context. Such borrowed knowledge courses must include a gender component that would examine socio-cultural and economic conditions of females and advance solutions to some of the challenges that impede the socio-economic advancement of females in rural settings (Haruna & Kennae, 2013).

5.2.4. *Gender Advocacy as a Form of Colonial Imperialism*

Western gender advocacy has been described as an effective weapon of both colonialism and modernism that is intended to annihilate socio-cultural practices, cultural history, ways of knowing of other group of people and societal history. People of non dominant cultures need to be cautious of the entrapment of colonialism in all its shades, and forms (Nzegwu et al., 2016). African females' response to the discriminatory strategies of Western feminists has prompted them to develop African feminism. Nkealah (2016) notes that African feminism tends to speak from the African context, cultural viewpoint, and African ideologies, and uses cultural and historical experiences as a guiding framework.

Angeles and Neanidis (2009) observe that people of African descent with higher attainment of Western formal education often display a non-communal attitude towards their fellow Africans. This is evidenced to the extent that these African elites put their own interest before their own community members as vividly purported to have demonstrated by the gender advocates in this study. This viewpoint above supports this study finding that African Akan Indigenous community leaders' perception of gender advocacy is a new form of colonial cultural imperialism (Pagan, 2022). Western "first world" feminists have contributed to the creation of universal laws and conventions that sought to eradicate all forms of discrimination and oppression against women. Though the idea behind the above viewpoint seems laudable, the same philosophical assumptions about reality, rules, moral values, social structure, and social changes are being applied in all situations and across cultures without regard for cultural differences. This makes gender advocacy in the African Indigenous domain to be unwelcomed (Nzegwu et al., 2016).

The major contestation of Indigenous Akan females against gender advocacy is that gender discourses are “universalist and Eurocentric.” The rhetoric sounds too domineering and is incongruent to practices that stem out of the African Akan socio-cultural values and community norms (Elsadda, 2018). This unwelcomed discourse about feminist activism led to the branding of feminism as being non friendly to Indigenous people and their culture (Matua, 2001). The above development prompted Indigenous community members to perceive formal education and gender advocacy to be western bedfellows that do not reflect local knowledge and customs. As vividly demonstrated by this study findings, rural African Indigenous community members pointed to this evidence of using gender advocacy as a conduit to take advantage people of low-income status. Females with formal education tend to frown upon their own socio-cultural values without having any sense of respect for communal living (Wiredu, 1992). Most gender advocacy groups in Ghana are females who identify themselves with the urban elite and wealthy class, and who tend to see their Indigenous contemporaries as victims of their own cultural norms and values (Lambon-Quayefio & Owoo, 2018). Hence, most females who claim to be gender advocates are mostly oriented with Western thought and practices which differ significantly from their Indigenous African feminist thought; a practice that has somehow made Indigenous community women perceive gender advocacy as a formal educational mediated process that leads one to forego his or her own native culture to become a Europeanized African (Pierre, 2020).

Feminist activism as an offshoot of human rights is also intertwined with gender activism. As indicated by Mutua (2001), the location of human rights movements from the Western world and its attack on Indigenous community cultures as abusive and barbaric raises a lot of questions. Ironically, it was Western cultural atrocities that gave birth to human rights advocacies and not Indigenous cultures. Hence, suspicions abound when these westerners turn around and construct Indigenous communities and non-western people as human rights violators. Msila (2021) argues that the invisibility of African women in leadership positions results in the use of Eurocentric feminist theories that disregard African epistemology in understanding the African reality. The generalization of gender across cultures results in the misrepresentation and marginalization of some socio-cultural values of the African Indigenous culture in an attempt to make African females visible. Gearon (2021) offers a counter stance by intimating that Indigenous feminist researchers who were raised by grandmothers and matriarchs are fully aware that "that the creation and caretaking of home is of the utmost sacred importance" (np) of females' duties. Hence, Indigenous feminists tend to disassociate themselves from the mainstream white feminist. Indigenous feminism differs significantly in characteristics and purpose from White feminism, as it deviates from the separatist agenda of white feminism that tends to portray males as enemies of female progress (Msila, 2021). Indigenous feminism rather aims at the castigation of colonization and has the objective of working toward Indigenous females' socio-economic advancement and the attainment of self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous people (Blay, 2008; Kolawole, 2004; 2013). Xanthaki (2019) opines that the determination as to whether Indigenous groups' socio-cultural practices are harmful to them or not must come from the Indigenous community group's own involvement and interpretation of these cultural practices before any judgement can be made.

As can be illustrated by this study findings, school children's participation in household chores and income generating activities for the family through a proper parent monitoring go a long way towards helping parents to fund their children's education. This study findings further support Bukari's (2022) work on children engaged in both work and schooling in the Central region of Ghana which led to the revelation that working school children were able to go about their daily duties with seriousness and a sense of purpose despite the absence of explicit routines or standards that guided their dual activities as students and workers. Such Indigenous community's values and norms inculcated in African children from infanthood to adulthood help them to be resilient and have fortitude in life. This strengthens Sackey's and Johannesen's (2015) claim that children's involvement in work socialisation in Ghana had a positive impact on them. Apart from the financial benefits derived from these work socializations, children also learn how to manage their own lives as they mature into adulthood. Bakari's (2022) study findings align with this study outcomes as articulated by the African Akan Indigenous communalities that children's engagement in Indigenous socio-cultural values as typified by the first and second stages of African Indigenous education helped them to be accustomed to communal and familial way of living (Nukunya, 2003). Meaning that the participation of African children in AIE alongside their formal schooling equipped them with a sense of community whilst alerting them to have compassion for their own parents' and siblings. The involvement of AIE alongside formal schooling processes helps children to become conscious of their status in life and the need for them to aspire to an attainable future.

Adonteng-Kissi (2018) offers the explanation that "work socialisation" is considered as a positive social orientation within the Africa Akan Indigenous community. This communal orientation made it possible for children as young as five to seventeen years to be socialized through carrying out domestic chores, petty trading activities and other income generating activities like farming and fishing. Every Indigenous African perceives this form of child upbringing as being positive toward the general development of the child. Work socialization is also considered to be an Indigenous community's means of training children to know how to lobby for social networks in the larger society and the entire world. Takyi (2014) explains that most advocacy groups who castigate against Indigenous socio-cultural norms by labelling these norms as abuse fail to consider the socio-cultural and economic milieus in which these norms evolved and operate (Bermudez et al., 2020).

Females from certain ethnic groups with particular geographical locations fall within a large majority of young females who get recruited as domestic workers for the more wealthy and rich females in Ghana’s urban cities (Awumbila et al., 2017). Yet these same highly educated females are the very people who spearhead gender advocacy activities and turn round to consider the African Indigenous gender norms as child abuse. Tetteh’s (2011) study on child domestic workers in the urban Ghanaian capital city of Accra showed that child domestic workers who get recruited as house helps and maidservants were all minors below the Ghana’s stipulated legal work age of eighteen years. The average age of these female children who constitute part of child domestic workers fall within nine years of age. Some of these female domestic workers were found to have been recruited into the child domestic workers services at tender ages of six and seven years. Children as young as five years of age enter child domestic work groups. It must be noted that most of these girls get abused by their mistresses and their families, and the majority of them are eventually forced to return home to their rural communities (Tetteh, 2011). This wave of feminism as captured by the study findings points to the unfortunate behavior of some educated and wealthy females whose exploitative activities have been in operation in Ghana from colonial era till now. Feminism activism can therefore be only viable in African Indigenous context if cultural claims are taken seriously. Such a step would call for a move away from the Eurocentric understanding of gender equity. Feminist ideologies that brand other cultures as traditional and uncivilized must be challenged (Xanthaki, 2019). The realities of colonization and the current prevailing attempts to assimilate Indigenous communities by branding their socio-cultural values as evil and demeaning must be taken seriously. Gearon (2021) outlines strategy counteracting the colonizing and assimilating agenda by indicating that the principle of decolonization that allows people to reclaim their right and preserve their traditional socio-cultural values must also be respected by the proponents of these alien international laws and conventions. Cunningham (2006) corroborates with the above view by arguing that policies with cultural relevance and progressive measures that aimed at the reversal of feminization of poverty, and other strategies that sought to focus on the unique needs of women are what Indigenous feminist ought to pursue. The recognition of the linguistic and socio-cultural differences within feminist groups is considered as the only viable means by which the feminist movement and Indigenous community organizations can unify.

In the words of Cunningham (2006), Indigenous females do not see their culture as the cause of gender oppression. The Indigenous idea of duality between males and females is in congruence with the Indigenous female's perception of feminism. As such feminism within the Indigenous domain must aim at the removal of the patriarchal system that emanated from colonialism. The preservation of Indigenous cultural heritage is Indigenous community's way of securing a model of gender equality for Indigenous women.

5.3. Cultural Knowledge in K-12 Schools

The third overarching theme recognizes that the inclusion of cultural knowledge in K-12 school leadership preparation programs is a necessary ingredient for the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices in rural Ghanaian schools. This overarching theme considers the need for distinction to be recognized in both Indigenous and rural contexts in the preparation of school leadership. It further sheds light on the various factors that draw community leaders to work together in African rural community settings. This theme demonstrates where it may be possible to integrate AIK into the preparation programs of K-12 school leaders, how K-12 school leadership preparation programs can be responsive to rural contexts, and the complexities inherent in culturally responsive school leadership practices around gender.

5.3.1 ***Responsivity to Rural Contexts***

Study findings point to the fact that there no single form of knowledge that needs to be used by both groups of K-12 school leaders and local Akan Indigenous community leadership for the development of culturally responsive school leadership practices. K-12 school principal's establishment of good relationships with rural Akan Indigenous community leadership aided him to lead the school with the support of community leadership (Dugan et al., 2012). The account of this study is akin to the fact that there is no readymade knowledge of African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms located in the two African Akan Indigenous communities of this study waiting to be uncovered (Cunliffe, 2011; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012; Mertens, 2007). Rather, African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) that would be needed by K-12 school principals to enable them to be responsive to rural Indigenous communities is derived from the sense making that emerges from collaborative efforts and work from school principals, local Indigenous leaderships, and community members (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ibhakewanlan & McGrath, 2015; Higgs, 2010). Hence, this study's finding supports Conliffe's (2001) description of the process of organization leadership knowledge creation as stakeholder's constructions of a culture's (organization's) 'common sense (its sensus communis)' as they "articulate shared feelings in the everyday flow of activities" (p. 368). This description of organizational team members' knowledge creation aligns with the mode of interactions that both K-12 school leaders and Indigenous community members noted within this study context in creating the form of knowledge needed for a successful implementation of culturally responsive school leadership within the rural Indigenous community contexts. Such means of organizational knowledge creation involves a joint team of formal and informal actors who are experts in their fields of knowledge. As exemplified by the study, K-12 school principals as formal leaders and the chieftaincy institution as a community group can achieve “collective sense making” by which meanings are created by institutional stakeholders. It is in the joint interaction of these two groups that sense can be made of their interactive proceedings and activities that culminate in the creation of knowledge for the implementation of culturally responsive school leadership practice. This sense making takes place in an intersubjective social domain wherein interactions, social practices, and shared meanings are constructed by both formal and informal leadership in the same local community. This strategy positions both the course and outcome of sense making in oral or documented words (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). This co-acting of organizational members binds them to action, whilst committing them to join those events that provide action to change. The above viewpoint supports Lundvall et al.’s (2008) claim that the field of educational administration, which falls under managerial science, has failed to produce the requisite tacit knowledge and strategies needed for human flourishing. The field of management science is characterised by both formal and informal knowledge which hampers knowledge adoption and utilization. In addition, certain knowledge creation areas of educational leadership and management relating to human interaction may be impossible to codify or be formalized. K-12 school leadership preparation can be responsive to the rural context by ensuring that leadership activities are created around the idea that parents, teachers and community leadership are key contributors to the general leadership performance of the school. As such school principals are to be prepared to have a vision which can be shared with all key actors of the school management team whilst equipping them with the needed knowledge that would enable them to "to act interdependently" in the achievement of organizational goals (Brown et al., 2019). This call for the K-12 school principal to co-share the principalship with other people demands a deviation from the perception of a school principal as a heroic individual who has the capability to singlehandedly transform school environments. Rather the school principal must be a leader who is able to co-ordinate the actions of other members in the realization of organizational goals (Brown et al., 2019). As indicated by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), school leaders who undergo innovative preparation programs are bound to be instructional leaders whose leadership practices impact learners' educational outcomes. K-12 school principals' job entails the ability to lobby and negotiate their way through the establishment of good and trusted relationships with local community members for the common educational good. Community cohesion is an integral area where school principals can be helped to thrive in the principalship. Societal values and beliefs impact on the school principal's leadership practices and these can have a positive or negative influence on the school principal's work (Riley, 2013).

Semke and Sheridan (2012) recommend the development of school leadership programs that seek to promote community, and parents' involvement in school leadership activities. The principal's ability to partner the school with community at the management level in school administration result in a situation where local groups engage in meaningful overtures that work towards the advantage of students' educational outcomes. Riley (2013) further notes that the means by which principals establish trust between community and school leadership is by involving parents and local leadership in school leadership activities. This form of leadership preparation is what Haruna (2009) refers to as the "cultural grounding approach" wherein a flexible view of leading strategies rooted in the African cultural values are utilized by all actors in the performance of leadership tasks. This culturally rooted form of leading supports African Indigenous socio-cultural values. It is participatory and geared towards communitarian and non-bureaucratic strategies. Such an approach to leadership practices moves the focus of leadership from the individual to the community and supports a relational view of leading. Hence K- 12 school principals must be prepared to imbibe the idea that the principalship position requires a shift in their social relationships (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Rural community members expect school principals to demonstrate a sense of community by appreciating local community members' way of life and by participating in local community events and activities (Klocko & Justis, 2019). These undertakings naturally lead to a mutual understanding between school and community and thereby unleash locally based resources and social capital that could be tapped and used as both teaching learning materials and human recourses by school leadership. Trust, social capital and cooperation are strongly tied together in human interactions.

Robinson and Gray (2019) spoke on how principal's leadership practices can impart positively on children's learning outcomes by connecting their instructional leadership strategies to schoolteachers' efficiency since transformational leadership and instructional leadership go together in the realization of learners' educational outcomes. Hence, school principals are to be prepared to focus on the building of relationships of trust between their teachers and focus on the well-being and learning of the children that they teach. Adams' and Woods' (2015) explorative study on teacher retention in native Alaska rural communities supports the view that teachers who thrived in these native communities were prepared to demonstrate pedagogical philosophies that aligns with Indigenous "student -focused thinking". Teachers must understand their students' line of thinking and trace their learners' line of thought in teaching and learning processes. As indicated by Klocko and Wells (2015), K-12 school principals' leadership practices can impact positively on children's learning outcomes via the work of their teachers. Beesley and Clark (2015) however noted that collaborative efforts of both principals and teachers alone cannot guarantee the school's ability to respond to the rural learners' needs. Though rural school principals have an advantage of tailoring the school curriculum to meet their unique needs of their learners they still need support from districts and regional educational services agencies. Logistics and other distance –learning opportunities must be provided to the rural school leader to ensure that material and professional supports are provided to augment K12 school principal's efforts in their attempt to provide contextual response to rural students' needs (Klocko & Justis, 2019).

5.3.2 *Culturally Responsive School Leadership Practices Around Gender*

Gender as described by the African societies as the social differences between male and females occupies significant position in the African Akan Indigenous community setting. Context becomes the significant factor in understanding gender variations. Krüger (2008) hints that organizational research involving gender and contextual knowledge can help in determining the true characteristics of genders across cultures. Apusigah (2009) offers a clearer understanding of how African Ghanaian societies construct gender by intimating that there should be an avoidance of alien structures and theoretical frameworks that impose meanings that thwart African practices and experiences. O'Connor (2010) notes that the term "Indigenous" refers to the state, culture, and way of life of several group of people, community and societies who have established strong ties with a particular geographical location prior to their subjugation and colonization by a different Nation State. Factor et al. (2013) further shed light on the traits of these subjugated people and outline reasons for peoples' refusal to embrace other peoples' concept and new ideas. Groups of people who have suffered subjugation from a dominant group usually create “oppositional collective identity” to demonstrate resistance to counteract their long history of suppression. Elsadda (2018), Xanthaki (2019), and Apusigah (2009) have also alerted post-colonial countries to be aware of the new form of subjugation that the dominant cultures continually try to impose on non-dominant groups via international laws, and human rights conventions. The above observations align with McCrudden’s (2014) indication that the implementation of international human rights laws in Indigenous and other non-Western cultures have disturbing implications. As such K-12 school leaders as agents of the state ought to adopt strategic measures that rebalance human rights or international laws towards local Indigenous community norms and thus avoid a homogenizing of these alien laws in local settings since local communities, families, and schools are the major agencies expected to transmit socio-cultural values of the society. This call by post-colonial researchers on the complexities of implementation of international laws and conventions has implications for both K-12 school leadership preparation and practices around gender (Aidoo, 2005; Blay, 2008; Ebunoluwa, 2009; Kolawole, 2004). As attested by the study findings, K-12 school leaders are always confronted with the challenge of attempting to implement international and national policies in local Indigenous community settings.

Jackson (2011) explains that the establishment of non-African institutions into the social fibre of African societies has resulted in the absorption of non-African culture into African institutional practices. The above allusion points to the notion that the trajectory of post-colonial African institutions has resulted in a situation that has made the custodians of these institutions absorb the norms, values and practices that they deem relevant and useful to them (Alesina & Giuliano, 2015). These institutions as humanly made structures used to regulate human behaviors are also characterised by both formal or codifies laws, and informal rules that become known as culture (Kendie & Guri, 2007). But studies by Haruna (2003; 2009) indicate that informal components and the recipients of these human behavior regulatory institutions are mostly left out in decision making processes by their formal counterparts. The above practice has been found to be the cause of leadership failure in the public sectors and school administration in Ghana (Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012).

The above train of thought when extended to the study calls for a deep analysis of any gender contestation related to educational outcomes. For instance, Tetteh (2011) associated African Indigenous educational processes that socialize females to be mothers and housekeepers with low educational outcomes for females in Ghana by reason that parents preferred to send their sons to school but saw no reason to educate females because rural communities did not seem to consider formal education to be beneficial to females. Merriam and Kim (2011) cautioned that formal educational must not be considered as the only form of orientation that leads to the attainment of livelihood for children. Non-western forms of education are equally profitable and rewarding. Informal education is embedded in community stories, music, dreams, visions, symbols, and arts. Socio-cultural practices such as rites and rituals are all channels of learning and means of acquiring knowledge. Learning takes place all the time and cultural practices become the very embodiment of knowledge. Adults are role models for the younger ones. Researchers like Hamenoo et al. (2018), and Afriyie et al. (2019) have joined Tetteh (2011) in calling on the state legislature and others like the convention on the rights of the child to curtail incidents of child labor and children attrition in formal education, without examining the very context and the rationale for the inculcation and observance of such African Indigenous education in rural communities. The observation above gains support from Auchmuty's (2012) contestation that legal reforms have failed to provide solutions to women's problems and females' need to seek other means of dealing with their challenges than via legal means. Females over the world have different experiences and challenges. As such each group needs to find its own strategy for dealing with their unique problems. Experiences become contingent on underlying factors as social status, race, and culture. As explicitly illustrated by Laird's (2002, 2005, 2011) studies and findings on the social work in the light of the legislation on the rights of children, the customary laws of Ghana, and the Ghanaian constitution, legal strategies alone may not offer the needed help for child protection in Ghana. Thus, offering the hints that these aforementioned factors create differences and results in the analysis and outcomes of women's studies (Tyagi, 2014; Sudarkasa, 1986). Since global and local issues are intertwined, it is possible for Indigenous knowledge to co-exist with other forms of knowledge (Addae et al., 2024). School leadership preparation programs must be guided by the idea of Indigenous sovereignty which acknowledges the Indigenous culture and what it stands for. The field of educational administration and school leadership has been dominated by hegemonic Eurocentric schooling models of leadership (Khalifa et al., 2019) that have worked to the disadvantage of Indigenous females.

Per Oplatka (2004) practices of transferability of educational policies from other countries and their implementation in developing countries emanated from Western systems of educational practices. Most of these alien transplanted school policies were based on cultural scripts and practices that provide autonomy to school principals rather than prepare school leaders to focus on instructional leadership that would lead to learners' educational outcomes. This has proven to be an unworkable form of school leadership (Khalifa et al., 2019) within the African Indigenous domain that must be debunked, to give room for leaders who are able to co-ordinate the actions of other members in the realization of organizational goals. Leadership can be enacted in different ways than what has been made to be accepted as the status quo (Haruna, 2009). Per Bolden and Kirk (2005), the understanding that leadership in the African context requires grounding in African knowledge and socio-cultural values will provide novel approaches for leadership in Africa.

Thomas et al. (2002) maintain that despite the impact of socio-cultural values on learners' educational outcomes, student traits of gender, ethnicity and race are mostly neglected by instructional designers at most leadership preparation and leadership efficiency evaluations. The relevance of culture in instructional design demands that effective leadership preparation must ensure the inclusion of cultural imprints in all areas of the leadership preparation program. Culture must serve as the hub of sense- and meaning-making at the heart of school leadership preparation program design. Nsamenang and Tchombé (2012) claim that the diverse nature of the rural community calls for an urgency in the consideration of culture as the yardstick for K-12 School principal's preparation programs. Elsaid and Elsaid (2012) suggest that cultural demands require leaders to incorporate global or international and local or traditional cultural norms in their leadership practices. Though most leadership styles are culturally contingent it is mandated of organizational leaders to initiate change and become sensitive to local Indigenous cultures. Both global and local cultures are needed to help humanity live abreast with time.

McCrudden (2014) notes that the term "traditional values" is ill defined and ambiguous in the face of international human rights laws and local community socio-cultural values. This ill-defined nature of the term allows for it to have different connotations specific to time and space. However, complexities inherent in culturally responsive school leadership related to gender can be avoided when school leaders promote local socio-cultural values (Bukari, 2022;

McCrudden, 2014). Such a measure would debunk the idea of perceiving human right laws as alien-imposed rules that conflict with locally accepted socio-cultural values. Apusigah (2008) suggests that taking a subjective stance in the meaning making process and engaging in both linguistic and spiritual analysis is required by the principal before arriving at any decision on these international and local cultural norms. Such a stance would enable school leaders to understand and work towards a reflection of the African Indigenous culture and reality. The above recommendation resonates with Assié-Lumumba's (2012) perception of collective responsibility of leadership in the African mantra 'it takes a village to raise a child'. For instance, the school principal can channel gender related issues in the school through the Queen mother and the paramount chief of the local community for guidance (Adjei, 2014; Farrah, 1997). The strategy above would enable rural school principals to navigate their way through the complexities that come with the implementation of culturally responsive school leadership practices around gender within the African Indigenous settings. K-12 school principal who place value on local leadership efforts motivate community stake holders to team up with school principals in dealing with socio-economic and other challenges that confront the entire community (Budge, 2006).

The combination of males and females in teamwork ends produces flexible actions needed for efficient school leadership. It is recognized that "male–female differences might affect differences in leadership to a certain extent" Krüger (2008, p. 157) but these differences can complement each other and lead to more effective overall leadership practices. For example, the feminine role of women as mothers and nurtures of children can be tapped into from the Queen mother to help resolve gender complexities inherent in culturally responsive leadership practices in rural Indigenous community settings. The harmonious co-existence between the

Queenmother and the paramount chief as shared leaders in the same paramountcy reflects a conceptualization of gender equity in leadership (Adjei, 2014; Farrah, 1996). Hence the K-12 school principal can also take that opportunity to explain national policies to community leadership and work together as a team to provide community and school leadership (Higgs, 2010). This suggested shared leadership model aligns with Santamaría's and Santamaría's (2015) recommendation that K-12 school leadership must be utilized as a platform to achieve human development for both the social and global world. The realization of such a vision calls for a different image of schooling and educational leadership that focuses on the interaction between context and school factors (Hallinger, 2018) and moves beyond the role of the formal leader alone (Torrance & Humes, 2015). Leadership at all levels has been the prerequisite to overall school improvement (Demmert, 2001). The realization of shared leadership practices would lead to congruence between community culture and school leadership practices. The school curriculum has to be tailored to meet the needs of the school whilst responding to community and societal needs (Du Plessis, 2017). Teaching in rural Indigenous communities requires teachers to tailor their teaching strategies to be congruent with learners' cultures, language and practices (Ottmann, 2017; Trumbull et al., 2015). Akinsola (2011) had argued that those "positive elements" of African education must be incorporated into the K-12 school principal's instructional leadership practices.

5.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter situated study findings within the literature. The first overarching theme, Embedding AIK in African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms advances literature about the importance of place. The literature on the significance of place sheds light on how geographical locations influence group behavior, and its consequence on school leadership practices development. The findings on the foundational constructions of gender roles further advances literature on various assumptions that impinge upon the construction of these gender roles and their relationship to K-12 school leadership practices. The situating of study findings on the role and importance of spirituality explained the intertwined nature of Indigenous community members' behavior and spirituality and their implication for leadership practices. The second overarching theme with four subthemes focused on principal training, communal leadership, the impacts of borrowing and/or sharing knowledge, and gender advocacy as a form of colonial imperialism. Literature on the communal leadership brought to light the need for collective decision-making strategies conceptualized through Indigenous community leadership models of leading alongside K-12 school principals. The situating of study findings within literature on knowledge borrowing/sharing recommended a blend of external and local knowledge through knowledge sharing rather than knowledge borrowing. The issue on gender as an emerging form of imperialism was captured through examples of unwelcomed ventures in the African Indigenous community that exploited Indigenous rural girls and/or did not allow for strategies that were realistic in the rural context. Literature on this new wave of feminism advocated for the adoption of a consultative form of leadership with local female leaders to enable school leaders to resolve gender related challenges. The situating of the last overarching theme related to cultural imprints for culturally responsive leadership highlighted how K-12 school leadership preparation programs can be responsive to rural contexts, and the complexities inherent in culturally responsive school leadership practices around gender. Further findings captured within literature pointed out varied strategies like the tapping of local community leadership strategies and locally derived community resources as areas that can be explored to develop culturally responsive school leadership practice.

Chapter Six

Research Contributions and Conclusions

6.0 Introduction

The research questions of this study asked, “How do rural stakeholders of Ghana’s education system understand the influence of Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values and child upbringing norms as an aspect of African Akan Indigenous knowledge (AIK) on children’s school experience?” and “how can this knowledge better prepare K-12 school leaders to engage in culturally affirming school leadership practices that would enhance children’s learning in rural Ghana?” The responses led to the development of three themes—one that responded primarily to the first question, one that responded primarily to the second question, and one that bridged the two. For the first question, respondents noted the fundamental importance of place as it pertains to how Indigenous rural communities conceive of, ritualize, and enact social norms around child upbringing that establish norms and taboos for understanding the world and enacting behaviour, including how those shape expectations for girls and boys. This led to conceptions of clearly demarcated gender roles and expectations for children’s contributions to the family that often differentially impact girls’ abilities to complete schooling even though there was established understandings regarding the different, but equal value, of roles for women and men. The third sub-theme included the importance of spiritual understandings of the relationship between humans, the physical world and the transcendent that framed a communal notion of existence and led to the creation of social norms that were intended to drive behaviour that had consequences for children’s experiences in school when the two did not align.

The second theme bridged the two research questions by acknowledging the lack of fit between current principal preparation programs that did not acknowledge, or include, rural

Indigenous knowledge or people. Principal training was disconnected from context, and the individualistic nature of training that presumes principals to be “the leader” of the school separate from the community disregarded the communal nature of Indigenous ontologies in the communities in which these principals served. To that end, efforts to “borrow” or “share” knowledge generally borrowed from non-rural, non-Indigenous and usually western and/or international contexts unsuited to local community values and social norms. Alternately, the borrowing of Ghanaian Indigenous knowledge was often undertaken without proper protocol or partnerships with local knowledge keepers. The lack of authentic cultural knowledge sharing thereby often led to reifying gender advocacy as another form of colonial imperialism that often exploited Indigenous rural girls and/or led to strategies inattentive to local needs.

The third theme focused on ways that African Indigenous Knowledge could support culturally responsive leadership by embedding it authentically into leadership preparation programs and by focusing on the strengths-based culturally affirming matrilineal understandings of gender and women leaders who already serve in important positions within the community to help lead efforts that uplift girls’ education without minimizing the important socio-cultural values of child upbringing that exist within the community.

Findings from this research provide authentic contribution to knowledge relating to K-12 school leadership preparation in the field educational administration and school leadership. Findings also add to the current corpus of literature, and offer diverse understandings across cultural, gender, Indigenous research, feminist studies, and educational spheres of studies. Insights into the African Indigenous rural context of gender and school leadership have implications for educational leadership practice. The findings also have implications for educational leadership in formal and informal educational organizations, for Indigenous and non-

Indigenous research methods, for educational leadership policy and practices. Finally, this chapter offers suggestions for future research in the field of educational administration, feminism, and feminism in Indigenous Africa.

6.1 Methodological Contribution

A major impetus that propelled me to undertake this study was to explore an alternate mode of knowledge generation for school leadership rooted in the African Indigenous perspective context (Karenga, 2006; Nkomo, 2011; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). The methodological contributions from this study address the oldest questions of ethical research design and methods in the conduction of research within the rural African Indigenous context: how research that focus on African problems might incorporate African tailored research methods to study them. The study adopted research practices that utilized existing Indigenous community values, modes of knowledge creation, and means of study undertaking (Kovach, 2010). For instance, the use of an existing African Akan culturally accepted Indigenous mode pf community data gathering and analysis via the Atsekuw Esoun Principles provided an opportunity for local Indigenous community leadership to be part of their own data gathering and analysis processes. The undertaking and completing of a research process with rural Indigenous community members using research methods that reflect Indigenous research communities, values and perspective and situating the findings within their knowledge frameworks mirrors the first and second stages of African Indigenous educational (AIE) processes for children (Toombs et al., 2019). This also made it possible for the study to bring forth novel insights, perceptions and research methods that are rare in current K-12 school leadership studies. In view of this, the methodological approach as well as the findings contribute to offsetting the knowledge gap existing between Western and Indigenous Akan construction, perception, and practices of leadership.

Despite the long existence of time in the promotion and advocacy of culturally responsive school leadership practices, there has been limited research on the ways in which culturally responsive teachings in African Indigenous communities can shift conceptions of school leadership in ways that can promote positive change. Concepts of culturally responsive leadership seem to be poorly understood even though they are recognized in the Ghana educational service (GES) working policies and practices. This is evident in work conducted by Tagoe (2012) who bemoan the lack of cultural knowledge and competence in all spheres of Ghana's educational and working sectors. As a teacher, adult educator, school counselor, and a budding researcher, I believe that cultural awareness and competence impact positively on teaching and leading in rural schools. Embedding cultural knowledge as a foundation of school leadership and teaching helps change practice and enhances educational outcomes. Integration and collaboration between the community, and the classroom become the best platform for the gaining of cultural knowledge that enhance culturally responsive leadership and teaching (Segura 2009). Teachers, instructors of doctoral programs, university-based designers of all programs must understand the complexities of culture and how it influences learning, and human behavior and incorporate this into preparation and training (Castagno et al., 2022; Ottman, 2017).

6.2 Implications for Indigenous Research

The methodological example of the Dwabo data collection as demonstrated in this study helped in determining the need for the practice of cultural safety when undertaking research with Indigenous communities (Drawson et al., 2017). Deciding when and how to implement cultural safety strategies becomes a key element of Indigenous community studies and was a major component of this study’s methodology (Smith, 1999). The concentration on the varied audience (University-based K-12 school principal preparation program implementers, and local Indigenous community leadership) supported the gathering of diverse perspectives in the field of educational leadership. The study remained true to the various proceedings that the Dwabo ought to follow, whilst offering participants the opportunity to provide justifications, drawbacks, advantages, and disadvantages for various points offered (Bull, et al., 2019). The incorporation of the Dwabo made it possible for me to build trust and collect information from the Indigenous community in an ethical and culturally responsive manner and supported the analysis of findings through an Indigenous African lens.

6.3 Implication for Research Ethics

University based ethics institutional review boards (IRB) and scholars interested in Indigenous research may be influenced by this study’s findings across research on K-12 school leadership preparation and development. These boards are mandated to uphold ethical knowledge and principles regarding Indigenous community data collection processes, in order to ensure that both researchers, and study communities work within an accepted ethical framework that support collaborative research and best practices. Research with Indigenous communities requires all formal university IRBs to search out what is appropriate processes and adapt ethics application procedures and approval processes that align with Indigenous community data collection practices (Cross, Pickering & Hickey, 2015). Some of the difficulties I had in acquiring approval from the community were related to a lack of understanding of communal Indigenous ethics that clashed with western notions of individualism. There is a responsibility on IRBs to move away from paternalistic positioning around notions of informed consent, individualism and “sponsorship” to understand what it means to conduct research in a culturally responsive manner with communities whose ethical frameworks may stem from an entirely different epistemological, ontological and axiological positioning.

6.4 Implications for Policy, Practice, and Education

The act of educational policy formulation, policy implementation, and school leadership practices are interpedently linked with one another (Kim, 2023). Educational administrators/ leaders are positioned as the drivers of policy implementation. The findings of this study suggest that school leaders as educational policy implementers should engage in decolonizing their leadership praxis, which necessitates that they deconstruct not only how they lead, but how they think about leading and how leadership has been framed within educational settings (Regmi, 2022).

6.5 Implications for Educational Leadership Policy

Findings may inform educational leadership policy in relation to K-12 school leadership program preparation design at the regional, district and local/national policy levels. The research may also inform policies relating to research with Indigenous communities, organizational policies on rural education, and guidelines and framework on K-12 school leadership practices within rural Indigenous communities. Developing K-12 school leadership preparation programs may be influenced by these study findings as designers refrain from considering their learners as a homogenous group and decolonize leadership curriculum. Room must be created for formal university-based school leadership preparation program designers to incorporate the unique contextual needs of rural school principals in K-12 school leadership preparation programs (Preston et al., 2017; Masinire et al., 2014). Factors found in this study that influence K-12 School leadership practices are illustrated in Figure 6 and can be used by K-12 school leadership program developers to help improve leadership curricula. These factors more appropriately focus on leadership training in rural Indigenous contexts, and enabling rural school principals to be equipped with the needed skills for efficient work with Indigenous community members.

Figure 6

Factors that Influence the Use of Akan Indigenous Knowledge in the Development of Culturally Responsive Leadership

- The importance of place (cultural and rural)
- Recognition of local constructions of gender roles
- The important role of spirituality on community norms that impact understandings of behaviour and leadership
- Principal training responsive to local culture
- Importance of communal leadership vs. individual leadership
- The impacts of borrowing and/or sharing knowledge
- Gender advocacy as a form of colonial imperialism and complexities inherent in school practices around gender

6.6 Implication for K-12 School Leadership Practices

As indicated in the prologue, my ultimate aim is to help educational administration researchers and practitioners collaborate with Indigenous community leaders to support the creation of a form of knowledge and practice that ensures that Indigenous peoples' socio-cultural values "can be enacted in education through curriculum and practice" (MacMath & Hall, 2018, p. 91). Several ideas are derived from this work which would in turn impact on the work of K-12 school leadership program designers and principals who intend to work with Indigenous community members. In the words of Stahl and King (2020), just "as with quantitative research, qualitative inquiry seeks to expand understanding by transferring findings from one context to another" (p. 27). Likewise, Morse et al. (1998) note that qualitative research derived theories, and information can be used as a guide in the development of intervention strategies to secure better practices in the field of the researched discipline. First and foremost, educational administrators and researchers of K-12 school leadership preparation program designers must make an effort to study the impacts of colonial education and its associated formal school leadership modelling on Indigenous people and on their communities which have had negative impacts on children's educational outcomes. Secondly, university-based researchers and K-12 school leadership program designers must incorporate courses that examine the relevance of the rural factor in the preparation of K-12 school leadership because these spaces are organized, resourced, led, and linked to community in unique ways. Finally, both educational administration researchers and practitioners must prepare K-12 school principals to be able to work with rural Indigenous community leadership. Such formal recognition and acknowledgment of local Indigenous community leadership efforts has great potential to enhance local school-community relationships, partnerships, and knowledge sharing that leads to improved leadership practice and educational outcomes of K-12 school children in rural Indigenous communities.

6.7 Implications for Educational Administration

Findings have implications for leadership preparation programs. University based principal preparation program designers must develop place-conscious curricula to ensure that aspiring principals understand the importance and influence of place on their leadership practice (FitzGerald & Militello, 2016; Hewitt & Rumley, 2020). Institutional/organizational characteristics, objectives and management practices must also be examined through a decolonizing lens for their effects on Indigenous peoples. Considerations of cultural competence must be embedded throughout training (Spikes, 2018). This study found that it is possible to create positive relationships between K-12 school principals and rural Indigenous community leadership that support the enactment of culturally responsive school leadership. Individual school principals suggested that K-12 school principals need to be offered context specific (rural, semi-rural and urban) leadership preparation to enable them to understand what is required of them to engage in culturally responsive school leadership practices. This study found that non-documented knowledge found within the community itself can play a major role in the preparation of school leaders for work in Indigenous communities (Ukpokolo, 2018). There is a need to deconstruct current leadership models for their lack of attention to cultural competence and diverse knowledge systems (Hardwick-Franco, 2019). This study found that K-12 school principal's ability to engage in a culturally relevant school leadership practices require them to learn from Indigenous community leadership practices particularly related to African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms. Linking up with Indigenous community leadership and members is essential in designing, delivery, and practicing culturally responsive school leadership—this cannot be talked about in a class or delegated to a non-Indigenous instructor—it must be lived. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) (2018) guidelines for the practices of culturally responsive school leadership practice indicate that school principals are to acknowledge, respect, and utilize learner's socio-cultural values and practices as resources for teaching and learning. Such NPBEA guidelines can be translated into practice by both K-12 school leadership program designers, and school principals (Minkos et al., 2017, p. 1261-3). These NPBEA guidelines can be implemented when the school principal and community leadership co-create a shared vision, whilst using data from the community and the school to inform school leadership decision making and involving community members in school leadership activities. A shared vision will create a culture for the school that enables the entire Indigenous community members to contribute to its flourishing (Stockdale et al., 2013). The various contributions and efforts demonstrated by the community members and leadership serve to role model teaching, learning and engagement for children that can be leveraged by the school leadership. Additionally, such community engagement in the school can drive school community participation and culturally responsive school leadership practices within Indigenous communities.

6.8 Implications for Future Research

This study explored how the knowledge on African Akan socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms can be used as an aspect of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) to augment K-12 school leadership preparation. The study findings revealed that local community leadership were disappointed with their lack of control and imputes in educational policy formulation and implementation in Ghana. Thus, this study was seen as a beacon of hope that revived their spirit and rekindled their dream of being in control of their children’s education. Hence, future research must be geared towards those concerns raised by African Indigenous leadership and support the development of Indigenous-led education. The hope that this research would lead to further initiatives was compassionately and vividly articulated by an African Akan Indigenous female chief:

> We are sure the very nature of this study of yours will go a long way in answering this question of yours as well. I think this should be an appropriate answer to this question, since community leaderships are mostly left out of decision-making process during school leadership policy formulation, and implementation processes. This means that

> persistent research topics similar to what we are doing can go into helping us to resolve some of these identified challenges. I will plead with people like you to encourage budding researchers to go into the study of Indigenous knowledge to enable us to get access to the needed funds and resources to help solve the numerous challenges that Indigenous community members face. (Dwabo Interview 20)

Local Indigenous leadership intimated that the chieftaincy institution as the custodian of Ghana's cultural, heritage, and Indigenous knowledge can contribute the wisdom inherent in African Akan Indigenous perspectives to augment K-12 school leadership preparation in ways that ensure school principals are better prepared to meet the needs of rural Ghanaian children. They articulated the following considerations:

a. The chieftaincy institution must attach great importance to education by ensuring that the institution becomes the custodian and an advocate of the country's Indigenous educational system and socio-cultural values as well. This act will offer the institution a voice and a place in the country's educational system.
b. The chieftaincy institution must have an advisory committee that are well versed in educational policy formulation and implementation. Such a committee should be consulted to enable the inclusion of imputes of the Ghana National House of Chiefs in any national education policy that the central government initiates.
c. The chieftaincy institution must have a resource center at the various local community levels where school leaders and all educational workers can be offered periodic in-services training that can help neophyte teachers and principals build relationships and come to understand the very people and community with whom they are asked to work. (Dwabo Interview 20)

This study touched on prospects and challenges that may come with an attempt to incorporate local African Ghanaian Indigenous knowledge in the preparation of K-12 school leadership. The theme places emphasis on the role of research as the possible platform to be used to rekindle the recognition of AIK in Ghana’s K-12 school leadership preparation programs.

Future studies must endeavor to improve upon the understanding of the relevance of African Indigenous socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms as a foundation for designing K-12 school leadership preparation programs (Akinsola, 2011; Nsamenang & Tchombé, 2012). It must include the ways in which AIK can be applied in the training of teachers on how to practice culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in K-12 schools. Such future studies would go a long way in ensuring the sustainability of culturally responsive school leadership practices within Indigenous communities (MacBeath, 2010; Segura, 2009). Since culturally responsive leadership and teaching are intertwined in policy and practices, they must be implemented together (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ottmann, 2017).

6.9 Implication for Future Research in Feminism in Indigenous Africa

The undertaking of this study created awareness that has implications for future research in Indigenous African feminism. l have noticed a need for further qualitative research that connects local Queenmothers of the chieftaincy institutions as informal/Indigenous educational organization to formal State owned educational institutions of the Ghana Education Service (GES). Though earlier Ghanaian feminist researchers like Aidoo (1996; 2005) and Blay (2008) have contributed to the knowledge base, I am of the belief that more qualitative interpretive research needs to be done on the relevance of the African Indigenous culture and education. I examined the influence of child upbringing knowledge during the first and second stages of the African Indigenous education (AIE) on formal schooling leadership processes within rural

Indigenous communities. I realized that there is an absence of research on rural Indigenous African communities in Ghana coupled with a lack of culturally relevance studies on the role and importance of female leadership in the African Akan Indigenous domain. Hence, I premise that future research must be geared in that direction, since little or no research has been done on the experiences and contribution of female Indigenous leaders of the chieftaincy institution.

In the light of the above, future research in African Indigenous feminism must explore how the blending of knowledges can be customized to fit the socio-cultural needs of Indigenous females without causing harm. Such future research must have objectives of arousing the consciousness of Indigenous Africans on the need to maintain their own native culture. Such research must centre ancestral ways of doing, knowing as the means by which social transformation of African females can occur. Socio-cultural values as the pitome of the African Indigenous culture must be tapped as the primary driver of change advocated by the chieftaincy institution of Ghana. I observed that the encroachment of colonialism has inevitably led to dormancy of the knowledge system resting within the chieftaincy institution of Ghana, making invisible what our Indigenous institutions can offer to the provision of education services of the nation:

- Indigenous African Akan females hold a unique position within the matrilineal inheritance system and within the African Akan chieftaincy institution.
- Gender roles within the African cosmos include male and female characteristics
- Gender norms and roles within Indigenous communities have spiritual implications.
- Females are not considered as bread winners in the African Indigenous context because of their sacred roles in other areas of life, including leadership.
- Females are not to be educated to perceive males as enemies of their progress.

- Current gender advocacy in Africa often serves as a new phase of colonialism, particularly for Indigenous rural females.
- Gender advocacy in the African Akan Indigenous domain needs to be male friendly, community inclusive, extended family friendly, polygamy friendly and culturally appropriate.

6.10 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are presented:

6.10.1 *Methodological Recommendations*

- The Sankofa Indigenous feminist methodology utilized in this study should be built upon in future studies as it served as a valuable holistic framework for studying how Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies can contribute to community-based research, research methods, and practice within Indigenous communities.
- The methodological concerns that developed as a consequence of gaining permission to conduct the research through a western research ethics board demonstrated the difficulties that can accrue when western individualism collides with Indigenous communal ethics systems. It is recommended that more attention be paid to communal ethical processes to ensure that Indigenous research, and the researchers involved, can respectfully engage in proper protocols with Indigenous communities without putting themselves, or their research, at risk.
- This study demonstrated the depth of knowledge that can be gleaned and the transformative impacts of research that authentically incorporates Indigenous research methods, ethical protocols, and data analysis procedures into the research process. More training in these methods is crucial, but it must be designed and conducted by the

knowledge keepers of the culture to ensure this knowledge is not appropriated or misused.

6.10.2 *Practice and Policy Recommendations*

- National and local education policy should necessitate that the Ghana National House of Chiefs provide input into education policy, and create space for committee membership related to policy creation for Indigenous and/or rural education policy-making.
- At the local community level, the chieftancy institution should have influence and formal authority in areas of teacher and principal recruitment, selection and evaluation.
- School leaders should create formal and informal mechanisms (committees, community meetings, festival attendance, etc.) to engage with community members on issues that impact the school.
- Respect for the socio-cultural values of the community on gender norms must be granted to community, and as leaders of children's second stage of education, women from the community should be integrally involved in helping to support children's education with a particular emphasis on gender roles.

6.10.3 *Leadership Preparation Recommendations*

- National agencies and post-secondary programmers should avoid "borrowing" knowledge about cultural competence from external "experts" and put time and resources into developing locally grounded programs that include the cultures that are served in Ghanaian schools.
- Principal leadership programs in Ghana should be evaluated for their emphasis on culturally responsive leadership and policies put in place to ensure that principals receive field training in rural Indigenous contexts.

- Curriculum design should include recognition of rural contexts and Indigenous epistemologies, and knowledge keepers should be asked to serve on curriculum design and training committees to offer guidance to educators.
- Principal preparation programs must include the deconstruction of various forms of gender advocacy to ensure that blind adherence to particular forms of advocacy do not in their consequences re-establish new forms of exploitation and colonial imperialism is Indigenous rural communities.
- Leadership preparation programs should acknowledge the reciprocal learning that can be enacted when communities help to inform school leaders while also creating opportunities for community learning that can minimize conflict, promote parent/educator relationships and foster cultural growth and change.

6.10.4 *Research Recommendations*

- More research that focuses on how cultural norms and community partnerships can facilitate effective teaching and learning environments in Ghanaian rural Indigenous contexts is warranted. Given that other areas of Ghana and Africa include rich Indigenous cultural histories, it would be valuable to conduct similar studies in other areas of the country and continent. Bringing rural Indigenous peoples together to talk about their collective experiences could engender a collective sense of agency and offer meaningful suggestions for improvement that serve as counter-stories to the colonial imperialism inherent in current school forms.
- More research on female leadership and matrilineal knowledge and leadership systems should be undertaken to provide an alternate vision of what has been, and what could be

possible, in research, policy and practice grounded in the affirming and valuable role that women have played in leadership in African rural Indigenous communities.

6.11 Conclusions

This thesis was born out of my attempt to explore the viability of using African Akan Indigenous knowledge to augment the preparation of K-12 school leaders for effective work in rural Indigenous communities. The above impetus led to my exploration of the relevance of my own African Akan Indigenous knowledge on educational leadership in my chosen professional field of educational administration. I attempted to understand how African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms impact on K-12 school leadership practices in rural African Ghanaian communities.

Research engagement with Indigenous African community leadership for the collection of this study data lasted for almost a year from November 2022-September 2023. Field work occurred in three stages. The first stage was characterized by palace formality activities like negotiations, lobbying and familiarization with local Indigenous community leadership via series of community meetings headed by the Omankyeame and State linguist. This first stage started from November 2022 to February 2023. I was able to learn a lot from the two communities even before the commencement of the actual Dwabo meetings for the study's data gathering. My ability to establish rapport with the leadership of these communities helped me to learn from the paramount Queen mother and a female chief of the two Indigenous States. This initial encounter with the female leaders provided them with insight on the project and gave them the chance to deliberate upon the study questions during the Dwabo proceedings. This earlier encounter with these local female leaders also alerted me on my position as an Indigenous researcher. I sometimes felt like an African Akan trying to relearn my own socio-cultural values in another

Akan Indigenous community. My attempt to compare the two research communities left me with the feeling that my own Indigenous community leaders seem not to attach great importance to some of their own socio-cultural values at certain times. I soon came to the realization that my interactions with the Indigenous people of Canada and my strong involvement in the learning of Indigenous knowledge and culture have had a lot of influence on me. I want my people to recognize the inherent value of their own culture and fight for their right to educate their own children. I however decided not to be too critical of my own people, since my experiences have allowed me to think about, experience and see possibilities for the future that appear in their own experience to be only dreams not yet imagined.

The second stage included the Dwabo community events to gather data held in March 2023 in the two Indigenous communities. This second stage took the form of a mini durbar in the palaces of the female sub chief and the female Paramount Queenmother of the two States. Though I saw myself as a student ready to learn from my people and community, I was met with the responsibility to contribute to the discussion related to the community's educational needs because of the knowledge that I have already acquired. This expectation from my own community led me to feel as if a burden had been placed on me. It dawned on me that a greater responsibility would soon be placed on me to become a leader for the changes advocated. I therefore became very sober throughout the Dwabo session. I saw the need to respond to this demand of my people as a member of the leadership lineage, yet I felt inadequate to fulfill this demand. The Dwabo ceremony with the second community ignited my hope, since I was able to overcome my own inadequacies and deficits encountered in my own community. As a cultural outsider of the second community, I was able to relax and comply with the all the required palace protocols before and after the Dwabo. The second community's strict adherence to their Indigenous socio-cultural values aligned with my newly acquired allegiance to Indigenous knowledge and culture developed during my studies in the Whiteman's country. The second Dwabo ceremony reminded me of my 12 years of teaching in the second community with my role as a member of the community who was sensitizing people of African descents from the Diasporas on the African culture. Partaking in the Dwabo and witnessing the collective deliberations and implementation of the various decisions on each of the study questions really brought me back home to Africa—to my roots, to my culture, and to my responsibilities to my people.

The last visit occurred when I went for the final community consent forms from the two researched community leaderships. I had a warm reception with almost everyone that I came across in the community. I noticed that my involvement with the community leadership at the two Dwabo ceremonies virtually made me a member of the second community leadership. I had previously met the leadership of the second community at the funeral ceremony of the Overlord of my Kingdom in June 2023. Though the meeting at funeral was not planned, I realized that members of the second community were keen to move the work that we have done forward. I later learned that some of the local chiefs and community leadership who took part in the Dwabo ceremonies are professors and instructors of other disciplines at the Kwame Nkrumah's University of Science and Technology in Ghana. I then understood why members of the Dwabo ceremonies displayed a high sense of precision and accuracy in their arguments and could so eloquently justify their socio-cultural values on child upbringing norms. I also noticed that the Queen mother of the State occupied the Greater Stool of the State which the paramount chief occupies during ceremonial gatherings. My investigation into the above occurrence led to the explanation that the Queenmother and the paramount chief switched position at that particular time because the paramount chief was officially mourning the loss of his spouse. Though the incident confirmed the fact that the Queenmother has equal power with the paramount chief within the African Akan Indigenous leadership domain, I also thought about the spiritual implication of that particular practice. Though I agreed with the validity of most of the explanations provided to me on the seemingly subordinate role of females offered by the African Akan communities, I was not satisfied with some of the answers provided to me on this very topic and scenario.

I offer that I am an insider to the ongoing Indigenous colonized experience. I write as an African Akan Indigenous royal woman. At the same time, I subjected myself to the teachings and learning of the Whiteman, his country, and people. I had hoped that as an African traveler in pursuit of another's knowledge (Higgs, 2010), I could improve my own form of knowledge located in my holy village in Africa. Looking backward on what I have learned, I have mixed feelings about the future of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) in Ghana, my motherland. I perceive the chieftaincy institution as the custodian of the nation's Indigenous culture and knowledge seems not to have a firm grip on the significance of things like the spiritual component of Indigenous community leadership. The study has convinced me that more needs to be done to create an urgency around the importance of utilizing these African Indigenous ancestral ways of doing, knowing and being to advance social transformation generally, and that of African females in particular. Socio-cultural values as the very epitome of the African Indigenous culture can be tapped and leveraged by the chieftaincy institution of Ghana and researchers to better prepare school principals for rural school leadership. I observed that the power of colonialism lies in its subjugation of knowledge systems that over time can make dormant the impact and necessity of culture as a driver of education. We need to recognize the value of our cultural knowledge that rests within the chieftaincy institution of Ghana and take back our right to raise and educate our children according to our values. I am glad that my Indigenous African community leadership members have been alerted with this study to see research as the possible means of attaining this goal.

6.12 Epilogue

Gazing forward, I see the Sankofa research as a journey worthy of taking. The Sankofa journey was daunting. I did not know whether the process of acquiring this form of knowledge would require me to amputate my limbs, my culture, in exchange for improvised crutches. This entire project looked insurmountable at times in this alien land of strange intonations. I almost gave up in my desperation, wanting to quit, but I was inspired to forge ahead, in great expectation, mindful always that an incautious leap into the future could easily lead to the sudden collapse of dreams (Anyidoho, 2000). Gazing backward my attention was focused on the pain, but there appeared a solitary voice urging me to move on, telling me to consider the gain. “No, it is not pain, we call it resilience,” said the solitary voice within, urging me on to keep the torch of hope burning. As I continually repositioned myself, I heard a constant voice whispering to me, “That is it, and should be the weapon and hallmark of all people of Indigenous descents.” Oh no! It has not been an easy task. But help came from Odomankoma, the Creator who has been able to guide me this far.

As already indicated in the positionality section of this study, the challenges that I encountered as an Indigenous international student in a Canadian higher institution of learning reified my conviction that culture plays a significant role in teaching and learning endeavors of every Indigenous person. This revelation was the impetus for me to underpin my study with an AIK component so that what African knowledge has to offer school leadership preparation and theoretical knowledge is made visible. I consider the College of Education at the University of

Saskatchewan and those who have supported me in this journey as allies who have helped plant the seeds of this dream—but the dream will be made real by my people, the values they hold, and the hope they have for their children as they work to reshape school leadership, teaching and learning.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide for K-12 School Principals

Thank you for accepting my request to partake in this research, and to share your experiences about how you were trained as a school principal, and how this professional leadership development influences your leadership practices. I am also very much interested in knowing, how, and what it takes to be a K-12 school leader in a Ghanaian Akan rural community. This interview would focus on the school principal's understanding of African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values related to childrearing norms, and how this understanding influences your leadership practices as a K-12 school principal in a rural community, your experiences with working in this rural community, your perspectives on the enactment of Indigenous leadership practices, and your views on the use of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) as prospects for the development of K-12 school leadership for efficient work in rural communities.

1. How did you become the principal of this school and what is your roles are responsibilities?
2. What do you believe helps principals to become effective in the role?
3. In what way were you adequately prepared to lead an effective learning environment in this rural Akan community?
4. What was missing in your formal leadership preparation that you had to learn through experience working in this rural community?
5. From which Akan community do you come from, and what are your views on your own tribes socio-cultural values relating to child rearing?
6. Describe the ways in which your own Indigenous socio-cultural values relating to child rearing influence your life as an individual, and as a school leader in a rural community?

7. In what ways (or have) these Indigenous socio-cultural values aligned or clashes with your views on leadership and or working with children that had been brought to you in your leadership preparation program?
8. How or where did you learn about the socio-cultural values of the community in which you work?
9. What value do you place on learning from and with rural community members as they work to improve school outcomes for boys and girls?
10. In what ways (if at all) have you been able to incorporate local socio-cultural values into your leadership practices? What effect does this have (if any) on children's educational outcome?
11. In what ways have your involve local community leadership in making educational decisions? How does this involvement affect your leadership practices and the nature of learning environment for children?
12. What advice do you have to offer for the design of leadership preparation programs that prepare school leaders for working in rural Ghanaian schools?

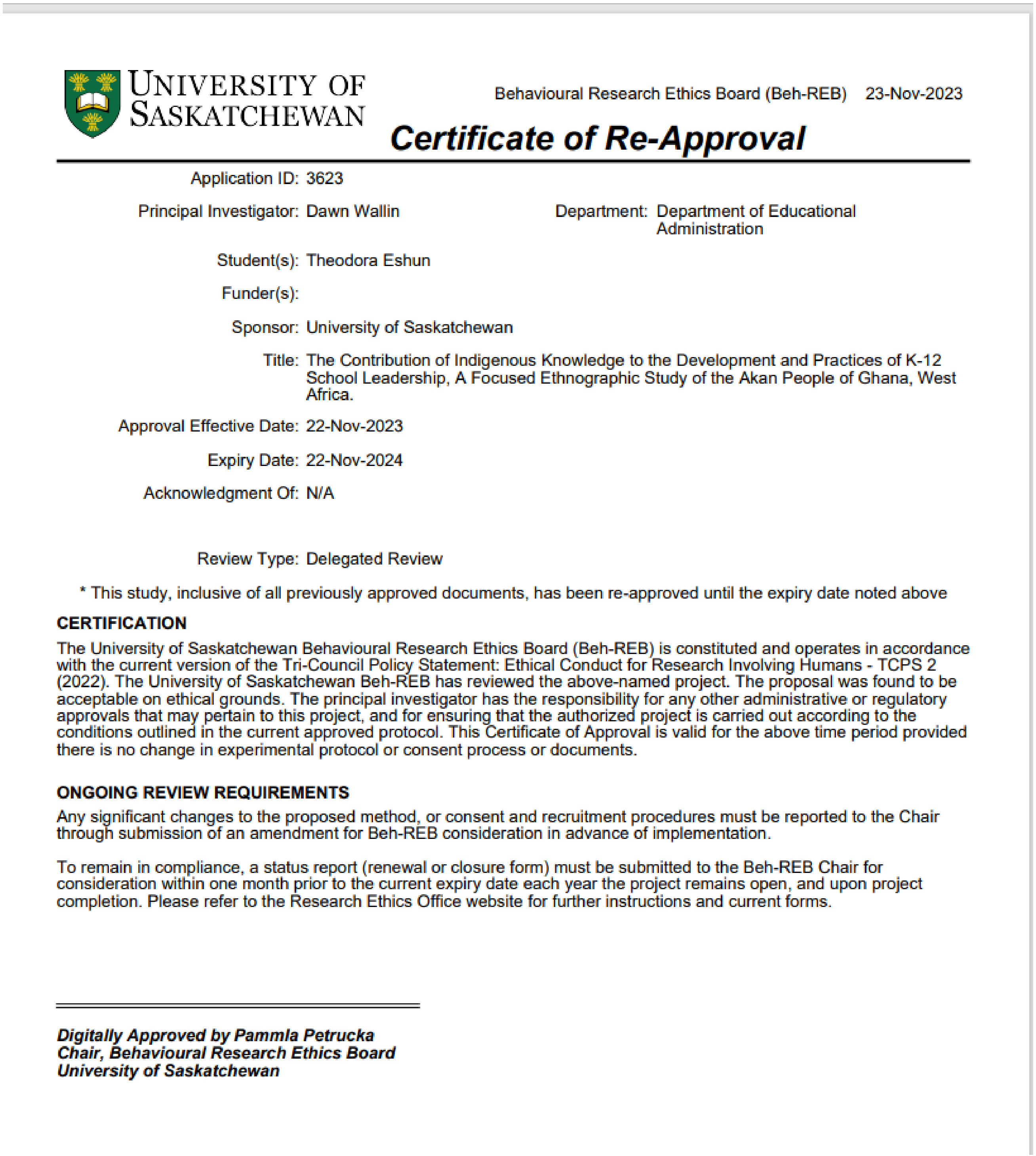
Appendix B: Interview Guide for Local Akan Indigenous Leadership

I wish to express my profound gratitude to your royal highness for granting me the permission to participate in this study. As an Akan and a member of this great African tribe, l know that this study would be incomplete without the inclusive the knowledge, and practical wisdom of the Akan sages. Hence with the Oman Kyeame (the State linguist) as the moderator, and the entire Oman as the Abaguafo (chief and his entourage as audience and partakers) this interview session will focus on an aspect of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK), described in this study as the Indigenous Ghanaian African Akan socio-cultural values related to child rearing for boys and girls. This interview would be centered on the nature of Indigenous Akan leadership practices pertaining to childrearing in this community, your role and perspectives of the Akan Indigenous chieftaincy institution as a custodian of Akan culture, and your views on how Akan leadership practices can be used to enhanced K-12 school leadership development that would enhance children's educational outcome in rural communities in Ghana.

1. Describe the Ghanaian African Akan Indigenous socio-cultural values related to child rearing for boys and girls.
2. What is the rational for upholding these socio-cultural values, and how does the chieftaincy institution enforce the observance and adherence of these socio-cultural values in the rural community?
3. What modification or abolition has the chieftaincy institution made to these socio-cultural values over time?
4. How does the chieftaincy institution enforce the observance and adherence of these socio-cultural values in the rural community?
5. How (or are) these socio-cultural values upheld in the schools?

6. What role has (or can) the chieftaincy institution play in affirming and supporting these Indigenous norms within the schools?
7. What practical wisdom exist in the rural African Akan Indigenous chieftaincy institution, and how could this traditional wisdom be applied in ways that might enhance boys' and girls' success in formal education settings?
8. How well does the chieftaincy institution work with K-12 school leadership in your community?
9. How could the wisdom inherent in African Akan Indigenous perspectives be used to augment K-12 school leadership development to ensure that school principals are better prepared to meet the needs of rural Ghanaian children?
10. How can local and school leadership work together in a culturally responsive ways to enhance children's educational outcome in this community.

Appendix C: Certificate of Ethics Approval



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 23-Nov-2023

Certificate of Re-Approval

Application ID: 3623

Principal Investigator: Dawn Wallin

Department: Department of Educational Administration

Student(s): Theodora Eshun

Funder(s):

Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan

Title: The Contribution of Indigenous Knowledge to the Development and Practices of K-12 School Leadership, A Focused Ethnographic Study of the Akan People of Ghana, West Africa.

Approval Effective Date: 22-Nov-2023

Expiry Date: 22-Nov-2024

Acknowledgment Of: N/A

Review Type: Delegated Review

* This study, inclusive of all previously approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans - TCPS 2 (2022). The University of Saskatchewan Beh-REB has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the current approved protocol. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Any significant changes to the proposed method, or consent and recruitment procedures must be reported to the Chair through submission of an amendment for Beh-REB consideration in advance of implementation.

To remain in compliance, a status report (renewal or closure form) must be submitted to the Beh-REB Chair for consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the Research Ethics Office website for further instructions and current forms.

Digitally Approved by Pammla Petrucka
Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan

Appendix D: Research Participant Consent Form for K-12 School Principals

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: The Contribution of Indigenous knowledge to the Development and Practices of K-12 School Leadership, A Focused Ethnographic Study of the Akan People of Ghana, West Africa.

Researcher: Theodora Eshun, Doctoral Candidate

Department of Educational Administration,

Phone: +1-306-966-6947

E-mail: tme222@usask.ca

Supervisor (s): Dawn Wallin

Associate Vice-President Research (Engagement).

Office of the Vice-President Research

Phone : + 306 966-1615

E-mail : **dawn**.**wallin**@usask.ca

Co supervisor : Janet Mola Okoko

Associate Professor

Department of Educational Administration

College of Education of Education

Phone: +1306-966-76-11

E-mail : janet.okoko@usask.ca

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of this focused ethnographic study is to explore how African (Akan) Indigenous knowledge (AIK) could be used to improve K-12 school leadership practices. The objective is to search into how AIK could be used in the development of training programs that would equip K-12 school leaders with the requisite knowledge for the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices (CRSLP) which would enhance Indigenous children's educational outcome in rural communities.

Procedures:

You are invited to partake in one interview with the researcher (Theodora Eshun). The interview will be about 60 minutes and will occur at a venue you choose for your convenience. You will be asked to discuss your knowledge and viewpoints on the African Akan socio-cultural values on child rearing norms as an aspect of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK). You will be asked to share your experiences as K-12 school leader in a Ghanaian Indigenous rural community. As I am interested in learning about the differential needs that exist in the work settings of Ghana's K-12 rural school principalship. Of importance to me is to learn about the impacts that cultural beliefs and practices have on your experience as K-12 school leader in rural Ghanaian setting, and the strategies used in curtailing these challenges. Since I am also interested in the impact that these experiences have on your leadership practices and how these in turn influences children's educational outcome. The interview session will be audio recorded (with your consent) and notes will be taken by the researcher. You will have the liberty to review your own recorded interview session, and to make addition, omissions, and make amendment before that information is included in this study's final report. All recorded interviews will be safeguarded and will only be listened to by the research team members. You have the right to ask any question connected to the procedures and aims of this study or your role in this research.

Potential Risks:

No short or long-term risk is anticipated in your participation in this study.

Potential Benefits:

The benefit of this research to you is its positive influences on your own thinking about k-12 school leadership development and practices in rural Indigenous communities. As your involvement in this research might be your own means of contributing to the training and professional development of K-12 School leadership for efficient work in rural communities. Whilst the knowledge and insight gained in this study might offer the requisite information needed by other researchers and school leadership development program designers in offering interventions intend to alleviate the rural learners' educational challenges. These intended benefits are not assured.

Compensation:

An honorarium of fifty cedis (about ten dollars) will be given to you as a token in appreciation for your time and contribution to this research.

Confidentiality:

Your partaking in this research is voluntary. The information offered in this study's data will be treated with the highest protection, and the study investigator will maintain its security by safeguarding the disclosure of recognizable information. Your sessions of the interview will be audio recorded. The recorded audio interview will be transcribed. You will be offered the chance to partake in the transcription of this interview and provide an avenue for you to review your interview responses and make the necessary corrections, omissions, and addition as deem fit, before your data is put in the final report of this study. Information from this research will be used at conference presentations and in the publication of educational journals. But pseudonyms will be used to protect the identification and traces of information on study members identity despite the use of verbatim quotations from the study data. You have the following options to decide on. Please indicate a check on the corresponding space to show your approval to:

I give authorization to be audio taped: Yes: ----No: …

I give authorization to be photographed Yes…No: …

Storage of Data:

The transcripts and all gathered data and study outcome of this research will be put on an electric device and safeguarded with concealed identification and kept in safety for five years period at the office of my research supervisor at the University of Saskatchewan. This stored data can only be accessed by supervisors and myself and will be securely destroyed after the five years post publication time had elapsed. All possible identifiable data like the study participants names and interview information will be in unconnected storage to guarantee the dissociation of research members identity with their responses. Your identity (name, location of community, and organization) will be deleted from both the transcript and the audio recordings. All information pertaining to the consent form and the study's master list will be securely destroyed on completion of data gathering and information is no longer needed. The cabinet on University of Saskatchewan PAWS will be used for backup data storage for this study data. All study data and any identifiable consents documents will be scanned and uploaded to an online data base at the University of Saskatchewan security storage at PAWS. Whilst all the paper documents on this research will be destroyed before the researcher leaves Ghana for Canada.

Right to Withdraw:

Your partaking in this research is voluntary and you are not obliged to respond to those questions that you are uncomfortable with. You can withdraw your participation from this study for no reason, at any time without any penalty or explanation. The information you have provided at the time of your withdrawal will be removed from the research data. Information gathering for the study will be utilized and done in confidential manner. Study participants will be asked to indicate their approval to consent before obtaining their data for the study. Your anonymity will be strictly protected. This study data will be protected and kept at the University of Saskatchewan for 5 years. Your liberty to withdrawal from this research will apply only upon your signing of the data release form. Research data dissemination may occur after this, and your attempt to withdraw, and the removal of participant's data from this research may prove impossible.

Follow up:

Result from this study can be obtained by emailing Theodora Eshun at tme222@usask.ca.

Questions or Concerns:

Your questions and concerns relating to this research will have to be answered before consenting to partake in the study. Please contact the researcher Theodora Eshun at +13060514-0610 or through an email at tme222@usask.ca. This study has gained the Ethical approval by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Board. All questions relating to your right as study participant may be channeled to that team via the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca. Or phone number +1306 966 2975. Out of town study participants may call toll free number +1888-966-2975.

Consent:

Your signature below shows that you have read through the full description of the study as stipulated: I have been offered the chance to ask questions of which have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to partake in this research study. A copy of this Consent Form has been offered to me for my record.

Name of Participant *Signature* *Date*

Researcher's Signature *Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher

Appendix E: Permission Letter for Ghana Education Service

I am Theodora Eshun, a doctoral candidate at the Educational Administration Department at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. I am leading an educational research project that aims to explore how African Akan Indigenous knowledge related to child-rearing practices could be used to equip school leaders with the needed knowledge for the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices which could enhance Indigenous children's educational outcomes in Ghanaian rural communities. This is to augment the efforts of the Central Region and the government of Ghana in resolving the high rate of underperformance of children in rural communities at the K-12 levels (Basic and secondary school levels). I have served as a classroom teacher and a high school counselor at the K-12 levels in both urban and rural communities in the Central Region of Ghana for over 20 years before leaving for Canada to further my education. My culminative work experience in rural Ghanaian communities taught me to believe that lack of logistics contributes to a major factor in determining K-12 school children's success in education. Yet, another lesson from my doctoral journey in Canada has led me to the realization that effective school leadership preparation contributes immensely to rural learners' educational success. Scant literature exists on the contribution that school leadership preparation makes on K-12 school children's attrition in Ghanaian rural Indigenous communities. There also exists scant research as to how African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK) influences K-12 school leadership practices, and how these affect rural leaners' schooling outcomes. This research assumes that rural African societies are strongly attached to their socio-cultural values, and any venture intending to improve the learning outcomes of these learners in these communities must be linked to their African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK). Unfortunately, many principals in Ghana assume school leadership positions with deficit viewpoints regarding rural communities and limited knowledge of Akan Indigenous childrearing norms. The absence of a socio-cultural imprint in the Ghana's school leadership preparation programs makes it difficult for principals (headteachers and headmasters) to understand and implement culturally responsive leadership practices that can enhance rural students' learning outcomes. This research will weave together community Indigenous knowledge of child-rearing practices with school principals' understandings of effective leadership in order to create opportunities for the introduction of culturally responsive leadership practice respectful of local traditions and knowledge. Please note that, this study is a qualitative study with Indigenous research methods, and which will include working with two Ghanaian Indigenous rural community leaders and two school principals who work in those communities. The study will involve two interviews of one to two hours of individual meeting with two school principals (headmasters and headteachers) in two rural community schools in the Central Region. All gathered data on the study will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. No school name or principals (headteacher or headmaster) will be identified in the study report. The study data will be treated with confidentiality as collected data, and consent forms will be separately preserved securely for 5 years on completion of the study. Study data and consent forms will only be securely disposed after 5 years after the publication of the study. The study data will be collected via an audio recording. Confidentiality will be assured throughout the data collection. A documented report on the interview will be available for study participants to ascertain that the report reflects the accuracy of their responses and views. The study outcomes will go a long way in enhancing the preparation of school leadership for efficient work in rural schools in Ghana. You may address all questions on this study by mail to Theodora Eshun, P. O. Box 30 Assin Manso SHS. Assin Manso, CR Ghana, or by email at the following address, tme222@usask.ca. You can also direct further questions on the study to my research supervisors:

Supervisor (s): Dawn Wallin PhD

Associate Vice-President Research (Engagement).

Office of the Vice-President Research

Phone : + 306 966-1615

E-mail : **dawn.wallin**@usask.ca

Co supervisor : Janet Mola Okoko

Associate Professor

Department of Educational Administration

College of Education of Education

Phone: +1306-966-76-11

E-mail : janet.okoko@usask.ca

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of this focused ethnographic study is to explore how African (Akan) Indigenous knowledge (AIK) could be used to improve K-12 school leadership practices. The objective is to search into how AIK could be used in the development of training programs that would equip K-12 school leaders with the requisite knowledge for the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices (CRSLP) which would enhance Indigenous children's educational outcome in rural communities.

Procedures:

You are invited to partake in one interview with the researcher (Theodora Eshun). The interview will be about 60 minutes and will occur at a venue you choose for your convenience. You will be asked to discuss your knowledge and viewpoints on the African Akan socio-cultural values on child rearing norms as an aspect of African Indigenous Knowledge (AIK). You will be asked to share your experiences as K-12 school leader in a Ghanaian Indigenous rural community. As I am interested in learning about the differential needs that exist in the work settings of Ghana's K-12 rural school principalship. Of importance to me is to learn about the impacts that cultural beliefs and practices have on your experience as K-12 school leader in rural Ghanaian setting, and the strategies used in curtailing these challenges. Since I am also interested in the impact that these experiences have on your leadership practices and how these in turn influences children's educational outcome. The interview session will be audio recorded (with your consent) and notes will be taken by the researcher. You will have the liberty to review your own recorded interview session, and to make addition, omissions, and make amendment before that information is included in this study's final report. All recorded interviews will be safeguarded and will only be listened to by the research team members. You have the right to ask any question connected to the procedures and aims of this study or your role in this research.

Potential Risks:

No short or long-term risk is anticipated in your participation in this study.

Potential Benefits:

The benefit of this research to you is its positive influences on your own thinking about k-12 school leadership development and practices in rural Indigenous communities. As your involvement in this research might be your own means of contributing to the training and professional development of K-12 School leadership for efficient work in rural communities. Whilst the knowledge and insight gained in this study might offer the requisite information needed by other researchers and school leadership development program designers in offering interventions intend to alleviate the rural learners' educational challenges. These intended benefits are not assured.

Confidentiality:

The information offered in this study's data will be treated with the highest protection, and the study investigator will maintain its security by safeguarding the disclosure of recognizable information.

Follow up:

Result from this study can be obtained by emailing Theodora Eshun at tme222@usask.ca.

Questions or Concerns:

Your questions and concerns relating to this research will have to be answered before granting to me the permission to undertake this research study in the GES. Please contact the researcher Theodora Eshun at +13060514-0610 or through an email at tme222@usask.ca

This study has gained the Ethical approval by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Board. All questions relating to your right as study participant may be channeled to that team via the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca. Or phone number +1306 966 2975.

Please provide a check mark on the corresponding section (s) that offers me your authorization to undertake the research in two public schools in the Central region of Ghana.

,, ,,

Signature of Researcher Date

,, ,, ,,

Name and Position of GES Officer Signature Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix F: Research Participant Consent Form for Indigenous Community Leadership

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled: The Contribution of Indigenous knowledge to the Development and Practices of K-12 School Leadership, A Focused Ethnographic Study of the Akan People of Ghana, West Africa.

Researcher: Theodora Eshun, Doctoral Candidate

Department of Educational Administration,

Phone: +1-306-966-6947

E-mail: tme222@usask.ca

Supervisor (s): Dawn Wallin

Associate Vice-President Research (Engagement).

Office of the Vice-President Research

Phone : + 306 966-1615

E-mail : **dawn.wallin**@usask.ca

Co supervisor : Janet Mola Okoko

Associate Professor

Department of Educational Administration

College of Education of Education

Phone: +1306-966-76-11

E-mail : janet.okoko@usask.ca

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of this focused ethnographic study is the exploration of African Indigenous knowledge (AIK) as prospect for equipping K-12 school leadership with the requisite skills needed for efficient work in rural Indigenous communities in Ghana. The objective is to examine how the Akan Chieftaincy institution use the Akan child rearing norms as an aspect of AIK to enact Indigenous culturally responsive leadership practices (ICRLP) in rural Ghanaian communities. I want to acquire a clear understanding of Akan Indigenous childrearing norms, and how the wisdom inherent in African Akan Indigenous perspectives can be translated in the performance of culturally responsive school leadership practices (CRSLP) by formal school leadership in rural Ghana. As I am interested in examining the contextual challenges and differential needs that exist in the work settings of K-12 school principalship, and how these needs can be met to improve children's educational outcome in rural Ghana.

Procedures:

My intention is to learn about the nature of the Akan Indigenous childrearing norms as an aspect of AIK in this community, as deliberated during your usual communal meetings (Dwabo). I want to study how the chieftaincy institution collaborates with the entire community members in the enforcement, observance, and adherence of these norms. I also want to you to outline the specific knowledge and skills needed by both local and school leadership to enable them work towards the enhancement of K-12 school children's education in this community. The proceedings of your meeting (Dwabo) will be audio recorded and photographs will be taken to demonstrate how the act and knowledge on culturally responsive leadership practices (CRLP) unfold in this community. Hence, I am seeking permission to partake in your traditional communal meeting Dwabo estimated to last two to three hours. I will also collect any other information that will further aids my learning and understanding of Akan Indigenous leadership practices on child rearing in your community. You have the right to request to withdraw from this interview at any time, you can also request not to record your interviews sessions when you deem uncomfortable to do so. The audio recording and the visual snapshots will serve as a reminder to me later, as it will enable me to recollect my participation in the Dwabo events accurately, by aiding in the determination of what needs clarifications during the interview sessions (Higginbottom et al., 2013). The interview questions for the sessions are meant to be used in determining the precision by which the totality of your thoughts and responses have been captured during the session. I will be soliciting for your ideas and views on leadership practices as well as the collection of any material artifacts that may help contribute to my clearer understanding of AIK and leadership practices in your community (Atkinson, 2015). You have the liberty to indicate how and when to record and take the photographs during the interview session. You will be offered the chance to partake in the transcription of this interview and provide an avenue for you to review your interview transcript and make the necessary corrections, omissions, and addition as deem fit, before your data is put in the final report of this study. Please be willing to seek clarification about the procedures, purpose, or your role in this research.

Potential Risks:

No short or long-term risk is anticipated in your participation in this study. However, study participants can withdraw their participation in the unlikely event where they may express a desire to do so.

Potential Benefits:

There would be no direct benefits from study members participation in this study. However, the involvement of the Indigenous community members in this study would offer them the chance to share and showcase their experiences and circumstances that shape their Indigenous leadership practices. Additionally, this study would offer clue to the revelation, and clearer understanding of the difficulties that confront rural Indigenous school children at the K-12 level in their bid to obtain formal education. The partaking of Indigenous Community members in the study will help create awareness about the inequities experienced by Indigenous children. And which will prompt school leadership preparatory professionals in their identification of the requisite knowledge, skills, and strategies that would enable them to train their products to deliver culturally responsible school leadership practices which would enhance children's education in rural Indigenous communities.

Compensation:

There will be a refreshment for all study participants during and at the end of the Dwabo ceremony. Each community will receive a token (i.e., a replica of the study's emblem of The Sankofa Bird) as an indication of the recognition of their time and contribution to this study.

Confidentiality:

Your partaking in this research is voluntary. The information offered in this study's data will be treated with the highest protection, and the study investigator will maintain its security by safeguarding the disclosure of all recognizable information. Your sessions of the interview will be audio recorded. The recorded audio interview will be transcribed. You will be offered the chance to partake in the transcription of this interview and provide an avenue for you to review your interview transcript and make the necessary corrections, omissions, and addition as deem fit, before your data is put in the final report of this study. Information from this research will be used at conference presentations and in the publication of educational journals. However, pseudonyms will be used to protect the identification and traces of information on study members identity despite the use of verbatim quotations from the study data. You have the following options to decide on. Please indicate a check on the corresponding space to show your approval to:

I give authorization to be audio taped: Yes: ----No: …

I give authorization to be photographed Yes…No: …

Storage of Data:

The transcripts and all gathered data and study outcome of this research will be put on an electric device and safeguarded with concealed identification and kept in safety for five years period at the office of my research supervisor at the University of Saskatchewan. This stored data can only be accessed by supervisors and myself and will be securely destroyed after the five years post publication time had elapsed. All possible identifiable data like the study participants names and interview information will be in an unconnected storage so as to guarantee the dissociation of research members identity with their responses. Your identity (name, location of community, and organization) will be deleted from both the transcript and the audio recordings. All information pertaining to the consent form and the study's master list will be securely destroyed on completion of data gathering and information is no longer needed. The cabinet on University of Saskatchewan PAWS will be used for backup data storage for this study data. All study data and any identifiable consents documents will be scanned and uploaded to an online data base at the University of Saskatchewan security storage at PAWS. Whilst all the paper documents on this research will be destroyed before l leave Ghana to Canada.

Right to Withdraw:

Your partaking in this research is voluntary and you are not obliged to respond to those questions that you are uncomfortable with. You can withdraw your participation from this study for no reason, at any time without any penalty or explanation. The information you have provided at the time of your withdrawal will be removed from the research data. Information gathering for the study will be utilized and done in confidential manner. Study participants will be asked to indicate their approval to consent before obtaining their data for the study. Your anonymity will be strictly protected. This study data will be protected and kept at the University of Saskatchewan for 5 years. You have the liberty to withdraw from this research. Research data dissemination may occur after this, and your attempt to withdraw, and the removal of participant's data from this research may prove impossible.

Follow up:

Result from this study can be obtained by emailing Theodora Eshun at tme222@usask.ca. **Questions and concerns:** Your questions and concerns relating to this research will have to be answered before consenting to partake in the study. Please contact the researcher Theodora Eshun at +13060514-0610 or through email at tme222@usask.ca. This study has gained the Ethical approval by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Board. All questions relating to your right as study participant may be channeled to that team via the University of Saskatchewan Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca. Or phone number +1306 966 2975. Out of town study participants may call collect to +1306 966 2975.

Consent:

We would like to review the transcripts of this interview: Yes No

Your signature below shows that you have read through the full description of the study as stipulated: I have been offered the chance to ask questions of which have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to partake in this research study. A copy of this Consent Form has been offered to me for my record.

Name of Participating community	Signature of chief	Date

Researcher’s Signature Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix G: Transcript Release Form for K-12 School Principals

I, --, have reviewed the complete transcript of interview in this research, and have been given the chance to make alteration, addition, and delete information from this study transcript. I accept the transcript as a true reflection of my responses to the interview with Theodora Eshun. I hereby approve of the release of this transcript to Theodora Eshun to be used in the manner stated in this study's consent form. I acknowledge the receipt of a copy of this information on Transcript Release Form for my personal record.

Participation Date.

--------------------------------------- ……………………………………..

Signature of Participant Signature of Researcher

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher

Appendix H: Transcript Release Form for Indigenous Community Leadership Site

I, --, have reviewed the complete transcript of community interviews in this research, and have been given the chance to make alteration, addition, and delete information from this study transcript. I accept the transcript as a true reflection of our responses to the interview with Theodora Eshun. I hereby approve of the release of this transcript to Theodora Eshun to be used in the manner stated in this study's consent form. I acknowledge the receipt of a copy of this information on Transcript Release Form for our community record.

-- ----------------------------------

Participation Date. Community

--------------------------------------- ……………………………………..

Signature of Participating Community Leader Signature of Researcher

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher

Appendix I: Glossary of Terms

Abaawa: maid servant, house help.

Abaguafo/Dwabofo: panel members

Abalakwa: a dunce, an idiot

Abator: novice/ neophyte

Aberwa; an old woman with wisdom

Abɔdzin krataa: certificate

Abosom –deities

Akan nyimdzee kwan: cultural preferred learning methods

Akan Amanbra: Akan system of governance

Akan Kusum Nyimdzee: knowledge and practices handed over from generation to generation.

Akan nyimdzee kwan: Akan way of knowing and learning

Akraman: giants

Akyeamepoma: linguist staff.

Amanyɛsɛm: system of governance

Anamon: footsteps

Anona Ebusua: the Parrot clan

Atsekuw Esuon: seven principles of African Akan Asebu leadership group hearing and deliberations.

Amanbra: customary, laws, rules, conventions

Amanbu: governance

Amandze: Cultural protocol and etiquette

Amonse: feminine sanitary cloth

Asaase Efua/Yaa: earth deity

Baesounfo: cabinet ministers of the chiefs

Boro: horizon

Borofo: English language

Boronyi: one who comes from the horizon (white person).

Bragoro: African Indigenous communal puberty rites for adolescent females

Dwabo/ Bagua: communal meeting

Ebibir Akan Kusum nyimdzee: African Akan Indigenous knowledge

Ebibir man: Black people

Ebusuafo: with common lineage and ancestry

Ebusuakuw: tribal groups

Ebusuapanyin: clan head

Edziban: refreshment

Ekyiwadze: taboos, prohibitions

Ewuakor Nymdzee: Ancestral knowledge.

Ewuraba: an Akan educated female with an Europeanized form of behavior (lady).

Ewurakor Nananom Nasamanfo: Ancestors or the living dead

Fie panyin: head of household

Gyaasehen: leader of domestic affairs

Kasambrenyi: puzzles

Kasa: language

Krakye: an educated Akan with male who exhibits an Europeanized form of behavior.

Kutrudobo: corner stone

Kweku Ananse; the proverbial spider/ a trickster

Kwesi kɔkɔɔ: white man

Maame: mother

Mbofra ntsɛtsɛe; child raising/ upbringing norms

Mba yen: child rearing norms

Mbahwɛ: child monitoring

Mbapowmba- descendants of elites

Mbayin/marima & mmaa/mbasiafo: male and female

Mbayimba/ mbaayiwa, mbasiafomba: boys and girls

Mbofra ntsetsebea: Formal educational institution.

Mbofra: children

Mbɛbusem: proverbs

Mbusu – abomination

Nsabranie: appellations

Nyimpa: Human Being

Nimpa/Nyimpa fahodzi: human rights

Nsagu ne apae: libation pouring and traditional prayers

Nyimpa fahodzi ntsitiaso: human right abuse

Nyimpa kuw: race

Nokwar: truth, (one mouth)

ɔbemfo: professor

ɔkwandor: spouse of the trickster

ɔbaapanyin: elderly woman

ɔboadze: creator

Oburmankoma- One of the three spiritual leaders and warriors with whale quality (Naval commander)

ɔdapagyan: One of the three Akan spiritual leaders with eagle quality (air force commander)

ɔson: last of the three Akan spiritual leaders with elephant quality (commander of the infantry engaged in ground combat) ɔhembaa: Queen mother and the mother of the state

Okatakyi: the great one

Okunyin: PhD degree holder

Okunyin suanyi: doctoral candidate

Omanhen: paramount chief

Oman mfrɛ yie: communal incantation for goodwill

Omankyeame: State linguist

Onyankopon: The Supreme Being

Papa: father

Panyin: an elder

Piaw! An applause meaning well-articulated

Sankofa: go back to for it

Suahunu: Akan word which connotes the idea that individuals need to learn in order to acquire the requisite knowledge to engage in responsible practices.

Sumankwa hene: Community spiritual leader

Sukuu ahwɛdofo: school leadership

Sunsum: spirit, invisible being ɔ ε

Sunsum mu akwankyerɛ: spiritual direction

Twidan Ebusua: Leopard/Tiger Clan

W, ano hwam: well-articulated

Wɔtu apo: closing of gathering

Yansapɔw: wisdom knot

Yansaboakwa Yankopon: the all-knowing God