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Leadership Roles of Teacher Trainees in the Gambia Primary School

A Case Study of Two Primary Schools

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract
The topic of this Master´s Thesis is the leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary: A case study of two primary schools in region two (2). The purpose of this research is to find out whether leadership responsibilities of teacher trainees is developing their education in teaching practice or if it is affecting the quality of teaching and learning in the primary schools.

The data of this research were gathered by using semi-structured interviews. The informants are from two primary schools, Farato-Busumbala Lower Basic and Brufut Basic Cycle, The Gambia College and Regional Education Office. From each school five people were interviewed, three teacher trainees, one mentor and one head teacher, two senior education officers from the regional office and two senior lecturers from Gambia College. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. I used content analysis to analyze the preliminary findings.

Two themes emerged from the findings as leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees which are Classroom Management and Extra Curricular Activities. The research found that teacher trainees are assigned with leadership responsibilities and these roles does not affect their teaching practice instead they develop them to become more effective when they become qualified teachers and assume full teaching responsibilities.

Asiasanat – Keywords
Leadership, Teacher, Trainee

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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This is a Master´s thesis on the Leadership roles of Teacher Trainees in The Gambia Primary Schools: A case study of two primary schools in region two, which is the western region of the country. The author's interest in this topic is from his career in the education field as an unqualified teacher, teacher trainee and qualified teacher.

The experience led the author to think of any theoretical, ideological and practical challenges teachers face in the field of education. As part of the first group of teacher trainees, they go through the three years of teacher education which is one year college based and two years of in-service training. The opportunity to pursue a Master´s degree in educational leadership in Finland further strengthened my desire to research this topic.

The literature review of this thesis includes defining who is a teacher trainee in the context of the Gambian education system, leadership roles of teacher trainees in general, the introduction of the Western education system in The Gambia, teacher education and training in Finland and the Western world, the concept of teacher leadership and in-service teacher training which is the method currently applicable in The Gambia.

The Gambia is an independent republic in West Africa and one of the smallest countries in the continent. It achieved its independence from Great Britain in 1965 and geographically it is a narrow enclave that extends about 15-30 miles along the Gambia River and is almost completely surrounded by a neighboring country called Senegal on all three sides except on the western side on which lies the Atlantic Ocean. According to Rubin, what is most appealing about The Gambia is

its river which proves to be one of the major avenues into West African hinterlands (Rubin, 1981).

The country is divided by River Gambia which originates from the Fouta Djallon in Guinea Conakry highlands. The administrative capital is Banjul which is situated on the south bank at the mouth of the river. The Gambia has seven administrative regions according to Sarr (1978) which are referred to as the north bank region (NRR), lower river region (LRR), central river region (CRR), upper river region (URR), western region (WR), Kanifing municipal council (KMC) and Banjul city council (BCC) respectively.

The Gambia has a Sahelian type climate which is normally characterized by a long dry season from October to mid-June and a wet season which is referred to as the raining season usually beginning in mid-June to October. The Gambia seems to have a very low economic output as reported by UNESCO (2008) with 59.3 percent of the population living under the poverty line, which is less than one U.S dollar per day from 1990-2004.

These difficult economic problems have given birth to over-dependency and too much reliance on foreign aid and loans. The over-dependency on loans has limited the ability of the nation to assess and control their own educational strategy as expected of independent countries.

It is in this light that the educational priorities are usually in line with the donor agencies like UNESCO and the World Bank. In the early 1990´s, The Gambia adopted a nine-year basic education system of schooling as clearly articulated in the World Bank declaration basic free education for all (UNESCO, 1990).

The declaration of basic education has a provision that tasked countries to adopt the concept to various national contexts in term of the school structure and curriculum and this led to the transformation of the educational structure in The Gambia as well the expansion of enrollment. These changes are not in line with the curriculum reform or educational quality which is largely affected and to some degree is lacking (The Gambia Education Policy, 2004-2015).

There was a military coup in 1994 which overthrew the democratic government. In 1996, a new constitution was created, followed by the 1997 parliamentary election, thus returning the nation to civilian rule. The Gambia has a population of 1.8 million based on the 2003 population and housing census figures and it has diverse ethnic groups (Faal, 1997).

The researcher has the experience of teaching in different primary schools in The Gambia as an unqualified teacher, teacher trainee and as a qualified teacher. In all these stages and titles the researcher was assigned leadership roles like deputy headmaster, senior teacher, school, farm and garden master, etc. without any formal or informal training to handle school leadership.

It is based on this experience that the researcher is conducting a research on the leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools with a focus on two primary schools in region two. The purpose of the research is to find out whether the leadership roles of teacher trainees are affecting the training of teacher trainees.

This research is important because one of the challenges facing the Ministry of Basic Education is attracting, training, distributing and retaining qualified teachers. Hence the ministry could not retain qualified teachers or train many of them; there is a gap in most schools. This gap is usually filled by teacher trainees or unqualified teachers who have no professional training to teach or assume leadership roles (MOBSE, 2009).

Another reason of conducting this research is that since there is a lack of trained teachers in many schools, which leads to a shortage of classroom teachers and shortage of school leaders or administrators. The criterium to lead a school in The Gambia is qualifying as a school teacher from the teacher training college with either PTC in the case of primary schools or HTC in the case of upper basic school couples with the number of years you serve as a teacher.

The teacher trainees mostly found themselves acting as deputy headmaster, senior teachers and head of various departments. Based on the experience of the researcher who served as a teacher trainee from 2001-2003 and as a qualified teacher as well as a mentor, the trainees handle these roles coupled with their training as well as being classroom teachers. In some schools there is only the headmaster who is qualified and the rest of the teachers are either unqualified or they are teacher trainees. Therefore, it is important to conduct this research in order to find out if the leadership roles are affecting the training of the teacher trainees.

There are many challenges and obstacles the teacher trainees face in their schools. Some of these challenges include quality and competence to deliver in classrooms and their respective leadership roles. The trainees handle full time teaching roles

but still have to read their distance education materials and prepare for face to face lectures during holiday time when they are expected to deliver their assignments as well. These challenges are the research problem which is the leadership problems of teacher trainees.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to Western education in The Gambia

The Gambia like many other African countries has its school system introduce to it by the Christian missionaries. The first Christian missionaries introduced the school system with the Society of Friends in the 19th century. The first school they built was the girls' school in 1822 (Gray, 1940) which is today the present St. Joseph school in Banjul.

This was followed by the boys' school. These two schools were built during the British colonial rule and they were modeling the British charity schools (Sarr, 1978). The main objectives of the missionaries were to groom new converts and spread Christianity, thus explaining the reasons for their curriculum which was based on religious teaching, reading, writing and mathematics.

The main rationale behind the Western education system in The Gambia was to help children to read and understand religious doctrines in order for them to serve as home grown catechists and pastors. According to Ball (1994) the purpose was not to educate Gambians but to convert them to become civilized Christians.

However, the main role of Western education was to provide religious instruction and therefore religion dominated the whole curriculum. Schooling in the early years was mainly for the elite because it was used and continued to be used as an attraction and incentive for Africans/Gambians to allow their children to be subjected to missionary influence (Ball, 1994).

This attraction was however in a form of creating a privileged group consisting of only educated Gambians. As they leave school they gain employment in the

formal sector of the economy. This is created from the onset by the Western form of schooling in The Gambia (Jammeh, 2012).

The school system later expanded with the establishment of district schools operated by the government and private schools which operate on the grounds of the missionary school model. The missionaries were not given an easy ride in introducing Western education as many parents resisted the idea as they thought that sending their children to mission schools would compromise their belief in their religion which is Islam (Gray, 1940.)

Although the missionaries introduced Western education in The Gambia, they did not introduce religious education to the local people, which existed long before the arrival of Christian missionaries as traditional Islamic schooling existed in many parts of the Muslim communities. A typical example of this is given by Gray (1940, P328), where he states that there are fifteen places in The Gambia at that time recognized as traditional Islamic educational establishments.

To conclude the introduction of a Western school system in The Gambia one has to remember that Christian missionary schooling in the context of a predominantly Muslim community met fierce resistance. The resistance of parents points to conflict over curriculum which today has given birth to the introduction of an education system in The Gambia consisting of Western education and religious education in the schools (Gray, 1940).

2.2 Primary Teacher's Certificate (PTC) Program

In the Gambia, basic education is the minimum requirement to gain entrance to the Primary Teacher's Certificate. Basic education comprises of six years of education at lower basic grades (1-6) and three years of upper basic education grades (7-9). Basic education is a nine year uninterrupted education of lower basic and upper basic education (Qualifying for Quality, p5.)

There are two main categories of schools in The Gambia that provide basic education: lower basic and upper basic. There are two types of basic education, namely the government or conventional school system and the Islamic, Arabic School system (Qualifying for Quality, p5.)

There are three categories of teachers teaching in the Gambian primary schools. These teachers are classified as qualified teachers, i.e. those who receive training from the College, unqualified teachers are those who have not received any form of training, and teacher trainees who are the student teachers on placement usually attached to a mentor (Qualifying for Quality, p5.)

The Primary Teacher's Certificate is a three year program conducted by the school of education, Gambia College, to train untrained/unqualified teachers in order for them to become qualified teachers to be posted to primary schools across the country. Teacher trainees in the primary schools are the said student teachers pursuing PTC (Government, 2000).

There is only one teacher training institution in The Gambia which is Gambia College. The Gambia College is the main supplier of trained and qualified teachers and it is the only institution in the country that trains teachers. They conduct teacher training in Early Childhood Education known as ECD, Primary Teacher's Certificate known as PTC and Higher Teacher's Certificate known as the HTC (Government, 2004.)

The Primary Teacher's Certificate used to be a two year college based program with three months teaching practice, but in 2000 PTC became a three year program with one year school based which is intensive academic work and two years teaching practice. The teaching practice is supervised by qualified teachers and lecturers from Gambia College. The school mentors attached to them are usually senior qualified teachers with several years of teaching experience. This will help the teacher trainee to apply the theory learnt at the college in practice (Government, 2004).

After the year 2000, the whole system of training teachers changed completely in order for the college to train more teachers to meet the demand of the increasing number of schools and students and provide high quality teachers. The teacher trainees were posted all across the country to fill the gap of lack of teachers in these schools and the trainees were given full responsibilities of classroom management because in many schools there was a shortage of qualified teachers (Government, 2004).

2.3 Teacher training and leadership roles in The Gambia

The educational structure of The Gambia was inherited from the colonial power and the country still continues to use English as a language of instruction. Education has not been openly embraced by the entire population and yet many schools are currently understaffed presently due to the fact that there is an increase in the number of new schools built and intakes of new pupils have also increased significantly (Jammeh, 2012).

The focus of this thesis is to research how leadership responsibilities of teacher trainees in primary schools affect their training to become qualified teachers. In the education system of The Gambia teacher trainees are faced with the heavy task upon their arrival in schools for teaching practice.

Teacher trainees have to assimilate a range of issues in their planning for teaching and learning, ensuring that their planning is in line with the existing practices of the school they are posted to (Cohen, 2010).

The school places demands and expects trainees to fulfill those demands, their tutors and mentors all expect performance from them as well as the pupils they will teach. As part of their work the trainees are usually required to prepare detailed teaching and learning plans, according to Cohen, and these are referred to as lesson plans and schemes of work in The Gambia (Cohen, 2010).

As some of the teacher trainees are full time classroom teachers, it is this context that is highlighting the roles of primary school teachers based on the findings of Louis Cohen (2010) which state that in primary schools the teacher is a manager, observer, organizer, facilitator and decision maker.

The findings further went on to describe the roles of the teacher of teacher trainees. As managers, they manage the whole learning environment which involves pupils as individuals and groups, the learning program, the environment and resources. As observers, they observe the actions of children, their reactions and interactions. As organizers, they organize the learning process, and as facilitators, they act as mediators between the child or class and the problem at hand. Finally, as decision makers, they decide on topics, projects and individual programs (Cohen, 2010).

The role of mentors is very important to the training of teacher trainees and leadership roles assigned to them during their entire training program. A mentor in a school is an experienced and qualified teacher in a school to whom the teacher trainees are attached for the duration of their training program.

It will be very important to review the roles and training the mentors get in order to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. Joyce and Showers (1998) observed that when it comes to classroom management, observations and instruction, mentors are taught or trained to learn about the tested or approved techniques of classroom observation as well as feedback.

This training is based on the grounds that since teaching and learning do take place in the classrooms, it is however in this light that it is very important for teachers and teacher trainees to work in the classrooms with the students in order to be helpful to each other. Acheson and Gall (1987) claimed that almost all the materials used come from literature on coaching, mentoring as well as clinical supervision.

Mentors are usually trained and well prepared to be able to handle the teacher trainees that are allocated to them. Among the areas mentors are highly trained in are planning checklists for different areas of the classroom and school management. Examples include organizing the classroom and the school, developing a workable set of rules, regulations and procedures on how to mentor the teacher trainee's responsibility and how to organize instruction (Joyce & Showers, 1988).

The importance of training mentors cannot be over-emphasized. The training gives the mentors skills that are effective in mentoring teacher trainees. The guide states the importance of mentoring as:

"Asking mentors to observe and be observed, it is like asking mentors to do something that is one and the same time important and difficult. Getting close to classroom means getting to what is referred to as close-to-the bone, which means talking to people in detail about their ideas and performance" (Little & Nelson, 1990, p.10).

There are several studies which suggest the roles played by mentors regarding the teacher trainees' personal perceptions of teaching are very important as well as decisive. According to one of the studies, a good relationship with mentors is very essential, though there is some disagreement as to what could constitute a good relationship. The general consensus and agreement is that of a relationship between mentors and teacher trainees as one that is cordial and not threatening or scarring (MacDonald, 1992).

Also, there is much discussion in the literature on the multi-faceted roles of mentors. It is noted that these are very complex as they act as a role model, coach

as well as a mentor. According to Ngidi and Sibaya (2003, p.21) there is a need for tertiary institutions to inform teacher trainees of what is expected from them during training as well as "effective supervision and guidance from mentors in their placements".

It is pointed out by MacDonald (1992) that the discussion around the roles of teacher trainees is now centered on modelling versus experimentation. This means the mentors are allowed or encourage teacher trainees to experiment with classroom practice as it helps trainees to become more and more reflective and active with an open exchange of ideas.

It is widely believed that imitating the teaching style of mentors by teacher trainees is purely based on the desire of the trainee to be assessed highly by the mentor. Most teacher trainees agreed that they imitate the teaching styles of their mentors because it is an advantage as the pupils in that class are used to that style and it makes evaluation easier for their mentor.

Teacher trainees, whether in The Gambia or any other country, generally appreciate the effort of their mentors in coaching them to teaching skills. They feel comfortable and the positive roles of mentors can affect positively their perceptions of the entire teaching practice. The basic things like introducing trainees, allowing them to participate in professional development and attending parent-teacher meeting can make teacher trainees feel part of the teaching profession (MacDonald, 1992).

There are many tasks and responsibilities of school leadership which includes necessary competencies, some even refer to school leaders as multifunctional beings. The idea of school leader as monarchic, autocratic or a paternal executive of the school is being seen as inappropriate, but viewing school leader as a mere manager or administrative executive is not enough too. The term transactional leadership has been applied to school leadership, the school leader is the manager of transactions which are fundamental for an effective and efficient workflow within the school (Louis and Miles, 1990).

According to Louis and Miles, (1990), there is a distinction between management, referring to activities in the administrative and organizational areas and leadership referring to educational goals and to inspiring and motivating others,

One could use the curriculum as a tool for leadership. Although different countries and educational institutes have different curriculum to meet the needs of

their students and citizens. I will look curriculum from the perspective of Finland. In Finland curriculum is defined as a predetermined overall plan for all actions that have been taken to realize the goals set to school. Today curriculum in Finland is a central tool for leadership as it entails norms and values as guidance tool, it also determines how to lead the learning process of the student and it creates a framework for how to lead organization to be able to lead the learning process as dictated by the curriculum (Meng and Risku, 2012, lectures).

By defining the curriculum and describing how different countries and institutes use it to meet the needs of their citizens and students, now one could shift and describe how it is used as a tool for leadership in details by referencing Status Review, May, (2012), Changing School Management by Alava, Haltunen and Risku.

These researchers stress that one of the most important management tools in a school is the curriculum and the planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement process lies with the school leader pedagogical skills. The curriculum they argued that is the end result of curriculum development and it provides a guideline for the school as it is the planning to implementation process requires interaction which involves both the need and the opportunity for the school leader to significantly exercise leadership.

However the researchers highlighted that management of the curriculum development process lies in the core of the principals' pedagogical leadership and if the principal does not lead the process, it will be led by someone which means the principal give up perhaps the most important pedagogical tool. It is argued by them that since management of the curriculum development process cannot solely be technical management, it is fair to say that a school principal needs a solid pedagogue with teaching qualifications. Being a professional manager is not enough on its own for a successful school management and thus curriculum being the most important tool in the school is therefore a good tool for leadership.

For them educational leadership includes administrative task like managing and distributing resources, planning and coordinating activities and promoting cooperative school culture with a high degree of collegiality, developing perspective and promoting a shared visions stimulating creativity and initiatives from others.

2.4 The concept of teacher leadership

The main idea of assigning leadership to teacher trainees in The Gambia is primarily to introduce the student teachers to the concept of teacher leadership. It is in this light that I will review the concept of teacher leadership as the basis of the literature review of this research.

The concept of teacher leadership is not new in the education system but as of now it is transformed. In the past decades in The Gambia, primary teacher leadership roles were limited to head teachers and their assistants. It should be noted that teachers had served previously as team leaders, curriculum developers, association leaders etc. In all these roles they served as representatives instead of leaders who could effect change (Livingston, 1992).

It is observed that reports on the status of teacher training and education have made a strong appeal for different roles for teachers as well as expanded professional growth (Carnegie, 1986, Holmes, 1986). In view of the above report it is recommended that teachers need to extend their influence beyond the classroom and engage in school leadership activities.

Based on various studies particularly the literature by Trones and Boles (as cited in Boyd-Dimock & McGree M, 1995) it is concluded that teachers define success in their occupation in situationsof their competence to be of help to others and their capability in making a difference in the lives of their students (McLaughin & Lee, 1988). Teachers as shown in other studies do not believe in conversative meanings of leadership as lofty or greater positions with organizational pecking order (Devaney, 1987). Teachers in their view consider leadership as a collaborative endeavor to boost professional betterment and growth for the betterment of educational services.

Regarding the concept of teacher leadership, many authors stress its importance and described it various forms, but they actually fail to give it a concrete definition. It is this lack of definition that formed a review in their findings of the literature of school leadership, Leithwood and Duke (1999 P.45) stated:

"It is very important to be clear from the outset what has been learned about leadership in schools over the century has not depended on any clear, agreed upon definition of the concept and philosophy as essential as this would look like from the onset".

The above quotation is in line with the literature on teacher leadership as the authors provided what could be considered a definition of teacher leadership. The lack of definition may be partly attributed to the expansive nature of what the term teacher leadership might mean.

However, over time new schools of thought about the term evolved. According to Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000), teacher leadership could be described in three ways. The first way, according to them, is teachers serving in formal roles like heads of department, heads of extracurricular activities, etc. Wasley (1999) attributes these roles of teachers as an extension of school operations.

In the second way, as described by Silva et al., teacher leadership is aimed more at the concentration of teachers of instructional expertise by appointing teachers to roles such as curriculum leaders, staff developers and mentors of new teachers as well as teacher trainees.

The third way of teacher leadership which is currently evolving termed teachers as the focal point in the process of reculturing schools so that the second way which is to maximize teachers' instructional expertise could be achieved. This third way recognizes teachers as the main creators and re-creators of school customs (Darling-Hammond, 1988, Silva et al.; 2000). This means teachers are both leaders within and outside their classrooms (Ash & Persall, 2000).

Additionally, Childs-Bowen, Moller and Serivner´s (2000) ideas on teacher leadership are closely related to Silva´s et al.'s third way:

> "We believe teachers are leaders when they function in professional learning community to affect student learning: contributed to school advancement, inspire excellence in practice, and empower all to participate in educational enhancement" (P.28).

Furthermore, it is noted that teacher leadership and the leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary is in line with the leadership in general. which means it is a skill which could be learned and this is the reason student teachers are trained in The Gambia primary so that they could learn the leadership skills and implement them in their respective schools.

Generally, and in The Gambia in particular, appointing teachers to leadership roles is exclusively due to longevity in the teaching field, experience and connections with the authorities rather than to any formal effort to provide them with any formal training. Liberman, Saxel and Miles (1988) created the formal program they developed for teacher leaders in which they reported in developing

competencies in several areas like rapport building, dealing with the change process, managing leadership work etc.

To strengthen this argument, Devaney (as cited in Gehrke, 1991) gave an in depth analysis and view of leadership areas that both teachers and teacher trainees should develop. She went on to identify six areas to study and get training in in order to develop their leadership skills in the school. These six areas are as follows:

The first one is what she described as continuing to teach and improve one´s own teaching skills. This is what is considered as developing staff development for teacher leadership as it consists of improving on subject matter knowledge and critical thinking as they are the basics on improving teacher leadership roles. Maeroff (1988) described it as enriching and increasing their knowledge on subject matter and learning leadership skills.

The second area is what she also described as organizing and leading evaluations of school customs. By this Devaney explains the capability of teachers to scrutinize school customs which should be taken into consideration in practical research. This is further buttressed by Pine (1986) by recommending that action research can be termed as an ongoing teacher development.

The third area is what Devaney considered participating in school decision making as an important aspect in teacher leadership. According to Johnson, Bickel & Wallace (1990), participation in school decision making helps to lead in problem solving as well as in conducting observation in daily school activities.

The fourth one is what is known as leading in-service training and helping other teachers which includes teacher trainees. This is highly placed on the theory of Little, Galagaran and O´Neal (1984) which suggested the training of teachers for teacher assistance which is solely placed on the California encounter in guided teacher activities and teacher counselor projects.

The fifth area is what is termed as providing curriculum development knowledge which is viewed as a peer review of school practice. Curriculum development is considered an important component for teacher leadership and Klein (1985) concurred with the idea of referencing the master teacher as a curriculum leader.

The last one is widely known as the participation in the performance and evaluation of school teachers. A good example is the Ohio teacher leader program

which is described by Anderson et al. (1988) as something that prepares teachers not only for helping roles, but also for performance peer reviews.

One key issue of teacher leadership is to promote quality education which is highly dependent on the on the quality of the teachers. The education system of The Gambia aims to get the best teachers and get the best out of the teachers by providing them with enough professional development as teacher leaders. Inadequate teacher leadership skills can impact on the teacher performance as that could lead to or discourage teachers from giving their best, as they are neither motivated nor are they are involved in the day to day school administration. From a different point of view, some head teachers lack the knowledge and experience to run a school, thus the need for teacher leadership education.

The concept of teacher leadership could only be achieved through good teacher training which needs a very good balance of theory and practice. In The Gambia the conceptual theory and balance are too wide and the blend of theory and practice is what teacher trainees learn in theory is not balance for them to experiment and enhance their teaching skills. Hence, teacher trainees spend quiet a good time in schools; the need for proper and effective support system is paramount for improving teacher leadership skills.

Introducing leadership to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary has the sole objective of introducing pedagogy and pedagogical leadership to the soon to be teachers. In order to fully grasp what pedagogy in education is I would look at the origin of the word.Pedagogy based on dictionary definition, is the art or science of teaching, education and instructional methods. It is also defined as the function or work of a teacher, teaching. This encompasses the goals of education as well as figuring out ways to achieve these goals.

There are many types of pedagogy or styles of teaching using varied strategies. The style of teaching a teacher chooses will have many factors depending on what kind of class is being taught, the age of students and the size of the class. Looking at the origin of pedagogy which is derived from Greek word pedagogues meaning male slave who took to school and supervise learning and the role later expanded

to include guidance and leadership (Meng & Risku, 2012) explained by teacher trainees are trained on such concept.

The main gist of teacher leadership through pedagogical leadership is to produce effective and well trained educational leaders in The Gambia primary schools. Warren Bennis said that he used to think that running an organization was equivalent to conducting a symphony orchestra. He went on to add that he does not think that´s quiet it, it´s more jazz meaning there is more improvisation. Good school leaders are made not born, if you have the desire and will power, you can become an effective leader. Good school leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, and training and experience (Jago, 1982). To inspire your workers into higher levels of team work, there are certain things you must be, know and do and these qualities do not come naturally but acquired through continual work, study and education.

Teacher leadership could be fully understood by explaining what leadership is all about. Leadership is defined as a process in which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. This definition is similar to the definition by Northhouse, (2007) which states that leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

However, leaders, especially school leaders are expected to possess some traits, skills and knowledge in applying their duties and teacher trainees are taught about these traits. The traits can influence their actions and (Jago, 1982) referred this trait leadership in which leaders are believed to be trained. These leaderships types are trait theory and process theory.

Trait leadership is learned, the skills and knowledge processed by the leader can be influenced by his or her attributes such as beliefs, values, ethics and character while knowledge and skills contribute directly to the process of leadership while other attributes give the leader certain features which makes him or her unique.

Furthermore, now that we defined leadership and analyze the traits, one question comes to my mind which is how do people become leaders? Bass, 2008 answered that there are three stages of for one to become a leader. First is the crisis or important event may cause a person to rise to the occasion, second some personality traits may lead people into leadership roles and third people can

choose to become leaders by learning these skills which is the transformational theory.

This was the primary theory until 1940`S when it moved beyond this original concept to transformational theory. Transformational theory can be compared transactional. A transactional leader works within the frame, whereas transformational leader works to change the framework which is the status quo. Another question worth answering is whether education is regarded as leadership. In my personal context the answer is definitely yes, because education and leadership are related concepts for their main focus is the enhancement of human society and no education system is established without the aim of building human capacity for societal development of the present and future generations.

To buttress this, one of the main functions of education is to produce quality man power that would occupy the various sections of the societal life, politically, socially, economically, morally and so on.

Therefore, education plays a major role in achieving quality and durable leadership. Majasan, 1938 P31 observed that the quality of democratic leadership enjoyed by U.S.A today is greatly informed by the quality education in place. I will conclude with the saying education is a powerful instrument for effective and quality leadership, therefore education is regarded as a leadership tool.

Finally, leadership today is shifting from Newtonian paradigm to quantum paradigm. Newtonian paradigm is simple, low abiding and controllable. It has the following traits, certainty, predictability, hierarchy, completion etc and leadership is transactional in Newtonian paradigm which is based on exchange between leader and follower and follower in which the leader is tires to meet the objectives by equaling the follower with a tool.

On the other hand quantum paradigm is more complex, chaotic and uncertain and it has the following traits, uncertainty, unpredictability, no hierarchy, collaboration, etc. Leadership in quantum is change which is a permanent phenomenon in organization. Change can be anticipated but not controlled and common vision is very important as people create themselves schemes according to which they act. (Meng and Risku, 2012).

In summary, how does one become a school leader/teacher leadership in The Gambia primary school? To become a school leader the stages described by Bass, (2008) are usually fulfilled and based on experience.

In a nutshell, Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson and Hann (2002) described the concept of teacher leadership in a more concise form. They view the term as an action that transforms teaching and learning in a school and that binds the school and the community together on behalf of the learning community. This is in line with what Pellicer and Anderson (1995) established as teacher leadership in line with instructional leadership.

2.5 Teacher education and training in Finland and the Western world

Finland is well known for providing basic and high quality education. One of the reasons for that is good teacher training programs. It is in this light that the researcher will review teacher education and training in Finland and the Western word beginning with the history.

The history of teacher education/training in Finland was first conceived in a seminar in Jyväskylä in 1863. The reason for the seminar was to educate elementary school teachers as there were some misunderstandings in the 1860's about the aims and contents of teacher education and up until now these misunderstanding exist (Niemi, Toom & Kallioniemi p.19-38).

However, the teacher training in Finland is built on three central elements which are theory, practice and experience. The themes of teacher training in Finland are self-knowledge, theoretical and practical principles of teaching and learning, pedagogical possibilities and limitations of the contents of the studies and professions. The teacher trainees mostly complete their teaching practice in teacher training schools and partially in field schools. The teacher education for teachers in comprehensive and upper secondary schools and those teaching general subjects in adult education and vocational education today is attainable in eight universities around Finland (Niemi, Toom & Kallioniemi, 2012.)

Moreover, it was in 1974 when the education and training of teachers in Finland was transferred to these universities. Prior to that primary school teachers were educated at teacher training colleges, and in 1979 the basic qualification for secondary school teachers was defined as a master`s degree obtained from programs requiring four to five years to complete (Niemi 2010, & Jakku-Sihvonen, 2006).

The most important aspect in the teacher training in Finland is an agreement of the deans of the faculties of education and the departments of teacher education who have regular contact with each other and the ministry. The Ministry of Education and Culture has full confidence in the departments and faculties involved in the teacher education (Meisalo, 2007, p.163).

The main principles of teacher education in Finland could be reviewed on the following themes. The first theme is the research-based approach as the main guideline. This approach is oriented towards teacher education as well as towards a research-based approach and professional culture (Niemi & Jakku Sihvonen, 2011).

The teacher education training in Finland requires both a qualitative and a quantitative approach, and it aims to prepare teacher trainees to find and analyze problems they might face as future teachers. It is the work of the professors to guide the teacher trainees in the research oriented aspect of their training. The main aim of this guiding process is to help trainees to discover and tap their intellectual resources and to enable them to fully utilize the resources available to them (Nummenmaa & Lautamatti, 2004, p.117).

The second principle is the social and moral code of the teaching profession which is context-bound depending on the students' age level. It is clearly stated that teachers and teacher education are closely related to national goals and purposes in Finland as the welfare and the economy of the nation are also related to the quality of educational outcomes which then again is also related to the competence of teachers. It is observed by Aloni (2002) and Niemi (2010) that teachers are key players in promoting human rights and social justice as well as democracy in our societies.

Another principle of teacher education/training is the integration of theory and practice which includes the pedagogical studies through supervised teaching practice which contains approximately 20 ECTS. The goal of the supervised practical training is to support teacher trainees to acquire professional skills in researching, in developing and in evaluating teaching as well as in the learning processes. The teacher trainees enhance and reflect on their own social skills in teaching and learning situations. The teacher trainees are supervised during their training by university teachers together with university training school teachers

and sometimes local school teachers depending on the phase of practice (Jyrhämä, 2006).

The history of teacher education, teacher training, teaching theories in education history and education of teachers in the West began in the 18th century. The teaching seminaries educating teachers were the first formal training in the Western history of education. In this thesis I will review the student teachers' conceptions and initial teacher training on primary teacher training in Bedford United Kingdom and the history of teacher professionalism in the United States of America by Hobson (2002, p. 5-20).

The higher education institutions like universities and colleges as well as the then polytechnics between the 1960´s and the 1980's were the key players in pre-service teacher training in England and Wales (Hobson, 2002). Although there are some variations in the initial teacher training programs, they were developed and run by higher education institutes in which student teachers were base, and schools were places where student teachers would go on placements to undertake practicum according to Hobson. In The Gambia these students are referred to as teacher trainees.

However, researchers like Taylor (1969) and Lomax (1973) argue that students' teachers valued highly the school based elements of their courses and were less appreciative or critical of the college based elements and so called theoretical components, most famously the study of academic, foundation disciplines of the sociology, psychology as well as the history of education.

In the 1980's and the 1990's, the British government assumed greater control of initial teacher training and education than governments had ever done before (Wilkin, 1999) and they put more emphasis on school-based and practical teacher training (Furlong, 1995). The department of education has outlined various competencies of teaching which are related to subject knowledge and application, class management, assessment as well as further professional development which all serve as the foundation stone for teacher training courses, and they pronounced that secondary teacher trainees must spend a minimum of two-third of their training in schools.

To conclude, in the USA Raviteh (2005) argues that their nation once faced a challenge in making sure that they have a sufficient supply of well educated, well prepared teachers for their children. It was acknowledged that good teachers are

vital to the future, but getting good teachers is the big question, thus leading to modifying teacher training.

2.6 In-service teacher training

The School of Education Gambia College which is responsible for training teachers has recently shifted the training method of teachers in The Gambia. The previous method which is one year full time college based and two years of teaching practice with distance education modules and continuous supervision is now replaced with the In-service teacher training.

The need for qualified teachers in Gambian primary prompted the shift. It is common knowledge among educational institutions that increasing standards for in-service education of teachers will not affect the professional growth of teachers. This theory is articulated by Ade (1939) by asserting that no amount of time spent on teacher training colleges or universities will complete the preparation of the teacher for the tasked ahead in the classroom.

Another theory by Cole (1939) took a comparable route by saying that teachers just like doctors, ministers, lawyers and other professionals must continue with their education after graduation as the basis of the theory is strongly rooted in the belief that new knowledge, materials and techniques make in-service training necessary today.

Fowler (1937) argued that if teachers are to become true leaders in their various schools and regions, it is important to provide them with a program of in-service training with emphasis on "doing" and not only "listening".

However, Gray vehemently stated that the in-service training of teachers is a necessity because in this modern generation college based teaching is becoming less and less effective as we are presently faced with a lot of challenging obstacles.

The advantages of in-service training of teachers are stated in many theories of educations as Zook (1937) outlined a very important merit which states that the colleges are now occupied with the training of teachers to execute certain educational tasks, but many of them have woefully failed in many sectors like

education for teachers to understand and teach children which is the primary purpose of the training.

Zook summarized his theory by saying that teachers should become real and authentic diagnosticians before they should be expected to be successful as practitioners or real teachers in their respective classrooms.

Valentine outlined his thoughts on the training techniques of in-service as educational "side shows" which, he argues, are stealing the time and money that should be used in the performance of educating teachers, so that they could also educate the children.

It is common knowledge, an open secret and a wider understanding among researchers and experts in the field of education that teachers are the most important factor in the quality of education in schools and this does not exclude teacher trainees. It is based on this reason that in-service teacher training contributes to improving educational systems and the learning outcomes of students.

Recently, according to observers in the field of education, in-service teacher training have become a topic of discussion. Looking through different types of literatures and theories, there are many reviews on the concept and one of the concepts which closely gave an idea of in-service training is what Gusty (1986) discussed as a coordinated attempt to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, change in their beliefs and change in the learning results of students.

There is now a general consensus that teachers should be supported in these new roles of leadership, facilitators, supervision and mentoring (Symeonidou & Phtiaka, 2009). One of the main reasons for in-service teacher training is to help teachers and teacher trainees to be successful in their careers as well as help their professional growth (Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2006).

Some researchers recommended that in-service teacher education should be tailored in such a way that it would be able to investigate behavior and promote programmatic changes that have the ability to improve the quality and standard within the school system (Baden, 1979, Mchaney &Impey, 1988). It is in this light that Valle (1982) and Özen (1995) suggested that in-service teacher training should include relevant training programs.

In-service teacher training traits include that would-be trained teachers are provided with an opportunity to improve job performance as this serves as good motivation for teacher trainees (Desmarais, 1992). Also, it is stated by Bonstingl (1996) that in-service teacher training is one of the tools which develop quality in education as well as increase the effectiveness of teachers.

The most important aspect about in-service teacher training is identifying the expectations and needs of teachers involved (teacher trainees) and their expectations and providing opportunities at various stages of the entire training program (Özen, 1995). It is in this view that the in-service training allows teacher trainees to achieve the expected knowledge, skills as well as attitude.

Additionally, each step and stage of the in-service training should be well planned, well-coordinated and fully executed. The main purpose of the training should be supported with appropriate methods and activities (Kucuksuleymanoglu, 2006). Itis therefore very important that in-service teacher training be steady and continuous so that the training could be effective and purposeful (Tekin & Ayas, 2006; Akar, 2007).

One of the most important thing is achieving a progress in education is the improvement in the education service and the availability of enough well qualified and trained teachers. The education policy of The Gambia (2004-2015) has its main objectives which include the provision of high quality basic education for all Gambian children (Education Policy, 2004 -2015).

The expansion in the school system throughout the country resulted in changes to mode of training of teachers. The only institution that is training teachers is the Gambia college and the demand for more qualified teachers is to restructure its teacher education program from an academic and theoretically based on more of practical (Education Policy, 2004 -2015).

The main purpose of shifting from a theoretical base to the practical in-service method is to produce an approximately six hundred teachers, three hundred for Primary Teachers Certificate and, three hundred Higher Teacher´s Certificate from 1999 as compared to previous one hundred and twenty in 1997-1998.

The reason teacher education program was restructured was purely to serve both towns and remote villages with highly trained teachers. Though The Gambia is training more teachers yearly there is still a shortage of qualified teachers in most

schools. This is another reason why in-service training of teachers was introduced was that un-qualified teachers to qualified teachers as well as maintaining quality. The in-service teacher training is programmed in a way that the teacher trainees are introduced to modern child centered teaching and learning theories for the entire duration of the training which is three years. The trainees are provided with the opportunity to implement the theories they learned in the college to actual classrooms and the in-service training is increasing the total number of qualified teachers (Adea, 2008).

One of the challenges facing the in-service teacher training is the lack of teacher capacity considering numbers and quality. The high distribution rate of teachers as well as the absence of well-organized in-service training has not helped. It is due to some of these challenges that the school curriculum has been reviewed to make it more responsive to the need of all stakeholders in the teacher education training program (Adea, 2008).

In a nutshell, in-service teacher training might be meaningless or less effective if the opinion of teachers, student teachers and all stakeholders in the field of education are not solicited. In this way it will be easy to determine what kind of in-service training is suitable and applicable.

2.7 Teaching practice/internship

The duration of the Primary Teachers Certificate in The Gambia is three years. The training of teachers which is adopted by the Ministry of Education is designed in such a way that the teachers recruited for the in-service will spend the entire three years in teaching practice in schools and will come for face to face lectures during holidays when schools are closed.

There are many theories and writers which backed this system of training such as Pressey (1937) who strongly believed that there should be a period of training/internship for teachers which will require residence in the community and that will give responsibility both for the school and the community.

In another theory, Carley reviewed the plan of in service training which is conducted in Stanford University. According to him this method does not only provide the normal practice, but also a follow-up period under the watchful eyes

of the college staff. Carley further stated that in this training program, coordinators were employed to make a normal routine or termly visit with teachers in their classrooms and to advise them both individually and in small groups as Flowers has drawn on a reported plan of follow up in New Jersey State teachers college.

There are many theories and reviews that gave credence to in-service training of teachers. Another separate note (Northway, et al. 1939) looked at ways of improving the training of teachers in New York State and emphasized that teachers needed teaching practice which is similar to that of graduates of medical schools.

In their review they identified six types of activities which are sponsored by the teacher training institutions. These six activities are: field supervision of faculty members, group conferences held at parent institutions or convenient places, bulletin services, extension courses, library service information and follow up conferences (Northway, et al. pp. 483-485).

However, it was reported in the Journal of the National Education Association that a very unique and very satisfactory in-service teacher training worked perfectly well in Eastern State normal school. The method applied here involves a teacher trainee with approved training being sent into the field for six weeks to relieve a regular teacher who in turn will enroll for credit courses in the college.

In outlining the values and some difficulties in teaching practice, Brink (1937) stated that the plan for in-service training should include the trainee's participation in meeting the graduate standing as well as professional and personal qualities. Brinks further stated these programs should include one full year of teaching practice under guidance which should be followed by a second summer school session.

It is observed by most researchers who have carried research on teaching practice that teacher trainees all around the world value teaching experience. According to Ngidi and Sibaya (2003), even with all these concerns, it seems there is little literature in general and more specifically in The Gambia on concrete roles of teacher trainees.

However, theories about teaching practice usually concentrate mainly on lectures and cooperation among teachers which sometimes exclude teacher trainees as

corroborated by MacDonald (1992). This too contributed immensely to lack of theories and literatures on teacher trainees.

It should be observed, however, that many studies concentrated on the development of teacher trainees in general instead of thoroughly looking into "complex, dynamic as well as the multidimensional nature of people individually and in their daily interaction (MacDonald, 1992:21).

A practical example of The Gambia is that all those admitted to pursue a Primary Teacher's Certificate or Higher Teacher's Certificate are obliged to do a teaching practice in various schools around all the regions before they are given a qualified teacher's status. The primary purpose of this is to help trainees acquire skills required of a teacher.

Most researchers in the education field consider teaching practice as one of the most important aspects of teacher education and training programs (Chepyator-Thompson & Liu, 2003). According to Irvine, Westway & Schaeter, (2004) teaching practice is crucial to the successful completion of teacher education.

The school of education, Gambia College, is the institute that trains teachers in The Gambia, and the burden to produce highly qualified teachers is their sole responsibility. Dovey (1984) suggests that to have highly trained teachers course requirements and curricula needs constant monitoring and reviewing.

2.8 New methods of in-service teacher training

This is not the first time the Ministry of Education in The Gambia introduced in-service training for aspiring teachers in The Gambia. From the early 1980´s towards the middle of the 1990´s in-service training was practiced alongside with the regular college based training with the sole aim of supplying qualified teachers to all regions and schools within the regions.

The present re-introduction of the practice is in line with newer or modern methods of in-service training in many educational institutions. In some instances a new method includes radio technology as cited by Wilson (1939) with the clear objective of improvement of teachers while in the service. It is observed by him that through the medium of a radio "a short cut may be found for transacting

research and experience into action and common practice" (Wilson, 1939, pp. 276-278).

Another scholar gave a clear perspective on the newer practices which includes the organization of summer training schools or workshops which aim at reviewing some of the values of the training program. It is noted by Richardson that many teachers recommended the use of workshops as an effective means of aiding trainee teachers while in the field learning the teaching profession (Richardson, 1939).

Other reserachers took a microscopic view of the relationship between the in-service and pre-service training of teachers. In his theory, Northway argued that in-service training should aim at perfection of techniques and continuation of professional growth, which should be in line with wider, cultural content of the training program. According to Reid, it should be geared towards professional training in which the trainee becomes an "apprenticeship" in teaching (Reid, 1937).

Other scholars like Allen took a closer view of the in-service training and pre-service training and took an example of the Woman´s College of the University of North Carolina as the basis of his theory. He buttressed that in the newer practices of in-service training there should be a link or communication channel between the trainers and the trainees so that the trainees could adjust themselves in the teaching service (Allen, 1939).

The newly adopted new methods of in-service training of teacher trainees and allowing them to assume leadership roles as part of their training in The Gambia primary schools are on the same page with what Pressey (1937) termed as a period of training for trainee teachers which should require the trainees to reside in the community in which they practice teaching. This, according to him would give them the responsibility to the school as well as the community they are serving.

It should be noted that currently the term teacher training is being systematically replaced in most educational literature by the term teacher education. It is stated by Zook (1937) that most teacher training colleges are occupied with training teacher trainees with new methods regarding their performance and with certain new methods of educational tasks and responsibility in the schools. The negative

side of this new method is that it limits the training and performance of teacher trainees in their training program.

The sole purpose of introducing the new methods of in-service training is in line with the aim of improving growth for teachers, teacher trainees and head teachers in a school. Quinn (1937) outlined seven things that teacher trainees should do in order to improve their educational growth as they would serve as qualified teachers in the near future. The seven things or new methods are; personal contacts, participation in community affairs, travelling, visiting important places, visiting libraries, self-evaluation and developing a fulfilling hobby.

The idea of a new in-service method is deeply rooted in the idea to improve the quality of those students who are aiming to become teachers through guidance and mentoring in the college and schools (Quinn, 1937). Targeting high quality students for the teaching profession is the responsibility of the school of education, The Gambia College and by extension the Ministry of Education.

Johnson and Morris (1937) believed that instead of concentrating on certain aspects in admitting students to teacher training programs, the admission board or committee should practically review the students' academic records after entering the training program as this would help the lecturers to guide and help the students to improve and become highly trained and qualified teachers. This idea is supported by Rhodes (1938) in whose view teacher trainees should observe the in-service methods throughout their entire in-service training.

To conclude the newer methods of in-service training, a prominent educationist called Stoddard, while discussing the trends of in-service training, pointed to the positives and optimism generated by the in-service training.

In his own words:

"We need to provide more opportunities for experienced teachers to study together in groups on problems of common concern under trained teachers; that too much distinction has been made between stages of pre-service and in-service education, and that one should gradually merge into the others" (Stoddard, 1939, pp. 500-507.)

The main idea of introducing new methos of teaching is to understand how teaching and learning can be used as a tool for leadership, This could be answered only if asked ourself the rhetorical question which is where does teaching and learning takes place and the answer is in school. The answer could lead to another question which is what is what is school and what is their mission?

Alava 2008 and Risku 2011, answered that a school is an organization as any other organization and operates in an evolving context, the learning of the organization is also the substance of school. They went on to say that the mission of the school is to create the future through with learning as the core substance of the school.

Teaching and learning can therefore be used as a tool for leadership through the phases of teacher professional development and through a good pedagogical principal. The main phases of teachers professional development are the induction phase where the teacher moves from teacher training to working life, institutionalization phase where the teacher decides to commit to the profession, re-evaluation phase where the teacher begins to question what he or she does, professional growth where the teacher to regard themselves as a supporter of colleagues and not just an expert teacher and the withdrawn phase where the teacher prepares to retire. (Meng and Risku, 2012 lecture).

A good principal with pedagogical orientation promotes or facilitates teachers professional growth as a tool in order to enhance learning. This is done through establishing a school culture base on collaboration and professional study, valuing and respecting teachers' personalities and by regarding teacher development process dynamic and not tied to career years, when this implanted effectively then teaching and learning could use as a tool for leadership in a school.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

My career in the field of education coupled with my experience as an unqualified teacher and teacher trainee in The Gambia primary schools has led me to critically think about any theoretical, ideological and practical challenges facing teachers and student teachers in the education field.

The experience I went through as one of the first group of teacher trainees to go through two years of training under supervision of mentors and going through distance learning materials as well as being assigned to leadership roles in the school directed my choice of this Master´s thesis. The opportunity to study a Master´s degree in Educational Leadership at a Finnish university further strengthened my desire to research this topic.

The topic of my research is the leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools. The research is qualitative and the data gathering was done by meeting the respondents and making appointments with them. The method used was interviewing methods which were conducted at two primary schools, a regional education office and Gambia college.

After a long consultation with my thesis supervisor and the unique nature of my research I was advised on the methods and the best suitable analysis method that will be suitable for my research. In the meeting with my supervisor, I decided to use an interviewing method to collect my data. The method was semi-structured because I was willing to be flexible in allowing the respondents to speak freely and widely on the issue. Informants or participants for my Master's thesis are selected in many different ways, considering the fact that they are major players in

the life of teacher trainees and the outcome of the research would be incomplete without the views of all those involved in teacher training program.

3.1   Research Question

How do the leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools affect their teacher training or how a leadership role affects the training of teacher trainees.

The aim of the research is to find out whether leadership responsibilities of teacher trainees are developing their education in teaching practice or whether the leadership role is affecting quality in teaching and learning or the effects of leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia school systems.

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3.2 Interview Questions

The interview questions below are part of my Master's thesis research on how leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools affect their training. The research will be conducted in region two and two primary schools as a case study. The respondents will be teacher trainees, senior teachers, regional education officers and staff of the Gambia College teacher training institute. Attached to these interview questions will be consent letter, and confidentiality of participants is guaranteed.

4 DATA GATHERING

I used a qualitative data gathering method to gather data from two primary schools in region two, The Gambia. Qualitative research according to Nelson et al. is interdisciplinary as well as transdisciplinary, and sometimes it could be called counter-disciplinary. Qualitative research is composed of many aspects at the same time and it is equally multi-paradigmatic in focus and its practitioners are sensitive to the value of multi-method approach. (Nelson et al., 1992, P4).

The aim of qualitative inquiry is to find the purpose, challenge and the problem. The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings; the data collection is not an end in itself. The ultimate activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis and interpretation as well as the presentation of the findings (Kvale, 1996).

The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data can reveal. The problem is, few agree on canons for qualitative data analysis, the sense of shared ground rules for drawing conclusions and verifying sturdiness as stated by Miles and Huberman (1984).I gathered the data from December 2013 to January 2014. In the summer I was able to conduct a mock interview of some selected participants mainly from Ghana and Nigeria - countries which have a similar education system to The Gambia. These mock interviews prepared for the final interview and they helped me to know my mistakes and correct them in time. Interviewing is a method of data collection that involves researchers asking respondents basically open-ended questions (Zina O-Leary 2004, 162). The interview is not as easy as many think, when it comes to conducting an interview

there are a number of options with their own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and limitations.

Interviews involve a set of assumptions and understanding about the situation which are not normally associated with a casual conversation (Denscombe 2003, 163). The type of interview used in this research is semi-structured. With semi-structured interviews, the interviewer still has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered.

However, with semi-structured interviews the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and, perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interview elaborating points of interest (Denscombe 2003, p. 167).

As the name suggests, these interviews are neither fully fixed nor free-form and are perhaps best seen as flexible (Zina O-Leary, 2004, p. 164). In this case, I started with a definite question, but pursue a more conversational style of interview that may see questions in an order more natural to the flow of conversation. However, I used audio recordings in this interview, since it allows me to preserve raw data for review at a later date. It therefore allows me to focus on the question/ answer process at hand (Zina 2004, p. 169)

The semi-structured interview places the emphasis on the informants' personal interpretations and experiences. This supports the aim of this Master's thesis which is to find out whether leadership responsibilities of teacher trainees are developing their education in teaching practice or whether the leadership role is affecting quality in teaching and learning or the effects of leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia school systems.

The semi-structured interview also takes into account that the formed meanings are created in interaction with the interviewer and the informant (Hirsjärve & Hurme 2001, p. 48). In a semi-structured interview the discussion is focused on certain subjects – certain "themes".

It is known in advance that the informants have experienced a certain event and the interview will concentrate on that event. When planning the interview, these themes demand careful consideration (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001, pp. 46-66). The

theme of this research is to determine the leadership roles of teacher trainees in Gambia primary schools.

To successfully implement this interview, the following were put into consideration: firstly I was at the interview places on time, meaning if you keep someone waiting, you might miss an appointment and you might never get a second chance.

Secondly, I set up and checked my equipment, the equipment were tested and set in advance to avoid failure. The third part is to establish rapport, which includes the introduction and expression of appreciation and introducing the research, meaning reviewing who the interviewers were for the purpose of the study, why his or her involvement is important and approximately how long the interview will last.

The final part was the explanation of ethics; these involve assurance of confidentiality and the right to decline to answer any particular questions, and to end the interview upon request (Zina O-Leary 2004, p. 167).

In some interview cases like employers of teachers, they seem to prefer the interviewer to help them make their decisions (Webster 1982; Bredeson 1983, pp. 8-15; Galbo et al. 1986). In spite of challenges to the validity of interviews, particularly unstructured ones (Reilly & Chao 1982, pp. 1-62; Webster 1982; Hunter & Hunter 1984; Taylor & O'Driscoll 1995), interviews enable employers to make judgements about the applicant's ability to fit with their view of the school's ethos and teaching, and mutual complementarity.

They do this because interviews indeed provide a rich source of information, making employees feel comfortable in their decision-making, sometimes in spite of the lack of a rigorous search for ability or talent to do the job. The verbal and non-verbal information conveyed in an interview creates an impression, favorable or otherwise.

In interviews, the facial expressions of the candidates have a significant impact on interviewers, causing them to form opinions and judgements that are not necessarily well considered, but make employers feel comfortable or uncomfortable with the applicant (Anderson & Shackleton 1990).

Further, verbal abilities of candidates strongly correlate with measures of teacher competency identified by principals and other supervisors of teachers, and this is assessable in an interview (Shields & Daniele, 1982). Interviews are also rich

sources of attributions. Silvester (1997, pp. 61-73) examined these and found that interviewers rated more highly those who took responsibility for any negatives in a consistent, stable way.

An example of this are those who acknowledged their own mistakes and systematically did something about them. When the interview is structured and focused on a specific job, its validity as a selection instrument goes up (Wiesner & Cronshaw 1988, p. 61; MacDaniel et al. 1994, p. 79).

The data were collected during November and December 2013 and January 2014. Both the researcher and the respondents participated fully in every session of the data collection. The maximum time spent on one interview was forty-five (45) minutes. After each interview, I would listen to the audio recording and I would transcribe it.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

QUESTIONNAIRE

A well designed questionnaire helps the researcher to gather an authentic and valid qualitative and quantitative data in a simple, cost efficient as well as timely manner (Anderson, 1998). The questionnaire for this research comprised of background and general questions relating to leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools.

INTERVIEWS

This study is mainly qualitative and descriptive. The research included conducting an interview with participants. The interviews were conducted at the location selected by the participants. The interview method was semi-structured which allows the researcher to be flexible in order to access the experience and in-depth information about the leadership roles of teacher trainees. This method is well described by Kvale (1996) as semi-structured life world interview with the aim of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described situation.

The interview was face to face which was conducted by the researcher himself. All the interviews were tape recorded and later transcribe for the sole purpose of analysis of the data.

4.1 Participants

Informants or participants for a Master's thesis can be selected in many different ways. When planning the sampling of participants, the research question, methods and the purpose of the study need to be taken into consideration. I used purposive sampling in this research which aims to find the participants whose qualities and experiences support the realization of the research objective (Research Method Knowledge Base, 2008).

Stones (1998, p.50), mentions four characteristics of selecting participants who are suitable for participating in this kind of research. The four features are as follows:

1. The experience of the case study to be researched.
2. Verbal fluency together with an ability to communicate feelings, thoughts and perceptions regarding the case.
3. The same home language as the researcher.
4. The willingness to be open to the researcher.

The participants in this research were fourteen (14) people from four (4) institutes, namely Gambia College, Regional Education office, Farato-Busumbala Lower Basic and Brufut Upper Basic, in region two, The Gambia. The participants are teacher trainees, lecturers at the teacher training college, senior education officers, head teachers and mentors to teach.

I interviewed ten (10) males and four (4) females from the four (4) institutions. I did not choose them personally, they were chosen by the institution they all individually represent based on the knowledge and experience they have. All the participants were initially contacted via telephone by the researchers and the interviews were scheduled according to the preference of the participants.

The permission for the interview for its recording and for the data usage was applied for every participant. All the participants were given the consent letter before starting the interview. The consent letter was written in the English language, the language which was used to conduct the interview. The people we interviewed were all between 20 and60 years old.

As a result, purposive sampling was used, which applies to those situations where the researchers already know something about the specific people or events and deliberately select particular ones because they are seen as instances that they are likely to produce the most valuable data.

In that case, they are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people and events chosen and their relevance to the research topic (Denscombe 2003, p. 14). According to the Webster dictionary (1985), a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole.

When dealing with people, it can be defined as a set of respondents or people selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. Social researchers are frequently faced with the fact that they cannot collect data from everyone who is in the category of being researched. As a result, they rely on obtaining evidence from a portion of the whole in the expectation and hope that what is found in that portion applies equally to the rest of the population (Denscombe 2003, pp. 11-12).

4.2 Informed Consent Form

All the participants in this research were fully informed about the purpose and nature of this study and were fully informed of their right to terminate their participation at any stage they wished. All the participants completed a consent form see (Appendix 3). Before I would start the interview with the participants I would rehearse what is referred to as a briefing by Kvale (1996) and I would once again remind all of them about the purpose of the research and why they are involved and would tell them to feel free to ask any question at any time during the interview.

4.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

As the name suggests, anonymity simply means that the identity of those participating in this research is fully protected. All the participants were also given assurances that their confidentiality would be guaranteed and they would have access to the results of the research upon completion. Confidentiality in short means avoiding the attribution of comments to be identified to participants (Lewis, 2003, p.67).

5. DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis in qualitative research means the splitting of something into corresponding parts and elements. The mode of analysis depends on what is being analyzed - the subject matter - and why one is analyzing, the purpose or motivation behind the analysis (Kvale 1996, p. 184).

Qualitative data analysis is considered both intuitive and inductive processes. Most qualitative researchers analyse and code their own data, and it is a very dynamic and creative process throughout the analysis. Researchers, however, attempt to get a deep understanding of what they have studied as well as to continue to refine their interpretations.

The use of tape recorder allows for a more reflective response to what becomes under discussion in the interview and the transcription of the tapes, the first stage of the data analysis process. The transcription of the data allows the researcher to revisit the data as many times as necessary. Sometimes pauses and hesitations of the interviewee which may not be visible during the interview can be noticed when listening to the tape while transcribing it.

Therefore, data analysis is a continuous process in which the collection of data and analysis of it are interlinked (Taylor &Bogdan, 1998). This point is reinforced by Kvale (1996, p. 205) as a "recognition of the pervasiveness of interpretation of the whole inquiry may counteract a common overemphasis on methods of data analysis as the best way to find the meaning of interview".

According to Wainwright (1997), data analysis in social sciences basically refers to the process of interpretation of text data in order to find the meaning and theoretical ground of research. Regardless of its shortcomings and demerits,

qualitative research is becoming more and more dynamic and it has also gained recognition in recent years.

The analysis method used in my research is the content analysis, which is divided into various approaches, and among them both the content analysis and the thematic analysis shared some features, and according to (Attride-Stirling (2001, p. 38) what was coined as thematic analysis is not a different method.

The process of formation of categories in content analysis shares the same values and principles with the formation of thematic networks in thematic analysis. In this analysis categories were used to arrive at the themes of the findings as explained by Ring et al. (2010). Qualitative research simply refers to research methods that seek to explore people´s experiences and understanding through analyzing textual data from speech to observation.

The most hectic part of analyzing a collected data is what Goodson, et al. (2010. P. 8) refers to as the researcher's needs to get the whole picture of the scenario which is to have the ability to configure the plot of the narrative and be able to recognize its constituents.

This research was analyzed and the data derived from interviews conducted with teacher trainees, head teachers, lecturers and senior education officers. These interviews were studied, so that conclusion could be made in relation to the theory. Ideally the content analysis methodology examines words or phrases within a wide range of texts.

The data were analyzed by using content analysis, since content analysis comprises techniques for reducing texts. Content analysis, however, is a methodical, applicable approach for binding texts of many words into smaller content categories based on accurate use of coding (Delyser & Dydia 2008, pp. 233-244).

Therefore, it can be a useful technique for allowing me to discover and describe the focus of individuals, groups, institutions, etc. It also allows references to be made which can then be corroborated using other data collection methods.

Content analysis is a scientific method which systematically and objectively aims to create conclusions from the collected data. Since the data for this study were gathered through interviews, the transcription differs from the conventional written text. This means that the written version of the interview includes many characteristics which are typical for spoken language, such as repetition.

These distractions need to be somewhat ignored and the essential statements found amongst the data. The emphasis should be placed on what has been said and what it really reveals about the topic. The informants' original expressions are important as they can be used as a basis for decoding the data, but also as quotations to increase the reliability of the findings. With the inductive content analysis, the researcher first devises that he or she summarizes the findings and makes a conclusion responding to the research questions (Kylmä & Juvakka 2007, 20-117).

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│ Acquaintance with the data  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Formation of main and sub  │
│         categories          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  Combining quotations and   │
│         categories          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
               ↓
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Drawing the          │
│  conclusions/findings and   │
│          results            │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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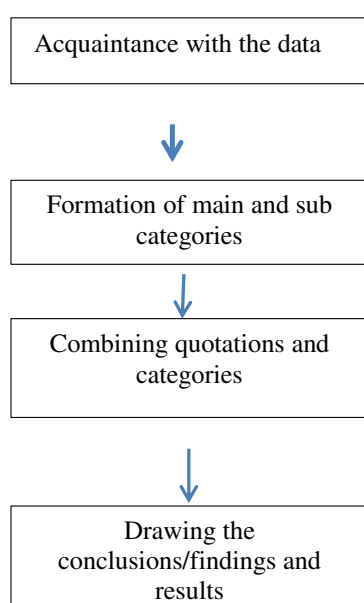
In this Master's thesis the selected categories both appeared from the topics of the semi-structured interview and formed the data itself. For example the topics surrounding the roles of teacher trainees and how they affect their teacher training were emphasized in the interview.

The questions concern how effectively teacher trainees are in leadership roles and what kind of support is provided for teacher trainees. The most essential expressions which occurred repeatedly in the transcripts were coded with underlining and later the similarities were numbered according to the topic.

Next, the original expressions were simplified, and later the most descriptive quotes were selected to be presented as examples of the data. Simplified

expressions were gathered together and the group formed the sub-category of the finding.

The table above is an example of how, in this research, the smaller pieces of data, such as the original expressions are combined to create sub-categories. First, quotes are made easier and shorter so that the main idea becomes visible and the other data more manageable.

Then a suitable sub-category is created. In this example, the category deals with leadership roles and together with other two related sub-categories forms the main category which is the leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools.

Data analysis always follows the qualitative method of research. The questionnaire and the transcribe transcripts of the interviews were all individually analyzed in order to get a clear mental picture of the leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools.

This research adopted the methods by Smith (1995) and Stones (1988) which relies on the fact that one should read an entire script in order to get an entire knowledge and be able to search for the themes, taking note of the connections that formed the themes and the ability to form the main themes from the sub themes.

The analysis of a data as well known is a continuous process in which data collection and analysis are married. According to (Taylor & Bogdan, 1988) the recognition of the interpretation for the entire length of the interview inquiry needs a common emphasis on methods of analysis as one of the steps in finding true meaning to the interviews.

However, I adopted the methods which were outlined by Smith (1995) to analyze the data. The methods outlined which I used are as follows:

I.   First is to read a single text in detail so that I could get a sense of it.

II. Second was that each line of text was then given a number and the rule was to read and read with an open mind,

III. The third was that anything I thought was important in the text was noted or underlined. These underlined texts were studied carefully and I tried to interpret what they mean.

IV.   Fourth was that I tried to document the themes from words that have significant meaning to the text remembering what Kvale, (1996) referred to as the need for researchers to shift from describing to searching for common themes.

V.   Fifth is that all the themes that emerged were listed in a separate notebook and I made connections. This is a method of analysis which involves a close relationship between the researcher and the text.

VI.   Finally, I adopted the main themes from the listed themes which formed, the results of the findings of this research.

5.1 Qualitative vs quantitative research methods

I choose qualitative research as a method for this research instead of quantitative for obvious reasons, as the qualitative approach would suit perfectly the case of leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary.

The experience of teacher trainees is paramount to the necessity to take a positive approach requiring quantification, but it was assumed that qualitative research would offer a better option of leadership roles of teacher trainees. This is what Kruger, (1979) refers to as the subjective nature of feelings of the interviewee that makes the data very important.

In this research, the qualitative method was preferred over quantitative purposely to concentrate on the leadership roles of teacher trainees. This is done by considering what Smith (1995) refers to as concern for persons rather than statistics or variables. This research was conducted with a view which is rich in descriptions of different individuals directly involved with teacher trainees.

According to Denzin & Lincoln (1994), qualitative research emphasizs the measurement and analysis of casual relationships between variables, not processes, and this research requires complete objectivity and detachment. The participants which include teacher trainees, mentors, education officers and college lecturers are considered as objects under study.

It should be noted that qualitative research seeks answers to questions that emphasize how experience is created and give meaning. It is based on this that this research is beyond the scope of quantitative research as the research aims to

explore and describe the leadership roles of teacher trainees as accurately as possible.

5.2 A case study approach

The reason of this research is to find out whether the leadership responsibilities which are assigned to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools is affecting their training and studies as students of the teacher training college.

This research is thus taking a case study approach whereby an in-depth study of a limited number of cases is conducted. Bassey (1999, p.58) describes an educational case study as an "empirical enquiry" which is usually conducted as an educational activity, as in this research, the teacher trainees.

An educational case study strives to investigate important traits of the case in order to create plausible explanations of what is found so that the reliability and trustworthiness could be tested to create a worthy argument or story in the research related to any relevant research theory or literature and have the ability to convince the readers as noted by Bassey (1999).

Additionally, the qualitative case study mainly seeks to find out a detailed description of a phenomenon in order to authenticate social realities through data collection from various means like interviews, observations, documents and audio visual materials (Creswell, 2007). In this research a small number of cases are studied which are two primary schools within region two.

One of the reasons the researcher opted for a case study could be traced back to his background as a teacher trainee with leadership responsibilities and later on as a mentor to teacher trainees. The researcher heard many theories and held conversations with senior teachers, education officers and teacher trainees on the subject of giving leadership duties to teacher trainees and opted to conduct a research on the topic.

In a nutshell, I chose a case study simply because of the advantages it has. The advantages are many, but I will mention a few of them. First, it is an easy means of gathering information, and it also allows for the study of human behavior in a naturalistic setting. A case study approach is also a valuable means of contributing

to human behavior as well as enables people being studied to be examined in detail (Mwamwenda, 1996).

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The College was established in the early 1950's as a teacher training college. It was called Yundum College until 1977 when students demonstrated and burned most of the structures. The College was relocated to Brikama and opened in 1983. The Gambia College has four constituent schools, namely:

- The School of Education: This is based in Brikama and trains teachers for nursery and primary and secondary school sectors offering certificates in Early Childhood Education, Primary Teacher's Certificate, Higher Teacher's Certificate (Secondary) and Teacher's Certificate (Primary).
- School of Nursing and Midwifery: This is a school based in Banjul and trains state enrolled nurses and midwives offering State Registered Nurse Certificate and Midwifery Certificate.
- School of Agriculture: This school is based in Brikama and trains agricultural extension workers, offering Certificate in Animal Health and Production, General Certificate in Agriculture and Higher Diploma in Agriculture.
- School of Public Health: This school is based in Brikama and trains public health officers offering Diploma in Public Health.

Each of the Schools is directed by a Head who is responsible to the principal of the College. At the moment, the school has no principal and is currently overseen by the vice chancellor of the University of The Gambia. The entry requirements for all the four constituent schools is completion of the West African Senior

Secondary School Certificate (an 'O' Level equivalent). The number of credits and passes usually corresponds to the level of the certificate for which admission is sought. For instance, to be eligible for admission to the Higher Teacher's Certificate (Secondary), the prospective candidate needs to have a minimum of four credits including English Language. (Source: Demba Ceesay, Former registrar of Gambia College, through email).

The main focus of this research is the leadership role of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools. The research first established who is a teacher trainee in the context of the educational system in The Gambia.

The term teacher trainee is not new in the education system around the world. The Gambia is no exception and there is continuing debate as to which correct term to use in reference to trainee teachers. Some argued that trainee teachers could be referred to as those undergoing teacher education.

According to Cecil H. Allen (1940), teacher education is a term which refers to policies as well as procedures that are specially designed to prepare for prospective teachers with knowledge, skills, wisdom, attitudes and behaviors the trainees will need in order to perform their roles in the classroom, in the schools as well as in the community.

This description of a teacher trainee is in line with the findings of this research as to who is a teacher in the context of the education system of The Gambia. The research first finds who is a teacher trainee before going further to discuss their leadership roles and whether it affects the quality of education. This research came up with two definitions as to who is a teacher trainee.

The first is that a teacher trainee, based on the findings of this research, is an aspirant interested in the profession of teaching as a career. He/she is a person on the threshold of entering the teaching profession with the hope of becoming a professionally trained and experienced teacher. A teacher trainee is also referred to as an enrolled college student studying in the field of education to become a teacher.

The second definition of a teacher trainee is someone who is pursuing a teacher´s course for the sole purpose of teaching in schools. He/she is attached to a class in a particular school and is supported by an experienced, qualified teacher who becomes his or her mentor.

The training of teachers in many countries is assigned to institutes of higher education like universities in many Western counties and the school of education, Gambia College in The Gambia. The training is sometimes carried out in two models in line with the education policies of the country.

The first model is usually known as the consecutive model. In this model a teacher first gets a qualification to gain admission to teacher training which is usually an undergraduate degree in most Western countries, but in The Gambia the basic qualification is completion of senior secondary certificate with a minimum of four credits including Mathematics and English Language. With this qualification the potential student can get admission to study and become a qualified teacher.

The second model is usually known to be the alternative concurrent model. In this model a would-be teacher or anybody aspiring to have teaching as a career is encouraged to study one or more subjects and the ways of teaching in that subject which in The Gambia are for students of Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC) or the Primary Teacher´s Certificate (PTC). Students do not specialize in any particular subject and they are trained to teach all the subjects taught in the primary schools.

The Gambia College is the main supplier of trained teachers and the only institution in the country that trains teachers. They conduct teacher training on Early Childhood Education (ECD), the Primary Teacher´s Certificate (PTC) and the Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC).

Before the year 2000 both PTC and HTC were conducted in a two-year period, and every teacher of both categories went out on school experience known as teacher practice, and these teachers in practice are referred to as teacher trainees. The HTC students then concentrate on project writings in the second term and the third term of their final year, while also doing their teaching practice and their lecturers tend to supervise them in collaboration with some senior teachers attached to them (Education Policy 1988-2003).

The PTC students normally spend one term which is three months of their final year on teaching practice. The schools they are posted to are usually selected schools within the capital area so that the lecturers would have the opportunity to supervise them. The schools that the mentors attach to them are usually senior qualified teachers with several years of teaching experience. This will help the

teacher trainee to apply the theory learnt at the college in practice (Education Policy 2004-2015).

After the year 2000, the whole system of training teachers changed completely in order for the college to train more teachers to meet the demand of the increasing number of schools and students and provide quality teachers. Both the PTC and HTC became three year programs, with the HTC being two years college based and the final year of teaching practice and project work. The PTC then became one year college based and two years of teaching practice with distance education (Education Policy 2004-2015).

The teacher trainees are not only posted to selected schools within the capital region, but they are posted throughout the length and breadth of the country in order to meet the demand of teacher shortage. The college lecturers are supposed to supervise them every term and observe how they are doing with the teaching practice and each trainee is supposed to be attached to a mentor who will guide them and help them with their distance education materials.

Presently, the college has introduced the in-service training of teachers and has a new method of recruiting teacher trainees. The recruitment is done in two categories and the first category is the unqualified teachers' category. This category of teachers is recruited from the regional education level and posted to upper basic schools (grade 7-9). These groups of teachers are all posted to upper basic schools.

The second category of recruitment is done at the college level, which is recruitment of primary school teachers (teacher trainees). This recruitment is done through open applications, then examination and later interviews. After all these stages, the selection of prospective students is done and they are posted to schools as teacher trainees. It is at this stage the regional education office is involved, as the prospective students are posted by the regional office.

When teachers are recruited, they are posted to different schools in The Gambia both in the lower basic and upper basic schools. There are strict criteria which the Ministry of Education and The Gambia College follow when it comes to posting of teachers or teacher trainees.

The criteria are the following:

- Completion of senior secondary education (grade 12)

- A minimum of four credits
- Posting to be made according to request from head teachers regarding subject areas needed
- Recommendation from principals provided the candidate meet the requirement

The school principals write and request for teachers to be posted to their schools if there is shortage of subject teachers. Aspiring candidates have also left open applications at the regional education office with their contact details. Sometimes the school principals will scout for potential candidates within their locality. Some school principals will personally come to the office to request for teachers.

The posting of teacher trainees is done based on an equal distribution among the schools and it is also based on categories of schools. After the posting is done redeployment is allowed when teacher trainees want to swap places, provided they communicate their desire to the regional education office. In the event of over staffing the recruitment office could redeploy some teachers to other schools.

The roles teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools vary from one region to another, from one school to another. There are general roles expected from all trainee teachers regardless of region or school. These general roles will be discussed later. The school head teacher in addition to general roles could assign teacher trainees with other roles in the school.

Teacher trainees manifest assorted roles in their teacher training program. At the college trainees are taught and trained in the roles of teacher professionalism in terms of codes of conduct which will prepare them to be members of the teaching community.

In responding to the question pertaining to the roles of teacher trainees, some the respondents gave a clear gist of the roles performed by them and one of them coined it as: "Teacher trainees display roles of classroom management as well as classroom control"

In explaining the above quotation, the role of teacher trainees in a school is not only limited to teaching pupils, but they also perform the role of psychologists by observing the pupils with learning difficulties and also interacting with children, thus gaining more learning experience. Most schools in The Gambia do not have

trained psychologists, so the role is performed by trained teachers who in turn sometimes delegate the same responsibility to teacher trainees.

Another respondent authenticated the above quotation concerning the role of teacher trainees by speaking about similar roles for them which I quote below:

-"TT´s are very significant in our system as they do perform roles like classroom management or control, responsibility by acting as quasi-teacher authorized upon by their colleagues in the same stream/class".

In short, it means these responsibilities are authorized by experienced teachers, and trainees are observed while they perform these duties and are given feedback by their mentors. In the primary schools the mentors are given the task to supervise trainees for their entire period of the training which is three years. Trainees are deployed to schools solely to gain experience in schools as social and educational institutions.

In describing the roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary, another respondent describes it as:

"The role of teacher trainees is to create a conductive teaching and learning atmosphere for all the pupils under him/her and to lead extra curricula activities in the school. They arrange a better sitting arrangement for the pupils".

The general roles of teacher trainees in the schools regardless of region or school in The Gambia primary are as follows:

- To teach the pupils
- To prepare teaching and learning materials, for example the lesson plan and scheme of work
- To take record of pupils' punctuality and regularity through the class register
- To conduct class assessment and prepare term results
- To assist the school administration in the day to day management of the school
- To create an enabling environment for the learners, which is geared towards the development of the school.

These roles contribute to the development of the school. The teaching roles of trainees help them to develop the academic competence of learners which are the pupils. By engaging them in extracurricular activities, the trainees help them tremendously in upgrading the performance standard of the school.

It is important to note that teacher trainees perform these roles to develop the school in the area of school leadership and management as it exposes the leadership styles as well as approaches.

The leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary have been categorized and two themes emerged from the findings, which are the roles assigned to them as they manifest assorted themes in their training programs. The two themes are classroom management and extracurricular activities.

6.1 Classroom Management

It is a common knowledge that The Gambia has hit a success in introducing reforms to provide education for all. Despite these success and though more Gambian children are attending school but most of them are not learning in schools, a situation that might be associated with lack of enough qualified teachers to manage the classrooms.

However, according to The Gambia country status report of 2010, "Gambian learning outcomes are strikingly unsatisfactory, even in terms of the most basic reading and numeracy skills, and are well below sub regional averages" (MoBSE andWorld Bank, p.26).

It based on this lack of learning in the classrooms that created the need for monitoring and supporting student learning and giving classroom management to teachers as well teacher's trainees. The logic was that classroom management will give basic information monitor learning and this valuable information can be used to upgrade the roles teachers in the schools. This information could be utilized to update teaching, curriculum and address other issues in the school system.

One should view the classroom management of teacher trainees in The Gambia within the context of the education system of The Gambia. The schools have a track record of poor coverage which for many years they were serving the minority. This is one of the reasons The Gambia education system embarked on

the expansion of the school system in the late1990´s and also they shifted educational priorities from access to quality and learning.

The role of teacher trainees on classroom management and classroom management in general has dramatically shifted from in the new education policy of The Gambia. The new policy contexts calls for using classroom management to support stakeholders participation in the overall school management.

The revised education policy of 2004-2015 (MoBSE, 2013, P.31) categorically states that:

"In order for the education sector to perform its rightful role in the provision equality education, the need for curricula that are relevant, elaborate, realistic and deliverable cannot be overemphasized. The delivery of such curricula will require systems that will be able to verify impact through appropriate assessment and examination tools across all levels within basic and secondary education. Assessments within basic and secondary education. Assessments will include formal examinations, continuous assessments based on the curricular. Benchmarks will be established to determine and monitor the standard of education across the basic and secondary levels in pursuit of excellence. Classroom management/assessment practice will be improved and continuous assessment strengthened to monitor student performance and learning achievement" (MoBSE, 2013,p.31).

The ministry of basic and secondary education of The Gambia continued to put in place instruments to make classroom management more effective for teachers and teacher trainees. These instruments includes school score cards which is more of a monitoring tool which allows immediate feedback on the quality and adequacy of services provided by individual schools (MoBSE, 2013).

The other instrument is the pupil report card which is provided at the end of each school term. The report card shows the pupils performance on each subject and it notes the number of pupils in the class, their attendance and punctuality, remarks from the class teacher. This instrument makes classroom management which is a leadership role to trainee teachers more easier and manageable (MoBSE, 2013).

Another instrument which is very important for classroom management and control is the school management manual which focuses on the use of management and assessment information which is designed for remediation strategies. It offers a very broad information on how to collect and analyze

classroom management information as well as improving innovative teaching, learning as well as student performance (MoBSE, 2013).

To quote directly from the respondents in describing the roles of teacher trainees which led to the above two themes, the respondents described their roles as follows:

"Teacher trainees also carry roles of classroom management/control and extracurricular activities and they their responsibility is also to act as quasi-teacher authorities upon their colleagues in the same stream or class"(Respondent).

One of the themes in the leadership roles of teacher trainees is the classroom management, as is evident from the above quotation. Classroom management is often referred to by educators as classroom discipline and it has been for decades a very important issue for teachers. It has been cited by Rose & Gallop (2006) as a very important component in the educational system.

There is no one concrete or acceptable definition for the term classroom management as many thinkers in the education field have different opinions with regards to the term. The closest definition of the term which is accepted as the framework to define the term is given by Evertson and Weinstein (2006).

According to them Evertson and Weinstein classroom management has two main reasons which are that

"[…] it does not only attempt to decree and maintain an methodical surrounding so that pupils can be involved in academic learning. The second reason is that it also has the objective of promoting the pupils social and moral growth."

Classroom management is very important in the training of teacher trainees because, as is cleverly articulated by Moskowitz and Hayman as cited in Kratochwill, 2009) (, if a teacher loses comand of the classroom, it will become very hectic and hard for them to recover command, and the pupils are thus making learning and the purpose of education unattainable.

Based on the research of Berliner (1988) and Brophy & Good (1986) it is evident that teachers have to take action in order to rectify some of the misbehavior as a result of poor classroom management skills. All the findings of this research supported the logic behind the idea of giving leadership roles like classroom management to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary as it develops them to become well trained teachers by the end of their training.

However, classroom management or control is very important in the school system of The Gambia as most classrooms are over populated and also the ability to control the class is connected with motivation, discipline as well as respect for both the teacher and the pupils.

As part of classroom control in The Gambia primary school, many teachers have formed rules and regulations for the class which is in line with the general school rules. This is done with the sole purpose of trying to manage the class. According to Gootman (2008), such rules will give pupils a sense of direction to make sure that the expectations of the teacher, the school and to some degree the parents become not only a dream but also a reality.

The teacher trainees, their mentors, head teachers, college lecturers and regional education personnel that took part in this research all unanimously agreed that the leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees are not an extra burden, but part of their practical training program that prepares the aspiring teachers to the roles leadership they will handle once their training is completed and they join the teaching fraternity.

These leadership roles are very important components to the teacher trainees in The Gambia and based on the findings, it has emerged that classroom management or control is one of the leadership roles assigned to trainees and it enables them to orient themselves to key issues that most teachers put into consideration so that they could develop an environment that is friendly to teaching and learning in schools.

It is pointed out by respondents that previously teachers in The Gambia were not taught how to manage classrooms or other school practicalities. Instead, the entire teacher training was entirely focused on the academics and a few teaching methods which excluded giving teacher trainees leadership duties.

The teacher trainees undergoing the current in-service system of training wholeheartedly appreciate their training method as very effective, and they believe that introducing them to leadership roles in class and school prepares them to fully take on responsibilities in the schools they will be posted to upon completing their training.

Looking at their responsibility in classroom management, the teacher trainees consider it as a way of gaining experience in the discipline and management of

behavior of their pupils which also give them experience in classroom management and leadership.

The teacher trainees are fully aware that successful teaching practice requires more than just the ability to control the behavior of pupils in their class. According to Evertson and Harris (1999), the term classroom control and management has changed from describing discipline and behavior control to a complete, holistic approach towards supportive learning environments and community building.

Although the teacher trainees are tasked with leadership roles in the classroom, it observed that the trainees are also learning classroom management practices. This is made possible because the first place to learn classroom control and management is in the very classroom they are working in. Much research by Fajef, Bello, Leftwich, Mesler & Shaver (2005) shows that teacher trainees have usually built a concept of classroom management on their own experiences in the class.

Teacher trainees as well as in-service teachers continue to learn more on classroom management on a daily basis as they are continually attending seminars on professional development and they take the lead on learning in their own way. The classroom management responsibility of teacher trainees are what Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder (2002) referred to as communities of practice where teachers, students and parents share knowledge with one another.

To summarize, classroom management is a process as described by Kauchak & Eggen (2008). Their division of classroom management into four overlapping categories is in line with what teacher trainees and senior teachers in The Gambia primary considered an advantage in allowing those undergoing teacher training to learn from everyday experience during their entire in-service training which is priceless.

The first among the categories is the allocation of time and resources as an important component of classroom management. In this, trainees are trained on how to divide time between teaching, learning, classroom routines like calling registers, lesson plan and scheme of work preparation and what subjects to teach during the week, month or the entire term.

The second category is what is considered the time for instruction, and this follows completing what is considered classroom procedures. This in short means

the time when both teaching and learning occurs simultaneously, as sometimes calling the class register may take a few minutes before the actual instruction begins.

The third category is what is also known as the time for engagement and this means the time when they actively engage them in the learning process. A good example of this is question and answer sessions in the class or marking the exercise given to pupils or making corrections together.

The last one is what is referred to as time for academic learning process ,and it is at this stage where the teacher trainees are expected to actively involve pupils in ensuring that they have a successful learning process.

From the above four categories of classroom control, it is evident that effective classroom management is key to academic learning. Thus teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools took it not as a burden, but as a key component in their training as is clearly articulated by Dr. Tracey Garrett who considered classroom management something that consist of key tasks as well as a responsibility.

6.2 Extracurricular Activities

The second theme which emerged from this research as leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees is the role of extracurricular activities. The teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools are assigned to lead extracurricular activities like school farm and garden, sports club, drama society, debating society, scouts and Red Cross societies etc.

The history and development of extracurricular activities was somehow slow at the beginning as many termed it as something that would not last long in school curriculum. According to Millard (1930) the philosophies of extracurricular activities were to "grow out of curricular activities and return curricular activities to enrich them." (Millard, 1930, p. 12).

As it turns out, people, including teachers and stakeholders in the education field, began to get the essence of extracurricular activities as it took some time to digest the idea. It is believed that before 1990, most educators were somewhat doubtful and many of them were of the view that schools should only focus on teaching academic subjects and exclude non-academic activities.

However, experts on extracurricular activities like Marsh & Kleitman (2002) have said that extracurricular activities are meant to supplement the academic subjects in the schools. This supplementary part was not until recently acknowledged, and now educators and researchers are all in unison that extracurricular activities do have positive effects in school curriculum.

Delegating or allowing trainee teachers in The Gambia primary to lead extracurricular activities in schools is based on expanding their training on all practical aspects of the school activities so that it will enhance and prepare them to be involved in all aspects of the school activities. This also prepares them to take on leadership roles and expose them to the day to day activities of the school.

There are numerous merits the teacher trainees gain in leading extracurricular activities as this gives them the opportunity to build a strong academic achievement even though extracurricular activities may not necessarily relate to academic subjects, as stated by many researchers who have studied the relationship of extracurricular activities and academic performance.

It is evident that teacher trainees are very active and fully engaged, as cited by Guest & Schneider (2003), that every school and community should place importance on some activities. In placing importance on activities which are outside the normal academic subjects could lead to a relationship between that activity and academic performance. This is one of the reasons teacher trainees take the extracurricular activities as an important component in their training program.

The Gambia like any other country is aiming to emulate countries that are successful with their education system, such as Finland which for close to a decade has been considered to have one of the best education systems in the world. One of the reasons, among others, that makes Finnish education a model in the world is that of extracurricular choice and that of intrinsic motivation. This delegation of extracurricular activities to teacher trainees is aimed at preparing the teachers and gives the nation a very good education system.

Having a good education system does not depend on the size, population or wealth of a nation, but on having well educated educators and placing trust on teachers. Finland is a small country just like The Gambia but is performing consistently well in education compared to larger countries like the U.S.A or the U.K. This is exactly what a small country like The Gambia is aiming to emulate

by training teachers and trusting them with leadership roles in key areas like classroom management and extracurricular activities.

It is worthy to note the importance placed on extracurricular activities and in engaging teacher trainees fully into it is based on the widely held opinion that learning does not only happen in classrooms, but learning could actively happen outside the classroom, thus the significance of introducing extracurricular activities in the training package of teacher trainees of The Gambia primary schools.

When looking at one of the reasons a country like Finland is performing well in their education despite the fact that they have a short school day, it is noticeable that despite the short school day, it is well balanced with things like school approved and sponsored extracurricular activities which are an important part of the learning process. This is what giving leadership roles to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary is aiming to achieve.

Furthermore, teaching practice is very important in the vocational training of teacher trainees in The Gambia and other countries as well. It is this integration into the real world school that prepares the teacher trainees to make the transition from trainees to professional teachers.

As stated earlier, the findings of this study revealed that the leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees are seen as positive even though it is extra added responsibility for their heavy work load in the school and the college. The leadership roles play a very important part in their development as teachers as they provide them with the context to marry theory with practice.

The assigned leadership roles help teacher trainees in The Gambia primary, and the role played by mentors are paramount in providing good quality education and making sure that all schools in The Gambia are staffed with highly educated, trained and qualified teachers. This is in line with the commitment of The Gambia government and the Ministry of Education in achieving the millennium development goals.

In addition, teaching practice is an important step in the professional development of teachers. It is a stage which provides the trainees with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and theories learned in the school of education, The Gambia College in real classrooms. The leadership roles also have been challenging, rewarding as well as a significant stage of the training of teacher trainees.

It is also very important to discuss that it is generally accepted that teacher trainees are key components for teacher preparation as stated by Geothals & Howard (2000). As it is an important component it is strongly argued by Guyton & McIntyre (1990) that teaching practice should be conducted in such a way that teacher trainees could be availed of the opportunity to carry on learning new knowledge, skills and to develop professionally.

As the role of mentors in the life of teacher trainees was reviewed, it should be noted that if mentors effectively executed their job and supervised the teacher trainees properly, it could contribute to the quality of teacher trainees. Teaching practice is a crucial stage in the training of would be teachers as it is among the final stages of becoming a qualified teacher.

From the above discussion, one can sense that teaching practice is an important part of teacher trainees training and it is in this light that The Gambia college placed a high value on teaching practice and encouraged the trainees to assume leadership roles in schools they are posted.

The Gambia College placed high importance in the good quality in teacher training and is striving hard to attain that goal as attainment of high teacher quality is an objective of any teacher training institute. There is presently a quality agenda campaign within teacher training institutions all around the world.

According to Biggs (2001), the quality campaign among teacher training institutions is centered on the quality agenda which is entirely based on public accountability. An example of this is like being transparent to a funding body like the government which might have a desire to improve outcomes, ability to sustain programs and activities as well as the ability to staff schools with high quality and qualified teachers.

Biggs (2001), however, outlined the purpose of teaching practice. According to him, teaching practice is far above the basic skills of just knowing how to teach in a classroom; the purpose is to develop several competencies of the teacher trainee which includes competencies in interpersonal skills and psychological skills, just to mention a few.

In these competencies, the teacher trainees prepare for teaching practice through lectures, distance learning and observation of the seasoned and experienced qualified teachers' teaching. It is the duty of The Gambia College to post all teacher trainees as well as attach them to qualified teachers. It is also their duty

that they liaise with head teachers so that a fruitful supervision and assessment of teacher trainees could be achieved.

In a nutshell, teaching involves many skills which cannot be learnt at one go or in one place. It is in this view that teacher trainees are assigned leadership roles so that they could improve their skills in drawing the pupils´ attention, skills of asking and answering questions, skills in managing time and the skills in drawing conclusions.

In order to be able to train a qualified and competent teacher, the teacher trainees should be introduced progressively to the teaching field through experienced and qualified teachers. It is through this that the teaching practice is a very good instrument and taking leadership roles in schools is a step in right the direction in the training of teachers in The Gambia primary.

Before concluding this discussion, I would like to take look at the relevance of teaching practice to teacher trainees. Benton-Kupper (2001) conducted a research on teaching practices in Millikin University on teacher trainees and teaching practice. In his research, he found that most of the teacher trainees' perceptions on teaching practice were positive as most of them claimed that it provides them with an excellent opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in their area of teaching.

Also, his findings shows that the relevance of teaching practice to teacher trainees among other things is that trainees learn the abilities, they also increase their confidence and teaching skills, they also receive much feedback on their lessons and most importantly they appreciate seeing themselves in real teaching life.

This study mainly hopes to make a contribution towards the roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia primary schools. It is also with this hope and understanding that this research is just a step towards the roles of teacher trainees, and hopefully further research on this topic will be commissioned and encouraged by all stakeholders in the education field.

7. REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

7.1 **Trustworthiness**

According to Gibbs (2006, 239-249), the issue of trustworthiness cannot be avoided without the theory of knowledge approach of the research. All sorts of data that I used for the thesis will be from responsible sources and valid. Social researchers should be ethical in the collection of their data (Denscombe 2003, p. 134). In conducting this research, the welfare of the participants was taken into great consideration.

 However, due to the fact that the participants are human beings, it becomes a responsibility of the researchers to protect the participants from any harm or effects from the questions that will be asked and the environment the interview will take place in Jackson (2006, p. 34).

The most important thing to ensure trustworthiness is confidentiality. Observing the principles of confidentiality means keeping information giving by or about an individual in the course of a professional relationship and secret from others. This is seen as central to the maintenance of trust between professionals and service users.

Furthermore, the participants have been given an inform consent form before the interviews to enable them with sufficient information for making an informed choice. Information had been offered in an accessible form that avoided the use of technical terms and other language difficulties.

As the researcher collected data from people with different cultural background, the researcher has maintained, as Hostetler (1997, p. 71) suggests, a compromise which can be a way of preserving relationships with people, as it can show trust

and loyalty towards democratic dialogue as means to settle disagreements. In this situation the researcher adhered to a great degree of compromise as to where and when the data would be collected.

7.2 Validity

Validity is another word for truth. In this research I made sure that all the data I gathered were factual to avoid doubt. Sometimes one doubts the validity of an explanation because the researcher has made no clear attempt to deal with the contrary case (Silverman 2000, p. 175).

Validity is among the most significant things in educational research as it is one of the objectives of valid knowledge (Silverman, 1993, p. 154), and it is also important to have the property of being true (Phillips, 1987, p. 10).

The theory of validity is concentrated on the techniques by which the authenticity can be gauged as it is clear that "less attention is given to conceptual issues involved" (Hammersley, 1987, p. 73).

The definition of validity is closely related to the theoretical and philosophical presuppositions which relate to the research process. According to Norris (1997), validity refers to "the purpose we have for believing truth claims" (p. 72) and this is in line with what Dewey called "warranted assertability".

The validity of any research measures how well the research answers to the research questions. This research is no exception. In qualitative research, validity can be divided into two different aspects, namely exterior and interior validity. The exterior validity looks at the relationship between the research questions, the findings and conclusions. This in a nutshell means the transferability of the findings, i.e. how well the research has succeeded in transferring the data into conclusions.

In practice this cannot be evaluated only by the researcher, since it mainly depends on the reader's assessment. The direct quotation from my respondents will prove the validity of this research in no small measure. These quotations are authentic and they represent the views of teacher trainees, senior education officers, head teachers, mentors and lecturers of Gambia college, all of them in region two, The Gambia, who I interviewed.

The interior validity refers to the suitability of the used method, concepts and theory. It creates the basis of credibility on the research that can and should be evaluated critically by the researcher (Hämeen-Anttila & Katajavuori 2007, 287; Parilla 2002).

The background of the researcher contributed to the validity of this research because the respondents feel more comfortable to speak with me. They had no sense of fear and they spoke and asked for more clarification if the question was not understood by them. One of the respondents even told me that the outcome of this research will help education officers of the country to help the training of teacher trainees.

After transcribing the interview, I sent the transcribed material to all the respondents for them to double check whether the views represent them and all consented that it was their words. For the quotations I used in the findings and discussions; again, these quotes were sent to them and they accepted that they were not misquoted. The above facts contributed immensely to the validity of this research.

However, cultural competence is part of inner validity and it refers to the researcher's ability to internalize the findings to a certain level. The researcher has to have an adequate amount of knowledge about the subject without losing objectivity. Isaksson (2008) argues that truly objective studies are impossible to follow and one should be cautious of one's own limitations instead of stating that person´s opinions will be ignored and thus do not affect the research process.

In this research, like the said skeptics stated, my own experiences and attitudes come across in my Master's thesis. As a Gambian and one of those who were once teacher trainees and have gone through the system, my main aim was to maintain objectivity, an open mind and professionalism. This is because in no way did I want the validity of this research to be compromised.

7.2 Strategies for establishing validity (Adapted from Jane Van Resenburg, 2001).

Criterion	Strategies	Strategies used in this research
Credibility	Prolonged and varied field experience. Time sampling Interview technique Establishing authority of researcher and structural coherence Referential adequacy (our sources of data and ideas)	Use of interview questions Continuous discussion with my supervisor Methodical adherence, attempt to explain inconsistencies Through literature review
Transferability	Nominated sampling Comparison of sample Time sampling Dense description	The degree to which these findings and results applied to other contexts. The purpose of this research is to find out the leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees.

Dependability	Audit of the research Dense description of methods used Coding procedures	The exact methods of data gathering and analysis are discussed intensively. The research plan was examined and approved by the supervisor.
Confirmability	Audit (follow up) Reflexivity	The supervisor of the research will review this research. The researcher acknowledges own part and experience in the research process.

7.3 Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions. Reliability is very important in a tape-recorded interview, which I did. This is because if people are tape-recorded, transcripts may be gravely weakened by a failure to transcribe apparently trivial, but often important pauses and overlaps (Silverman 2000, p. 188).

The Master's thesis as any other study should be trustworthy. The evaluation of trustworthiness is a necessary part of the study report as it enables the readers to evaluate the accuracy of the findings and the importance of the study for further utilization. According to Kylmä & Juvakka (2007, p. 127), trustworthiness can be evaluated by using general reliability criteria for qualitative study.

Nevertheless, the reliability of qualitative research could be evaluated by reviewing content analysis. The content analysis should be done systematically with deliberation and by following the researcher's predetermined criterion. The process should be reported in details, so that another researcher with the same data

would end up in a similar content analysis. (Hämeen-Anttila & Katajavuori 2007, p. 287)

The examples which represent the formation of the sub- and the main categories of my findings increase the reliability of this research. All the interviews conducted were tape recorded, and if there was anything or any word that was unclear, I listened to it again and again until the actual words were understood to avoid any misunderstanding. I keep the principle of double checking and this is also the reliability and validity of this research.

7.4 Ethical considerations

According to Silverman (2000), ethical awareness is a fundamental part of the professional practice of social workers. Their ability and commitment to act ethically is an essential aspect of the quality of service offered to those who use social work services.

There are a number of main features that narrated the system of ethical security that the concurrent social institutions has created to try to protect better the rights of their research participants. The rule of unforced participation requires that people not be forced into participating in research. This is especially important where researchers had earlier counted on 'captive audiences' for their subjects: examples are prisons, schools, and places similar to that (Silverman, 2000).

The consent form therefore means that eventual research participants must be totally aware about the agendas and dangers associated in research and must give their approval to be involved.

Ethical standards also obligate that researchers not to place the participants in a condition where they might be at peril of danger as a result of their participation. Danger can be classified as both physical and psychological. There are two patterns that are appropriate in order to help guard the privacy of research participants. (Denscombe, 2003, pp. 139-140).

My consent form included my true identity as a researcher so that the participants will know who is conducting this research and where he can be contacted and the organization under whose auspices the research is conducted. There are statement providing enough detail for the participants to understand the aims, methods and

anticipated outcome of the research. The participants will know in advance what I expect them to undertake and the reward they might expect from their effort.

5   CONCLUSION

It is part of the training of student teachers to learn about the total and complete day to day activities of the school and this is not merely restricted to only teaching in the classroom, but also includes taking part in leadership positions and in the extra-curricular activities of the school.

The leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary school are mainly done with the objective of developing high quality learning and teaching. It is aimed at helping the teacher trainees to focus on professional collaboration, development and growth in the teaching profession.

It should be noted that these leadership roles the teacher trainees are executing is not a formal role, responsibility or task. They are more connected with delegating the trainees to lead in school work which impacts directly their training to become qualified teachers and enhance their performance in the classroom and the school as well as the community.

Recently, various researches have shown that even in more hectic circumstances, schools are able to sustain or maintain improvement through capacity building and equipping teachers to lead innovation and development (Harris and Chapman, 2002; Harris, 2002). Other findings have similar results which are the capacity for development through distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000).

Based on the findings of this research, two key themes emerged which are classroom management and extracurricular activities. These leadership roles of teacher trainees have features of what today is known in the education field as distributed leadership, and the objective is to teach student teachers to learn how

to develop professionalism by working together and learning from senior and experienced teachers.

In the findings of this research, it is shown that teacher trainees play an important role in the educational system of The Gambia. They are directly involved in the day to day teaching of pupils and are actively involved in the curriculum implementation. It is in this light that their work is highly appreciated.

It is a well-known fact that teachers generally provide leadership and they are equally well leaders of social groups like environmental activities, formal and non-formal organizations (Kagoda, 2011). This ability to leadership is one reason that teacher trainees in The Gambia are assigned to leadership positions. Teachers are usually trained on human capital and this is important for developing countries like The Gambia.

The leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees in The Gambia primary are part of their training, and it is part of the policies and procedures that are uniquely designed to train the student teachers with the knowledge, attitude, behaviors and skills they will need to execute their roles in the school and to a large extent in the community.

The training of teachers in The Gambia is in line with what Tallbert-Johnson (2006) refers to as the most important and best known way of training change agents, as it is believed that success in educational systems hugely depends on the awareness of teachers, their professional growth and values, their commitment and their content knowledge.

The training of teachers during the past years has changed from the two year program to three years, from college based to distance education and from presentations to in-service training. The School of Education and the Ministry of Education are changing the training program of teachers in response to the broader, social, economic and political changes the country is going through.

According to Elliot (1993), teachers normally learn how to teach in schools through experience and reflection. Teachers as well as teacher trainees also learn through practice or through acquiring skills and knowledge and applying it. Teachers have also learned through their reflection of past and present experiences.

In summary, the leadership roles assigned to teacher trainees in The Gambia have an objective of preparing the trainees to learn the technical skills in school

leadership skills which will help them to perform in their schools. This requires knowledge and understanding of the system and encouraging teacher trainees to act as facilitators, leaders in the classroom and the ability to take on new initiatives.

6 RECOMMENDATION

This topic is very interesting and is not completely exhausted. The research was conducted in region two and the all the participants are from the same region. The outcome and findings of this research might have been different, had the research been conducted in another region. The number of qualified teachers in region two cannot be compared to the number of qualified teachers in region six. It is therefore based on this that I would recommend further studies on this topic.

In order to address these challenges facing teacher trainees and teachers in general, the system should create opportunities and make the teaching profession attractive to young teachers and improve teacher training programs. I would also recommend that the system create the following opportunities for teachers.

1. To promote professional growth of teachers where they could improve their teaching as good and effective teachers could not afford not to improve their professional growth as students bring more challenges each day.

2. To improve classroom culture where the teacher could use the class culture as a learning tool. If a teacher does not create a safe culture, learning may not occur.

3. To improve strategy in order to maximize results as strong teachers make sure their efforts match technique to students guided by intuition and empathy.

4. To encourage resource management by which teachers learn how to do with what they have.

5. Finally problem solving skills, which what could go wrong and how one could help as well as making the teaching profession attractive to the population.

The obstacles are many and some are discussed earlier and for teachers to handle these obstacles they need knowledge in pedagogical skills and school leaders too should embrace distributed leadership and have more leadership training.

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APPENDICIES

Baboucarr Suwareh

Regional Education Director

Region 2, The Gambia

1. Research Permit Request

I am a student in the Master's Degree Program in Educational Leadership, where I am writing my Master's thesis on the topic Leadership roles of Teacher Trainees in The Gambia Primary Schools.

The purpose of the study is to explore/find out whether leadership responsibilities of teacher trainees are affecting their training.

I am requesting for your kind permission to collect the research data in your institution at the time of your convenience **(November to December, 2013).** The research data to be collected would consist of four backgrounds and nine general interview questions. The interview will be tape recorded. The respondents are teachers, teacher trainees, regional education officer and head of the school of education, Gambia College.

The data are collected and used for research purposes only and will be dealt with anonymously.

Please contact director Mika Risku of the Institute of Educational Leadership in the University of Jyväskylä (tel. 358-400 247 420, email: mika.risku@jyu.fi), if in need for additional information.

Alhagie M.S Jabbi

Kuulakuja, 3A 10, 01280, Vantaa

+358-442537212, alhagie7@hotmail.com

2. Acknowledgement Letter

Ref.   Mr Jabbi's research permit request

LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is to certify that Alhagie M.S. Jabbi is a full time student in our Master's
Degree Program of Educational Leadership as of autumn 2012 and has completed
all the studies as required, cumulatively circa 60 ECTS by the end of spring term
2013.

Alhagie M.S Jabbi is planning to write his/her Master's thesis on the topic
Leadership roles of teacher trainees in The Gambia Primary Schools for which
purpose he is contacting you to gain access to research data in your institution.
The research topic is fully acknowledged by our institution and the thesis is part
of the Master's Degree Program.

Mika Risku

Director

Tel. +358-400-247 420

Email: mika.risku@jyu.fi

-----------The permit to pursue data collection for the master's thesis has been
given by the 1st advisor of the thesis on …………….., 201

………………………………………….

Signed by 1st advisor

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3. CONFIDENTIAL LETTER

I am a student of Jyväskylä University and conducting an interview for my Master´s Thesis titled; Leadership roles of Teacher Trainees in The Gambia Primary School: A case study of two primary schools in region two. I am conducting this research as part of my final master thesis and the interviews will be conducted in The Gambia.

The interviews will be tape recorded and all data would be kept confidential and will not be given to anyone without your permission after completing this research. If you participate in this interview, your school or institution would benefit by being in the database of the Institute of Educational Leadership, University of Jyväskylä.

For more information about this research, you can kindly contact

Alhagie M.S. Jabbi

+358 442537212

altabbi@jyu.fi

I have read and understood the information written in this consent letter.

1. _____   _____

_____

Signature of participant   Date and place

2. _____   _____

_____Signature of participant

        Date and place

4. Interview Questions

BACKGROUD QUESTIONS

1. Name ---
2. Sex ---
3. Title ---
4. School ---

GENERAL QUESTIONS

5. Who is a teacher trainee
6. What are the roles of teacher trainees in a school
7. How do teacher trainees contribute to the development of the school
8. What kind of leadership task is assigned to teacher trainees
9. How do the leadership roles affect their teacher training
10. How effective are teacher trainees in leadership roles
11. What kind of support is provided to teacher trainees
12. What are the approaches to leadership learning and development of teacher trainees
13. How do teacher trainees prepare for school leadership

5. Education System Of The Gambia

The Gambia operates on a 6-3-3-4 system:

Education level	Years of study/age	Certificate/Exam/ Degree
Lower Basic School	6 years/ages 7–13	Grade six Placement Exam
Upper Basic School	3 years/ages 13–16	Basic Education Certificate Exam
Senior Secondary School	3 years/ages 16–19	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE)
University (undergrad)	4 years	Bachelor's degree
University (grad)	1+ years	Master's degree

Source: National Statistic Abstract, academic year 2006/2007.

6. Total Number of Schools in The Gambia

Total Number of Schools	Age group	574	% of Total
Total Number of Basic Cycle School (combination of the lower and upper Basic School)	7-19	62	11%
Total Number of Lower Basic Schools	7-13	368	64%
Total Number of Upper Basic Schools	13-19	89	16%
Total Number of Senior Secondary School	16-19	55	10%

Source: National Statistic Abstract, academic year 2006/2007.