

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, MENTORING, AND STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA: PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

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Abstract: The paper focuses on the correlation between the transformational leadership practice demonstrated by the educational administrators at the Ghana private universities and the success of the mentorship and professional development programs. The study is thus a qualitative-research that examines how the major aspects of a transformational leader, which are vision articulation, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, influence the mentoring structures and the production of professional growth among the academic and administrative personnel. Semi-structured interviews with university administrators, mentoring coordinators, and staff in the selected private universities provided the data, which was triangulated with institutional documents and other related literature published in 2022-2025. The results show that transformational leadership has a positive impact on the growth of mentoring engagement, staff motivation, professional competence, and development of collaborative and learning oriented institutional culture. The researchers highlight that the issue of effectiveness in institutional performance and sustainability depend on organized mentoring systems, leadership development programmes, and continuing capacity-building instruments.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership; Mentoring; Professional Development; Private Universities; Higher Education Leadership; Ghana.*

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Introduction

Transformational leadership is universally accepted as a key factor of organisational performance, a situation that learning institutions are highly prone to the leadership practices since human capital growth and organisational performance directly depend on leadership (Suwanmanee, 2023; Assefa, 2025). Developed based on the effort of Bass (1985), transformational leadership focuses on the aspect of vision creation, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and person-oriented consideration. These leadership behaviours have also been linked to increased personnel dedication, working satisfaction, progress and general organisational execution in the context of higher education (Cheng and Zhu, 2025; Northouse, 2024). Educational administrators are the key players in the universities in transforming the vision of the institutions into working realities. Their leadership styles have a huge impact on organisational culture, employee morale, and teaching, research, and administrative service delivery (Bush and Glover, 2023). Transformational leaders help staff to go beyond the role expectations by encouraging them to share purpose, promoting reflective practice, and focusing on continuous professional development through mentoring and capacity-building programs (Yukl, 2023). Empirical studies are starting to indicate that mentoring and professional development programs are best

integrated into leadership systems that encourage the development of trust, empowerment, and the learning-oriented institutional cultures (Cheng & Zhu, 2025; Assefa, 2025). Relevancy of transformational leadership has been experienced especially in the context of the Ghanaian higher education sector (in the private sphere). Ghana in the last 20 years has seen a rapid growth of the number of private universities in the country due to the growing demand of tertiary education, diversification of academic courses and a restriction of the public university system. Most of them are multi-campus universities that are extremely competitive, with increased student enrolments, staff retention issues, and the high demands that accreditation and quality assurance standards impose by national regulatory authorities (Akama, 2023; Loglo, 2024). These contextual forces require leadership strategies to place staff mentoring, professional development and leadership succession planning as an institutional priority, as opposed to a peripheral activity. Even though the role of transformational leadership in higher education is becoming more popular in the scholarly literature, few empirical studies have investigated its impact on mentoring and staff professional development in Ghanaian privatised universities (Akama, 2023; Loglo, 2024). Current studies have mainly concentrated on universities that are publicly based or have studied the leadership outcomes being job satisfaction and organisational commitment and the research has

not given much attention to the structured mentoring programs and continuous professional learning in the context of private, faith-based and multiple campuses university institutions. This gap limits the comprehensive comprehension of the ways in which leadership practices can be utilized to improve staff capacity and institutional sustainability to the private higher education situation in Ghana.

It is against this background that the current study examines the effects that transformational leadership practices that have been implemented by educational leaders in Ghanaian private universities on mentoring structures on the outcome of staff professional development. Based on the reflections of administrators and staff in the chosen private universities, the study aims to enrich the insight into the leadership-based mentoring practices and their consequences on the performance of the staff, professional competence, and institutional culture. In this connection, the research questions used in the study are the following:

1. What transformational leadership practices are exhibited by educational administrators in private universities in Ghana?
2. How do these leadership practices influence mentoring structures and professional development outcomes?
3. What are the perceived impacts of mentoring on staff performance, professional competence, and institutional culture?

In answering these questions, the research adds to the increasing literature on higher education leadership in developing situations and provides useful information related to enhancing mentoring and professional development systems in the Ghanaian higher education of the private sector.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

Transformational leadership refers to a style of leadership that encourages followers to perform better than they would have otherwise by addressing higher values, a sense of shared vision and intrinsic motivation (Bass, 1985; Suwanmanee, 2023). Instead of membership of a formal structure and transactions, transformational leaders are interested in influencing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in a manner that fosters the development of the organisation over a long period. In institutions of higher education, the leadership style is especially applicable since institutions of higher learning are deeply relying on human capital, professional autonomy, and lifelong learning to reach institutional goals (Northouse, 2024).

Transformational leadership has been critical in planning organisational change, professional learning and innovation of teaching, research and administrative practices in private universities in Ghana (Assefa, 2025; Bush and Glover, 2023). Transformational leadership practices have shown to have better chances of enabling educational administrators to establish favorable institutional conditions that support collaborative efforts, exchange of knowledge, and long-term dedication of staff. This kind of leadership is now considered to be critical in handling the complex issues facing private universities in Ghana, such as increased competition over students, regulatory and accreditation

requirements, change of technology, limited resources and continued staffing and retention issues (Yukl, 2023).

Transformational leadership has four essential aspects, which are especially susceptible to high education institutions. Idealised influence is the ability of the leaders who are ethical role models through which they can exemplify institutional values, integrity, and professionalism, thus gaining the trust and respect of the staff (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2024). This aspect is enacted in the Ghanaian private universities in the form of transparent governance systems, equity in the development and promotion prospects of staff, and compliance with both academic and administration standards. Inspirational motivation is the ability to express a clear and attractive vision of the institution that resonates with the personal goals of the staff with the overall organisational objectives, which encourages employees to work together to achieve common results (Suwanmanee, 2023; Assefa, 2025). This aspect is particularly critical in the context of the private universities where the motivation of staff is directly related to the purpose, professional identity, and the stability of the institution.

Intellectual stimulation takes into consideration the role of the leader in stimulating creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving by questioning the status quo and encouraging the innovative methods of work (Yukl, 2023). In Ghana, in the context of private university, the intellectual stimulation assists the curriculum innovation, research output, and administrative change by enabling the employees of the university to investigate new concepts and solutions to meet new educational requirements. Individualised consideration is the fourth dimension that aims at offering personalised mentorship, coaching, and feedback to help individual members of staff develop professionally and career-wise (Bass, 1985; Cheng and Zhu, 2025). The dimension is quite consistent with the concept of mentoring since it demands that leaders must be aware of individual needs, strengths, and developmental goals in the various academic and administrative positions.

African contexts of higher learning Empirical literature shows that transformational leadership positively involves the staff, creates a culture of collaboration in an organisation, and enhances the overall performance of the institution (Akama, 2023; Loglo, 2024). Transformational leadership in Ghana (as well as other sub-Saharan African nations) has been linked to an elevated level of employee commitment, higher rates of professional development, and better service delivery in both academic and administrative departments (Assefa, 2025; Loglo, 2024). Nevertheless, regardless of such positive effects, there is a lack of empirical studies specifically connecting the transformational leadership practices with the mentoring effectiveness in the context of the private universities. The gap is more pronounced considering the fact that while private universities in Ghana are increasingly becoming dependent on systemic mentoring programs to facilitate staff development, leadership development as well as long-term sustainability of institutions in an ever-competitive higher education setting.

Mentoring and Staff Professional Development

Mentoring has been widely understood as an organisational process that is structured and developmental in nature whereby more senior staff members guide, offer advice, psychosocial support, and professional guidance to less senior staff members with the view of influencing the development of professional

competence, career advancement, and organisational acclimation (Pesina, 2025; Crisp and Cruz, 2023). In private universities, Ghana, mentoring is a vital knowledge-sharing process within an institution, facilitating the professional growth of early-career scholars and administrative employees and promoting ongoing professional development in an ever-competitive and more convoluted organisational culture (Harrison and McKinnon, 2024).

Effective mentoring programmes in higher education are not limited to the informal interpersonal relationship but they are specifically designed to introduce a variety of professional development activities. They usually involve special training sessions, peer coach programs, leadership shadowing, reflective supervision, and organized feedback (Pesina, 2025; Assefa, 2025). When institutional development entails incorporating mentoring in the development strategies of the individual staffs of the private universities, it also leads to the growth of the individual staffs but also to the overall organisational performance like succession planning of leadership, service delivery, and enhancement of the organisational culture (Suwanmanee, 2023; Bush and Glover, 2023). Empirical research has proven beyond doubt that successful mentoring has a lot of positive impacts on the lives of individuals and institutions. Mentoring has been associated with greater job satisfaction, increased motivation, faster skill development, and greater career confidence of academic and administrative staff at the individual level (Akama, 2023; Harrison and McKinnon, 2024). On the organisational level, mentoring helps to increase staff retention rates, institutional commitment, and emergence of collaborative and learning-oriented cultures in universities (Suwanmanee, 2023; Loglo, 2024). These conclusions are of significance especially to the case of the private universities in Ghana where the scarcity of resources, the lack of competition in the labour market, and the lack of retention of staff tend to compromise the long-term capacity development process.

In the Ghanaian higher education environment, though, mentoring programs in most of the private universities are mostly informal, diffused, or incidental, which restrains their effectiveness and sustainability (Loglo, 2024; Akama, 2023). Mentoring relationships often lie on personal goodwill as opposed to institutional policies that are clearly defined leading to the irregular availing of professional development opportunities as well as the unequal development of the staff. This is particularly acute in the context of the rapidly growing private universities with the increasing enrolments, the presence of multiple campuses, and the strict accreditation and quality assurance stipulations, which add to the pressure on the systematic and coherent staff development frameworks and policies. Mentoring as a part of a transformational leadership strategy can be used to significant effect to overcome these drawbacks. Transformational leaders, with their measures of individualised consideration, and inspirational motivation, are in a good position to institutionalise mentoring, as a strategy to staff development and organisational capacity building (Assefa, 2025; Yukl, 2023). Through coordinating the orientation of mentoring programmes with the institutional vision, leadership practices and strategic goals, the Ghanaian private universities can establish systematic and sustainable views on professional development that power personal staff development, leadership sustainability, and institutional effectiveness in a highly competitive higher education environment.

Linking Transformational Leadership, Mentoring, and Professional Development

Transformational leaders are especially important in designing organisational conditions that promote the process of continuous learning, innovation, and professional development among employees (Assefa, 2025; Yukl, 2023). Such leaders in private universities in Ghana do not just act as administrative overseers but they take an active role in influencing the institutional values, norms, and practices that facilitate staff development and organisational learning. Transformational leaders facilitate the development of mentoring networks that promote skill acquisition, leadership development, and the systematic exchange of organisational knowledge among senior employees and new academics and administration representatives through the provision of intellectual stimulation and individualised attention (Cheng and Zhu, 2025; Suwanmanee, 2023). The literature has established a number of interrelated processes that transformational leadership reinforces mentoring and professional development results in higher learning institutions especially in the full privacy university operations. To begin with, transformational leadership can assist in the implementation of the structured mentoring programmes with clear goals, well-defined roles, and accountability tools (Bush and Glover, 2023; Loglo, 2024). Transformational leaders in the private universities by entrenching mentoring initiatives in institutional policies, quality assurance systems and strategic development plans make the mentoring practices sustainable, equitable and in tandem with overall organisational interests as opposed to relying on informal or ad hoc provisions. Second, transformational leadership brings about the enriched learning conditions where employees are encouraged to participate in the process of the continuous professional development. With inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, leaders assist the staff to acquire new competencies, actively engage in training workshops, leadership development programmes, and peer-learning, as well as think critically about the practice (Assefa, 2025; Northouse, 2024). These learning-focused environments are of special value to the private universities of Ghana, which are dynamic settings that are marked by change in regulation, technology and changing student and stakeholder expectation.

Third, transformational leadership fosters collaborative organisational cultures favouring knowledge sharing, peer support and problem solving as a team (Akama, 2023; Suwanmanee, 2023). These collaborative cultures within the context of the private university in Ghana have enhanced the relationship of mentoring because they have led to trust, open communication and shared responsibility in professional development. Not only do the collaborative environments increase the learning results of the individuals, they also increase institutional resilience and performance through the promotion of teamwork, innovation, and collective ownership of organisational goals (Cheng & Zhu, 2025). Although these linkages are becoming more evident in the global literature, the literature has yet to explore empirical research on how transformational leadership, mentoring practices, and staff professional development interact in Ghanaian private universities, and especially those that have adopted a multi-campus model (Loglo, 2024). This study filled an empirical and contextual gap with important evidence-based information on how to improve leadership-based mentoring and professional development practices to enhance an emerging competitive sector in higher education, through the context of empirical investigation of these relationships in the context of higher education in Ghana and the setting of private universities.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a qualitative multiple-case study design, which is specifically suitable in the investigation of a complex social phenomenon like leadership practices, mentoring processes, and staff professional development in the context of their real-life institutional backgrounds (Yin, 2023; Creswell and Poth, 2023). The suitable approach to adopt is qualitative as it facilitates the creation of rich, contextualised information on the experiences, perceptions and interaction of the participants, thus it is appropriate to use in studies that do not emphasise statistical generalisation of the study.

Case study designs have been extensively used in research in higher education to investigate organisational procedures, leadership behaviours, and institutional cultures since it can provide a holistic analysis of various data streams and perspectives of stakeholders (Merriam and Tisdell, 2024). This study adopted a multiple-case design that enabled a comparative analysis on the way transformational leadership practices affect mentoring structures and professional development programs in the private universities of Ghana that were selected. This method also increased the level of analysis because variations and similarities in leadership and mentoring practices of different institutions are taken into consideration, including those with multi-campus setups.

The qualitative design is consistent with the exploratory character of the study, that attempts to comprehend how and why transformational leadership can influence the mentoring and the professional development practices instead of testing the predetermined hypotheses (Creswell and Poth, 2023; Yin, 2023). The development of context sensitive findings through the examination of leadership driven mentoring in various private universities developed a context sensitive find that can inform the practice and policy formulation in the sphere of leadership in the Ghanaian higher education of the private universities.

Participants and Sampling

The participants were chosen through purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method typically used in the qualitative research to select those individuals who directly experience and know the phenomenon under study (Creswell and Poth, 2023; Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposive sampling was suitable since it allowed the researcher to select the respondents purposely among parties who are highly engaged or currently engaged in leadership, mentoring, and staff professional development practices in the Ghanaian private universities.

In this investigation, there were three types of participants to guarantee a wholesome variety of viewpoints: Educational administrators (n = 10) Senior and middle-level administrators in charge of strategic planning, staff supervision and policy implementation. These respondents gave information on leadership behaviors, institutional interest and decision-making regarding mentoring and professional development. Mentoring and professional development coordinators (n = 6) who had participated directly in the design, coordination and monitoring of mentoring and staff development programs in their respective institutions. The involvement has facilitated a profound insight into the programme structures, challenges in implementation and alignment with leadership practices.

Staff Mentees (n=18) were randomly selected based on both academic and administrative departments of the identified private universities. These respondents were beneficiaries of

mentoring programs and they gave first hand testimonies on mentoring experiences, leadership support and the result of professional learning. Diverse participants in the study were selected in order to provide institutional diversity and difference in leadership and mentoring practices, including single-campus and multi-campus organizations. Such a multi-institutional approach to sampling reinforced the process of triangulation of the data and made the findings more credible because they encompassed leadership intentions, programme implementation perspectives and staff experiences in different organisational settings (Merriam and Tisdell, 2024; Yin, 2023).

Data Collection

Numerous qualitative approaches were used to gather data to provide depth, richness, and credibility because of methodological triangulation (Creswell & Poth, 2023; Yin, 2023). The use of various sources of evidence helped the study to develop different views of transformational leadership, mentoring practices and outcomes of professional development in the private universities of Ghana.

The method of primary data collection was semi-structured interviews. The rationale behind the choice of this approach is that it can be flexible to investigate the experiences of the participants in detail with a consistent focus on the research goals of the study (Kallio et al., 2022). The interview questions were based on leadership practices, mentoring experiences, learning opportunities in professional, and perceived results of leadership-based mentoring programs. The interviews took about 45-60 minutes and were held in person or virtual basing on the availability of the subjects. Informed consent was used to audio-tape and transcribe the interviews verbatim so that no data would be lost (Creswell and Poth, 2023). The data of document analysis was used as a secondary source of information to study the institutional evidence on leadership, mentoring, and staff development. Strategic plans, human resource and leadership policies, mentoring guidelines, staff development reports, and internal training records of the participating private universities were the documents reviewed. The use of document analysis made it possible to compare the formal intentions of policy with the reported leadership practices and reinforce the interpretation of the analysis through a method of analytical analysis (Bowen, 2022; Yin, 2023).

Besides, literature triangulation has been conducted in the form of the systematic review of available scholarly literature published between 2022 and 2025 on the topics of transformational leadership, mentoring, and professional development within the context of higher education. This step facilitated the contextualisation of empirical results in the current theoretical and empirical discussions and increased the validity of the conclusions made in the study (Braun and Clarke, 2022; Creswell and Poth, 2023).

Data Analysis

The thematic analysis was applied to data analysis, and it was performed according to the six-phase analytical framework by Braun and Clarke (2022). Thematic analysis was deemed suitable due to its flexibility but rigorousness in identifying, analysing, and interpreting meaning patterns in qualitative data, especially when it comes to research studies in the field of organisational practices and leadership experiences (Nowell et al., 2017; Braun and Clarke, 2022). The analysis process started with familiarisation where the interview transcripts and institutional documents were read

severally in order to have a holistic perception of the data. The preliminary observations pertaining to leadership behaviours, mentoring structures and professional development experiences were identified. This was done with systematic coding of meaningful segments of data by deductive and inductive means. The conceptual framework of the study and literature about transformational leadership and mentoring informed deductive codes, whereas inductive codes were based on direct narratives of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Codes were then sorted out into broader themes, which included leadership support of mentoring, institutionalisation of professional development and joint learning cultures. Themes were discussed and narrowed down to provide internal consistency and categorical differentiation. Thematic definitions were done and labeled to represent their application to the research questions well. The result of the analysis was the creation of the research report where themes were represented through illustrative quotes of the participants and explained vis-a-vis the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Yin, 2023).

Trustworthiness

The four criteria of qualitative rigor credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability were used to ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 2023; Creswell and Poth, 2023). The methodological triangulation increased the credibility of the research, which was achieved by integrating data sources (interviews, document analysis, literature triangulation) to support the findings of each data source (Yin, 2023). Member checking was also employed by communicating preliminary interpretations to some of the selected participants in order to verify their accuracy and relevance to their experiences. The reliability and confirmability were enhanced by the preservation of a comprehensive audit trail containing the methodological choices, coding procedure, theme advancement, and reflexive notes. This increased the level of transparency and allowed an extraneous examination of the research process (Braun and Clarke, 2022; Lincoln and Guba, 2023). The issue of transferability was also managed through rich and thick descriptions of the institutional contexts, leadership practices, and the mentoring arrangements so that the reader can evaluate the relevance of the findings to other similar settings involving multi-campus private universities in the developing country context (Merriam and Tisdell, 2024).

Ethical Considerations

All the research stages were based on ethical considerations. The participation was voluntary and the participants were notified about their right of dropping out at any point without reprisals (Creswell and Poth, 2023). Instrumental consent was received through institutional approval of every participating private university before data were collected, and informed consent was obtained, following a full-disclosure of the objective of the study, study procedures, and risks that may be involved.

All the data were anonymised by using pseudonyms and coded identifiers to guarantee the participant anonymity and confidentiality. Transcripts and audio recordings as well as digital files were safely stored and only viewed by the researcher (Yin, 2023). In line with the best practice in ethics in research in the educational field, all the data were held in secrecy and utilized solely towards the academic purpose in accordance with institutional and international research ethics (BERA, 2023).

Findings

Thematic analysis has also generated four broad themes that explain the relationship between the transformational leadership, mentoring practices, and staff professional development in the case of Ghanaian private universities. These themes underscore the influence of the leadership behaviours on the mentoring structures, professional learning experiences, and the organisational culture in the institutional contexts. **Inspirational Leadership:** Leading by example, the leader must display the desired behavior they want their team to emulate.

Visionary and Inspirational Leadership

4:1 Inspirational leadership is where the leader leads by example, the person has to demonstrate the kind of behavior he or she wants his or her team to follow. Results showed that the administrators at the private universities exemplified visionary and inspirational leadership through clarity on the institutionally grounded vision that was focused on staff development and life-long learning. According to the respondents, the institutional leaders always informed them about how mentoring and training programs were in line with institutional missions and long-term strategic goals. One of the administrators said:

We aim to develop each member of staff to be able to work and learn professionally, we encourage them by demonstrating how their service to the institution is being used to achieve its mission (Administrator 2). The leadership style relates to inspirational motivation aspect of transformational leadership whereby the leaders explain strong visions that establish staff commitment and purpose (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2024). The staff members who participated in such visionary leadership said that they were more willing to participate in mentoring programmes and professional development activities. These results are in agreement with the previous research that found transformational leadership to be correlated with increased motivation, engagement, and learning-oriented organisational cultures in higher education institutions (Assefa, 2025; Suwanmanee, 2023).

Individualised Mentoring and Support

The other theme was individualised mentoring and support, in which leaders offered individualised mentoring depending on the professional requirements and career objectives of staff members. Participants also reported mentoring relationships that were characterised by frequent feedback, coaching and role specific guidance that is based on individual duties. As one mentee noted: My supervisor not only guides me on how to deal with complicated administrative issues but also advises me based on my career objectives (Mentee 5). This observation can be attributed to the individualised consideration aspect of transformational leadership, which is focused on the acknowledgement of individual differences and encourages personalised professional development (Yukl, 2023; Cheng and Zhu, 2025). According to the staff, this type of individualised mentoring boosted their confidence, competence and problem solving-skills, leading to better job performance and professional identity. In line with the current literature, the results indicate that mentoring as a component of transformational leadership approaches is an essential factor in building the capacity of the staff and transferring the knowledge to the institution in a context of a private university (Akama, 2023; Loglo, 2024).

Intellectual Stimulation and Professional Learning

The results also revealed that intellectual stimulation was a salient aspect of transformational leadership of the administrators in the private universities. The administrators challenged the staff to challenge the prevailing practices, offer new ideas, and think in a reflective manner by having mentoring discussions. One of the mentoring coordinators wrote:

We welcome employees to suggest new ways or ways of improvement, which are deliberated in mentoring sessions and applied where possible.

This strategy corresponds to the dimension of transformational leadership that is associated with intellectual stimulation, challenging assumptions, encouraging creativity, and promoting continuous learning (Yukl, 2023; Northouse, 2024). The mentoring sessions offered secure forums where the staffs can share new ideas, experiment with alternative strategies as well as learn by errors. The respondents stated that they experienced increased analytical abilities and were able to apply theoretical information to both academic and administrative problems.

In line with the literature, the mentoring relationships that encouraged intellectual stimulation facilitated the promotion of professional learning through the encouragement of critical reflection and problem-solving adaptability (Assefa, 2025; Cheng and Zhu, 2025). The personnel referred to mentoring as interactive and dialogic learning, instead of the directive, which confirms that transformational leadership enhances deep and practice-based learning in the setting of institutions of higher learning (Suwanmanee, 2023). This was a leadership-based mentoring that was more helpful in multi-campus private universities where employees would be required to acclimatize institutional policies to varying operational environments.

Teamwork Organisational Culture

The other major theme was the creation of team organisational culture that occurred because of transformational leadership and mentoring behaviours. Respondents emphasized that mentoring was not only limited to hierarchical relationships but also peer learning, cross-campus learning and collaborative problem-solving. As one mentee observed:

What we can learn with the help of mentoring is that we get to learn the experience of other colleagues in other campuses; there is a strong sense of work and sharing of knowledge (Mentee 9).

This result indicates the importance of transformational leadership as the way of developing organisational cultures that can be described as trustful, collaborative, and shared responsibility to learn (Bush and Glover, 2023; Akama, 2023). The mentoring programmes were used as the platforms to establish professional networks within the campuses where the staff was able to share ideas, best practices and establish a common professional identity. This kind of teamwork was said to increase employee participation and decrease the sense of seclusion normally linked with multi-campus organizations.

According to the literature, collaborative cultures play a critical role in maintaining any professional development initiative, because they promote the idea of lifelong learning and collective responsibility towards the institutional goals (Loglo, 2024; Merriam and Tisdell, 2024). Here, employees stated that they were more motivated to attend workshops, mentorship, and informal learning opportunities when the leaders facilitated the collaboration and mutual support. These results support the opinion that with structured mentoring, transformational leadership enhances institutional learning capacity and long-term staff development results in private universities.

| Leadership Dimension | Mentoring Practice | Staff Development Outcome |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Visionary / Inspirational Leadership | Goal setting and inspirational mentoring | Professional direction and motivation |
| Personalised Guidance and Development | Personalised advice and development | Skill acquisition and professional confidence |
| Intellectual Stimulation | Mentoring for problem solving and innovation | Creative and analytical problem solving |
| Shared Organisational Culture | Group learning and collaborative mentoring | Knowledge sharing and organisational learning |

Table one: Mental Connections between Transformational Leadership, Mentoring, and Staff Development in Private Universities

Discussion

The results indicate that transformational leadership leads to a positive effect on mentoring practices and staff professional growth in the context of private universities in Ghana, which supports and expands the previous literature on the topic of higher education leadership (Assefa, 2025; Suwanmanee, 2023; Northouse, 2024). The capacity of the administrators to present powerful institutional visions was identified as a major motivational factor that prompt the staff to engage in mentoring and professional learning processes. Visionary leadership helped the staff to view professional development not as a personal responsibility but as an organizational one, associated with the long-term sustainability (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Bush and Glover, 2023).

The paper also shows that individualised consideration is a key factor in improving the effectiveness of mentoring. Leaders

who gave specific guidance, feedback, and emotional support facilitated the development of mentoring relationships in terms of particular developmental needs and career ambitions. The discovery has been supported by the research that suggests that transformational leadership theory (personalised mentoring) improves job satisfaction, professional competence, and confidence in university employees (Cheng and Zhu, 2025; Yukl, 2023). In the individual case of multi-campus private universities, this individualised support is particularly crucial due to dissimilarity in the environment of operation and staff functions. Besides, the results indicate the role of intellectual stimulation as a contributor to innovation, reflective practice, and solving problems adaptively. Transformational leaders facilitated the emergence of adaptive capacities needed to meet the demands of accreditation, technological change, and resource scarcity by promoting mentoring interaction between staff and encouraging them to challenge current practices, and introduce new ideas (Assefa, 2025;

Suwanmanee, 2023). This confirms the thesis that intellectual stimulation is one of the primary ways that leadership can be used to facilitate learning and ongoing improvement in an organisation (Yukl, 2023). The findings, in general, highlight the importance of mentoring as an effective professional growth and institutional performance tool. Mentoring, used with the practices of transformational leadership, strengthened collaborative organisational cultures, improved knowledge sharing, and increased staff commitment to continuous improvement. These results are in line with the previous research that names mentoring as personal and institutional capacity-building tool within the higher education sector (Akama, 2023; Loglo, 2024; Merriam and Tisdell, 2024).

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, the following are the recommendations to enhance the leadership based mentoring and professional development in the Ghanaian private universities:

Design Leadership Training Programmes.

The university management must use specific leadership development programmes focused on enhancing the transformational leadership competencies of the administrators and pay attention to the vision building, mentoring skills, emotional intelligence, and change leadership (Northouse, 2024; Assefa, 2025).

Mentoring Programmes make formal.

The mentoring programmes in the private universities should be structured and goal oriented with the role, expectations, and evaluation mechanisms with consistency and sustainability across the campuses (Cheng & Zhu, 2025; Loglo, 2024).

Combine Mentoring and Professional Development.

To enhance the building of institutional capacity, mentoring must be organised to support the overall professional development strategies, such as workshops, peer learning forums, leadership shadowing, and career planning initiatives (Suwanmanee, 2023; Merriam and Tisdell, 2024).

Promote Interdepartmental Cooperation.

Cross campus mentoring and collaborative learning platforms should be encouraged by the university leadership to enhance knowledge sharing, decrease fragmentation and integrated organisational cultures in the multi-campus institutions (Akama, 2023; Bush and Glover, 2023).

Conclusion

This paper concludes that transformational leadership is key in improving the effectiveness of mentoring and the professional growth of the staff in the private universities in Ghana. The visionary leadership, individualised support, and intellectual stimulation of administrators were identified to add strength to the capacity of the staffs, motivation, and engagement, and create collaborative organisational cultures. Such leadership practices allowed the mentoring relationships to serve as effective tools of professional learning, innovation, and transfer of knowledge in an institution. When applied to the case of the Ghanaian private universities, especially those with multi-campus systems, the combination of transformational leadership and organized mentoring programmes provides a strategic roadmap towards sustainable development of the staff and the university.

Through integrating mentoring into leadership and professional development models, the resilience of organisations, better service delivery, and facilitation of long-term institutional performance can be implemented by the private universities in a highly competitive higher education landscape.

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Authors contribution

K.K.Y: Contributed to conceptualization, investigation, formal analysis, and data collection. Also involved in reviewing and editing the manuscript

J. A.Y: Led the conceptualization, investigation, formal analysis, data collection, and data analysis. Additionally, contributed to writing the original draft and participated in the review and editing process.

I.M.M, N.A, L. B. B: Contributed to conceptualization, methodology, and supervision.

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Not Applicable

References

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