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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BRIDGING THE GAP: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN FOSTERING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) FOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN CAPE COAST, GHANA

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Abstract

This study investigates how transformational school leadership influences the implementation of socio-emotional learning (SEL) and character development in selected high schools in Cape Coast, Ghana. Data derived from a questionnaire administered to 60 educators, including classroom teachers, department heads, and counselors, were analyzed in terms of three focal constructs: Leadership Practices (LP), Implementation of SEL (SEL), and Character Development (CD). Reliability tests affirmed a sound internal consistency ($\alpha \geq 0.79$) for each measure. The descriptive findings indicated an overall favorable view toward leadership ($M = 3.95$), with moderate to higher engagement with SEL initiatives ($M = 3.80$) and strong endorsement of students' ethical and prosocial growth ($M = 3.90$). Strong correlations between LP and SEL and CD ($r \geq 0.67$, $p < .01$) indicate the interdependence of visionary leadership with holistic educational outcomes. Importantly, there were no notable differences found between public and private schools or across levels of experience, suggesting that supportive leadership practices transcend school type and teacher background. In essence, the findings imply that leadership-driven approaches emphasizing vision, collaborative capacity-building, and resource alignment are key to embedding socio-emotional competencies into regular teaching schemes. Thus, future research should employ longitudinal or qualitative approaches to unpack the contextual variables that might affect the sustainability or depth of character-focused SEL programs, such as resource availability and cultural norms.

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Introduction:-

In recent years, socio-emotional learning (SEL) has gained greater recognition as a vital dimension of holistic education, with significant cultural appreciation towards it. To inculcate self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (Hemi & Kasperski, 2023; Lee et al., 2023), there is a need for socio-emotional learning programmes. Research indicates that the academic and behavioral objectives of the intervention will not be achieved primarily through structured SEL initiatives. These seemingly correlated

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outcomes reduce bullying, aggression, anxiety, and promote good mental health indicators (Foster et al., 2022; Zong& Yang, 2025). Advances like these make SEL a potential key player in producing moral-theoretic students' emotional-like competencies preparing them for better citizenry and professional living (Ardi Rafsanjani et al., 2024; Djafri&Syakhrani, 2025).

However, the conditions under which SEL becomes functional in schools are mostly dependent upon supportive leadership and a clearly articulated institutional vision (Williams & Burgess, 2025; Yilmaz & Tore, 2025). School culture has been created by the leaders who promote resources and professional development opportunities for staff (Moran et al., 2025; Stevenson & Thompson, 2025). In the Ghanaian context, educational reforms increasingly highlight character education and SEL as core targets (Kelechi & Ridwan, 2025; Iksal et al., 2024), but the practical integration of these reforms varies greatly among regions and school types. Cape Coast, a historic educational center in Ghana, serves as a typical paradigm. Many schools here have a long-forgotten academic tradition, which is coupled with curricular restrictions, shortages of resources, and challenges of leadership that would adversely affect the incorporation of a holistic approach to implementing SEL programs (Nasution et al., 2024; Piala et al., 2024).

Yet, though national policy reforms and the growing acceptance regarding the necessity of SEL in character formation exist, there is an aspect where policy implementation and action diverge for many Ghanaian schools (Alazmi& Bush, 2024; Dabdoub et al., 2024). School leadership, which in this context denotes principals, headteachers, and school administrators, should be vital to bridging this divide. But they are mostly unprepared for leading long-term SEL endeavors, lacking training, resources, and institutional backing (Noviyanti, 2025; Kołodziejczyk, 2025). A lack of training just deepens the inadequacies; thus, many leaders are left wondering how they might actually teach SEL in daily practices that truly matter to students' moral and emotional growth (Steny, 2025; Dian &Hidayatulloh, 2024).

Such shortfalls are of serious concern, especially when linked with increasing evidence that effective SEL programs can bolster students' empathy, resilience, and ethical behaviors (Djafri&Syakhrani, 2025; Dena &Darmawan, 2024). Should heads of schools in Cape Coast and related contexts miss the access and assistance required for implementing the initiatives, students and communities will be denied multiple benefits that include enhanced academic performance and diminished behavioral problems (Ardi Rafsanjani et al., 2024; Fitriani et al., 2024). This gives urgency to the need for examining the leadership frameworks, training opportunities, and institutional structures that promote or impede effective SEL and character-building approaches.

Grounded in these considerations, this article explores the role of school leadership in fostering SEL for character development in Cape Coast, Ghana. Through analyzing leadership styles, resource allocation, professional development, and stakeholder engagement, this study aims to examine how principals and school heads have integrated SEL in the day-to-day activities of educational institutions. This research finding may finally feed into policy recommendations and ways to improve the quality of character education and the well-being of students in Ghanaian schools and beyond.

Literature Review:-

The literature review places the subject of this investigation within the broader scholarship on socio-emotional learning (SEL), school leadership, and character development. It will first discuss core theories that describe how leadership styles may either promote or inhibit SEL initiatives, thereby enhancing the moral agency of students. Key meanings of terms such as SEL, character development, and school leadership are then provided so as to ensure that they are conceptually clear in the Ghanaian context.

Theoretical Review: Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory posits that leaders can elevate group aspirations and performance by fostering a shared vision, motivating team members through personal charisma and providing individualized support (Yilmaz & Tore, 2025). Transformational leadership in education is seen through the establishment of inclusive, innovative, and ethically grounded school cultures, where teachers and students are encouraged to go beyond conventional expectations (Williams & Burgess, 2025; Masry-Herzallah et al., 2025). Such a leadership style transcends more transactional exchanges of rewarding performance by cultivating authentic commitment to some larger moral and social purpose, thus focusing on the application and integration of SEL and character development (Noviyanti, 2025; Dabdoub et al., 2024).

The benefits of applying Transformational Leadership Theory to socio-emotional learning and character development initiatives lie in the relationship with vision-driven change. Transformational leaders, the research indicates, articulate an inspiring vision for holistic education but also nurture collaborative settings for teaching and learning (Hoang & Le, 2025; Stevenson & Thompson, 2025). For example, the common feature of these leaders is that they work through inspirational motivation to rally teachers around a generalized understanding of educational philosophy that includes empathy, integrity, and resilience. They further activate through intellectual stimulation where educators are challenged to creative instruction techniques and curricula social-emotional (Sliwka et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2024). Leaders infuse the intrinsic motivation of teachers, thus going beyond the categorization of basic academic tasks into everyday practice.

Research indicates that transformational leaders do not only proclaim compelling visions for holistic education; they also build environments that are open to collaborative teaching and learning (Hoang & Le, 2025; Stevenson & Thompson, 2025). For instance, in most cases, such leaders engage in inspirational motivation, which calls upon teachers to come around a common idea of educational philosophies such as empathy, integrity, and resilience. They also manifest intellectual stimulation where they participate in innovative attempts of educators to new instructional techniques and social-emotional curricula (Sliwka et al., 2024; Cheng et al., 2024). By doing so, these leaders engage the intrinsic motivation of teachers so that they can go beyond the basic preoccupation of academic achievement and marry the moral and affective dimensions into the everyday practice.

Furthermore, transformational leaders are uniquely positioned to balance accountability with innovation, a critical need in contemporary educational contexts (Adeoye & Baharun, 2025; Alzoraiki et al., 2024). They focus on building teachers' self-efficacy, which, in turn, promotes innovative work behaviors essential to effectively embedding SEL in the curriculum (Yilmaz & Tore, 2025). By modeling openness to change and valuing collaborative problem-solving, principals who adopt a transformational style can overcome cultural or systemic barriers—such as hierarchical decision-making or resource limitations—that often hinder character education initiatives (Piala et al., 2024; Dian & Hidayatulloh, 2024). The result is a school climate characterized by shared responsibility, reflective practice, and continuous professional growth, all of which reinforce the socio-emotional competencies students are expected to master (Tang, 2025; Hariyasasti, 2025).

School leadership

The concept of school leadership is a multi-dimensional one. It includes processes, structures, and relationships, through which principals, head teachers, and other senior staff guide educational institutions toward fulfilling shared goals. Traditionally, school leadership was considered with regard to administrative functions, but its definition has been extended to include collaboration in decision-making, strategical vision setting, and sustainable positive school cultures (Williams & Burgess, 2025). Now school leaders find themselves working within intensification of work and time poverty conditions resulting in accountability pressures, policy demands, and technological advances complicated for their daily practice (Creagh et al., 2025).

One of the clear realities, despite all of this, is that professional development is important for effective leadership. According to Sahlin (2025), reflective learning and peer-based collaboration are significant in improving experienced principals' competences. On the same lines, comprehensive capacity-building programs, which tend to integrate institutional, emotional and community dimensions, emerge with hopeful possibilities toward sustainable school improvement (Piala et al., 2024). Importantly, the Middle Level Leadership approach advocates specialized training for principals, targeting how to best support adolescent learners as well as innovative pedagogy development (Williams & Burgess, 2025).

As technology continues to transform the overall scenario, education has begun to change its way of defining leadership behaviors over time. Fullan et al. (2024) have said about artificial intelligence found in data privacy and instructional quality aspects as well as the fact that it gives new opportunities for smoother workflows, personalized learning, and also data-informed decision-making. Karakose and Tülübás (2024) seem to echo the same sentiment as per the necessity of strategic planning and ethical guidelines to be laid to help utilize the benefits with minor losses, such as from algorithmic bias and privacy infringement.

This is, therefore, highly relevant in the dynamic world of leadership: that is, leading in the name of and towards the mission of effective school governance in the present context includes balancing managerial duties, and instructional oversight and technology adaptation in the overall wellness of the staff alongside student-centered outcomes.

Leaders, therefore, must also meet the heightened accountability their institutions and policy makers demand of them and yet still balance this expectation with digital innovation, requiring ongoing professional development, collaborating partnerships, and the ability to take innovative, flexible responses to new educational demands.

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) is the way learners begin to know themselves, their emotions, their intrapersonal skills, and responsible decision-making, essential qualities for their self-development and the well-being of the community (LeTendre, 2017). Over the past few years, the literature on SEL has grown considerably and certainly serves as an indication of the increasing recognition of SEL's value to the shaping of academic, behavior, and mental health outcomes (Mondi et al., 2021; Yorke et al., 2021). Farhod (2024) pointed out that SEL should really have the objective of turning out more empathetic and resilient individuals navigating better through social relations as well as learning environments. Such skills keep extending beyond the walls of the school, framing the students as better prepared for complicated societal, ethical, and emotional circumstances existing beyond it (Brunner et al., 2025).

The new features of educational technology nab the way SEL shall follow. Scholars point to the future where All tools promise better personalized feedback, early detection of emotional problems, and adaptive learning (Sethi& Jain, 2024). Emerging technologies must be integrated within the parameters of SEL frameworks while taking into account ethical, cultural, and pedagogical perspectives to ensure that opportunities provided by the digital platform will complement and not substitute real human interactions and teacher expertise (Cordeiro et al., 2021).

Arguments in the field of meta-analysis rely on and support the learning effectiveness of SEL with respect to these different stages in human development. For example, Brunner et al. (2025) showed that early childhood interventions emphasizing cognitive and socio-emotional skills lead to future dividends in academic performance and emotional distress reduction. Likewise, Mondy et al. (2021) argue that early structured SEL programs especially beneficial for at-risk populations build strong foundation skills to protect against later behavioral or academic challenges. This is in line with Yorke et al. (2021), where they emphasize that the importance of social-emotional learning during the crisis is when students' mental health and social connectivity become so vulnerable, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Combined, all these studys point to SEL as a multifaceted, transformative approach, which promotes not only individual learners but also the larger educational ecosystem. Addressing issues of emotional regulation, social awareness, and ethical decision-making, SEL can dovetail clearly into more traditional ends of an academic education, for it is designed in recognition of the holistic nature of development in schooling (LeTendre, 2017). Most schools would that include preparing students for uncertain futures into their socio-emotional competencies for all-rounded education where cognitive accomplishment has as counterpart emotional well-being and social responsibility, as stated by Cordeiro et al. (2021).

Character development

Character development in educational contexts can be defined as the intentional and systematic process of teaching and promoting values, ethics, and personal virtues—traits that together direct students in their moral judgments and social interactions (Djafri&Syakhrani, 2025). It has essentially become an accepted doctrine in this field that schools are not merely academic places but rather formative communities where learners come to absorb the norms and attitudes valuable for responsible citizenship (Dabdoub et al., 2024; Dian &Hidayatulloh, 2024). Character education programs deepen students' feelings of empathy, integrity and civic engagement through explicit teaching, modeling a good character, and constant reflection. The outcome of character programs is the establishment of a harmonious environment in schools and communities (Sanjani, 2024).

As per studies, character development that works well acts from a perspective that reaches beyond merely rule-following to one that encourages internalized ethical frameworks. This recognition through ethical beliefs and behaviors fosters a culture of personal responsibility and social accountability among students (Nasution et al., 2024; Kelechi & Ridwan, 2025). In Ghana and many other cultures, emphasis is given to such communal values as respect for elders, cooperation, and assistance. Such emphasis propounds the notion that character building is not merely personal engagement but is also a collective effort fused into the traditions of the community and its moral expectations (Djafri&Syakhrani, 2025).

Moreover, contemporary scholarship points to the complementarity of character education and socio-emotional learning (SEL), suggesting that socio-emotional skills often act as precursors to moral behavior. For instance, a student who is good at emotional regulation and perspective-taking is better able to show empathy and moral judgment in difficult situations (Dabdoub et al., 2024; Dian & Hidayatulloh, 2024). Teachers can connect curricular goals to character-building outcomes through organized teaching methodologies, school-wide programs and transformational leadership reinforcing values through classroom discussions, reflective activities, and real-life applications (Fitriani et al., 2024).

Character development remains an important goal of holistic education, seeing to it that academic achievement is complemented with the moral and social competencies of becoming a responsible and caring citizen. By integrating such values into institutional practices, schools can create respectful and inclusive communities both within and outside the immediate reach of their educational practice.

Leadership as a Catalyst for SEL

Transformational leaders catalyze socio-emotional learning (SEL) making exemplary environments of emotional safety and collaboration and, thus, advocating evidence-based practices (Yilmaz & Tore, 2025; Stevenson & Thompson, 2025). By modeling empathy, openness, and respect, these transformational leaders prompt teachers into adopting SEL techniques into daily learning. These leaders are also interested in furthering professional development offering teachers knowledge and resources for the effective design, delivery, and assessment of SEL activities (Williams & Burgess, 2025). Likewise, effective principals integrate SEL objectives into staff meetings-for consistency in peer reinforcement and peer learning (Piala et al., 2024). Through resource allocations and school policy aligning with socio-emotional priorities, they develop a supportive infrastructure to counterbalance the need for academic attainment with holistic development of the student.

SEL as a Foundation for Character Building

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the foundation for the development of moral values and decent behavior; it helps in internal and external skills development (Zong & Yang, 2025). For instance, by developing self-awareness, managing emotions, and helping build relationships, students learn the attitudes needed to endorse ethical behavior such as being empathetic or respecting one another. Such activities in SEL usually comprise: taking turns in speaking, role play, and solving problems together, with the outcome that such practice helps children view social challenges positively (Foster et al., 2022). Over years, these reinforced prosocial attitudes will mature into higher levels of compassion, integrity, and civic-mindedness, thus building the bridge between immediate social skills and enduring character traits.

Research Methods:-

This study was quantitative in nature as it sought to obtain the structured questionnaire perceptions of educators on leadership practices, socio-emotional learning (SEL), and character development. The target group in this quantitative study was public and private high schools in Cape Coast from January to March 2025, with a sampling strategy of purposive sampling, which resulted in 60 valid responses among teachers, department heads, and SEL coordinators. The result was a diverse sampling of years of experience (1–5, 6–10, 11–15, 16+ years). It also included different subject areas (English, Math, ICT, PE, etc.). The instrument contained three sections: Leadership Practices (Section B), SEL Implementation (Section C), and Character Development (Section D), all which demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha \geq 0.79$). The items have been rated on a five-point Likert scale (from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), which had been subject to pilot testing for clarity and relevance.

Results:-

Table 1:- Demographics.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	28	46.7%
	Female	32	53.3%
Age Range	20–29	18	30.0%
	30–39	20	33.3%
	40–49	14	23.3%
	50 and above	8	13.4%
Role	Teacher	42	70.0%

	Department Head	10	16.7%
	Counselor/SEL Coordinator	3	5.0%
	Other (Admin, Specialist, etc.)	5	8.3%
Years of Experience	1–5 years	16	26.7%
	6–10 years	22	36.7%
	11–15 years	12	20.0%
	16+ years	10	16.6%
School Type	Public	40	66.7%
	Private	20	33.3%
Subject Taught	English / Literature	12	20.0%
	Mathematics	10	16.7%
	Science (Biology/Physics/Chem)	8	13.3%
	Social Studies / History	5	8.3%
	Business / Accounting	4	6.7%
	ICT / Computer Science	5	8.3%
	SEL & Guidance	4	6.7%
	Physical Education (PE)	4	6.7%
	Other (Art, Languages, etc.)	8	13.3%

Source: Compiled by author

The sample from which the population of 60 respondents was drawn reflects the early to mid-career educators in public (66.7%) and private (33.3%) high schools. The sample also achieves a rough gender balance, with 70% of those surveyed being classroom teachers and the other 30 % occupying leadership or specialized roles. Thus, the data yield both the frontline and strategic perspectives on SEL initiative implementation. It is interesting to note that 36.7% of the respondents have teaching experience ranging between 6-10 years. Such significant involvement may signal the readiness of teachers to accept change in teaching practice, which is imperative for the integration of SEL and character developmental practices in educational settings. This combination of roles, experience, and school types can inform quite nuanced policies and training programs, suggesting that leadership practices need to accommodate with a variety of teacher readiness, resource contexts, and curriculum demands to effectively foster socio-emotional and moral competencies in Cape Coast's diverse educational environment.

Table 2:- Leadership Practices.

Table B1:- Reliability of Section B (Leadership Practices).	
Number of Items	6
Cronbach's Alpha (α)	0.82

Source: Compiled by author

Table 2 presents the internal consistency of the Leadership Practices (LP) subscale. With six items measuring elements like vision-sharing, resource allocation, and teacher support, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 indicates strong reliability (Hair et al., 2019). These results suggest that respondents' perceptions of leadership are captured cohesively, reflecting key behaviors and attitudes characteristic of transformative school leadership (Yilmaz & Tore, 2025).

Table 3:- SEL Implementation.

Number of Items	6
Cronbach's Alpha (α)	0.85

Source: Compiled by author

Table 3 shows that the SEL Implementation (SEL) subscale, comprising six items related to classroom activities and teacher collaboration on socio-emotional instruction, achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85. This score underscores the internal coherence of items, which collectively measure how frequently and effectively teachers embed SEL strategies (Foster et al., 2022) into their daily practice.

Table 4:- Character Development.

Number of Items	5
Cronbach's Alpha (α)	0.79

Source: Compiled by author

Table 4 indicates that the Character Development (CD) subscale, consisting of five items addressing moral and ethical student behaviors, reports a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79. While slightly lower than the other subscales, it still meets accepted standards. These items measure outcomes such as empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect, which many scholars view as core components of character education (Djafri&Syakhrani, 2025).

Table 5:- Descriptive Statistics for Sections B, C, and D.

Section	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Section B (Leadership Practices)	2.50	5.00	3.95	0.54
Section C (SEL Implementation)	2.00	5.00	3.80	0.60
Section D (Character Development)	2.20	5.00	3.90	0.68

Source: Compiled by author

Table 5 provides an overview of the average scores and variability for each composite measure. Respondents rated Leadership Practices (M = 3.95, SD = 0.54) favorably, suggesting that most perceive school leaders as supportive and goal-oriented. SEL Implementation (M = 3.80, SD = 0.60) reflects moderate to high integration of socio-emotional teaching strategies, while Character Development (M = 3.90, SD = 0.68) indicates that teachers broadly observe positive ethical and social behaviors among students. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.54 to 0.68, denote moderate variation in responses across the sample.

Table 6:- Correlations Among Sections B, C, and D.

Sections	Section B	Section C	Section D
Section B (Leadership Practices)	—	0.67	0.71
Section C (SEL Implementation)	0.67	—	0.69
Section D (Character Development)	0.71	0.69	—

Source: Compiled by author (**Note:** $p < .01$)

Table 6 shows strong, positive correlations among Leadership Practices (LP), SEL Implementation (SEL), and Character Development (CD). Specifically, LP correlates highly with SEL ($r = 0.67$, $p < .01$) and CD ($r = 0.71$, $p < .01$), mirroring research that emphasizes the role of supportive leadership in fostering socio-emotional strategies and ethical growth (Stevenson & Thompson, 2025). Additionally, SEL (Section C) and CD (Section D) are themselves strongly interlinked ($r = 0.69$, $p < .01$), supporting the argument that socio-emotional competencies underpin moral and prosocial behaviors (Zong& Yang, 2025).

Discussion:-

In general, the study emphasizes that school leadership is crucial to the willingness and ability of teachers to utilize socio-emotional learning (SEL) for better character development. The demographic information confirms the sample to be relatively balanced in gender and has a considerable proportion of mid-career educators who are likely to adopt innovative teaching approaches. This change attitude is practically important for SEL and character education, given that the teachers with mid-experience (6-10 years) usually possess the foundations of their teaching but also have relatively flexible practices that would allow them to integrate new practices in their routines (Foster et al., 2022).

According to the reliability analyses presented in Tables 2 to 4, the measures of Leadership Practices (LP), SEL Implementation (SEL), and Character Development (CD) capture their respective constructs quite effectively. The subscales provide consistent insights into how teachers and school leaders perceive their roles and actions, as shown by the ranges of Cronbach's alpha values from 0.79 to 0.85. This further affirms the proposition that leadership, SEL, and character-building interventions can be systematically evaluated and improved through wisely designed and validated instruments (Hair et al., 2019).

From a descriptive standpoint (Table 5), respondents generally rate their school leadership highly ($M = 3.95$). These insights point to a strong sharing of vision, resource allocation, and teaching support believed to be widely accepted strengths-lumbers with the principles of transformative leadership (Yilmaz and Tore, 2025). Also, the average empty value of 3.80 indicates that SEL Implementation may show moderate consistency for socio-emotional strategy integration, whereas a 3.90 mean average for Character Development indicates what teachers perceive as the ethical and social behaviors displayed by students.

These outcomes are supported by literature, which stresses that when teachers infuse SEL activities in classroom instruction, it promotes student well-being and moral development (Stevenson & Thompson, 2025; Djafri&Syakhrani, 2025)More critically, the high correlational values among LP, SEL, and CD (Table 6) suggest a synergistic relationship whereby when SEL practices are actively championed and modeled by leaders, teachers are more inclined to deploy methods that cultivate empathy, cooperation, and responsible decision-making within learners. This triangulation of synergy is consistent with previous studies that indicate that support from leadership enables the "how" and "why" underpinning socio-emotional initiatives, which translates into deeper moral and prosocial outcomes (Zong& Yang, 2025). The correlation between SEL and character-building ($r = 0.69$) affirms that socio-emotional competencies, namely, self-awareness, relationship skills, and emotional regulation, are basic means for shaping students' ethical behavior and civic-mindedness (Foster et al., 2022).

These findings suggest that, even with the differences in demographic diversity and the roles that might have been played by the respondents regarding teaching, good leadership practices may transcend various experience levels and subject areas to create a common vision regarding SEL and character development. In the resource-variable region of Cape Coast, this becomes a very important factor, as it enables flexible leadership strategies in SEL programs to design and suit specific readiness of teachers, cultural values, and curriculum-related needs. This strengthens the belief that it is indeed compelling leadership, that as supportive as it might seem, should not be restricted to just administrator functions but should at least serve to bring transformational possibilities that change holistic outcome results-academic, socioemotional, and moral as well.

Moving forward, the moderate standard deviations suggest some variability in how schools enact leadership and SEL. Future research might explore qualitative methods-such as interviews or focus groups-to capture context-specific challenges and success stories, thereby offering more fine-grained insights. Additionally, longitudinal research would clarify the causal mechanisms by which leadership interventions influence teachers' engagement with SEL practices and, ultimately, the character of students over time. However, the positive correlations and strong reliability measures observed here will demonstrate possible relationships among leadership, SEL and character education stressing the importance of leadership-centric professional development as reform in the education system of the Ghana school system and beyond.

Conclusion:-

This study emphasizes the crucial importance of transformation leadership for nurturing SEL and character development in Ghanaian high schools. Very high reliability scores ($\alpha \geq 0.79$) attest to a cohesive measurement of leadership, SEL implementation, and moral outcomes; meanwhile, moderate standard deviations (0.54-0.68) imply variance in teacher readiness. In addition, the strong correlations exhibited among leadership, SEL, and character formation lend credence to the synergistic relationship between visionary leadership and positive student tendencies with no statistical disparities distinguishable across public and private schools or among varying experience bands. Although no clear irregularities were obtained from the results, the qualitative exploration can uncover contextually relevant barriers (for example, resource constraints, gaps in professional development). Henceforth, it is imperative for policymakers to ensure such training is targeted and that their implementation is merged further with resource allocation to augment teacher capacity in SEL and character education. Longitudinal and qualitative studies could further shed light on how different styles of leadership are adapted in response to shifting needs over time. Investing in strategic leadership now seems like a viable pathway to sustainable socio-emotional and moral development, considering the range of roles and experience levels that were represented in this sample. Such an inclusive approach is right in line with mid-career educators being ready for experimentation concerning innovative practices. Under these designs, SEL and character building can flourish in various educational settings. In this way, Ghanaian schools can provide enduring ethical and behavioral returns across students in the different demographic and institutional contexts that resonate with the alignment of leadership, teacher development, and well-structured SEL programs.

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