

Journal of Nation-building & Policy Studies (JoNPS)

ISSN: 2516-3124 (Print) ISSN: 2516-3132 (Online)

Indexed by IBSS, EBSCO, ProQuest, COPERNICUS, ERIH PLUS
And Sabinet

Volume 9, Number 1, April 2025

Pp 5-31

A Hybrid Governance System for Community Development in Ghana

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/2516-3132/2025/v9n1a1>

Andrews Jack Dotsey

Department of Adult Education and Human Resource Studies

School of Continuing and Distance Education

College of Education

University of Ghana

jadotsey@ug.edu.gh / sjdotsey@gmail.com

Abstract

Community development outcomes in Ghana are a product of the shared meaning of local government and traditional authorities. Thus, accelerating development in the local communities requires an effective collaboration and fusion of development objectives of the two governance leaders to unearth the unique opportunities embedded within each paradigm. Drawing from the structuration theory and the full range leadership theory, the study explores the key elements of collaborative governance. The research adopts a mixed-method approach for gathering the data to help reveal the complexities and nuances shaped by the dual or parallel nature of governance systems in Ghana. Data was gathered from three regional metropolises in Ghana, specifically Accra, Kumasi and Tamale, which represents the South and North divide in local governance and traditional leadership in Ghana. The study found that collaborative governance was weak in Ghana's local governance landscape, premised on power and resource divergence between the two factions. In leadership attributes, traditional leaders have the people's trust and command their respect as such, they are able to drive social change. However, traditional leaders are materially and symbolically disenfranchised by the constitution, with very

limited power, authority and resources, as these remain the preserve of local government. The local government leaders, on the other hand, have the backing of the law and resources of the state develop the community; however, they lack local community knowledge and the respect of the people. In terms of development priorities, traditional leaders prioritise education, security and health, while local governance prioritises road infrastructure, education, electricity and street lighting. In competences, local governance is more competent in legislative and executive capacity, while traditional leaders have more of a deliberative capacity. From the results, the study puts forward a Tradimodal governance system that operates with the synergy of the local government and traditional authorities, operationalised through adult learning to deepen community development outcomes.

Keywords: *Hybrid Governance, Fusion, Community Development, Local government, Traditional Authority, Metropolis*

1. Introduction

Governance structures in Ghana can be demarcated into traditional and modern democratic governance (Nketia, 2014). These two governance systems have legal and constitutional backing within the country as recognised in the Local Governance Act, 2016, Act 936, and the Chieftaincy Act, 2008, Act 769.

The Act creates districts within the various regions and establishes district assemblies which comprise key members such as the district chief executive, one elected member from each electoral area within the districts, members of parliament of constituencies that fall within the district, as well as appointed members by the president. The Assembly is mandated to plan and oversee the development of local communities through their various functions that encompass administrative, deliberative, legislative, and executive functions.

This Act was meant to create an assembly that is non-partisan to bring key stakeholders in the various districts together by working closely with traditional authorities within the districts. Local governance will therefore act as the link that bridges the gap between national governance and communities in the deployment of resources and policies at the local level (Honyenuga & Wutoh, 2019) and also provide opportunities for community discussions and deliberations.

However, empirical and practical evidence shows that the local governance system has become inherently partisan, with tribal politics mitigating the laurels of democracy in what Acemoglu et al. (2014) have

called elitist politics. Elitist politics creates exclusion, and the winner takes all, as practised in Ghana's electoral system. This system of governance is not beneficial in fast-tracking community engagement and development. Relying on existing protocols for leadership within the local communities, this research will seek to interrogate the potential of traditional and democratic leaders working collaboratively to improve community development outcomes and to discover the modalities necessary for the fusion of the two systems of governance for inclusive growth.

1.2 Research Problem

In Ghana, there are fundamental challenges regarding how existing governance structures impact local community development. First, successive governments of Ghana have struggled with the task of harnessing the potential of both traditional and modern democratic governance systems for community development (Fuseini, 2021; Panyin, 2010). For instance, the Land Act, 2020 Act 1036, which sought to enhance collaboration between democratic leadership and traditional leaders, i.e., the chiefs, for effective management of land resources, had witnessed some desertion in its content when introduced.

Secondly, despite the Chieftaincy Act 759 and the Local Government Act 936, there is no national policy instrument that provides a legal framework for participatory governance for community development. The current discourse on community development in the Ghanaian governance system has been political promises in electioneering campaigns and oftentimes provided in political party manifestos.

The challenge of translating manifestos into concrete development projects and programmes within the communities is a great setback to our current governance system. Typically, because the country is unable to capitalise on the successes of contemporary democracy and traditional government to help local communities develop. There are methodological as well as theoretical gaps in the literature on the study of governance, particularly in Ghana. For instance, current research on the role of education in fostering better governance in Ghana suffers certain fundamental gaps that need to be addressed empirically. Some groups of studies have focused on how education encourages socio-political participation by focusing on a few individuals who have benefitted from non-formal education programmes (Darkwa, 2016; Namoog, 2018). While these studies reveal interesting findings on how non-formal

literacy programmes create empowerment and participation, particularly among women groups, they fail to address the utility of education in offering frameworks to build the capacity of local government leaders. The few studies that focus on structural utilities and barriers to education in Ghana (e.g., Tagoe, 2018) also do not consider how education can improve local governance. Some studies provide evidence to the fact that Ghana runs a governance system where democratic governance works in tandem with traditional governance (Adotey, 2019). However, studies that examine structural factors that influence education in Ghana only focus on the democratic governance system without recourse to traditional governance.

There is therefore limited knowledge regarding how the democratic and traditional governance system in Ghana shapes education in Ghana at the structural level and how education, in turn, shapes local governance for community development. Also, existing literature uses either qualitative or quantitative data in seeking to answer questions related to effective governance. However, the ability to combine different data sources to answer this all-important question is necessary to bring out the nuance that will give meaning to how traditional and democratic governance systems could work together for better community transformation. Additionally, as much as literature has put forward the need for traditional and democratic governance systems to work together for community development, literature so far has not been prescriptive of how this fusion can take place. There is also limited understanding regarding where local governance capacity building and human capital development policies and interventions should focus and the role adult education can play in such policy interventions. This research responds to these gaps in the current research by exploring the effectiveness of merging traditional and modern democratic governance systems for local community development in Ghana. To achieve this, the research will combine three theories from the field of education, governance and public administration to establish how the fusion will be made possible. Also, the study will combine qualitative and quantitative data to establish a better synthesis of the findings and achieve deeper meanings to guide the outcomes and recommendations that may flow out of the research.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The quantitative data addresses the following objectives:

1. Assess the competencies and capacities of local government and traditional authorities for enhancing local governance in the community
2. Identify areas of collaboration between the traditional and local government leaders
3. Assess how adult education can be drawn on to build the capacity of leaders for effective local governance in the community

The qualitative data addresses the following objectives:

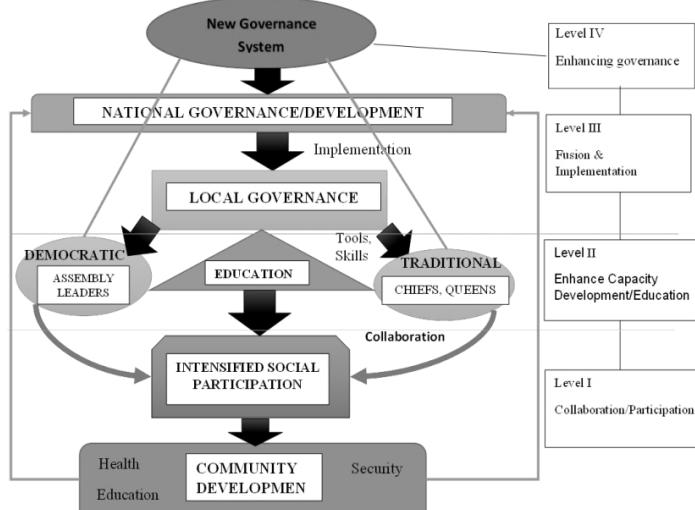
4. Explore the perceptions of local and traditional government leaders for enhancing governance and the challenges that undermine collaborations between the two governance leaders for effective community development.
5. Propose a hybrid governance system that can drive the community development agenda in Ghana through collaboration.

1.4 Research Conceptualisation

The study conceptualises a fusion between the two governance structures in Ghana, specifically traditional and modern local government, to create a new governance model. An enhanced and intensified social action and participation will be generated as a result of the collaboration between the key governance divide facilitated by adult education. This will help build leadership capacities for effective governance, which is expected to result in improved community development.

Community development at the district or local level will have a direct positive influence on national governance and development as a consequence of the fusion of the two systems and the active and inclusive participation of all stakeholders in the community. Education, more especially adult learning will be the centrepiece of this revolutionising leadership. It is envisioned that this hybrid governance system will facilitate an effective bottom-up and top-down approach for sustainable development in the community and overall national development.

Figure 1: Conceptualisation of a new governance system for Ghana



Source: Authors Illustration.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Hybrid Governance and Community Development

In several countries such as Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mexico and others, individuals live in a sort of dual polity (Holzinger et al., 2016), such that state governance and traditional rulership in the local communities coexist. In Africa, several researchers have explored the participation of local community members in the traditional governance process within their local or traditional areas (Houle & Conroy-Krutz, 2025; Fuseini, 2021; Akateeba et al., 2018). According to Houle & Conroy-Krutz (2025), traditional authority are the pre-existing traditional institutions of governance before colonial boundaries were created, which weakened their authority. Traditional institutions play an important role in maintaining customary practices underpinning ethnic identities. The strength of ethnic identity in modern day is connected to the ability of traditional authority to organise collective action, serving as the de facto institution of local governance. Local communities are more drawn to traditional governance compared to decentralised governance in their local areas. Powerful traditional authorities increase collective action to drive the provision of local public goods (Baldwin, 2025).

In Ghana, there is a growing research interest in traditional governance systems (Akateeba et al., 2018; Fuseini, 2021; Mahama, 2009). For instance Akateeba et al. (2018), explore collaboration between chiefs and local public bureaucrats in land delivery in Ghana using interviews and conclude that strong institutional capacities are needed for pro-poor land governance. Honyenuga and Wutoh (2018) find conflicting roles being performed by chiefs and local government actors, resulting in role conflicts in the Volta region of Ghana.

Despite the leadership tensions between traditional authorities and local government actors at the local levels, some studies provide evidence of the persistent critical roles that traditional authorities play in the development of local communities (Fuseini, 2021). For instance, Dapilah et al. (2013) report that traditional authorities play an important role in the development of education, employment creation, preservation of cultural heritage, and environmental sustainability in the Wecheau Traditional Area.

2.2 Adult Education, Social Participation and Community Development

Social participation is central to how adult education contributes to local governance and development at the community level in Ghana. Social participation ensures that all local community interest groups can be brought on board to directly participate in the leadership and decision-making processes within their local communities and neighbourhoods (Kim & Lee, 2019).

In Africa, interest in the role of adult education in leadership participation is rising. Kuenzi (2006) conducted one of the earlier studies to investigate the effects of education, formal and nonformal, on political participation in rural Senegal. The researcher found that non-formal adult education programmes increased the likelihood that one will vote and contact officials regarding community and personal problems. Brown (2020) defends the value of adult education, saying they provide space for learners to come into the presence in an unscripted manner. Also, Edwards et al. (2021), in reviewing the educational systems of Mexico, conclude that adult education and community organising can contribute to the foundations of community empowerment.

In Ghana, Baah-Ennimh et al. (2005) reveal micro-level participation of women in community development and governance is still lacking in comparison with the size of their number because of lower educational outcomes for this group.

This current study believes that given the ubiquitous role that adult education plays in driving socio-political participation in local communities, there is a fundamental question of how education can be the rallying ground for the fusion of the two governance canons for better development.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Setting and Data

The present study is extracted from a doctoral project that used a mixed-method approach to explore the Fusion of modern democratic and traditional governance systems in promoting community development in Ghana. The study was conducted among three select districts in the Accra, Kumasi and Tamale Metropolis. The three districts have strong representations of traditional and modern systems of governance that work hand in hand in making developmental decisions within the districts. The study specifically used a questionnaire, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to gather its data spanning from January to October 2022.

3.2 Study Participants

The participants of the study comprised local governance and traditional rulership. For local governance, the population included leadership of the Metropolitan Assembly, assemblymen and assemblywomen, and unit committee members of each of the electoral areas. In terms of traditional governance, the population included the leadership of the Ga-Adangbe Kingdom, Ashanti Kingdom and Tamale Kingdom, local chiefs, queen mothers, and palace elders from each local town. The total participants for the qualitative study were 140, comprising 51 respondents from Kumasi, 46 from Tamale and 43 from Accra. For the quantitative analysis, a total of 370 participants were sampled for the study, consisting of 132 respondents from Kumasi, 130 from Accra, and 108 from Tamale.

The sample for the qualitative component was informed by suggestions from qualitative methodologists such as Morse (1994) and Creswell (2017). The study selected its quantitative sample using a published sample size table from Israel (1992). A non-probability

Sampling technique was used in selecting the participants for the present study.

3.3 Ethical Issues

Ethical standards were duly considered in the data-collection process. The application for ethical clearance through the Ethical Review Board of the College of Humanities, University of Ghana, was obtained to conduct the study. The participants were guaranteed their confidentiality and privacy of the information they would provide. Participants went through informed consent processes before they were included in the current study.

3.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis following the procedures of Clarke and Braun (2013) for analysing interview data. The scholars proposed a stage approach when analysing qualitative data thematically. The research used the first stage of the thematic analysis to transcribe the audio data into transcripts. The next stage involved thoroughly reading and coding the transcripts. The third stage involved grouping the codes into minor themes. The last stage involved grouping the minor themes into major themes in ways that provided insight into the research question under study. The qualitative findings are presented using themes, codes, and quotes from participants' narratives. The quantitative data of the study was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics were presented using frequencies and percentages to estimate the data patterns. The data was then interpreted for meanings from which conclusions and recommendations were drawn.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Demographics Characteristics of Participants

The total sample for the quantitative study was 370 respondents. Kumasi metropolis captured 35.7% of the respondents, Greater Accra metropolis 35.1% and Tamale metropolis 29.2%. With reference to the governance

module, local government respondents were 54.6% with traditional authority and 45.4% of respondents. In terms of gender distribution, the sample was dominated by male respondents (76.2%) with the remaining 23.8% being females. The ages of the respondents ranged between 26 years and 67 years. In terms of their educational level, 35.7% had high school education, 23.8% had a diploma/HND, 18.4% have a bachelor's degree, 14.9% have up to basic education, 1.1% have a master's degree and 1.1% have not attended any school.

In terms of the qualitative survey, the majority of the participants formed the focus group discussions (77.1%) with 22.9% being individual interviews with selected stakeholders.

The distribution in terms of region and gender is similar to the quantitative data, however, regarding the type of government, the majority of the participants were from the traditional government (65.7%) with 34.3% from the local government. Also, the age distribution was higher, and in terms of their educational background, all participants were educated.

4.1.2 Development Priorities of Local and Traditional Government Leaders

The respondents were asked to list their five topmost development priorities within their local communities. The essence was to examine the extent to which development priorities within their local communities align with the vision of governance leaders (see table 1). Twenty (20) development priorities emerged from the two groups. For the local government respondents, the topmost community development priorities are road infrastructure (57.2%), educational facilities (50.5%), electricity and street lighting (49.5%), and security (42.1%). Meanwhile, the traditional authorities topmost community development priorities are educational facilities (94.6%), health facilities (49.4%), security (49.4%), road infrastructure (48.8%), and sanitation and waste management (45.2%).

Even though the data outcome reveals some level of alignment of top priorities regarding education and security, the level of prioritisation differs. For instance, while traditional leaders place education as the highest development agenda for the community with over 90% selecting it, only 50% of local governance leaders selected education as a top priority. Also, sanitation is key to traditional leaders but not a top priority for local government. The traditional government leaders rated health

facilities, sanitation and waste management, and access to water/boreholes as development priorities higher than local government leaders. On the other hand, the local government leaders rated road infrastructure, electricity and street lighting as top priorities more than the traditional leaders.

Table 1 Development Priorities

Development Priorities	Local Government		Traditional Leaders	
	f	%	f	%
1. Road Infrastructure	116	57.2%	82	48.8%
2. Bridges	12	5.9%	20	11.9%
3. Drainage system	52	25.7%	38	22.6%
4. Educational Facilities	102	50.5%	158	94.6%
5. Microfinance Support	7	3.5%	5	2.9%
6. Health Facilities	60	29.7%	83	49.4%
7. Markets	59	29.2%	65	38.7%
8. Recreational Facilities	20	9.9%	16	9.5%
9. Sanitation / Waste Management	67	33.2%	76	45.2%
10. Security	85	42.1%	83	49.4%
11. Electricity/Street Lighting	100	49.5%	62	36.9%
12. Toilet Facilities	15	7.4%	21	12.5%
13. Youth Employment / Empowerment	21	10.4%	36	21.4%
14. Farmer Support / Agriculture	3	1.5%	12	7.1%
15. Water /Boreholes	50	24.8%	52	31.5%
16. Unspecified Infrastructure	13	6.4%	16	9.5%
17. Active Participation	0	0	5	2.9%
18. Support for Needy	4	2.1%	11	6.5%
19. Information Centre	4	2.1%	1	0.6%
20. Traffic Light	10	4.9%	5	2.9%

4.1.3 Competencies and Capacities of Local and Traditional Government Leaders

The respondents were asked to assess their own competencies and capacities in several competency areas needed for local leadership within the Ghanaian context. The total mean scores showed that the

respondents rated themselves relatively high on knowledge of assembly by-laws ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.87$), resource mobilisation ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.99$), conflict management and dispute resolution ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 0.99$) and project monitoring and evaluation ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.94$). However, they rated themselves very low in the areas of knowledge of legal process and the law regarding the Assembly ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.17$), ICT competence ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 1.30$) and knowledge of the 1992 constitution ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.17$).

Thus this study finds that traditional leaders remain strong in conflict management and dispute resolution with a mean score of (3.77), a skill which is linked to their deliberative abilities. However, they are lacking in areas such as information and communication technology (1.97), knowledge of the 1992 Constitution (1.19) and legal processes and the law (1.98). Therefore, the key strength of traditional leaders lies in their close participation in the affairs of the society, as given by their ability to resolve conflict. Key to development is the cooperation and participation of the community. Herein lies the role of the traditional leaders in championing the development agenda of the government and encouraging community participation.

Therefore, local governance leaders need to engage traditional leaders, to understand their development projects and programmes while traditional leaders should assist the local government to plant such projects in the community by ensuring the buy-in of the people; herein lies the concept of fusion or synergy in governance paradigms. This discussion is supported by Panyin (2010), who also points out that better and faster growth of communities and the nation as a whole is made possible with more collaboration between traditional and democratic leadership.

This study identifies the key role that traditional leaders can play to enhance community development under the current leadership paradigm of the country. This is echoed by a traditional leader in Tamale who says:

The assembly, the assembly. They will be very strong if they had linked up with the chiefs. Okay. Because, um, we have cultural backing of the people to be able to push local development. They go in with the people who allow them. But if you come and consult with the chiefs here, the chiefs, you work with the chiefs. Even the police do that before the people cooperate with them' (Traditional Chief, Tamale).

Having identified the strength of traditional leaders for enhancing community development, the study also sieves out the strength of local

government. The findings reveal that local governance leaders stand tall against traditional leaders in terms of knowledge of assembly bye-laws (4.09), resource mobilisation (4.00) and project management (3.67). The key competencies of this group compared to the traditional leaders can be explained by constitutional backing and differences in educational levels among the two groups. For example, executive functions focus on the power to lead and execute provisions of the law. The 1992 Constitution and the Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 936) give executive powers to the local governance system rather than to the traditional governance. Therefore, there is constitutional backing that gives local government leaders power to manage the local assemblies. For instance, the MCEs derive authority from the president and represent the president within the districts. Whoever controls resources controls power – tax resources (e.g., market tolls), manage other resources (such as gold reserves), and give them locus to exert power influence. These findings align with the structuration theory, which assumes that structures feed into role play and power (Hustedde & Ganowicz, 2002). In our contexts, the structure of our local governance allocates executive and legislative functions to assembly leaders and mandates traditional leaders to contribute to deliberations in running the assemblies.

Table 2: Competencies and proficiencies

Competency Areas	Total	Local Government	Traditional Government
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
Knowledge of the Assembly bylaws	3.93 (0.87)	4.09 (1.33)	3.98 (0.82)
Resource mobilisation and management	3.88 (0.79)	4.00 (0.77)	3.75 (0.78)
Conflict management and dispute resolution	3.81 (0.99)	3.83 (1.01)	3.77 (0.97)
Project monitoring and evaluation	3.63 (0.94)	3.67 (0.87)	3.57 (1.02)
Knowledge of central government policies	3.47 (1.11)	3.45 (1.13)	3.49 (1.07)
Project development planning	3.36 (1.95)	3.37 (0.99)	3.36 (0.91)
Budgeting and Finance	3.23 (1.03)	3.43 (0.98)	3.00 (1.04)
Knowledge of the 1992 Constitution	2.26 (1.17)	2.31 (1.10)	1.19 (1.24)
Information Communication Technology (ICT)	2.15 (1.30)	2.29 (1.30)	1.97 (1.29)
Legal processes and the law	2.13 (1.17)	2.24 (1.12)	1.98 (1.21)

Source: Field data (2022)

4.1.4 Areas of Collaboration

In terms of areas of collaboration, the study finds strong collaboration in land administration ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.11$), development of by-laws ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.84$), appointments ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.88$), and economic and business development ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.89$) (see Table 3). The areas where they least collaborate include the setting of development agendas for communities ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 2.11$), healthcare planning and development ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 0.93$), dispute resolution ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.89$), and education planning and development ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.12$). Several challenges were identified that undermine the collaborative work between the local government and traditional leaders within the communities. The thematic challenges that emerged were issues of lack of empowerment for traditional leaders, power sharing, funding architecture and divisions among traditional chiefs.

Table 3: Areas of collaboration between local and traditional governments

Areas of collaboration assessment	Total	KMA	TMA	AMA
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)
1. Land administration	4.44 (1.11)	4.93 (.87)	2.07(1.13)	3.00 (1.43)
2. Development of bye laws	4.28 (0.84)	3.90 (1.01)	2.19 (1.21)	4.73 (.63)
3. Appointments	4.14 (0.88)	4.08 (.97)	3.93 (.78)	4.38 (.46)
4. Economic and business development	4.20 (0.89)	3.83 (.88)	3.00 (1.43)	3.57 (1.43)
5. Security	3.65 (1.21)	3.58 (1.13)	2.81 (1.43)	4.42 (.68)
6. Infrastructural development	3.47 (1.11)	3.78 (1.11)	3.93 (1.22)	2.76 (1.21)
7. Natural resource management	3.66 (0.89)	3.72 (1.11)	3.00 (1.12)	2.22 (1.13)
8. Law enforcement	3.35 (0.88)	3.96 (.97)	1.52 (1.43)	3.42 (1.43)
9. Education planning and development	2.88 (1.12)	3.96 (1.11)	1.14 (2.11)	3.01 (1.43)
10. Dispute resolution	2.82 (0.89)	3.58 (1.22)	2.56 (1.12)	2.27 (1.21)
11. Healthcare planning and development	2.15 (0.93)	4.09 (.67)	2.14 (1.11)	3.12 (1.11)
12. Setting community development agenda	2.07 (2.11)	2.10 (1.23)	1.07 (1.13)	2.00 (1.43)

Source: Field data (2022)

4.1.4 Perceptions of the Governance Systems

Using qualitative analysis, the study assessed the perceptions of governance participants on the counterparty group. In the first place, the participants were asked to discuss what they considered to be the strengths and weaknesses of the two governance systems. The local government leaders identified four thematic strengths of traditional authorities, which largely centred on cultural legitimacy. One of the chiefs indicated that the local assembly needed to partner with chiefs so that they could draw strength from their cultural legitimisation to become stronger within the communities:

The assembly, They will be very strong if they had linked up with the chiefs. Okay. Because, um, we have cultural backing of the people to be able to push local development ..." (Traditional Chief, Tamale)

Linked to cultural legitimacy is the idea of moral authority, which also came up strongly as strength of the traditional governance system.

.... The Chiefs have moral obligation to fulfil. They are also seen as custodians and owners of the land and so whatever happens to the people are their responsibility to take care of.....(Assembly Member, TMA, Tamale).

The participants from the district assemblies also referred to the fact that the traditional leaders are best communicators to the people in the local communities.

The traditional leaders command respect in the community. They are able to communicate well with the people in the community (Assembly Member, AMA, Accra).

In the fourth place, participants identified historical knowledge of the community as a key strength of traditional leaders.

The traditional leaders have in-depth knowledge about lands, rivers, cultural practices like naming ceremonies, marriage rite and festivals. Incantations and libations are poured for sacrifices (Assembly Member, KMA, Kumasi).

In terms of the strength of local government leaders, three key thematic pointers are identified as the key strengths of local government leaders, such as access to money and resources, legal authority, and enforcement of authority.

Access to money and resources emerged as the dominant theme on the strength of local governments.

.....The local government supervises all central government projects. Example is the One district one factory" (Assembly Member, KMA, Kumasi)

Legal authority also emerged as a very strong theme of the strength of the local government authority. Participants from the district assemblies alluded to the legal authority that backs their activities:

We have the legal authority to arrest people who breach the law. Sometimes the law gives the assembly the authority to even seize people's properties when they go contrary to rules and regulations of the assembly" (Assembly Member, KMA, Kumasi).

Related to the legal authority is the fact that the local government leaders have enforcement authority.

.....The community and the government have the enforcement authority so that two must work together to able to implement development....." (Divisional Chief, Accra).

Given the clear authority and resource difference between the two sides of governance, there is always tension and conflict between the local government and the traditional leaders. This is because the assembly has total control over funds (District Assembly Common Fund (DACF) and Internally Generated Funds (IGF)), which they operate without the consultation of the traditional leaders who also think they have the ideas and more capacity to drive the community development agenda given their role and place. This is highlighted in the statement by traditional authorities from the three regions.

There is always a tension or conflict between the local government and the traditional leaders, this is because the assembly has total control over funds (both DACF and IGF) they operate without the consultation of the traditional leaders which they also think they have the ideas in building their communities', (Traditional Chief, Kumasi).

The local government in their operations don't allocate any resources to support the activities of the traditional leaders', (Traditional Elder, Tamale).

The local government have control over all the assembly resources and uses it for what they think is important and don't involve the traditional leaders'. (Divisional Chief, Accra).

The findings from this study align with findings from previous studies reported in other African countries such as Cameroon (Cheka, 2008), South Africa (Amoateng & Kalule-Sabiti, 2011) and Ghana (Adjei et al., 2017; Honyenuga & Wutoh, 2019), which all point to the fact that resource allocation, resource management and power structures undermine fruitful partnerships and alliances between traditional institutions and local government functionaries in grassroots development.

4.2 Discussions

The key findings from the study using both the quantitative and qualitative data support the fusion of traditional authorities and local government leaders to champion community development. Analysing the quantitative data, the study finds that local government leaders have more formal education than traditional leaders, in terms of their academic qualifications and in terms of skill acquisition for leadership. There is weak collaboration in community planning, health and educational planning. This can be explained by the fact that the two leadership groups have different development priorities. Traditional leaders prioritise education, health and security, local government prioritises road infrastructure, education and electrification.

The educational background and skill set as revealed by their competencies call for a retooling of governance leaders through education, especially in legal matters and project management for the traditional leaders and communication modules for the local government leaders.

Results from the qualitative data point out key strengths in the two governance systems. The key strengths of local government are their access to money and resources, legal authority and enforcement of authority. The key strengths of traditional leaders are their cultural legitimacy, moral authority, communication competencies and historical knowledge. The major challenge to collaborative governance is the lack of empowerment of traditional leaders in terms of material resources and symbolic empowerment. Again, power-sharing challenges, funding architecture and divisions amongst chiefs all work against collaboration in governance in Ghana. The way to achieve collaboration is by ensuring

symbolic empowerment of traditional leaders, material empowerment and consensus building. Concerning this, the traditional leaders call for more education in legal education and the constitution to bring them up to speed with the roles and responsibilities under the constitution. They equally call for collaborative educational programmes and projects.

4.2.1 Hybrid Governance

This research proposed a hybrid governance system to support and accelerate the growth and development of local communities in Ghana. The findings from the study establish that traditional leaders have the hearts of the people, as they are effective communicators. Effective communication can get the information to the heart; however, local governance leaders cannot communicate as effectively as traditional leaders.

“The position of the chiefs gives them the power to communicate with the people in the community and make them follow whatever they say” (Assembly Member, TMA, Tamale).

The people respect the words of the traditional leaders, especially the chief, more than even the DCE or MCE.

“They are able to speak to the people to follow without using force as compared to the assembly where they sometimes involve taskforce and the police in their operations” (Assembly Member, KMA, Kumasi)

On the other hand, the local government has the financial and legal authority but not the ears of the people. They have legitimacy and sway, as echoed in this statement:

“They have their money. Every year, the government allocates huge amounts of money to them. They also collect several taxes from the traders and commercial drivers and other businesses within the Assembly. So, in terms of money, they have more power” (Traditional Council Member, Accra).

Traditional leaders are materially and symbolically disenfranchised by the current constitution. The constitution has created the local governance system.

“Once the constitution has done that, they have legal authority within the assembly” (Traditional Chief, Tamale.). They have the legal or law backing to their activities,

so they are able to generate more money and use it to manage the communities under them" (Traditional Elder, Kumasi).

Given the revealed differences in power, authority, resources and influence, how do we fuse the two governance systems to transform communities?

The research proposes a Tradimodal Government Model (Figure 3). The Tradimodal Governance model draws on the synergy of strengths of local government and traditional government, as have been unearthed in the present study. The model situates human resource development at the centre of resolving the symbolic and material tensions inherent in the current systems of local leadership.

Education should be the rallying ground for this synergy. Chiefs indicate they do not know their role under the constitution, and they are not being educated in that area. The findings also point to the fact that there is no joint leadership training that can highlight modules of improving the lot of the community as a joint force.

No concerted training programs...., We have never done that before" (Divisional Chief, Accra). "They don't run meeting and training sections for traditional leaders to be updated with current and significant issues as far as community development is concern" (Chief, Kumasi).

Education here will consist of specialised adult learning modules addressing the educational divide and bridging the knowledge gap for empowerment. If traditional leaders are materially resourced and symbolically empowered, they will be able to effectively champion the programmes of the local governance leaders. This shared drive will achieve greater growth in the community. Similarly, if the local governance leaders are allowed to share somewhat in the space of traditional leaders in terms of the respect of the people, the sense of acceptance and respect will increase their desire to remain accountable and champion greater growth of the community. This is because traditional leaders are seen to be strong on cultural legitimacy, moral authority, communication competence, and historical knowledge, all of which helps in social mobilisation within the local communities. To share space with traditional leaders, local governance must invest in historical knowledge of the communities they govern so that their actions do not infringe on the needs and belief systems of the people.

Also, they must learn effective communication and community engagement so that their development strategies garner the needed support.

How do they share in the space of traditional leader? Traditional leaders should advise on the selection of candidates for the local government and endorse their candidacy during elections, thereby entrusting them to the people. This process of embracing one another will bring out the Tradimodal governance system as conceptualised and re-echoed by the research findings. Community development relies on unity of purpose as a way to reduce apathy.

"The ultimate is to develop the communities, so unity of purpose is important" (Divisional Chief, Accra).

This synergy will facilitate community development along key thematic United Nations development goals such as improvements in education, health and security. These development pointers have been emphasised by the traditional leaders as given in their top three priority areas and equally collaborated on by local governance leaders as their development focus. The ideals of better education, health and security can be attained when the two parties recognise and create the avenues to work together for the good of the community. This point is echoed by the traditional authorities when they say

"They try to organize a community meeting and discussion. There should be more such meetings where we both meet to deliberate on issues of our communities and build consensus" (Traditional Council Member, Accra) "There should also be proper structures of engagement (meetings and training and capacity development programs) for traditional leaders to empower them" (Traditional Council Member, Tamale).

Cincinnato et al. (2016) point out adult education has an indirect impact on participation by raising the consciousness and confidence of the local community leader. Iñiguez-Berrozpe et al. (2020) believe non-formal education or adult learning will also empower women to overcome the structural barriers to participation in their community leadership processes and decision-making. Particularly, this is important in the Ghanaian setting in which we seek more women's participation in governance. Participants from the two governance systems all identify educational training as a key to unleashing their potential to drive growth in the community. For instance, they mention the need to

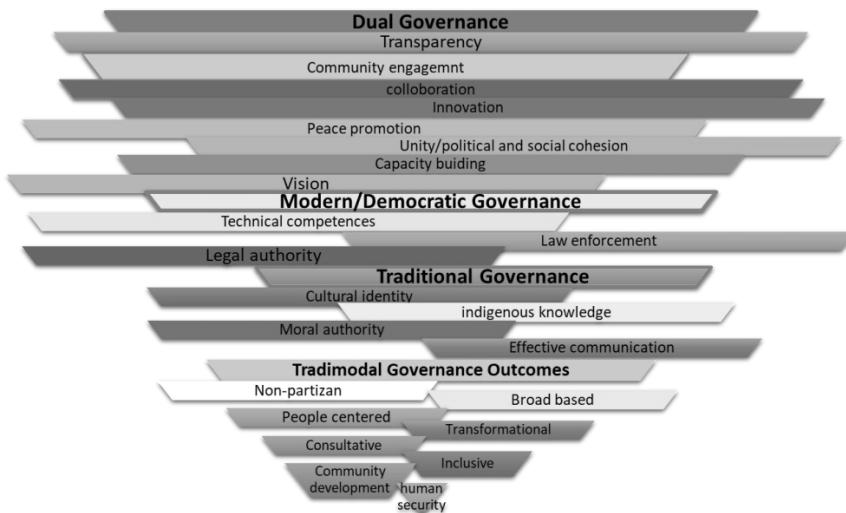
To train them on security, to train them on how to support their children to go to school, to train them on, how to help tidy up sanitation in the community' (Divisional Chief, Accra.) "And they adult learning programs in the community for both traditional leaders and local government leaders" (Traditional Council Member, Accra) 'Yeah, and you see, the education will make people understand' [Assembly Member, Kumasi].

Adult education or non-formal literacy programs therefore constitutes critical structural opportunity for symbolically liberating adult learners by providing them with knowledge and skills that awakens their critical consciousness in order to transform their lives and communities (Kutame & Kwapon, 2019). Mbaku (2020) calls for all African countries, to develop and implement educational programs to help citizens understand and appreciate the constitution and its provisions, and recognize the law for their private lives, to guide conflicts resolutions including those arising from trade and other forms of exchange. Programs for empowering youth and women could be particularly fruitful.

These submissions alongside the outcomes of this study therefore underscore the call for adult learning modules to serve as the bedrock to achieving the synergy that is need for governance at the local community level in Ghana. When both traditional and local governance leaders are able to offer one another equal respect and space in governance, the local community will be the benefactor of the synergy (as illustrated in figure 3).

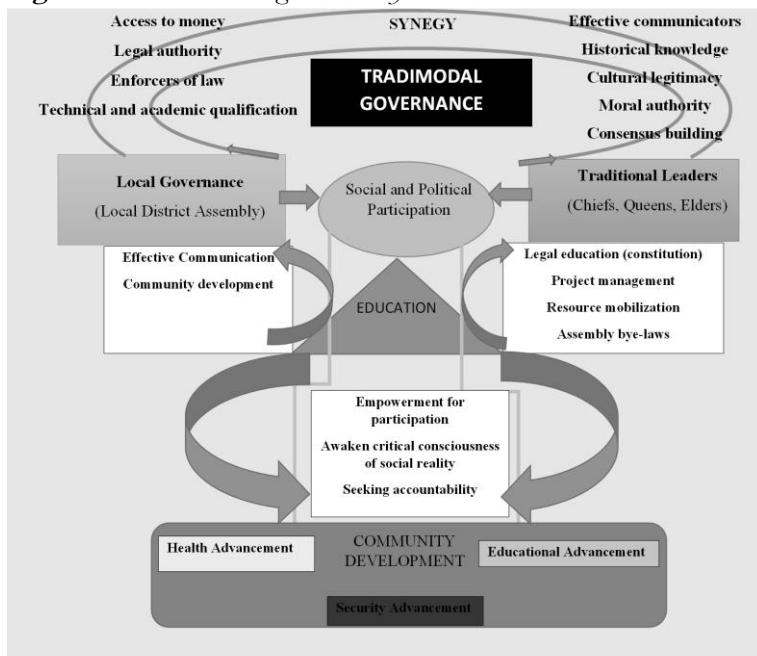
The Tradimodal governance system derives its strength from the traditional and modern/ governance systems currently existing in the country. Traditional governance has the building blocks of cultural identity, indigenous knowledge ending with effective communication (see in figure 2). Modern governance has legal authority, technical competence and law enforcement capabilities. Working together, the two provide a leadership that has the ingredients of transparency, collaboration, unity, capacity building etc. Effective collaboration and synergy coming from this duality of governance will lead to community development that encompasses inclusivity, consultation and human security amongst others.

Figure 2: Characteristics of new the governance system



Source: Authors' construct

Figure 3. A Tradimodal governance system



Source: Authors' construction from study findings

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study adopts a mixed method approach to predict governance outcomes that can emanate from the fusion of traditional governance and local government leadership (democratic governance). The study identified key knowledge gaps, strength and weaknesses amongst both side of the divide, which present unique opportunities for a new governance modern which I term the 'Tradimodal' governance. This new governance system will lead to better community development outcomes encompasses inclusivity, consultation, human security etc. Following the research findings and proposal, the study thereby recommends training programs for community leaders with the following priority areas;

- The traditional leaders should be trained and given refresher courses on the 1992 Constitution, Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), Chieftaincy Act, 2008, the ACT that revises and consolidates the Chieftaincy Act, 1971 (Act 370), as well as and development of bye-laws for District Assemblies,
- There should be a setting up of periodic joint meetings for training and capacity building for both local and traditional government leaders on core skill areas such as Information Communication Technology (ICT), Legal Education, resource mobilization, budget and project planning and evaluation. This will also enhance networking and team building critical for collaborative work
- To facilitate institutional capacity development, a special national institution such as a Chieftaincy College dedicated to the leadership empowerment and development of traditional leaders should be set up. This will be the precursor to the Tradimodal governance system.
- Also, there is the need to review the District Assemblies' Common Fund (DCAF) to allocate percentage to traditional leaders to support development of their local communities. This recommendation aligns with earlier calls by some civil society organizations such as The African Centre for Traditional Governance and Community Development which advocate for 10% allocation of the DCAF for Chiefs to support development in their localities.

5.1 Limitations and Recommendation for Further Studies

There is one key limitation to this study that needs to be pointed out. The study was not able to interview ordinary community members to get their insights on the type of governance the local community needs to drive its economic and social growth.

- I. Future studies should focus on identifying key leadership traits and strategies that the community members identify as key to sustainable community engagement and development to further enrich the proposed Tradimodal model in this current research.
- II. Also, future studies should focus on comparative study of the impact of adult education intervention programs on improving competence and collaboration between local and traditional government leaders in facilitating local community development.

Acknowledgements

Appreciations go the Accra, Kumasi and Tamale Metropolitan assembly for their willingness to participate in this study by being part of the survey respondents. Also, appreciation goes to the chiefs and elders of the various assemblies for their warm reception when approached to participate in this research.

References

Acemoglu, D., Reed, T., & Robinson, J. A. (2014). Chiefs: Economic development and elite control of civil society in Sierra Leone. *Journal of Political Economy*, 122(2), 319-368.

Adjei, P. O. W., Kwaku Busia, A., & Bob-Milliar, G. M. (2017). Democratic decentralization and disempowerment of traditional authorities under Ghana's local governance and development system: a Spatio-temporal review. *Journal of Political Power*, 10(3), 303-325

Adotey, E. (2019). Parallel or dependent? The state, chieftaincy and institutions of governance in Ghana. *African Affairs*, 118(473), 628-645. <https://doi.org/10.1093/AFRAF/ADY060>

Akaateba, M. A., Huang, H., & Adumpo, E. A. (2018). Between co-production and institutional hybridity in land delivery: Insights from local planning practice in peri-urban Tamale, Ghana. *Land Use Policy*, 72, 215-226.

Amoateng, A. Y., & Kalule-Sabiti, I. (2011). local governance and spatial distribution of resources: The need to harness traditional leadership for service delivery in South Africa. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies-Multi-, Inter-and Transdisciplinarity*, 6(2), 36-54.

Awinsong, W. A. (2019). Ghanaian Agency in Democratization: Examining Democracy Promotion in US-Ghana Relations After The Cold War, 1992 2001. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan).

Baah-Ennumh, T. Y., Owusu, S. E., & Kokor, J. Y. (2005). Participation of women in local governance in Ghana: a case study of Ashanti region. *Journal of Science and Technology (Ghana)*, 25(1), 95-107.

Baldwin, K. (2025). Traditional Authorities Around the World: Toward a Better Understanding of their De Facto Power, Downward Accountability, and State Recognition. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 28.

Boateng, P. (2013). *Dualism in local Governance: The Case of Chieftaincy and local Government in Small Communities of Akyem Abuakwa State of Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).

Brown, M. (2020). Pedagogical development in older adult education: A critical community-based approach. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 52(1), 16-34.

Cheka, C. (2008). Traditional authority at the crossroads of governance in Republican Cameroon. *Africa Development*, 33(2).

Cincinnato, S., De Wever, B., Van Keer, H., & Valcke, M. (2016). The influence of social background on participation in adult education: Applying the cultural capital framework. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 66(2), 143-168.

Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The psychologist*, 26(2), 120-123.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. *Sage publications*.

Dapilah, F., Bonye, S. Z., & Dawda, T. D. (2013). From conquerors to development partners: The changing roles of traditional authorities in local level development and governance in Ghana. *Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Studies*, 11(2), 3-13.

Darkwa, L. A. O. (2016). In Our Father's Name in Our Motherland: The Politics of Women's Political Participation in Ghana. *papers.ssrn.com*

Edwards Jr, D. B., DeMatthews, D., Spear, A., & Hartley, H. (2021). Community participation and empowerment in marginalized contexts : leveraging parental involvement, adult education, and community organizing through social justice leadership. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 51(8), 1190-1207.

Fuseini, I. (2021). Navigating traditional and modern institutions in city governance: the role of chieftaincy in spatial planning in Tamale, Ghana. *African Studies*, 80(2), 230-248.

Holzinger, K., Kern, F. G., & Kromrey, D. (2016). The dualism of contemporary traditional governance and the state: Institutional setups and political consequences. *Political Research Quarterly*, 69(3), 469-481.

Honyenuga, B. Q., & Wutoh, E. H. (2019). Ghana's decentralized governance system: the role of Chiefs. *International Journal of Public Leadership*.

Houle, C., & Conroy-Krutz, J. (2025). Colonial Mapmaking, Ethnic Identity, and Traditional Authority in Africa. *British Journal of Political Science*, 55, e28.

Hustedde, R. J., & Ganowicz, J. (2002). The basics: what's essential about theory for community development practice?. *Community Development*, 33(1), 1-19.

Iniguez-Berrozpe, T., Elboj-Saso, C., Flecha, A., & Marcaletti, F. (2020). Benefits of adult education participation for low educated women. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 70(1), 64-88.

Israel, G. D. (1992). Determining sample size (Fact sheet PEOD-6). University of Florida.

Kim, S., & Lee, J. (2019). Citizen Participation, Process, and Transparency in local Government: An Exploratory Study. *Policy Studies Journal*, 47(4), 1026-1047.

Kuenzi, M. T. (2006). Nonformal education, political participation, and democracy: Findings from Senegal. *Political Behavior*, 28(1), 1-31.

Kutame, L. C., & Kwapon, O. F. (2019). Assessment of Learning Needs of Street Vendors in Ghana: Implications for Adult Education. In *Learning Cities, Town Planning, and the Creation of Livelihoods* (pp. 137-149). IGI Global.

Local Government Service (2015). Local Governance Act, 2016, ACT 936. <https://lgs.gov.gh/law-acts-legislative-instrument/>.

Mahama, C. (2009). local government and traditional authorities in concert: Towards a more productive relationship. *Commonwealth Journal of local Governance*, 7-25.

Mbaku, J. M. (2020). Good and inclusive governance is imperative for Africa's future. *Brookings*. February, 3, 2020.

Morse, J. M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research. In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S., *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd Ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Myers, W. M., & Fridy, K. S. (2017). Formal versus traditional institutions: evidence from Ghana. *Democratization*, 24(2), 367-382.

Namoog, M. Y. (2018). *Non-Formal Education and District Assembly Women's Participation in local Governance in Northern Sector of Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).

Nketsia, N. K. (2014). African culture in governance and development: The Ghana paradigm. *Ghana Universities Press*.

Panyin, O. A. O. (2010). Chiefs and traditional authorities and their role in the democratic order and governance

Tagoe, M. A. (2018). Ghana: the life and death of adult education and implications for current policy. In *The Palgrave International Handbook on Adult and Lifelong Education and Learning* (pp. 549-569). Palgrave Macmillan, London.