Principals' Leadership Needs for Effective Management of Secondary Schools in Meme and Fako Divisions of Cameroon

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess principals' leadership needs for the effective management of secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions in Cameroon by examining their professional, instructional, and communication skills. The study population consisted of 175 teachers, 31 department heads, 26 unit heads, and 16 principals from 12 schools. The findings revealed that continuous professional training and retraining, instructional supervision, effective communication, and creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning were vital to principals' effective management of schools. Based on these findings, provisions should be made for the continuous professional training and retraining of principals; principals should frequently carry out instructional supervision and also make use of vertical and horizontal communication to clearly communicate school goals.

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est d'évaluer les besoins en leadership des directeurs d'école de la Meme et du Fako au Cameroun en examinant les habiletés professionnelles, pédagogiques et communicationnelles des directeurs pour assurer une gestion optimale des écoles secondaires dans ces deux départements. La population de cette étude comprend 175 enseignants, 31 chefs de département, 26 chefs d'unité et 16 directeurs dans 12 écoles. Les données ont montré qu'une formation et un recyclage professionnels réguliers, une supervision pédagogique attentionnée, une communication efficace, et la création d'un environnement positif pour l'enseignement et l'ap-

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prentissage sont essentiels pour assurer la bonne gestion d'une école par son direc-
teur. D'après les données, des mesures devraient être prises pour la formation et le
recyclage professionnels réguliers des directeurs d'école; d'autre part, ces derniers
devraient régulièrement assumer la supervision pédagogique, et ils devraient recourir
à la communication verticale et horizontale pour transmettre clairement les objectifs
de l'école.

Keywords / Mots clés :: principals' leadership needs, effective school management,
professional development, professional training and retraining, instructional leader-
ship, school leadership / besoins en leadership des directeurs d'école, gestion efficace
d'une école, développement professionnel, formation et recyclage professionnels,
leadership pédagogique, leadership d'une école

Introduction

Principals are the core of school leadership. The administrative machinery of second-
ary schools in Cameroon revolves around them. Principals have faced scrutiny in re-
cent educational policy debates over how to manage schools effectively due to growing
interest in institutional quality and instructional leadership. An outstanding principal
is the key figure responsible for the success and growth of a school, which is largely
assessed in terms of teaching and students' learning outcomes (Fullan, 2002).

Today's global education landscape is rapidly changing due to many innovations
in curriculums and the delivery of the education process. Raj Mestry and Bernardus
Grobler (2002) assert that the role of the principal has become increasingly complex
and demanding, requiring improved professional development programs. Principals
as instructional leaders are not only expected to restructure and redefine the learning
environment of schools, they are also expected to be concerned with professional
training and retraining programs, practice effective communication, and be actively
involvement in instructional supervision. The school is viewed as an open system
where the principal needs to interact with both human and material resources to
achieve the goals and demands of the institution. The complexity of the job high-
lights the fact that the continuous development of school principals is inherently im-
portant to producing high-performance schools in a knowledge-based society and
globalized era (Fullman, 2005).

It is not unreasonable to assume that the qualities of a good principal lead to effec-
tiveness in school management, and, therefore, principals must be reinforced with the
skills, knowledge, and attitude to cope with the rapid changes in education. Fritz Ndiva
Mbua (2003) stated that training opportunities and professional development should
be provided to principals to enhance their communicative, organizational, and leader-
ship skills. School principals are supposed to be professionals and lead their schools ef-
fectively, and for this reason, professional training and retraining is of utmost importance.

The school principal is the administrator who controls a school's resources for
the purpose of attaining organizational goals, making leadership skills vitally impor-
tant. This study sets out to examine principals' leadership needs for the effective
management of secondary school in the Meme and Fako Divisions in the southwest

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region of Cameroon. Effective education leadership builds the pedagogical, administrative, and cultural conditions necessary for successful learning and teaching. The tone of the school depends on the principal's effectiveness in managing the school. The principal is an administrative head, a manager, a community public relations person, a supervisor, an instructional leader, a curriculum innovator, and a catalyst for teachers' achievement (Adaegbe, 2010).

Problems and Gaps

The administrative machinery of a secondary school revolves around its principle. Kenneth Leithwood and Carolyne Reihl (2003) write that an outstanding school undoubtedly has an exceptional principal, whereas a deteriorating school will be the product of feeble leadership. If school leadership is important for effective school management, then principals must be trained and retrained continuously on how to do their job effectively (Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis, 2008). The speed at which classroom teachers are turned into principals in Cameroon accounts for lapses and shortcomings in the effective management of schools. There is a dire need for professional leadership training and retraining for school administrators so they can effectively manage secondary schools.

A school principal needs leadership and managerial competencies, rather than teaching ability and longevity. The fact that any teacher who graduates from a higher teachers' training college in Cameroon can become a principal with little or no training on leadership is a concern because a bad school leader may render even the best program, the most adequate resources, and the most motivated teachers and students ineffective (Nwankwo, Nwogbo, & Nwachukwu, 2019).

The purpose of this study is to examine:

- Principals' professional leadership needs for the effective management of secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions.
- Principals' instructional leadership needs for the effective management of secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions.
- Principals' communication leadership needs for the effective management of secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions.

Literature Review
Historical background

In the past decade, most schools had single teachers or masters who answered to the local community—often through elected or appointed school management boards. As schools became larger, the "principal teacher" position was created. The principal was a teacher who carried out some clerical and administrative duties, such as assigning classes, conducting discipline, maintaining infrastructure, taking attendance, and ensuring that the school began and ended on time. These duties brought the principal teacher a degree of authority, as the role encompassed communicating with the authorities who governed the schools from afar. As the years progressed, the principal teacher eventually lost all teaching responsibilities and became a manager, administrator, supervisor, instructional leader, and, increasingly, a politician (Cuban,1988; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Rousmaniere, 2007).

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Philip Hallinger (1992) argued that in the sixties and seventies, principals were also expected to manage government sponsored entitlement and maintained that "as a result of increased government intervention in local policy, principals came to be seen as potential change agents" (p. 2). Hallinger noted that this focus on principals' capacity to enact change was only affirmed in the eighties with the popularity of Ron Edmond's effective school research, emphasizing that strong administrative leadership was a common characteristic of successful schools. Thus, principals were once again called on to be instructional leaders and the "primary source of knowledge for the development of the school's educational program" (p. 2).

In their review of the history of secondary school principals, Rebecca Goodwin, Michael Cunningham, and Teresa Eagle (2007) argued that principals have been asked to do more and more tasks and take on more and more responsibilities, and their role has become an "accumulation of expectations that have increased the complexity of the position until it has reached a point where change is inevitable" (pp. 2–3). Principals today are asked to do a good deal of work for the effective management of their schools. The *No Child Left Behind Act (2001)*, for example, demands that principals be held accountable for student achievement at a school and classroom level.

In recent years, educational policymakers, funders, and researchers have become increasingly interested in building school leadership. As interest in educational leadership has grown, so has interest in principalship—a position that is reportedly more difficult, time-consuming, and pivotal today than ever before (Knapp, Copeland, & Talbert, 2003). A report produced by the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000), a non-partisan research and advocacy organization based in Washington, DC, portrays past principalship in a fairly typical way; "for the past century, principals were expected to comply with district-level edicts, address personnel issues, order supplies, balance program budget, keep hallways and playgrounds safe, put out fires that threaten tranquil public relations and principal still needs to do all these things" (p. 2).

Today, the political environment that surrounds the work of principals has changed. As government officials, policymakers, and regional leaders increasingly seek to hold schools accountable for student achievement, the focus inevitably shifts to the individual leader of a schools the principal, who is seen as an agent of success or source of failure. This highly individualistic notion of educational change has led proponents of current school reforms to liken school principals to "CEOs" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 85). Therefore, training principals to effectively manage schools in this new environment is a rising concern in Cameroon and other African countries. The presence of French and English educational subsystems make Cameroon a unique and complex context for school management (Tchombe, 2001).

Context

According to Magnus Anuna, Chigozie Jacob Chiawolam, Binta Ibrahim Zaifada, Gospel Kpee, and Onyemaechi Ekeh David (2019), principals' leadership *needs* refer to their contemporary and vital needs. The *contemporary* needs of secondary school

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principals concern the present or trending needs of twenty-first century school leaders. *Vital* needs include the tools schools principals need for the effective management of their schools. Furthermore, Anuna et al. (2019) stated that effective management has to do with a principal's ability to obtain the necessary resources to create a school climate and culture where teachers and students work toward school goals. Thus, effective management involves the proper use of communication, organizational and individual knowledge, and access to resources.

Cameroon has increased enrolment at all levels of education; however, much of it is at primary and secondary schools. Education is now indispensable for effective participation in socio-economic development and ongoing rapid globalization. This accelerated quest for quality education has become a top priority in sub-Saharan African countries, Cameroon in particular (Oketch & Ngware, 2014). As the principal is seen as the head or chief executive of a secondary or high school, the principal is expected to provide quality education for all students and job satisfaction and motivation to the teaching and non-teaching staff (Mbua, 2003). The global trend toward the acquisition of quality education has created heated debate on and worries about the contemporary and vital leadership needs of principals in Cameroon.

Theoretical Framework
Professional leadership
The concept of professional leadership or development and its relationship with instructional leadership has been referenced by Jo Blasé and Joseph Blasé (2000), Larry Lashway (2002), and Vicki (Baker) Sweitzer (2009). Professional development in the instructional leadership paradigm is concerned with the role of principals as leaders influencing the professional development of educators in their schools; it also encompasses principals' responsibility to develop professionally to perform their new role. Sweitzer (2009) views professional development as comprising activities professionals engage in to achieve professional competence. It is further perceived as a variety of activities educators undertake to improve their practice.

Instructional leadership
According to Marcia Masumoto and Sharon Brown-Welty (2009) instructional leadership focuses on a principal's influence on student achievement and how they positively affect teachers, which is identified through learner performance. Research by Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore Louis, Stephen Anderson, and Kyla Wahlstron (2004) and Tim Waters, Robert Marzano, and Brian MacNulty (2003) emphasizes the role of the principal as an instructional leader in setting directions, guiding educators on matters of instruction, and generally directing the school.

Both twentieth and twenty-first century researchers on instructional leadership emphasize the view that instructional leadership encompasses the actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. According to Helen Wildy and Clive Dimmock (1993), a principal must be able to define the purpose of schooling, set school-wide goals, and implement strategies to achieve those goals. The principal must provide educators and learners with all

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the resources necessary for effective learning to occur; supervise and evaluate teachers through the performance of their learners; initiate and co-ordinate in-house staff development programs; and create and nurture collegial relationships with and among teachers. The primary role is instructional leadership and, as such, the principal must direct changes in terms of teaching and learning. Thus, instructional leadership should guide and direct instructional improvements associated with learner performance.

Communicative leadership

Communicative leadership refers to the way a leader communicates with employees. The general assumption is that communicative leaders have a profound influence on employee attitudes, well-being, and performance. Research has established that the benefits of good internal communication include job satisfaction, greater productivity, less absenteeism, improved quality of goods and services, reduced costs, and increased levels of innovation. Other studies confirm that employees who are more satisfied with top management's communication are more likely to be committed to the organization, and that personal feedback, supervisor communication, and organizational information are important to how employees identify with their organizations (Johansson, Miller, & Hamrin, 2011).

Methods

Instruments for data collection

This study used a descriptive survey design and adapted a questionnaire developed by Anuna et al. (2019). The survey instrument is titled Principals Needs Requirement Questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured under the following subheadings: professional leadership needs of principals for the effective management of secondary schools; instructional leadership needs of school principals for the effective management of schools; and communication leadership needs of principals for the effective management of secondary schools. The instrument was used to measure, describe, and examine the relationship between principals' leadership skills and the effective management of schools in Meme and Fako Divisions. The first part of the questionnaire stated the purpose of the exercise. The second part requested background (demographic) information about the respondents. The third part was on the three aspects of principals' leadership needs: professional, instructional, and communication. The items on the Principals Needs Requirement Questionnaire were structured on four-point Likert scale.

Sample size

The study's sample constituted 250 secondary school teachers and 14 principals selected from 12 schools in Meme and Fako Divisions of the southwest region of Cameroon. Based on the fact that most schools have one principal who is the leader, a convenience sampling technique was used for data collection for principals and teachers depending on their availability. The schools include four government schools: Cameroon College of Arts and Science (CCAS), Government Technical High School (GTHS), Government Bilingual High School (GBHS), and Government

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Secondary School Kumba-mbeng (GSS); two lay private schools: Diligent Bilingual College (DBC) and Martin Luther College (MLC); and two confessional schools: Saint John College (SJC) and Saint Francis College (SFC), which were selected from Kumba municipality in Meme Division. Whereas in Fako Division, two government schools: Bilingual Grammar School (BGS) and Government High School (GHS); two confessional schools: Presbyterian Comprehensive Secondary School (PCSS) and Baptist High School Buea (BHS) were selected from the Buea municipality. A sample of the teachers was surveyed to get a comprehensive overview of their perception of the leadership needs of principals to effectively manage their schools. Thirty-four department heads, 26 unit heads, 16 principals and vice principals, and 172 teachers were selected for the study (see Table 1).

Table 1: Staff roles at participating schools

SCHOOLS	Department heads	Discipline masters	Principals	Teaching only	TOTAL
GHS BUEA	6	3	1	10	**20**
BHS BUEA	2	2	1	10	**15**
PCSS BUEA	4	2	1	11	**18**
BGS BUEA	3	5	1	13	**27**
SJC KUMBA	2	1	2	8	**13**
SFC KUMBA	2		2	12	**16**
MLC KUMBA	1	1	2	12	**16**
GSS KUMBA	3	4	1	28	**36**
GBHS KUMBA	2	3	1	22	**28**
DBC KUMBA	1	1	1	8	**11**
GTHS KUMBA	3	2	1	15	**21**
CCAS KUMBA	5	2	2	21	**30**
Total	**34**	**26**	**16**	**175**	**250**

Data collection and analysis

A pilot study was conducted by visiting the selected schools to present a detailed explanation of the study. Data was then collected from the sample schools by seeking informed consent from teachers, department heads, discipline masters, and vice principals and principals and then administering the questionnaire. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and decision rating were used to summarize the responses to each survey item. Excel spreadsheets and SPSS version 2.0 were used for data analysis.

Results

Demographic information

The demographic characteristics consisted of information relating to the schools sampled and the respondents, including educational qualifications, sex, age, and work experience. The majority of study participants, 132 (52.8%), were male, 106 (42.4%) were female, and 12 (4.8%) did not indicate (see Table 2). The majority of the respondents 36 (14.4%) were from GSS Kumba-Mbeng; a minority, 11 (4.4%), were from Diligent Bilingual College in Kumba.

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Table 2: Summary of demographic characteristics of participants

Variable	Description	Frequency of participants	Percentage
School	CCAS K	30	12
	GTHS K	21	8.4
	DBC K	11	4.4
	GBHS K	27	10.8
	GSS K	36	14.4
	MLC K	16	6.4
	SFC K	16	6.4
	SJC K	13	5.2
	BGS B	27	10.8
	PCSS B	18	7.2
	BHS B	15	6
	GHS B	20	8
	Total	250	100
Current position	Teaching only	175	70
	Principal	16	6.5
	Unit leader	23	9.2
	Department head	31	12.4
	Missing	5	2
	Total	250	100
Educational qualification	Diploma	62	24.8
	BA/BSc	134	53.6
	MA/MSc	33	13.2
	Others	16	6.4
	Missing	5	2
	Total	250	100
Sex	Male	132	52.8
	Female	106	42.4
	Missing	12	4.8
	Total	250	100
Age range	< 30	41	16.4
	30–35	70	28
	36–41	81	32.4
	42–47	38	15.2
	> 47	14	5.6
	Missing	6	2.4
	Total	250	100
Work experience	8–11	80	32
	12–14	89	35.6
	15–17	55	22
	18 >	20	8
	Missing	6	2.4
	Total	**250**	**100**

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Table 2 indicates that 31 participants (12.4%) were department heads; 23 (9.2%) were unit leaders; 16 (6.5%) were principals; and 175 (70%) were teachers. The majority of respondents, 134 (53.6%), hold a bachelor's degree; 62 (24.8%) hold a diploma; 33 (13.2%) hold a master's degree; and 16 (6.4%) hold another certificate or no qualifications. Five respondents (2%) did not indicate their academic qualifications. Forty-one participants (16.4%) were 30 years old or less; 70 (28%) were between 30–35 years; 81 (32.4%) were between 36–41 years; 38 (15.2) were between 42–47 years; and 14 (5.6%) were 47 years old and above.

To examine principals' professional leadership needs to effectively manage secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions, six items (see Table 3) were presented asking respondents to rate them on a Likert scale, including strongly agree (SA), agree (A), strongly disagree (SD), and disagree (D).

Table 3: Principals' professional leadership needs for the effective management of secondary schools

Item	Principals' professional leadership needs	SA	A	SD	D	Total	Mean	Decision
1	The school principal frequently attends regional workshops on professional development.	20	112	16	102	250	2.54	Agree
2	The principal has a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in educational administration.	36	61	43	110	250	2.36	Disagree
3	The principal sometimes undergoes online courses on education leadership.	12	127	20	90	249	2.53	Agree
4	The principal plans professional development and in-service training.	9	36	46	157	248	2.03	Disagree
5	The principal initiates specialized professional trainings on finances and management techniques.	6	27	77	138	248	1.85	Disagree
6	Do you think the principal's professional skills are above average?	29	76	24	119	248	2.44	Disagree
	Total	**112**	**439**	**226**	**716**	**1,493**	**13.75**	

Most of the participants (132) agreed or strongly agreed that principals frequently attended regional workshops on professional development, giving item 1 mean score of 2.54. Further, the majority of respondents disagreed that their principal has a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in educational leadership or administration, giving item 2 a mean score of 2.36.

The majority of the respondents (127) agreed with item 3—that the principal sometimes undergoes online courses on education leadership—giving it a mean score of 2.53. The majority of the respondents (157) disagreed that the principal plans professional development and in-service training, giving item 4 a mean score of 2.03. The majority of participants (138) disagreed that the principal initiates specialized professional trainings on finances and management techniques, giving item 5 a mean score of 1.85. The majority of participants (119) disagreed that the principal's professional skills are above average, giving item 6 a mean score of 2.44.

Item 1 had the highest mean score, closely followed by item 3. They were the only two items with an "Agree" decision rating. Based on these results, principals' professional leadership needs that are currently being met are attending regional workshops on professional development and taking online courses on education leadership.

To examine how instructional supervision by principals is impacting teachers' needs in Meme and Fako Divisions, participants were asked to assess six items on four-point Likert scale (see Table 4).

Table 4: Principals' instructional leadership needs for the effective management of secondary schools

Item	Instructional supervision leadership needs	SA	A	SD	D	Total	Mean	Decision
1	The principal frequently supervises me in the classroom.	8	43	102	97	250	2.54	Disagree
2	Principal's classroom supervision affects my overall activities in the school.	61	145	8	36	250	2.36	Agree
3	The principal can influence my classroom instruction.	37	143	14	56	250	2.53	Agree
4	The principal gives me feedback immediately after supervising me.	8	54	91	95	248	1.85	Disagree
5	The principal's presence in my classroom motivates me.	51	132	10	57	250	2.44	Agree
6	Do you think the principal's instructional skill is above average?	19	92	9	124	244	2.50	Disagree
	Total	**184**	**609**	**234**	**465**	**1,492**	**14.22**	

The majority of the respondents (199) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the principal frequently supervises in the classroom, giving item 1 a mean score of 2.54. Meanwhile the majority of respondents (145) agreed that principal's classroom supervision affects overall activities in the school, giving item 2 a mean score of 2.36. The majority of the respondents (180) agreed or strongly agreed that the principal has the ability to influence classroom instruction, giving item 3 a mean score of 2.53 (see Table 4).

Item 4 asked respondents to indicate whether the principal gives feedback immediately after supervision, and the majority of the respondents (186) disagreed or strongly disagreed, giving the item a mean score of 1.85.

The majority of respondents (185) agreed or strongly agreed that the principal's presence in the classroom is motivating, giving item 5 a mean score of 2.44. The last item in this section asked respondents whether their principal's instructional skill is above average. The majority of the respondents (133) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, giving it a mean score of 2.50. Item 1 had the highest mean score (2.54), while item 5 had the lowest (1.85). The mean scores between items that participants agreed and disagreed with are fairly close.

To assess principals' communication skills for the effective management of secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions, six items were used to solicit respondents' perceptions based on a four-point Likert scale (see Table 5).

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Table 5: Principals' Communication leadership needs of effective management of secondary schools

Principals' communication leadership needs (Items)	SA	A	SD	D	Total	Mean	Decision
The principal communicates school goals clearly.	27	120	16	86	249	2.63	Agree
The principal always communicates school goals to me.	32	128	8	81	249	2.74	Agree
The principal communicates instructional goals after supervision.	11	63	32	143	249	2.21	Disagree
The principal frequently communicates the school's goals to students and parents.	23	118	18	91	250	2.58	Agree
The principal raises awareness of the school-community relationship by clarifying instructional goals.	23	159	11	57	250	2.79	Agree
Do you think the principal's communication skills are above average?	20	140	13	75	248	2.69	Agree
TOTAL	136	728	98	533	1,495	15.64	

The majority of respondents (147) agreed or strongly agreed that the principal communicates school goals clearly, giving item 1 a mean score of 2.63. The majority of respondents (160) agreed or strongly agreed that their principal always communicates school goals, giving item 2 a mean score of 2.74. The majority of respondents (175) disagreed or strongly disagreed that their principal communicates instructional goals after supervision, giving item 3 a mean score of 2.21. The majority of respondents (141) agreed or strongly agreed that the principal frequently communicates the school's goals to students and parents, giving item 4 a mean score of 2.48 (see Table 5).

A large majority of the participants (182) agreed or strongly agreed that the principal raises awareness of the school-community relationship by clarifying instructional goals, giving item 5 a mean score of 2.79. The majority of respondents (160) agreed or strongly agreed that their principal's communication skills are above average, giving item 6 a mean score of 2.69 (see Table 5).

Out of the six items, five were rated "Agree," indicating that a principal's communication leadership skills are likely to have a positive impact on the management of a secondary school (see Table 5).

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that principals need professional leadership skills to effectively manage secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions. The results further revealed that principals need regional workshops on professional development and online courses on education leadership, which is in line with Anuna et al. (2019), who found that principals need professional training and retraining to effectively manage their schools. However, workshops and online courses are not enough to give principals the skills they need for effective school management. These results also reflect the findings of Sufean Hussin and Saleh Al Abri (2015), who recommended that the educational authority in Muscat City District, Oman, organize a

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systematic development program for school principals to upgrade their knowledge, competences, and dispositions.

This study revealed that classroom supervision, the ability to influence classroom instructions, and having a presence in the classroom are particularly necessary for effective school management. Furthermore, a principal's communication leadership skills are more likely to affect the management of schools positively, particularly when it comes to clarifying school goals, communicating the school's goals to students and parents, and clarifying instructional goals to the educational community. A gap in communication can keep staff and students in suspense and impact the management of the school. This study found a link between principals' organizational leadership skills and the effective management of schools in Meme and Fako Divisions, notably in providing working materials for the school and providing financial incentives for teachers.

This study also revealed a dire need for the professional leadership training and retraining of school administrators, enabling them to acquire new skills to manage schools effectively (Pont, Nushe, & Moorman, 2008). Continuous regional training and retraining, including online educational courses, can positively affect school management. Frequent classroom visits by principals will be ineffective if they are not coupled with effective supervision, the ability to motivate the teacher, and the ability to influence classroom instructions. Further, clarifying school goals, frequently communicating the school's goals to students and parents, and clarifying instructional goals to the educational community have a positive impact on school management. Generally, a principal's professional development, instructional supervision, and communicative skills are vital for the effective management of secondary schools in Meme and Fako Divisions.

Recommendations

As indicated by Isaac Nwankwo, Vivian Nwogbo, and Esther Nwachukwu (2019), a bad school leader may render even the best program/curriculum, the most adequate resources, and the most motivated teachers and students ineffective. Therefore, particularly given the insufficient/limited financial resources currently allocated to schools in Cameroon, there should be a mechanism put in place to train and retrain principals to help them develop the leadership skills necessary to effectively manage secondary schools.

The following measures should be put in place for the development of principals' leadership skills:

- The government should establish continuous professional training and retraining for school principals, create online educational leadership courses, and involve principals in more personnel development programs.
- Principals should be provided with enough funds and instructional seminars/workshops and materials to enable them to motivate teachers and carry out effective classroom supervision.
- Principals should be encouraged to utilize vertical and horizontal means of communication about school goals to both teachers and students. This is necessary to avoid communication gaps, which brings confusion in every organization, including the school system.

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Limitations

Due to the prevailing (ongoing) socio-political crisis in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon, sample schools used for this study were purposefully selected from among the schools that are fully operational.

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