

Secondary School Principalship as a Determinant of Quality Education in Selected Government Secondary Schools in Yaounde; Cameroon

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Abstract-This study sets out to assess the effects of school principalship on quality education in the secondary school. Quality in education has become to measuring rod by which educational systems must operate. Within the context of this study quality education is limited to the quality of students' output which could be determined by the quality of resource management by the school principal. The school principal is in charge of ensuring educational quality at all level and an educational system is not beneficial to the society when it is void of quality. This work is based on the hypothetical premise that principal's characteristic and resource management influence quality education in secondary schools in Yaounde. The study used data collected from teachers of secondary school and simple random, quota and purposeful sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample size of 543 for teachers of government secondary schools in Yaounde. The quantitative approach was employed in data collection and analysis. In the quantitative approach, we constructed a questionnaire . Data collected was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS); and the following results were obtained in relation to the hypotheses of the study.

- Principals characteristics are significant predictors of quality education in secondary schools in Yaounde Centre
- Resources managements is significant predictors of quality education in secondary schools in Yaounde Centre

Both of them (Principals characteristics, Resources managements) account for 62.3 percent of the variations in quality education in the secondary school.

Index Terms- Principalship, quality education, secondary school.

I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The school principal is the internal supervisor of educational processes that go on in the school system. He makes sure all the required inputs are meticulously translated into desired outputs in order to ensure system internal efficiency. However, it has been observed that student performances at national levels both in the English and French subsystems have been dropping over the past decades. The falling in educational standards could be justified by lapses in principalship. Student performances in the BEPC, probatoire, BACC, have hardly gone above 60 percent in the past decade; while in the GCE ordinary and Advance levels students' means performance has been dwindling for the past decade. This means that quality education in terms of students output is wanting and school principals could bear the responsibility because they are not only the custodian of school property but

they are also pedagogic supervisors with the main objective of ensuring quality and efficiency in the school production function. When students perform poorly, school objectives will never be met. This leads to exasperated wastage of resources in the sense that government pays teachers for job not well done and parents and other education stakeholders have invested in the educational system, which is not producing good results. Lack of quality education especially in the teaching and learning process could lead to society stagnating and under developing at the same time; because present learners are tomorrow's developers; and if they do not learn as it is required, they would lack the necessary skills to effectively participate in society's development processes. Lapses in principals' characteristics and teacher management could affect quality education. It is based on the above shortcomings that we intend to assess how school principalship affects quality education in the secondary school.

1) General research question

To what extent does principalship influence quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde?

2) Specific research questions

- How does a principals' characteristic affect quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde?
- To what extent does resource management influence quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde?

General research hypothesis

- **Ha.** Principalship influence quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde.
- **Ho.** Principalship does not influence quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde.

Specific research hypotheses

- **Ha₁.** Principals characteristics affects quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde.
- **Ha₂.** Resource management affects quality education in government secondary schools in Yaounde.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The school principal is responsible for ensuring quality assurance in education, which can be defined as the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality outputs (students) that meet set standards and expectations of the society. To Robinson

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(1994), quality assurance is a set of activities that an organization undertakes to ensure that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality. Its goals are the anticipation and avoidance of faults or mistakes by setting attainable standards for a process, organizing work so that they are achieved, documenting the procedures required, communicating them to all concerned, and monitoring and reviewing the attainment of standards. Venkaiah (1995) sees quality assurance as a philosophy and a process in which all the functions and activities of an institution are treated equally, planned, controlled and implemented in a systematic and scientific manner. A critical look at the definitions shows that quality assurance in education encompasses systematic management, monitoring and evaluation procedures adopted to measure the performance of school administrators (principals), teachers and students against educational objectives to ensure best practices in resource inputs, utilization and curriculum management by the principals to produce students that achieve the set educational goals in secondary schools.

School principalship is a well-established position that provides instructional leadership and supervision by coordinating curricula, co-curricular programmes and is responsible for the general administration of the school (Adeniji, 2002). As the Chief Executive of the school, the principal must make it possible for staff to have access to suitable facilities of all kinds in order to discharge fully their responsibilities in achieving the educational objectives. The teachers must be well supervised and motivated in order to sustain their interest and make them dedicated, committed, willing, enthusiastic and inspiring teachers (Lanzeby, 2008). The quality of the supervision of teachers' instructional tasks by the principal is an index of effective school management. Of all the major tasks of a school principal, none is as sensitive and as challenging as the one relating to the supervisory role and it is expected to be given the deserved attention in the scheme of things.

Instructional supervision is an internal mechanism adopted by principals for school self-evaluation, geared towards helping teachers and students to improve on their teaching and learning activities for the purpose of achieving educational objectives. The principals being instructional leaders are at the vantage positions to supervise, monitor, assess, evaluate and disseminate current information on educational issues and modern teaching techniques to teachers in order to stimulate them for scholarship and best practices in curriculum delivery.

The principal ensures effective instructional supervision by interacting academically and socially at a regular basis with teachers and students within and outside the classrooms. The primary aim is to monitor the implementation of curricular and ensure desirable increase in teachers' capabilities, upgrade their conceptual knowledge and teaching skills, give them support in their work to facilitate better performance in teachers' pedagogical practices and students' learning outcomes in the school settings (Wiles, 1975; Oyekan, 1997, Adepoju 1998; Olagboye, 2004; Adetula, 2005).

Instructional supervision provides a vehicle and structure which allows schools, departments, as well as individuals (teachers and students) within them, to respond

effectively to curriculum and instruction in order to achieve the stated educational objectives. Instructional supervision, if handled with utmost attention, has the potential to strengthen the principals' capacities for managing human and materials resources. The principal who is the driving force behind the school programme needs to proactively mobilize all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching, the governing board, parents and the community towards identifying the schools strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate decisions on type of follow-up action required to improve teachers' inputs and students' learning outcomes in the school.

The appraisal of teachers' pedagogical practices is necessary in order to safeguard quality standards in schools. In order to accomplish this task, the principal must have an intimate knowledge of the psychology of human learning, command of the various theories of instruction, be acquainted with the sources and uses of instructional media/materials, be familiar with evaluation techniques, be skilled in individual and group counseling, and have a good knowledge of Cameroon's education system and goals (Lucio, 1979; Adetula 2005).

In pursuit of these goals, the school principals make use of supervisory techniques: clinical supervision/classroom observation, micro-teaching, seminar/workshop and research to improve the conceptual knowledge, skills and competence of teachers, and students learning (Ogunsaju, 1983; Peretomode, 1995), as enumerated and discussed below: The clinical supervision technique is commonly used by principals; according to Goldhammer (1969), clinical supervision involves the following five-stage process: (i) a pre-observation conference between supervisor and teacher concerning elements of the lesson to be observed; (ii) classroom observation; (iii) a supervisor's analysis of notes from the observation conference between supervisor and teacher; (iv) a post-observation conference between supervisor and teacher; and (v) a supervisor's analysis of the post-observation conference. During observation, the supervisor takes note of the teacher's knowledge of the subject being taught, evidence of adequate planning and preparation for the lesson, lesson presentation, teacher's personality and the extent of students' participation or interaction with the teacher. These form the bases for providing constructive advice on how to improve the quality of classroom instruction. The visit may be repeated until the required improvement is achieved.

Excellent schools do not just happen; they require the right kind of leadership, both at the classroom level and in the front office. The most effective school principals have what it takes to lead their academic institutions and ensure increased student achievement. Although specific duties vary by level, principals at any school are expected to effectively run day-to-day operations as well as set the goals and objectives needed for success. They establish academic standards, overseeing their implementation and making sure teachers are equipped with the necessary resources to meet those benchmarks. Other duties typically include: managing the school's finances and budget; making sure facilities are safe and secure; meeting with teachers and parents as part of measuring progress and gauging behavior; supporting teachers in their disciplinary decisions; and supervising and monitoring all categories of school staff, including teachers, counselors and media specialists.

This approach is built around the premise that every step of the process of a service and of an operation has room for improvement. This was corroborated by Deming's cycle of continuous improvement, which is normally based upon Plan, Do, Check and Act cycle (PDCA). This process enables the principal to regularly monitor, assess and evaluate the resource inputs, instructional process and outputs by identifying the key elements/aspects that need improvement and ways of addressing these, implementing the plan, analyzing the result to ensure that significant agreement exists between the original goals and what is actually achieved, and acting on the plan full scale by conducting further work through feedback and reviews (Blackman, and Fenwick, 2000). Often, larger schools have assistant or vice principals to aid with school administration.

Quality assurance is achieved in schools that have strong principals who devote considerable time to coordinating and managing instruction; such principals are highly visible in the school and stay close to the instructional process. In many instances, effective principals adopt continuous and consistent classroom visits to ensure adequate teaching and learning processes (Peters and Waterman, 1988). At the same time, instructional leadership is in many ways a shared responsibility. It engenders a common sense of commitment and collegiality among the staff.

Effective school principals establish clearly defined goals for academic achievement, and they concentrate their available resources and their operations on attaining them, provide adequate time-table for teaching, routine check of lesson plans and observation of classroom instruction, continuously monitor students' progress to determine whether their instructional goals

The principals being instructional leaders are at the vantage positions to supervise, monitor, assess, evaluate and disseminate current information on educational issues and modern teaching techniques to teachers in order to stimulate them for scholarship and best practices in curriculum delivery. Despite the obvious advantages of clinical supervision in its various forms, it has been criticized by researchers such as Garman and Hunter (1987) because it is time consuming and labour-intensive, rendering it impossible to use on any regular basis given the large number of teachers that supervisors are expected to supervise in addition to their other administrative responsibilities. He therefore advocated the use of research approach to stimulate effective teaching and improvement in students' learning outcomes. The research approach is a well-planned activity, which involves systematic and objective collection and analysis of data in order to find solutions to identified problems. It could be used as a technique for instructional supervision. In this respect, the supervisor has to engage teachers individually or in team work to find solutions to problems of teaching/learning that confronts them instead of dictating solutions to problems relating to teaching and learning.

The micro-teaching is a teaching situation which is scaled down in terms of time, class size and teaching complexity to allow the teacher to focus on a selected teaching strategy. It is designed to develop new skills and refine old ones. The lesson consists of two elements, namely, content (usually a

segment of a topic in a subject area) and the skill, which is a chosen specific teaching skill. Depending on the availability of facilities, the micro-lesson may or may not be video recorded. This process allows the teacher together with the supervisor and the students to view the replay of the videotape of the lesson and evaluate the person and discuss aspects of the lesson (Peretomide, 1995). The supervisor points out the strengths and weakness and skillfully changing those weakness into strengths through constructive dialogue with the teacher supervised. Based on the knowledge of the immediate feed-back and suggestions for improvement, the teacher re-teaches the lesson to the same group or a different group of students. Microteaching technique can be applied at the various stages in the professional development of teachers, including both the pre-service and in-service stages.

The seminar/workshop involves a small group of people that is temporarily formed to discuss a specific topic, or work on a common problem and trying to find solution to a specific problem or resolve issues affecting teaching-learning process in schools. Improved methods of teaching basic concepts and topics are not only discussed but also demonstrated during the workshop (Nyameh, Douglas, Teru, and Titus, 2013) and (Redmond and Housell, 2013). The situation also provides opportunity for critical analysis of ideas related to the issue, problem or topic at hand in a permissive, topic-centered and face-to-face interaction and directed practice. Tape recordings of selected portions of a class meeting have been successful in stimulating group discussions and consequently modifying teacher behaviour towards higher teacher effectiveness.

A cursory look at the various methods of instructional supervision discussed above shows that the principal acts as a change agent for the professional growth of teachers and the improvement of curriculum delivery, which is the central focus of instructional supervision (Ogunsaju, 1983). The areas that usually attract the attention of secondary school principals include the planning of lesson notes, effective delivery of lessons, assessment and quality of tests/assignments given to students, improvisation and utilization of instructional materials, providing regular feed-back on students' performance, adequate keeping of records and appropriate discipline of students to ensure quality assurance in secondary schools as earlier mentioned.

The quality of the output of educational system is measured by results of examinations of given standards. There are other school outputs such as discipline and good citizenry. Examination results are always used because it allows for easy comparison. Thus if a school has higher points or scores in such examinations, the school is judged to be of higher quality. It must however be emphasized that there is more to the educational process than competence in cognitive ability. (Jagero, 2013)

Quality education is a vast concept and would mean a lot. It comprises some of the following elements:

The quality of students before they begin school is very important in terms of their health conditions, the childhood experiences and the home support they receive from their parents. Good feeding enables student's brain to functions normally and in turn facilitates learning. Also, as a hungry man is an angry man so a hungry student would hardly learn what is expected of him. In the same way students' effective presence in the classroom is very important coupled with parental support in providing learning tools and motivation of all kind.

Secondary School Principalship as a Determinant of Quality Education in Selected Government Secondary Schools in Yaounde; Cameroon

For UNICEF (2000), Positive learning outcomes generally sought by educational systems happen in quality learning environments. Learning environments are made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements. As far as the physical elements are concerned, we are looking at the Quality of school facilities, i.e. where formal learning occurs, and interactions between school infrastructure and other quality dimensions such as portable water, instructional materials and textbooks etc, and class size. Psychosocial elements in this case will include peaceful and safe environments especially for girls, effective school discipline policies, non-violent and inclusive environments. Vital service delivery elements here include the provision of health services to enable the school take care of sick children.

Quality content refers to the intended and taught curriculum of schools. National goals for education, and outcome statements that translate those goals into measurable objectives should provide the starting point for the development and implementation of curriculum (UNICEF, 2000). Student-centred, non-discriminatory, standards-based curriculum structures so, as to emphasize deep coverage of important areas of knowledge, authentic and contextualized problems of study, and problem-solving that stresses skills development and knowledge acquisition as well. The contents should equality include provisions for literacy, numeracy and peace education which fall among the primary objectives of formal education.

Unicef (2000) marked that Until recently, much discussion of educational quality centred on system inputs, such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios, and on curricular content. In recent years, however, more attention has been paid to educational processes how teachers and administrators use inputs to frame meaningful learning experiences for students. Their work represents a key factor in ensuring quality school processes.

The teaching and learning processes are determined by the teachers' professional training and the degree of commitment and professional development programmes that he undergoes. Salient teaching approaches like the student centred approach is also an important aspect of pedagogic processes to optimize student achievement which must be the school's first priority. Evaluation processes are also included in the school system are act as teachers feedback to student on how well they have perform and for all these processes to be effective and of good quality, there must be a pedagogic integration of information and communication technologies to ease hey operations of teaching and learning. Given that the teacher is the key element in the teaching and learning process, his workload and working conditions have to be taken into consideration if his output has to be of good quality.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in selected secondary schools in Yaounde centre in Cameroon. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 secondary schools.

The proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the percentages of respondents in various schools. The purposeful sampling technique was used to select the respondents to whom research instruments were administered. Within the context of this study a sample of 543 teachers were selected.

The questionnaire was the instrument used to collect data for this study. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, we used the test-retest reliability type or the stability reliability type. With this the cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.8 was obtain indicating that the instrument had a good test re-test reliability.

The data collected from the field with the use of questionnaires was analyzed using the multiple regression analysis. Multiple regressions is expressed as:

$$\hat{Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_p X_p$$

Where the β_s are a set of coefficients in the population whose values are to be determined.

IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perception on Leadership Attributes of the Secondary School Principal.

Attributes	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic
Instructional Leadership	1,7697	,85103
Organisational Leadership	2,1067	1,01807
Moral Dimension	2,0955	,89315
Political Context	3,9466	,88491
School Vision	1,9466	,88491
Communication Skills	1,9466	,88491
Comfort and Empathy	2,1713	1,04078
Decision Making	1,8427	,98260
Commitment to Task	2,0534	,89755
Self-Management	1,9972	,85744
Time Management	1,7946	,79778
Facility Management	1,9275	,84613
Community Leadership	1,8640	,86844
Planning and organization	3,1027	,99774
Directing	2,0695	,92344
Checking and control	2,1420	,99746
Problem solving	2,0997	,96249

1=Little Potential/Quality, 2=somewhat potential/Quality, 3=Moderate potential/Quality, 4=Strong potential/Quality, 5=Excellent potential/Quality

Looking at the table above, we realize that most secondary school principals are not competent enough in the exercise of their duties. Majority of the respondents indicated that their school administrators do not have to required potentials except for policy and planning and organization where their potentials appear to be moderate. This is true because most principals mostly concentrate on managing financial resources since they could have some spill over for personal gains. This becomes evident especially in cases where people buy their positions as principals.

Hypothesis testing

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.791 ^a	.625	.624	.72894	.625	449.603	2	539	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource management, Principal's Characteristics

In the context of this work, multiple regression analyses were carried out with the intention to determine the direction of the hypotheses that were tested above and also determine the degree of predictability of the dependent variable by the independent variable. Table shows the multiple linear

regression model summary and overall fit statistics. We find that the adjusted R² of our model is 0.624 with the R² = .624 that means that the independent variables (principalship) explains 62.4% of the variance in the dependent variable. *Quality education*).

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	477.795	2	238.897	449.603	.000 ^b
	Residual	286.399	539	.531		
	Total	764.194	541			

a. Dependent Variable: *Quality Education*

b. Predictors: (Constant), Resource management, Principal's Characteristics

From the ANOVA table output the p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 permits us to reject the null

hypotheses and all the slopes equal 0 and conclude that at least one of the slopes differs significantly from zero.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.443	.136		3.262	.001
	Principal's Characteristics	.170	.049	1.000	24.079	.000
	Resource management	.610	.043	.602	9.260	.000

a. Dependent Variable: *Quality Education*

- The coefficient for Principal's Characteristics (0.170) is significantly different from 0 because its p-value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05.
- The coefficient for Resource management (.610) is not significantly different from 0 because its p-value is 0.000, which is larger than 0.05.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on this we conclude that principals characteristics and resource management are significant predictors of quality education. This results corroborate with the findings of Nji(2018) who found out that the secondary school principalship was the major determinant of school internal inefficiency. He found out that principals were appointed based on their longevity in service and not based on competences. The principles of scientific management where by the development of a true science of management so that the best methods of performing each task should be determined are not respected; whereas Tamukong (2002) in Fonkeng & Tamajong (2009: 14) argue that "*successful management depends to a large extent on a number of manager's ability to understand and work with people who have different backgrounds, needs, perceptions and aspirations*". Tchombe(2001) equally posits that the principal is the eyes and ears of government and is equally the custodian of school property. This means that he could be

held responsible incase the secondary school system does not meets its objectives. The principals being instructional leaders are at the vantage positions to supervise, monitor, assess, evaluate and disseminate current information on educational issues and modern teaching techniques to teachers in order to stimulate them for scholarship and best practices in curriculum delivery. but the reverse is true as principals lack salient skills in instructional leadership, Organizational Leadership, Facility Management, Communication Skills, Time Management, Community Leadership, professional ethics etc.

Lanzeby, (2008) mentions that as the chief executive of the school, the principal must make it possible for staff to have access to suitable facilities of all kinds in order to discharge fully their responsibilities in achieving the educational objectives. The teachers must be well supervised and motivated in order to sustain their interest and make them dedicated, committed, willing, enthusiastic and inspiring teachers. The quality of the supervision of teachers' instructional tasks by the principal is an index of effective school management. Of all the major tasks of a school principal, none is as sensitive and as challenging as the one relating to the supervisory role and it is expected to be given the deserved attention in the scheme of things.

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Secondary School Principalship as a Determinant of Quality Education in Selected Government Secondary Schools in Yaounde; Cameroon

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An appraisal of teachers' pedagogical practices is necessary in order to safeguard quality standards in education as a whole. In order to accomplish this task, the principal must have an intimate knowledge of the psychology of human learning, command of the various theories of instruction, be acquainted with the sources and uses of instructional media/materials, be familiar with evaluation techniques, be skilled in individual and group counseling, and have a good knowledge of Cameroon's education system and goals (Lucio, 1979; Adetula 2005). This entails that effective principalship is needed in order to ensure quality assurance and control in school process so as to augment the quality of education.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

First and famous secondary school principals should work harder to render the school system efficient. Principals devotion to task and effective presence matters a lot in the attainment of institutional objectives. Teacher management as key human resources should be done with professionalism and flexibility.

The school for principalship needs to be created by government were a true science of educational management will be taught where right skills and competences will be acquired by aspiring school principals. Also, Principals in active service need to go through sound professional growth programs to upgrade their competences.

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