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Perceptions of Leadership Effectiveness: An Exploratory Case Study of Three Cameroonian School Principals

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

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Prudence Avwontom Kono

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Perceptions of Leadership Effectiveness: An Exploratory Case Study of Three
Cameroonian School Principals

by

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MSc., University of Scranton, 2007

MA, University of Yaoundé, 1991

BA, University of Yaoundé, 1987

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
K-12 Educational Administration

Walden University

August 2023

Abstract

This study explored the school principal selection process in Cameroon where the political appointment of school principals with no plan for formal training was practiced. The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to explore and describe school principal perceptions of leader behaviors in urban Cameroon schools. Goldring's learner-centered leadership approach was the conceptual framework that guided this study. Research questions were focused on school principals' perceptions of behaviors, standards, and cultures that they believed are critical to effective leadership in urban Cameroon schools. A multiple case study design was used to capture insights and perceptions of three purposely selected elementary, middle, and high school principals through semi structured interviews and document artifacts. Emergent themes were identified through open coding, and findings were developed and checked for trustworthiness through member checking, rich descriptions, and researcher reflexivity. Findings revealed that principals in Cameroon would benefit from targeted training focused on learning-centered leadership practices while considering possible contextual challenges as well as leadership behaviors that build school communities to encourage and support strong student academic performance. Further research on school leadership effectiveness within the same context is recommended with an expanded participant pool. This study has implications for positive social change by creating a structure to provide principals with guidance and training to build collaborative school communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my father, Joseph Chi Avwontom, and to my mother, Frida Bi Avwontom, both of blessed memory.

Papa, as an educator, you were relentless in the pursuit of greater things as you brought positive social changes to many over many years. I learnt well from you.

Mama, as a nurse and midwife, you taught us the importance of selflessness as you gave of yourself at home, at the hospital, and in your social circles. I learnt well from you.

Thank you both for your relentless love, support, and encouragement to reach for greater things. I pray that this work brings positive social change in education and in social work just as you both did during your exemplary lifetimes.

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Thank you, thank you, thank you! An African proverb says that “one hand cannot tie a bundle”. This journey would not have been possible without the help, guidance, and encouragement of many dear people. I would like to thank the following immensely for believing in my abilities and choosing to walk with me:

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- My grandbabies, Xavier and Yannick, for the joy you bring to my heart that gives me hope and purpose for the future.
- My siblings, friends, colleagues, for being available as a sounding board when I had doubts and needed reassurance.

Above all else, I thank my Heavenly Father! Without His Grace, none of this would have been possible. I pray that He continues to guide us in His infinite mercy!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the field of educational leadership and management, school leadership is critical in terms of ensuring school effectiveness. Leadership contributes to overall student success (Fullan, 2014; Manna, 2015). While there is an abundance of studies related to school leadership in more developed countries, this is not the case for lesser-developed countries, especially some countries located in the sub-Saharan region (Lopez & Rugano, 2018). Existing literature on educational leadership in Cameroon, while growing, is sparse, creating the need for more research.

People in different parts of the world are able to use their creative thinking capacities and skills to design effective educational systems that have promoted social change. This implies that effective educational systems have the potential to bring about sociopolitical and economic growth. Effective educational school leaders are key in building effective school systems and progressive societies. This study informs leadership actions in education that might promote positive social change in terms of organization of schools in Cameroon.

This chapter includes an introduction to the study as well as the background, problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions that are addressed in this study. The conceptual framework, research design, key definitions, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations are also addressed. The chapter concludes with the significance of this study in terms of the educational context in Cameroon as well as other regions of the world.

Background

Asuga et al. (2016) noted lack of empirical studies around educational leadership in the African context in comparison to the western hemisphere. There exists an abundance of empirical studies related to the influence of school leadership on school improvement and student achievement in more advanced countries. Many educational leadership issues are addressed in these studies. A prevalent topic covered in research is leadership effectiveness and student achievement, as well as identification of competencies deemed to be impactful in terms of bringing about positive change in schools. Day et al. (2016) argued transformational leadership is critical to student achievement. Goksoy (2015) concluded it is critical to distribute leadership across management of educational institutions in order to ensure balanced situations which are conducive to student growth and achievement. It is established in literature that there is a link between effective school leadership and school effectiveness (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2015; Oplatka, 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2016). Asuga et al. (2016) noted a lack of educational leadership literature within the African context and highlighted the concentration of the limited literature in a very small number of countries. Countries in the southern parts of the continent have seen steady growth while other parts of the continent are lacking in educational research.

The lack of literature on educational leadership effectiveness is even more prevalent in sub-Saharan African countries, including Cameroon. Titanji and Yuoh (2010), for instance, sought to explore the effectiveness of education inspectors' supervisory tasks in the English content area from a teacher standpoint. Their work did

not address the effectiveness of school leaders. Ashu and Bisschoff (2015) argued for structured leadership and management training of school leaders in Cameroon but did not address the effectiveness of current school leadership practices. Furthermore, a merit and certification system does not exist for the selection of school principals and school heads. Instead, school leaders are appointed into positions by governmental decrees without consideration for training or certification (Besong, 2014). School leadership improvements in this context begins with an investigation into current practices by way of leadership evaluations.

According to VanWynsberghe and Herman (2015), education is instrumental in bringing about change with regards to outlook and attitude. It is therefore necessary that schools become learning communities that ensure positive outlooks for student growth and achievement. Effective school leadership is key in terms of achieving student success and meeting educational goals (Algarni & Male, 2014; Augustine-Shaw, 2015; Irby & Lunenburg, 2014). Lack of substantial research on educational leadership effectiveness in the Cameroonian context constitutes a significant gap in literature on school leadership and effectiveness in Cameroon. I sought to address this important gap in literature.

Problem Statement

A problem exists in the education sector in Cameroon. This problem is lack of training for school principals. This problem is negatively affecting student achievement and teacher output (Wohlfahrt, 2018). One reason for this problem is that there is no specific criterion process in place for school principals who are politically appointed to these positions of leadership (Wirba, 2015). Wirba (2015) found secondary school

principals in Cameroon had no formal training prior to their appointments in both public and private educational sectors.

Educational leadership is critical to student achievement. According to Heck and Hallinger (2014), school principals are able to influence student achievement by creating conditions that build consistency and effectiveness for all stakeholders. Besong (2014) found that principals in secondary schools in Cameroon were lacking skills that were necessary for managing human and material resources as well as upholding interpersonal relationships with stakeholders. Besong recommended induction courses for principals who are promoted from the classroom into leadership positions without prior training. Ashu and Bisschoff (2015) argued for implementation of professional development for principals in order to align their practices with international standards.

Educational leadership training and development in Cameroon is a current problem needing to be addressed. As part of addressing this problem, it is important to explore behaviors that contribute to effective school leadership and have the potential to be impactful in terms of planning professional development and training of current and aspiring principals. Ashu and Bisschoff (2015) argued for structured leadership, management training, and professional development of school leaders in Cameroon. This study is an exploratory case study of three principals from secondary schools in Cameroon.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to explore and describe leadership behaviors that are perceived by school principals as critical to their leadership

effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon. To conduct this study, data were collected from multiple sources.

Research Questions

The following central research question and sub questions guided this study:

RQ: What are behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ1: How do principals perceive curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools?

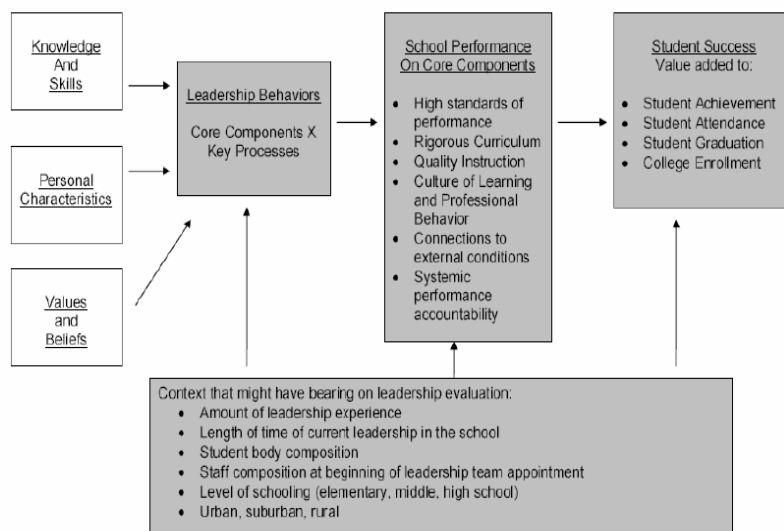
SQ2: How do principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools?

SQ3: How do principals perceive connections to external communities?

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed using the concept of learning-centered leadership (LCL). LCL is a two-dimensional framework that is grounded in research and involves leadership behaviors that influence student achievement (Goldring, Porter, et al., 2009; Porter et al., 2010). The two dimensions of this conceptual foundation are core components and key processes. It is the intersection of these two dimensions that results in increased student achievement (Goldring et al., 2009; Porter et al., 2010). Core components refer to “characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach” (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 2). Key processes refer to transformational leadership behaviors that are “associated with processes of leadership that raise organizational members’ levels of commitment and shape organizational

culture” (Goldring, et al., 2009, p. 2). Both core components and key processes are necessary for effective school leadership that produces expected results. Figure 1 includes a diagram of the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) conceptual model that elaborates the intersection and resulting outcomes of core components and key processes within the LCL as presented by Elliott and Clifford.

Figure 1*VAL-ED Conceptual Framework*

Note. VAL-ED conceptual model portraying links between core components and key processes. Adapted from “Principal assessment: Leadership behaviors known to influence schools and the learning of all students (Document No. LS-5),” by S. N. Elliott, and M. Clifford, 2014. <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/literature-syntheses/>. Copyright 2014 by The CEDAR Center. Reprinted with permission.

In investigations of the effectiveness of school leaders in terms of organizing schools for success, it is important to apply conceptual approaches that allow for visualization of the functionality of the entire organization. The VAL-ED conceptual model explains how variables connect around leadership behaviors to create healthy schools.

Nature of the Study

A multiple case exploratory approach was used in this study with three urban school principals. Qualitative research methods involve giving a voice to participants within

their natural settings through interviews, observations, and examinations of artifacts and documents (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative methods also involve obtaining in-depth data about the study subject. Exploratory case studies are appropriate for new research with little prior history and serves as a starting point for new lines of research (Ben-Eliyahu, 2014). I used a multiple case study design to explore the research questions for this study. Johnson and Christensen (2017) defined case study research as research that includes detailed accounts and analyses of one or more cases. The multiple case study design was used to conduct in-depth interviews with chosen school principals in order to elicit and describe behaviors that are conducive to leadership effectiveness.

Definitions

The following term served to inform my study:

Core components: Elements of a school's culture that create effective learning-centered environments (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Effective leader: An effective leader is one who successfully combines high standards, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning, connections to the community, and performance accountability as well as planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communication and monitoring with a goal to ensure positive student outcomes (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Key processes: Leadership actions and behaviors that ensure high standards of student performance (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Learner-centered leadership/Learning-centered leadership (LCL): Two-dimensional concept (which includes core components and key processes) that involves

leadership behaviors that impact student achievement (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED): Principal leadership behavior evaluation instrument which is used to measure school principal leadership effectiveness by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from a survey, and then reporting findings on a scale ranging from ineffective to outstandingly effective (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Assumptions

Some assumptions existed in this study. I assumed that the interview questions and follow-up questions were sufficient to gather necessary data, and that participants would avail themselves for the entire interviewing process, including debriefings. I also assumed participants fully understood the academic and technical language of the LCL framework to be able to respond with fluency to interview questions even though they had not been exposed to school leadership trainings during which they might have encountered such language. I further assumed all participants responded with honesty to research questions, even when responses did not portray their practices positively.

Scope and Delimitations

This study involved exploring principal leadership behaviors that are perceived as effective in Cameroon. This study involved exploring and describing strengths and weaknesses of leadership behaviors of school leaders in Cameroon as a starting point for developing principal leadership training and development. Participants in this study were three purposefully chosen urban school principals (one elementary school, one middle

school, and one high school) in Cameroon. These participants worked in their current schools for at least one academic year. All schools were located in the same city.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), transferability or external validity is important if results of a study are to be applied to other similar situations. This study has transferability potential. Variance of participants and setting are important in terms of establishing external validity and transferability. This study has the potential to be replicated with other similar participants and settings on a larger scale in Cameroon. Both urban and the rural educational landscapes in Cameroon are similar in terms of their setup, and as such, transferability is possible.

Limitations

Case study research is effective for exploring complex issues that have limited prior literature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This design has limitations in terms of establishing external validity through transferability and dependability, as well as researcher subjectivity.

A design limitation of this study was the limited number of participants, which might make it challenging to fully replicate the study. I made sure to describe in detail the processes inherent to completing this research to allow adaptation and transferability. I also made sure to record interviews in order to ensure dependability of transcribed data. A contextual limitation also existed in this study. Language barriers were an issue for some participants because both English and French languages are official languages spoken in Cameroon. I made sure to have interview questions translated into French, the second official language of business in Cameroon, to address this limitation. A third

limitation for this study involved researcher subjectivity. I had some familiarity with the setting, and this could have led to bias in terms of participant selection and research outcomes. To counter this limitation, I ensured that participants did not include people I already knew in order to remain objective during the entire process. I also used an interview protocol and did not change it based on personal knowledge of the setting.

Significance

Effective educational leadership is important in Cameroonian urban education settings because urban school leaders in Cameroon face the same kinds of pressures that other urban school leaders face elsewhere, such as poor economic and social status and cultural challenges. As a multilingual country with many ethnic differences, cultural, political, and linguistic influences pose problems for educational leaders in Cameroon.

Cameroon is a sub-Saharan country that is known for its multilingual complexity. Simons and Charles (2018) listed 277 living languages being used in Cameroon. This high level of linguistic variation brings with it other traditional and cultural challenges with regards to equity in education. Lack of equity is evident in the school leader selection process where there are high levels of ethnicity-based nepotism (World Bank, 2018). Cameroon's educational system is founded on this complex multilingual background as well as its colonial heritage due to its former colonizers Germany, France, and Great Britain. The country has two educational subsystems based on French and English linguistic affiliations, thereby adding to its rich linguistic and cultural diversity.

The centralized nature of the education system, as well as the political practice of appointing school leaders rather than selecting them through democratic processes results

in some leaders coming to the job unprepared and facing challenges, thereby creating complex education settings in which school leaders must operate. According to Biamba (2012), Cameroonian school principals are transactional agents of accountability and management for the government rather than transformational leaders. No studies exist that indicate how these education administrators fare as transformational leaders.

This study contributes to the administration and organization of urban education in Cameroon by documenting core components and key processes that urban education leaders use to navigate the educational landscape in terms of accomplishing their duties in a complex education setting. This serves as a starting point for seeking solutions in terms of strengthening educational leadership within this context. Democratization of educational leadership processes for educational leaders in countries such as Cameroon is necessary for understanding the complexity of tasks for school and educational leaders within African settings. Investigating perceptions involving leadership effectiveness in this study was used to address how school leaders impact school organizations and consequently student performance and achievement in complex cultural and multilingual settings. This is significant as this study has the potential to make a difference in terms of growth and development of the field of educational leadership and administration in Cameroon and Africa while at the same time contributing to filling an important gap in literature.

Summary

Effective educational systems have the potential to bring about sociopolitical and economic growth. Effective educational school leaders are key for building effective

school systems. This study has the potential to bring about positive social change by identifying strengths and weaknesses of educational leadership in Cameroon.

Identification of these areas is a starting point for developing improved and focused leadership training that will have a positive impact on student achievement, the educational system, and eventually, the rest of the country.

Chapter 1 included an introduction to the aim of this study. The background, problem statement, statement of purpose, and research questions were discussed. The conceptual framework, research design, key definitions, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations were also addressed in this chapter. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the significance of this study in terms of the educational context of Cameroon as well as for the scholarly community. In Chapter 2, existing literature on school leadership in its broader context is explored in depth.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Since the year 2013, there has been limited research involving education leadership and effectiveness in Cameroon. During this time, studies mostly addressed leadership in Cameroon from historical, economic, and political perspectives (see Ashu, 2016; Ndeh, 2015; Ndjio, 2016). Instructional leadership effectiveness in Cameroon has not been an area of focus in literature on education. According to VanWynsberghe and Herman (2015), schools are the primary unit for change, and effective school leadership is a key component in terms of achieving lasting student success and meeting educational goals.

The purpose of this research study was to explore leadership effectiveness of school leaders in urban schools in Cameroon. As a developing country, Cameroon faces challenging issues that include socioeconomic, cultural, healthcare, and infrastructure challenges (Ngwakongwi et al., 2014; St-Pierre et al., 2015). I sought to address this important gap in literature by exploring leadership behaviors exhibited by leaders in three urban schools in Cameroon.

There exists an abundance of studies related to the impact of school leadership on school improvement and student achievement in more advanced countries. Many educational leadership issues are addressed in these studies. Some of the prevalent topics covered in the literature are leadership effectiveness and student achievement (Allen et al., 2015; Cruickshank, 2017; Day et al., 2016; Hitt & Tucker, 2016), and identification of competencies deemed to be impactful in terms of bringing about positive change in schools (Hitt & Tucker, 2016; Hitt et al., 2018). Day et al. (2016) argued that transformational leadership was critical to student achievement. Goksoy (2015)

concluded that it is critical to distribute leadership across all stakeholders in order to ensure a balanced situation which is conducive to student growth and achievement. These studies establish that there is a link between effective school leadership and school effectiveness. Asuga et al. (2016) noted the lack of empirical studies around educational leadership in the African context in comparison to the western hemisphere. Besides the slowly growing body of educational literature in the southern regions of the African continent, only sparse literature on school and education leadership in sub-Saharan African countries was found.

In sub-Saharan Africa, school leadership and administration are especially important because of economic, social, and political challenges that this region faces. Cameroon is one of the countries in this region. There is no substantive body of work in the literature that addresses school leadership effectiveness in Cameroon. My study helps to fill a gap in this literature by investigating how school principals perceive their leadership effectiveness in urban schools in Cameroon.

In Chapter 2, I address the literature search strategy, conceptual framework, leadership, instructional leadership effectiveness, leadership evaluation frameworks, models, and instruments, and the VAL-ED framework and assessment instrument.

Literature Search Strategy

The following databases and search engines were accessed: Education Research Complete, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, SAGE Journals, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, ProQuest One Complete, Education Source, Taylor and Francis, and Walden University Library.

In this study, I used the following keywords: *educational administration, educational management, education in Africa, educational leadership, educational leadership in Africa, education in Cameroon, Cameroon education system, instructional leadership, leadership effectiveness, leadership behaviors, learner centered leadership, curricula high standards, professional learning, school leadership, student achievement, key processes, core competencies, and teacher leadership.*

While the literature search for this study spanned between 2012 and 2022, the majority of literature was published between 2018 and 2022. This resulted from sparseness of literature on education and educational leadership in Cameroon. Most of the available literature addressed linguistic issues while little attention was given to school management and leadership effectiveness. Given the lack of a substantial body of work directly addressing educational management and leadership in Cameroon, the literature review was expanded to other regions in Africa as well as Europe and the U.S., where there was an abundance of literature. Care was taken to choose only those sources that could be applied across geographical borders.

Conceptual Framework

LCL is the conceptual foundation on which this research study was based. LCL is also the conceptual framework on which the VAL-ED framework rests. Danzig et al. (2007) described LCL as an evidence-based leadership framework with a foundation in the pragmatic worldview. Pragmatism in leadership allows practitioners to work within the boundaries of a social context and to utilize democratic strategies in achieving results (Ruetenik, 2016). Democracy is therefore the cornerstone of the LCL framework, which

places responsibility on all stakeholders in an educational setting for its success (Danzig et al., 2007).

Goldring, Xiu Chen et al. (2009) defined LCL as a behavior-anchored framework based on its pragmatist philosophy. Learner-centered leadership is a two-dimensional concept that focuses on the leadership behaviors that impact student achievement (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009). The two dimensions of this conceptual foundation are core components and key processes. It is the intersection of these two dimensions that results in increased student achievement. According to Goldring, Porter et al., core components refer to characteristics that support the learning of students while enhancing the teachers' abilities to teach, while key processes refer to transformational leadership behaviors that are associated with the processes of leadership that both enhance members' commitment and shape their organizational culture. Both core components and key processes are necessary for effective school leadership that produces expected results.

In an investigation of the effectiveness of school leaders in organizing schools for success, it is important to apply conceptual approaches that allow a visualization of the functionality of the entire organization from the leadership perspective. The learning-centered leadership conceptual framework seemed to be well suited for this research study, with its direct focus on the school leader's behaviors and how they enhance or hinder learning within the school. The next entries in this section attempt to situate this conceptual framework within a historical time frame to better understand its evolution through the literature on leadership.

Leadership

Leadership is a term that is loosely used to talk about the things that people do when they are in a position that requires them to take responsibility over moving an idea or event forward with the aim of reaching a pre-defined group or personal goals and objectives. According to Silva (2016), this process involves individuals, followers, team, and contexts acting as the leader. Leadership, in a nutshell, is the art of influencing people. There exists an abundance of research in the literature on leadership theory, skills, and characteristics. Following is a summary of some of the major attempts at defining leadership as well as a synopsis of some of the most prominent concepts in the field.

Brief Historical Overview of Leadership

To fully understand the complexities involved in defining leadership, it is necessary to go far back in the literature to earlier attempts at a definition. According to McCleskey (2014), the literature on leadership goes back more than a hundred years. Leadership is a complex modern and universal phenomenon that has as many diverse meanings as the unique settings in which the concept operates (Bass & Bass, 2008). Attempts at defining the concept of leadership are many and varied. However, over the almost one hundred years span, many of these definitions have portrayed a commonality in that they all refer to leadership as a process that involves influencing people and activities, and giving purposeful direction to group activity as indicated by the works of some of the historically grounded seminal work on the topic (Cohen, 1990; Jacques & Clement, 1994; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Stodgill, 1948.) Bass and Bass (2008) for instance,

identified more than ten different definitions of leadership that could be further combined into even more definitions depending on the kind of institution or organization within which it operates.

As a result of differences in role, functional, and institutional needs, the meaning of leadership is not the same in a military or social setting as it is in an educational or industrial setting. Despite these differences in operational meaning, Bass and Bass (2008) recognized the critical importance of leadership in these different settings and proposed an all-inclusive definition of leadership as the initiated expectations-based interaction of competencies within and among members of a specific group to solve problems or to attain goals. Working along the same lines, Northouse (2016), and more recently Silva (2016), both defined leadership as a process in which one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal within a specific context. To be effective, leadership therefore needs to involve all members of the organization working together alongside a designated central figure.

Evolution of Leadership Theory

The numerous definitions of leadership stem directly from the equally numerous conceptual and theoretical research studies and outcomes in the field. Over time, many concepts and theories of leadership have emerged, and several theorists have advanced meaningful and useful theories about leadership. To date, there exist as many leadership theories, concepts, models, and styles as one would dare to describe with adjectives. Key influencers in the field include Bass and Bass (2008) and Fullan (2007) who in their seminal works, both recognized the complexity of the concept of leadership as well as its

universality and presence in all forms of society. In more grounding work, Leithwood et al. (2006) listed instructional, transformational, moral, constructivist, servant, cultural, and primal as only a few of the adjectives used to describe the leadership concepts and theories in the evolving growth industry of leadership. Equally, Bass & Bass (2008) distinguished up to twenty-one leadership types in the field of education. Leadership adjectives abound in politics, business, health, public service, and religion. Despite this abundance of leadership rhetoric, a few schools of thought have emerged to become dominant in leadership theory and research (Ahmed et al., 2016). The dominant leadership theories include the great man theory, the trait theory of leadership, the behavioral theory of leadership, the contingencies theories of leadership, and the transactional and transformational theories of leadership.

Great Man Theory

Although leadership activity can be traced historically back to the beginnings of time with Adam, Abraham, and Moses in the Bible and prominent leaders such as Confucius and Caesar, impactful scholarly and empirical contributions to the study of leadership concepts and theories only goes back to the mid nineteenth century when Thomas Carlyle propagated the idea of the Great Man through his promotion of heroic leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008). In his series of social commentaries, Thomas Carlyle reinforced the notion of leaders as heroes who were born with unique qualities that enabled them to shape the history of the world by enlightening and leading the masses through their work in politics, literature, art, religion, the military, or wherever they were. The idea of the Great Man eventually developed into the trait theory of leadership during the early twentieth century.

Traits Theory

At the turn of the previous century, the traits theory of leadership was deemed to be more accurate than the earlier great man perspective (Day & Antonakis, as cited in Day & Antonakis, 2018). This theory assumed that people who are endowed with certain characteristics and dispositions are more apt to become leaders (Bass & Bass, 2008). The traits approach emphasized the critical role of personality traits in effective leadership (Northouse, 2016). Northouse identified qualities such as intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability as major leadership traits. Theorists of this school of thought contended that leaders are born with natural traits or personal characteristics and tendencies that prepare them to become leaders. The downside of this approach was

its excessive focus on the individual and little attention to the environmental and situational factors that affect leadership as upheld by the proponents of situational leadership theories (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Behavioral Leadership Theory

The 1950s and 1960s saw the emergence of the behavioral theories of leadership. The proponents of this school of thought held that behavioral styles are more important in determining leadership than the physical representation or internal characteristics of a person (Day & Antonakis, as cited in Day & Antonakis, 2018). Emphasis was on what leaders do and how what they do affects effectiveness. Of prime influence in the development of this theory were studies by Michigan and Ohio State Universities in which consideration and initiation of structure were identified as important independent variables in determining leadership behaviors that distinguished them from followers (Horner, 2003). These and other studies indicated that leadership can be learned through the teaching of certain people and task-oriented behaviors. As the scholarly study of leadership grew, other leadership theory movements such as the contingency and transformational proponents incorporated these behavioral ideas in their attempts at grounding leadership theory (Day & Antonakis, as cited in Day & Antonakis, 2018).

Contingency or Situational Leadership Theories

The contingency theory of leadership was largely promoted during the 1960s and 1970s. Contingency theories of leadership are numerous and varied and are based on the need to relate leadership behavior styles and traits to specific situations (Day &

Antonakis, as cited in Day & Antonakis, 2018). Bass and Bass (2008) referred to these variables as time, place, and circumstance and pointed out the interdependence of these variables, noting the difficulty in merging all the variations into a succinct theory due to different situational needs. As a result, several contingency approaches became prominent, among which are Fiedler's Contingency model that focused on leader-member relations, task structure, and position power as variables influencing a leader's control of a situation (Day & Antonakis, as cited in Day & Antonakis, 2018; Dugan, 2017). Other theories that emerged include the path-goal theory, the Vroom-Yetton theory, and the leader-member exchange theory (Dugan, 2017).

According to McCleskey (2014), situational leadership focuses on how well a leader can match his or her leadership style to the competence and commitment of their employees. The situational approach seeks to match leadership style to specific situations. An effective situational leader is therefore one who can adapt his or her leadership style to the demands of different situations (McCleskey, 2014). Four adaptive leadership styles emerge from situational leadership: delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing. The coaching approach focuses on achieving goals while meeting followers' socioeconomic needs while the supporting approach goes even further to use behaviors that bring out the followers' task skill.

Transactional and Transformational Leadership Theories

An important shift in the study of leadership theory occurred in the later years of the 1970s with the work of James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Burns (1978) made a clear distinction between the older conceptions of leadership that mostly focused on the leader

in a transactional role, and a newer conception of leadership that focuses on transforming both the leader and the follower in a mutually supportive effort. Further work on this concept of leadership portrayed both transactional and transformational leadership as constituting the full range of leadership, thereby, bringing together trait, and contingency theories into this broad model of leadership (Bass & Avolio, eds., 1994). The concept of transformational leadership has developed into a broad range leadership approach that seeks to change and transform people (Gomes, 2014). Gomes further stated that transformational leaders are charismatic and visionary as they seek to initiate change and transform followers by engaging, inspiring, and mobilizing, while paying attention to ethics, emotions, values, and the needs of followers. The flexibility and broad range of this model of leadership means that transformational leadership can be applied in almost all fields.

Key Statements and Definitions Inherent in the Conceptual Framework

Learning-centered leadership as a conceptual foundation is a two-dimensional concept that focuses on the leadership behaviors that impact student achievement (Goldring, Porter, et al., 2009). The two dimensions of this conceptual foundation are core components and key processes. It is the intersection of these two dimensions that results in increased student achievement.

Core components refer to “characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach” (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009, p. 2). Key processes refer to transformational leadership behaviors that are “associated with processes of leadership that raise organizational members’ levels of commitment and

shape organizational culture” (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009, p. 2). Both core components and key processes are necessary for effective school leadership that produces expected results. In an investigation of the effectiveness of school leaders in organizing schools for success, it is important to apply conceptual approaches that allow a visualization of the functionality of the entire organization. The core components and key processes of the Learning-Centered leadership conceptual foundation allow a visualization of how all aspects of a healthy school are connected and rely on one another with the main pivotal point being leadership behaviors.

Core components include high standards for student learning, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, a culture of learning and professional behavior, connections to external communities, and systemic performance accountability while key processes include planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Core Components

The core components refer to the elements that create an effective learning-centered environment. Goldring, Porter et al. (2009) identified six core competencies of effective leadership that ensure academic, social, and professional growth. The core competencies are high standards for student learning, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, culture of learning and professional behavior, collaboration between school and community, and accountability for student learning.

The first competency addresses how school leaders implement high standards for student learning to ensure that they are meeting learning goals. The second core competency seeks to ensure that academic content is ambitious in all core content areas through the implementation of a rigorous curriculum. The third core competency is focused on implanting effective instructional practices that ensure quality instruction. The fourth competency ensures that student learning is the focus in the development of a culture of learning and professional behavior. Component five seeks to ensure that there is collaboration between the school and community. Component six ensures that there is both individual and collective accountability for students' academic and social learning.

Key Processes

The key processes refer to the leadership actions and behaviors that ensure high standards of student performance. Goldring, Porter et al. (2009) identified six key processes: planning, implementing, creating, advocating, communicating, and monitoring.

The planning key process describes how school leaders plan and share a common vision, policies, and practices. The second key process focuses on how they implement plans, policies, and practices that ensure high student performance. The creating process involves how school leaders create supportive financial, technological, and human resources environments in their schools. The fourth process investigates how the school leader advocates for students both within and beyond the school. The fifth key process involves how the school leader establishes open lines of communication between, within, and beyond the school. The sixth key process looks at how the school principal implements a systematic and effective monitoring plan that includes collecting and analyzing data for decision-making and school improvement.

Learning-Centered Leadership and School Effectiveness

Many studies have sought to link school leadership to school effectiveness and student achievement. This focus on effectiveness and achievement has in turn created the need for reliable and valid evaluation instruments for use in measuring leadership impact on school achievement.

The VAL-ED framework is the instrument used in the assessment of Learning-centered leadership. The VAL-ED was developed as a 360-degree evaluation instrument to capture the essence of school leadership within its specific environment. It uses a series of seventy-two survey questions that reflect the core components and key processes of LCL to capture the essence of how school leader behaviors influence school success. While this leadership evaluation tool has been proven to be suitable for use in culturally diverse contexts like the Cameroonian context (Cravens, 2014), for the purposes of this

exploratory study, these constructs shall be used to inform the questioning patterns of the interviews. The constructs that will be explored in this study are the six core components of a successful school and the six key processes that are linked to effective leadership as described by Goldring, Porter et al. (2009) and that are based on the two-dimensional conceptual framework of learning-centered leadership.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Educational Management and Leadership

In the field of education, management and leadership are fields that have been the subject of study over a long time. According to Connolly et al. (2017), educational management and educational leadership are key concepts in understanding how educational institutions operate; however, these two concepts are fundamentally different. This is a line of thought that is supported by the work of Bush (2019) who argued that there is a lack of consensus on the meanings of management and leadership as they pertain to education. Bush explained this lack of consensus on the grounding of these fields in other disciplines such as political science, sociology, and economics. However, this lack of consensus has not deterred scholars from attempts at either linking or distinguishing these two fields.

Bush defined educational management as a field of study and practice focused on the authoritative operation of learning organizations and seeking to link management activities to the aims and objectives of schooling. This definition of educational management is distinctive when compared to the focus of educational leadership on vision, values, and intentional influence at individual and group levels (Bush, 2019).

However, Bush also suggested combining vision with functionality in order to ensure that schools achieve their intended goals.

Other scholars like Connolly et al. (2017) and Fullan (2014) also argued that educational management and educational leadership are not mutually exclusive and that an effective school principal's work involves aspects of maintenance and change that reflect both management and leadership. Fullan (2014) countered the notion of a visionary leader as vague and insufficient in capturing the complex essence and importance of the managerial aspects of the job. Connolly et al. (2017), attempted to combine management and leadership by introducing the concept of responsibility as the main link between the two. They purported that people become visionary and influential leaders by carrying out the duties attached to their management responsibilities.

Educational management and leadership stem from organizational leadership and systems thinking. In continuation from his earlier work, Bush (2015) argued that there are great similarities between leadership practices in learning organizations and other kinds of organizations in terms of goals, structure, culture, and contexts. Senge (2006) described such school organizations as places where practices, principles, and essences come together in collective and systemic unison to develop capacity and shared vision, and to seek common outcomes. Razik and Swanson (2017) conceptualize educational leadership from a systems thinking standpoint with many inter-connected social, political, economic, and cultural strands, and that has the goal of developing visionary leadership in learning institutions. According to Razik and Swanson (2017), school leaders with a

systems perspective are more visionary and portray leadership that goes beyond simply administering and managing educational resources.

Educational Management and Leadership Contexts

One of the dimensions used to define leadership and management is the cultural context within which they are exercised. Contextual purposes, traditions, history, norms, and ideals all contribute to the manifestation of leadership and management. Razik and Swanson (2017) stated that the cultural context of a group or organization is instrumental in how meaning is attributed to management tasks and leadership relationships. Several models of leadership such as contingent and transformational models in western regions are contextually influenced. This leads one to believe that other regions of the world might have other contextually based models. Msila (2014) proposed the recognition of an African model of educational leadership. According to Msila, this model is grounded in Ubuntu, a South African philosophy that upholds collective personhood and morality. The humane and moral values upheld by Ubuntu are common across many sub-Saharan countries. The underlying strength of this African leadership model is the importance of promoting the common good and building trust, both universal values (Msila, 2014).

The interest in contextually based educational leadership is growing. Truong and Hallinger (2015) for instance, conducted a study with a bid to conceptualize the context related leadership styles of school leaders in Vietnam. Hallinger (2016) recognized that most of the research on educational leadership is from Europe or America and is carried out with the assumption that what happens in these parts is the norm. Hallinger found that context as a variable in school leadership practice was largely ignored in favor of

variables such as vision, goal setting, and professional development. Hallinger then made the argument for the inclusion of context as a major factor when considering how school leaders impact school and student success. He recommended the refinement of educational leadership research to include context as an important variable in future studies. These findings are relevant to studies of leadership in sub-Saharan Africa, a region/context that is more complex than most other regions/contexts.

Interest in the contextual nature of educational leadership continues to grow. In a qualitative study of the experiences of three female principals in Kenyan secondary schools, Lopez and Rugano (2018) found that educational leaders in post-colonial settings face challenges that are very different from their counterparts from different parts of the world. Lopez and Rugano recommended that cultural and contextual variables be strongly considered in developing practical leadership policies. Along the same lines of thought, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) also found that contextual variables are complex and numerous and can be categorized under any of three main types namely situational, material, and external contexts. Clarke and O'Donoghue recognized the complexity of context for educational leadership and proposed guidelines for practice around the emerging concept of contextual intelligence. Beliefs, values, and knowledge sources are instrumental in how people in different contexts perceive leadership and management.

Based on these studies, one can draw the conclusion that leadership effectiveness is ensured when contextual elements and values are included in leadership development.

Effective School Leadership

Schools are learning organizations that are characterized by visions for student and collective learning, as well as connectedness within unique and changing contexts (Kools & Stoll, 2016.) Practices, principles, and essences come together in collective unison within learning organizations to develop capacity and shared vision, and to seek common outcomes. Connectedness and collectivity of human and other variables stand out as a common trait in such organizations, and as such, create complex systems with many interdependent subsystems. Within this complex systemic structure, the leader plays a crucial role. According to Razik and Swanson (2017), school leaders with a systems perspective are more visionary and portray leadership that goes beyond simply managing educational resources to one that actively seeks to develop capacity in all stakeholders within the system.

Role of Leadership in School Effectiveness

School effectiveness has been linked to student success (Karadağ et al., 2015; Manna, 2015). The importance of the school principal's role in school effectiveness and success has also been the central subject in many studies (Algarni & Male, 2014; Augustine-Shaw, 2015; Irby & Lunenburg, 2014.) In a three-year mixed methods impact study of associations between principals' work and student achievement, Day et al. (2016) found that school leaders have an impact on the overall success of schools. They provided empirical evidence to support the rhetoric of the existence of a strong link between school improvement and a combination of transformational, instructional, and other organizational practices by school leaders. Day et al. (2016) concluded that

sustained school growth and effectiveness is possible when school leaders diagnose and understand the needs of their educational organizations as they operate within their specific complex contexts.

These findings are corroborated in the work of Cruickshank (2017) who argued that school principals influence student achievement through an integrated leadership approach that focuses on setting common goals and vision, merging instructional and transformational styles in teaching and learning, and developing an awareness of the external variables that impact their schools. Some implications for practice emanating from the study are that there needs to be a shift from single format leadership practice to integrating transformational and instructional practices under the same umbrella to build more visionary and systemically open and inclusive leadership styles. This shift can be made possible through the development of leadership capacity.

Leadership Development for School Effectiveness

Choosing and developing leaders is also an important aspect in the quest for school effectiveness and student success. In a descriptive study identifying an effective design for mentoring new school leaders, Augustine-Shaw (2015) identified some key tenets as best practices to guide leadership development and improvement. Some of these tenets include establishing a vision for success, creating a learning culture, building leadership capacity and positive relationships, community involvement, and establishing accountability through data use. School principal evaluations present an objective way of choosing the right school leaders to build effective schools.

The quest to improve education through improved leadership is an on-going concern in many learning organizations. Gumus and Bellibas (2016) argued for the need to create hands-on professional development instances for principals to have opportunities for networking and mentoring. On a quest to seek out theoretical contributions to the field of leadership development, Slater et al. (2018) examined the work of the International Study of Principal Preparation (ISPP), an international research network concerned with building frameworks for principal preparation and leadership development. Their work confirmed the need for principal development in the areas of policy and practice, as well as recommendations for continued research for both developed and emerging educational contexts.

With regards to research within the African sub-Saharan region the need for training is equally present. In a survey study of educational leadership challenges in 90 post-secondary schools, Ofoegbu and Obiweluzor (2015) got an unexpected finding in relation to demographic instability due to contextual variables. They found that the high level of student mobility affects school leadership effectiveness. Ofoegbu and Obiweluzor concluded that while school heads portrayed some transactional and transformational traits in their day-to-day leadership activities, there was a need for principals to be trained appropriately to be effective in meeting the needs of the internal and external complexities of the school environment.

In contrast to most studies that have focused on leadership effectiveness, a study by Macharia and Kiruma (2014) sought to investigate the ineffectiveness of the inspection processes in Ugandan schools using a phenomenological and survey mixed

methods research design. They concluded that weaknesses exist within the educational inspection set up due to a lack of training for the leaders. Based on these findings, Macharia and Kiruma recommended leadership training programs to include skills necessary for classroom observations, giving feedback, and conducting post inspection follow-up activities. Ohlson, Swanson et al. (2016) , sought to investigate elements of school culture other than leadership that impact student attendance and by extension, student academic achievement. They found that the investigated variables of collaborative school culture and teacher quality affect student attendance and achievement. Ohlson, Swanson et al. concluded that these findings have the potential to influence school reforms in the areas of educational policy as well as teacher and leader training and development.

Day et al. (2016) argued that school success is not only dependent on leadership style but also on the leader's ability to diagnose and understand the specific contextual needs of the school and to apply layered and context-based strategies in seeking resolutions. These studies stand out in their shift from the focus on leadership as the key factor in student success. Despite findings from like studies, the focus on effective leadership as the focal point for effective schools has not waned but has continued to draw interest (Bush & Glover, 2014; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2017).

Instructional Leadership

For over thirty years, stemming from the effective schools' movement of the 1970s and 1980s, the need for leadership with a focus on instructional practices has been on the rise and created an interest in instructional leadership as a concept separate from

other leadership concepts (Dimmock & Tan, 2016). The effective schools' movement put emphasis on the traditional managerial role of instructional leadership that focused on observations of classroom practices, providing feedback, and modeling what was considered good instruction. However, as variables such as school size, stakeholder involvement, curriculum enrichment, socio-political and economic influence, and financial resources have taken more center stage in education, so too has the need for a different kind of educational and instructional leadership and management grown. Recent research in the field is beginning to shift toward a paradigm that has the principal connecting and collaborating on all instructional practices at the classroom level as opposed to supervising from a managerial platform (Zhaohui et al., 2017).

Instructional leadership roles are complex given the numerous variables involved in obtaining effective results (Salo et al., 2015). The complexity of instructional leadership lies in its focus on merging the needs of students, teachers, administrators, policies, curriculum, community, and other variables in addition to managing resources in efficient ways. Mette and Riegel (2018) sought to distinguish between the instructional leadership tasks of supervision and evaluation from a systems-thinking standpoint. They concluded that systemic educational policies and practice define instructional leadership. Mette and Riegel (2018) suggested that school leaders need to consider this level of complexity as they carry out their instructional leadership tasks. In a mixed methods national study spanning a three-year period, Day et al. (2016) concluded that a key factor for leadership success is the principal's ability to diagnose, understand, and articulate the school's instructional needs in a clear and succinct manner using contextual and

organizational factors as supports. They suggested further research using mixed methods to fine-tune the nuances of the instructional leadership roles and behaviors of principals.

Dimmock and Tan (2016) argued for a reconceptualization of instructional leadership to encompass learner-centered behaviors and leadership for learning, thereby putting student learning at the center of school leadership. Influencing motivation and student learning goes beyond classroom observations and feedback to teachers. In reconceptualizing educational leadership and supervision, the role of an effective instructional leader becomes more learner-centered and focused around engaging in strategic organizational practices in hiring, supporting, and retaining teaching staff as well as engaging teaching staff in professional exchanges that address teaching and learning processes in and out of the classroom.

Zhaohui et al. (2017), posited that the traditional supervisory nature of instructional leadership is obsolete and in need of redefinition. They advocate for the use of the School Administration Manager (SAM) model that provides the principal with the time necessary for hands on work in direct instructional tasks such as data analysis and utilization, connecting with teachers and other staff, and reflecting on daily practice. Liu and Hallinger (2018) equally concluded that time management skills, possession of a teaching and learning knowledge base, as well as possession of relational skills are all important factors when it comes to successful instructional leadership.

Instructional Leadership in Context

The complexities of instructional leadership are made evident by both roles and contextual dimensions. Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) described the context of

educational practice as a multifaceted, multi-layered, and unstable mix of cultural, socio-political, historical, and geographical factors. Contexts differ all around the world and offer numerous variations to the practice of instructional leadership. Context based practices have an important influence on leadership effectiveness in culturally diverse educational settings (Norman et al., 2016). Norman, Hashim, and Abdullah argued that successful leaders strategically incorporate culturally founded strengths, assets, and styles in purposeful, creative, and well-intended ways to create positive work environments.

Most of the research on educational leadership has been based in the United States, European countries, and other countries with sufficient financial resources to support such studies (Bush, 2018). The prominent models of instructional leadership emanating from these studies reflect the contextual dimensions of these more advanced countries. Many of these studies within the American context are based on the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) standards, which are the guiding professional practice principles for school leadership effectiveness in that context (Davis et al., 2013).

In sub-Saharan Africa, there exists limited research on school leadership with most studies based in the South African post-apartheid context (Bush & Glover, 2016). Other countries on the African continent make do with models from western countries. Given the universal nature of education, researchers have indicated the need for more contextually balanced approaches in research studies on educational and instructional leadership to ensure its stance as a unique and separate field of study from other leadership and management fields. Lopez and Rugano (2018), for instance,

recommended a focus on emerging contexts within the greater international context in order to broaden the field. In so doing, the platform for global intellectual exchanges in the development of educational and instructional leadership will be established. A sub-Saharan country such as Cameroon would benefit from such intellectual research sharing efforts since it does not have a substantial repository of its own leadership research from which to draw resources.

Educational leadership in Cameroon is unlike educational leadership in the more advanced countries of the world. Educational leadership positions are filled politically by government appointments rather than through a highly structured application and selection process. Stakeholders have little or no input and are not involved in this subjective process. There is no certification requirement or specific set of standards and competencies required of those appointed to work as school leaders (Ashu, 2014). Ashu further points out that while Cameroonian school leaders receive minimal leadership training through periodic seminars that focus on managerial development, on-the-job instructional leadership training is what is mostly prevalent compared to other settings where formal leadership education is an important part of the selection criteria.

Wirba (2015) found that while participants reported that school leaders served as father figures in their schools and were also mostly portrayed as transformational leaders, they lacked the leadership training necessary to ensure their effectiveness on the academic front. Ashu and Bisschoff (2015) attributed poor school leader performance in Cameroon to the lack of structured leadership development programs.

In addition to the lack of a structured leadership-training program, school leaders are also faced with contextual challenges such as politics, cultural and ethnic differences, and numerous traditional disparities. Cameroon is known to be widely diverse in terms of culture and tradition, and adapting to this diversity as a school leader can be challenging. Research remains sparse in this area. Biamba (2012) indicated that while school principals were agents of accountability and management for the government education ministry, they faced challenges dealing with traditions, culture, and politics. As a result of these challenges, these leaders tended to lean toward a transactional model of leadership as they spent a lot of time fixing things and not initiating transformational acts. Ashu (2018) found that leader practices tended to be more distributive and used differences as assets rather than hindrances to enhance academic outcomes. This finding is an indication that with the right structures in place, challenges can be overcome, and proactive leadership can become the norm in the country's schools.

Evaluating Instructional Leadership Effectiveness

Defining Educational Evaluation

Educational evaluation dates to the industrial revolution and the beginnings of modern educational systems in Europe and North America (Razik & Swanson, 2017). Since that time, several models of evaluation have been developed and utilized. Razik and Swanson pointed out that prior to the 1950s, evaluation models focused mostly on educational programs and systems. Thereafter, an interest in personnel and multifactor evaluations developed as interest in accountability and achievement grew. Current models of educational evaluation focus on professionalism by using many models and

qualitative and quantitative methods to meet diversity and accountability requirements. Professionalism calls for a level of conceptual commonality that takes diversity into account and can be generalized and applied beyond a specific setting. Razik and Swanson's (2017) definition of educational evaluation as a systemic collection and interpretation of information and data culminating in individual or systemic action fits this notion.

Principal Instructional Leadership Evaluation

The school leader is at the center of school effectiveness. According to Razik and Swanson (2017), school effectiveness has become a public debate, thereby creating the need for the assessment and evaluation of educational entities and their participating stakeholders. Louis and Lee (2016) argued that the school leader is an important player who brings together all the pieces of the school community to ensure student engagement and achievement. Louis and Lee concluded that school leadership is collective and sharing leadership through targeted instructional leadership practices within established professional communities of learning is more likely to have an impact on overall student related outcomes.

The connection between targeted instructional leadership and student outcomes was explored in Reardon (2011) that used the VAL-ED instrument and a hierarchical multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis to research how school principals' perceived learning-centered behaviors relate to student achievement. The study results indicated that learning-centered leadership has a direct effect on student achievement, thereby supporting a positive relationship between learning-centered leadership and student

achievement. In a similar study involving principal self-assessment and teacher and observer surveys of the effect of leadership behavior on student academic achievement, Tatlay et al. (2014) found that leadership behaviors influenced student academic achievement according to the school principal self-assessment. However, this was not the case for the teachers whose survey analysis indicated that there was no effect of principal behaviors on student achievement. This contradiction calls for a closer and more thorough evaluation of leadership practices with input from all stakeholders in order to produce a more comprehensive picture of the link between leadership and student achievement. Dimmock and Tan (2016) argued that instructional leadership goes beyond just what happens in the school building to include the school principal's overall ability in management. These findings are in sync with other research such as Terosky (2014) and Shuangye and Walker (2015), who contended that effective school leadership puts the student or learner at the center of all stakeholder actions. What happens within the school is just as important as the influences of the community and beyond in ensuring student achievement.

Although the link between leadership and student achievement is established and documented, Reardon (2011) questioned the impact of context on the learning-centered practices of school leaders while establishing the need for school principal professional development in the core components of learning-centered leadership. According to Tatlay et al. (2014), context plays a serious role in leadership effectiveness and student achievement. The exigencies of context can take away from the immediate roles of the school leader. It would seem that school leaders need targeted training focused on

learning-centered leadership practices while taking into account the contextual bottlenecks that are encountered. The need for effective leadership training and development has been documented in several studies (Shuangye & Walker, 2015; Terosky, 2014). This need was previously emphasized in Lingam and Lingam (2013) whose mixed methods study of educational leaders' self-perception of effectiveness indicated that when school leaders do not meet up to the dimensions of effectiveness, it is mostly due to lack of training. Lingam and Lingam recommended the replication of this study in other national settings as well as the evaluation of existing training programs to identify areas of weakness and need in school leadership roles. This will in turn assist training program designers by providing them with the material for more adequate leadership training programs that are learner centered.

The school principal's role as an instructional leader is therefore critical in ensuring school effectiveness, and as such, lends itself to a full and thorough assessment and evaluation. Dimmock and Tan (2016) sum this up in writing that the need for learning-centered education means that the concept needs to be developed to include all aspects of the learning community and leaders need to move away from an authoritarian leadership style and move towards behaviors that engage the entire learning institution. Leaders therefore need to be trained to relinquish authoritarian styles and engage in more learner-centered approaches in their roles. In this regard, Shuangye and Walker (2015) proposed the institution of authentic leadership, a learner-centered leadership style that uses contextual variables to inform leadership practices that involve all stakeholders.

Processes in Instructional Leadership Evaluation

According to Spaulding (2014), educational evaluations seek to answer questions about what is working or not, as well as what to change or keep. This is achieved by asking the right questions that connect aims and intentions to results and accomplishments that are focused on a common vision. Purposeful educational evaluation aims to bring forth the implementation of the ideal vision of an educational program as perceived by a social need. The processes in an effective evaluation utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods, and include problem identification, data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of result and feedback, and action proposal. These processes can be applied to both formative and summative evaluation. Formative educational evaluations are suitable for ongoing improvement while summative evaluations are suitable for making overall judgments about the educational program (Razik & Swanson, 2017). The formative evaluation of school personnel aims to build capacity in education through leadership development and training.

Leadership Evaluation Frameworks, Models, and Instruments

Over the years, social and economic indicators such as achievement gaps and socio-economic status have created a heightened interest in the relationship between school leadership and student outcomes (Day et al., 2016). Several leadership evaluation rubrics, models, and instruments have been developed in education and other fields in attempts to capture the essence of leadership practices that produce measurable results at the student level.

Interest in educational outcomes through instructional leadership is at the core of school leadership as evidenced in a meta-analysis of 57 studies on the relationship between school leadership and student outcomes (Karadağ et al., 2015). This meta-analysis revealed that the impact of instructional leadership on student achievement was significant especially when it came to transformational and distributed leadership styles and practices. The meta-analysis also indicated that the following five school leadership dimensions were instrumental in bringing about positive student outcomes: goal setting; strategic resourcing; planning, coordination, and evaluation of curriculum and instruction; building teacher capacity; and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. These dimensions in no way cover what should or should not be measured in a school principal evaluation, however, they are commonly found in many school leadership evaluation rubrics and instruments.

The literature on school leadership evaluation instruments is sparse and nascent. Most of the research has focused on teacher evaluation tools and rubrics (Grissom et al., 2018). Substantial contributions to this topic date more than five years. Tredway et al. (2012) contended that there is no single right evaluation instrument and that an effective leadership assessment should include more than one type of instrument and multiple types of evidence. Kearney et al. (2012) reinforced this assertion in their overview of ten commercially available leadership evaluation frameworks, assessments, and support instruments. This overview brings to light some of the differences that exist among the measurement tools and rubrics. While instruments such as the Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) (which is a tasks-based 360-degree

formative assessment that measures distributed leadership practices across the entire school) and the 360-degree Leadership Assessment (that consists of self, supervisor, and staff ratings with feedback on leader strengths and weaknesses) are formative in nature, other instruments such as the Leadership Effectiveness Evaluation system and the Leadership Development Program (LDP) focus on a performance appraisal to identify leadership duties and responsibilities and leadership support.

Other noteworthy measurement and evaluation instruments include Marzano's School Leadership Evaluation Model (whose main attributes are 5 teacher –focused domains that are used to measure three leadership components with a goal to support leaders to become highly effective in student achievement), the Multidimensional Leadership Assessment System/Leadership Performance Matrix, and the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VA-LED) (a 360-degree multi-rater survey instrument based on a learning-centered framework of leadership core competencies and key processes. Feedback is diagnostic and formative with suggestions for professional development).

It can be challenging to choose from the myriad of instruments available for quantitative and qualitative research, however, the 360-degree evaluation instruments seem to capture the essence of leadership evaluation since they allow for both qualitative and quantitative data to be collected from the leader's immediate work circle (Kang & Jin, 2015). According to Elliott and Clifford (2014), it is essential to use evaluation instruments that are psychometrically tested and that can capture the complex expectations of leadership functions through multiple forms of qualitative and

quantitative evidence. The VAL-ED, which is based on the conceptual framework of learner-centered leadership, is a 360-degree evaluation tool that meets this definition.

Leadership effectiveness can be measured by any given entity using a self-made rubric or a third party free or commercial instrument. In qualitative studies, researchers use other types of instruments that include interviews, observations, and focus groups. An instrument that is geared towards qualitative research, and interviews specifically, is the interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework proposed by Castillo-Montoya (2016). The IPR is a qualitative framework that brings together four critical steps necessary for a successful interview experience. According to Castillo-Montoya, the steps of the IPR process include aligning research questions and interview question, developing open-ended questions that create opportunities for in-depth inquiry, having the protocol reviewed and refining with feedback, and finally piloting the protocol. Castillo-Montoya (2016) further argued that the IPR process helps in strengthening the reliability of qualitative interview protocols.

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, literature available on LCL and how leadership influences student performance was explored and discussed in terms of educational management and instructional leadership. There exists a link between leadership behaviors and student achievement (Algarni & Male, 2014; Augustine-Shaw, 2015; Irby & Lunenburg, 2014; Karadağ et al., 2015). The influence of context on complexities of instructional leadership and student achievement was also explored.

A review of literature on education in Cameroon indicated that there is paucity of research with regards to educational leadership in general and instructional leadership in particular. This has revealed a gap in research involving educational and instructional leadership in this context. I sought to fill this gap and extend knowledge in the discipline by studying perceptions of the impact of school leadership on student achievement in Cameroonian schools. Chapter 3 includes the methodology for this study and its suitability in terms of exploring how leadership is perceived in Cameroonian schools.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe leadership behaviors that are perceived by school principals as critical to their leadership effectiveness in three urban schools Cameroon. An exploratory multiple case study approach was used to address the research problem. This chapter includes the rationale for this design. Also discussed in this chapter is my role as the researcher, procedures for participant selection, procedures for data collection and analysis, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

The following central research question and sub questions guided this study:

SQ1: What are behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ1: How do principals perceive curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools?

SQ2: How do principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools?

SQ3: How do principals perceive connections to external communities?

I addressed core components of successful schools and key processes that are linked to effective leadership and are based on the two-dimensional conceptual framework of LCL.

I sought to answer research questions using the qualitative research tradition. Qualitative research is a methodology that can be used to investigate simple and

complicated topics (Yin, 2014). Qualitative research methods allow researchers to obtain in-depth and firsthand data about the subject by giving a direct voice to participants within their natural settings through interviews, observations, and examinations of artifacts and documents (Klenke, 2016). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the five most prominent approaches are narrative, phenomenological, grounded, ethnographic, and case study approaches. I used the case study approach to explore the central research question and sub questions.

Yin (2014) defined case study research as research that includes detailed accounts and analyses of one or more cases, which involve focusing on individuals, groups, organizations, or social, political, or other phenomena. Case study research involves real phenomena within real settings (Johnson & Christensen, 2017; Yin, 2014). Researchers might choose to study a single case or several cases. I used a multiple case study design to address three principals from three different schools.

The multiple case study approach was suitable for this study because the case is bounded by time and activity. In addition, the case study approach allowed me to obtain and analyze in-depth data about behaviors that school leaders consider to be most important in terms of effectiveness. The multiple case study design was used to conduct in-depth interviews with chosen school principals in order to explore behavioral themes that are conducive to leadership effectiveness.

Exploratory studies are appropriate for new research with little prior history and serve as starting points for new research (Ben-Eliyahu, 2014). I used an exploratory multiple case study design to explore the research question and sub questions for this

study. An exploratory approach was most suitable for this multiple case study for two main reasons. First, due to the sparseness of research on educational leadership effectiveness in Cameroonian schools, it was necessary to begin the process of adding to the knowledge base via a study that captured as much firsthand information as possible. Second, Cameroon is a highly diverse and culturally rich country. Cultural practices of a particular context could influence leadership behaviors in positive ways. According to Norman et al. (2016), context-based practices have an important influence on leadership effectiveness in culturally diverse educational settings. Successful leaders strategically incorporate strengths, assets, and styles in purposeful, creative, and well-intended ways to create positive work environments (Norman et al., 2016). The highly diverse nature of the setting for this case study made it necessary to explore these contextual influences in answering the main research question.

Role of the Researcher

There were issues with potential bias because I had some familiarity with the setting of the study and could have subjective opinions that could influence the direction of interviews, analysis, and results. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), reflexivity is an important aspect of qualitative research because this process involves reflecting on data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Reflexivity also allows researchers to legitimize, validate, and authenticate qualitative processes (Mortari, 2015). During the analysis phase of the study and subsequent discussion phase, I exercised reflexivity in a bid to remain logical during analysis. To further mitigate any unintentional biases due to familiarity with the setting, I used member checking and

frequent debriefing during the data collection and analysis phases. Clarifying issues of bias in this manner was necessary in this study because I lived and worked in the setting for about 10 years and had some knowledge of it.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population for this study was three principals from three schools in one urban city in Cameroon. The setting was limited to one elementary, middle, and high school. I used purposeful sampling to select participants for in-depth interviews in this multiple case study. According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling involves selecting information-rich cases to address questions under study.

Participants were educational leaders who had worked in their particular schools for at least one academic year. Goldring, Porter et al. (2009) recommended selecting study participants who have worked with and had interactions with the same school leader for a minimum ideal period of 2 to 6 months. This minimum work period was necessary to ensure that participants had had opportunities to employ impactful leadership behaviors in relation to curricula standards, professional learning and accountability, and building community connections.

Prior to participant selection, I sought and obtained permission from the appropriate authority to conduct research in the educational jurisdiction. Thereafter, I followed these steps to recruit principal participants for interviews. I purposely chose nine principals from schools within the educational jurisdiction, three from each educational level for initial contact to create a candidate pool. Starting out with nine

principals was a cautionary measure to make sure that the recruitment effort did not result in fewer than needed participants. I sent an electronic copy of the initial participant recruitment letter and a copy of the participant consent form to the nine principals. Based on the responses from the nine principals, I then purposely selected three participants from the pool (one from each educational level) to be study participants. I then scheduled interview times with the three school principals.

Instrumentation

I used audio-recorded interviews and artifacts to collect qualitative data. I provided the required audio recorder. Given the breadth and depth of the interview questions and follow-up questions, I was able to collect enough data to reach saturation. In the case where the data was insufficient to address the research questions, I planned to set up follow up interviews or recruit and interview more participants until data saturation was attained.

Interviews

I developed an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to form the basis of the in-depth interviews with the three purposefully selected principal participants. The interview protocol was developed following the IPR framework. The IPR is a framework that brings together the four critical steps necessary for a successful interview experience. According to Castillo-Montoya (2016), the steps of the IPR process include aligning research questions and interview question, developing open-ended questions that create opportunities for in-depth inquiry, having the protocol reviewed and refining with feedback, and finally piloting the protocol. Castillo-Montoya (2016) further argued that the IPR process helps in strengthening the reliability of qualitative interview protocols.

The following interview protocol was developed along these lines. The open-ended questions for this interview protocol were formulated based on the main research question and sub-questions, the conceptual framework, and the literature review.

In the first phase of the interview protocol, I sought to align the research questions (RQ) to the interview questions (IQ). I used a matrix as recommended by Castillo-Montoya (2016) to ensure that there were no gaps in coverage of the research questions. The central question for this study was to elicit behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in 3 urban secondary schools in Cameroon. Six questions stemmed from this central question and constituted the basis for the interview questions. The questions were as follows:

1. How do principals ensure high standards for student learning?
2. How do principals ensure that a rigorous curriculum is in effect in their schools?

3. How do principals ensure quality instruction in their schools?
4. How do principals ensure a culture of learning and professional behavior?
5. How do principals ensure connections to external communities?
6. How do principals ensure performance accountability at their schools?

Table 1*Interview Protocol Matrix*

	Participant Background/Close out	SQ1	SQ2	SQ3	RQ4	RQ5	RQ6
IQ1	X						
IQ2	X						
IQ3		1.1					
IQ4		1.2					
IQ5			2.1				
IQ6			2.1				
IQ7				3.1			
IQ8				3.2			
IQ9					4.1		
IQ10					4.2		
IQ11						5.1	
IQ12						5.2	
IQ13							6.1
IQ14							6.2
IQ15	X						
IQ16	X						

In keeping with the IPR process, I received feedback on the protocol in order to refine and then pilot the questions prior to the field session.

Artifacts

In addition, I planned to collect available artifacts and documents that the participants deemed necessary to share and that supported the tenets of the learning-centered leadership framework. Possible artifacts that could be collected included school

records, mission and vision statements, school assessment data, curricula documents, professional development documents, community connection and involvement documents, and any other artifacts that the participant deemed important to further shade light in response to interview questions. Were any of these artifacts used?

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participant Recruitment

Participants for this study were recruited from three schools in an urban city in Cameroon. These schools represent the three levels of education within the system, namely, elementary school, secondary school, and high school. Prior to participant selection, I sought and obtained permission from the appropriate authority to conduct research in the educational jurisdiction. Thereafter, I followed these steps to recruit principal participants for interviews. I purposely chose nine principals from schools within the educational jurisdiction, three from each educational level for initial contact to create a candidate pool. Starting out with nine principals was a cautionary measure to make sure that the recruitment effort did not result in fewer than needed participants. I sent an electronic copy of the initial participant recruitment letter and a copy of the participant consent form to the nine principals. Based on the responses from the nine principals, I then purposely selected three participants from the pool (one from each educational level) to be study participants based on length of time at the school. I then scheduled interview times with the three school principals.

Participant Participation

Prior to their participation in the study, all three participants were provided with an informed consent form. These consent forms were distributed and collected electronically. Participants were also informed of the protocols of administration of the interviews. They were informed of their right to opt out of the study at any time. Participants were informed that they would not receive any compensation for participation.

Data Collection

I used the research question and sub-questions to develop open-ended interview questions for data collection (see Appendix A). These questions were formulated based on the study's overarching conceptual framework of learning-centered leadership. The same questioning sequence was utilized for the three participants. Each interview session was planned to last for 30 to 60 minutes and was audiotaped. Each participant was allowed to choose a quiet and inviting venue, preferably within the school campus, for interviewing to ensure his or her comfort during these sessions. The interview data were recorded in audio recordings that I transcribed. I also collected available artifacts to permit triangulation of data during the analysis phase (see Appendix B). According to Klenke (2016), triangulation or the convergence of multiple data sources adds to the rigor of the research study and the establishment of research credibility.

Exit and Debriefing

At the end of the interview session when all questions had been exhausted, I thanked each participant and informed them of a follow-up debriefing. After transcribing

the recordings, I conducted a member check by sharing the interview transcript with the participant to ensure accuracy of responses and to make necessary additions or subtractions as noted by the participant. This was a necessary step to inform the credibility, validity, and transferability of this research study.

Data Analysis Plan

Qualitative methods were used to analyze data from the interviews of the principal participants. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) noted that the data collection and analysis processes are simultaneous in qualitative research since it is not stagnant but emergent. I organized notes and records and began analysis after each interview. A case study strategy was employed for qualitative data analysis. The case study strategy is used in qualitative research to gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information in a study (Patton, 2015). This is a two-stage strategy that involves describing the setting and participants in detail prior to analyzing the data for emergent themes and issues. Thereafter, the directed content analysis strategy was used. The directed content analysis strategy is built around purposiveness in data selection to meet the needs of the specific research questions (Hashemnezhad, 2015.) Categorical strategies which “break down narrative data and rearrange those data to produce categories that facilitate comparisons” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), were employed to regroup the interview and artifacts data under the six pre-determined process categories of the learning centered framework. Any significant data that could not be aligned under the existing categories constituted a new theme or category.

Coding of Data

Predetermined themes were used in coding the qualitative data obtained from interviews and artifacts. Predetermined codes included all core component variables as well as all key process variables of the learner centered leadership framework. These variables were used to create a codebook or matrix to guide the process of coding the transcripts. Creswell and Creswell (2018) argued that a codebook is necessary in instances where a more systemic approach to the qualitative analysis is needed. Other emergent themes that related to leadership effectiveness were also coded accordingly.

The computer assisted qualitative data analysis tool, MAXQDA, was used to aid in the coding and analysis process. This tool was suitable because it has the capabilities that match the analysis requirements for this qualitative study. I also chose this tool because it offered detailed training and tutorials on how to use it. In addition, the cost of the tool was within my financial reach compared to other tools. Description and narration were used to present findings along with visual representations such as tables and figures. Any discrepant information Was there any? was described in order to keep the study real and to add to the credibility of the study.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Member checks were used and reported to establish trustworthiness of findings and thereby, internal validity. Member checks in qualitative research involve presenting analysis results to participants for a confirmation of accuracy (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The participant Are you referring to yourself here? If yes, you are the researcher

and interviewed school principals were invited to participate in member checks for accuracy of the data and analysis. Authentic citations from interview responses were also reported to enhance trustworthiness of data, analysis, and results. Triangulation of the interview data and data gleaned from artifacts was also employed to establish credibility. Triangulation involves comparisons and cross-checks of data pulled from varying sources and participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016.) Any discrepant information from the analysis was closely examined and discussed in thick detail to add to the credibility of the results.

Transferability

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), transferability or external validity is important if results of a study are to be applied to other similar situations. I established transferability in this study by applying rich, thick descriptions and variance in participant selection. Rich, thick description allows the research consumer to have a close-up encounter with the setting and findings and adds an element of shared experiences to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016.) The Cameroonian setting is unique in linguistic and cultural diversity. It was therefore important to describe this setting in detail to portray a near clear visualization for the reader. Collecting and analyzing data from principals at three different educational levels also contributed to the external validity of the study from a maximum variation in participant selection standpoint (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016.) Using rich, thick description and variance in participant selection in this way helped in establishing the transferability of the findings. Both the urban and the rural educational landscapes in Cameroon are very

similar in terms of their setup. This similarity will allow findings to be connected to the urban and rural settings on the Cameroonian educational landscape.

Confirmability and Dependability

Confirmability and dependability are two other indicators of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Confirmability is the extent to which the research findings stem completely from the data collected from the participants and not from researcher bias or manipulation while dependability refers to how stable the data can remain over time (Elo et al., 2014.) Analyzing data as it is collected is helpful in establishing confirmability. During the data analysis stage, the research returned often to the data to ensure conformity and consistency of interpretations. To establish dependability, I outlined in detail all steps in the participant selection process such that replication will be effortless. I also audio recorded the interviews to further ensure the dependability of the data collected and transcribed.

Dealing with Bias

A major threat of bias in this study was myself because I had some familiarity with the setting of the study and who could have subjective opinions that might influence the direction of interviews, analysis, and results. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), reflexivity is an important aspect of qualitative research that allows researchers to include reflections in data analysis and interpretation. During the data analysis phase of the research study and the subsequent discussion phase, I exercised reflexivity by including comments and insight from field notes with regards to personal experiences of the setting and situation to facilitate an honest narrative. Clarifying issues of bias in this

manner was necessary in this study because I lived and worked in the research setting and have extensive knowledge of the educational setup even though it has been over twenty years since I actually worked in this setting. This could be a real source of bias because my prior knowledge could cast doubts in my mind and create subjectivity in the study. To manage bias, I kept field notes that were used during the analysis and discussion phases of the study.

Ethical Procedures

Prior to engaging in data collection, and after IRB permissions were sought and obtained from the proper authorities to carry out research in some of their sites, letters of informed consent were presented to participants for acceptance to participate in the study. All disclosure, permission and consent documents are reported in the appendix of this study. At all times during the research process, participants were treated with respect and always had the choice of opting out if they so wished.

I also clearly explained the purpose and potential implications of the study to the participants. It is unethical research practice for a researcher to choose intentionally to not fully disclose the nature and purpose of a research study to participants. Such action totally goes against the guiding principles of acceptable research conduct such as respect, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice (Punch, 2014). I was mindful of the importance of remaining respectful towards research participants by ensuring that confidentiality was maintained and that the choice to participate was made in full cognizance of the research purpose and potential uses of outcomes. To protect the data during collection and after analysis, I took the following measures. All interview audio

files, transcripts, artifacts, coded data, and consent forms were stored electronically on a trusted server. All transcripts, coded analysis files, and consent forms were scanned and encrypted before storage.

An ethically acceptable research project is one in which researchers ensure that fundamental human rights are not violated during all phases of the project from conception to completion. I did not anticipate that there would be any need to use incentives to get the full collaboration of participants.

Summary

This chapter included an explanation of the qualitative research methodology that was used for this research. The rationale for using the exploratory multiple case study design was discussed. Also discussed in this chapter was my role as researcher, procedures for participant selection, procedures for data collection and analysis, and issues of trustworthiness. Participants for this study were three school principals in Cameroon. Data were collected through interviews and artifacts. Results of the data collection and analysis are described and discussed in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe leadership behaviors that are perceived by school principals as critical to their leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon. An exploratory multiple case study approach was used to address the research problem.

The following central research question and sub questions guided this study:

RQ: What are behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ1: How do principals perceive curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools?

SQ2: How do principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools?

SQ3: How do principals perceive connections to external communities?

I address core components of a successful school and key processes that are linked to effective leadership using the conceptual framework of LCL.

This chapter includes an introduction, followed by information about the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a summary.

Study Setting

The general organizational structure of the educational system in Cameroon is complex. There are two concurrent educational systems operating in the country. One system operates in English and emulates the British school system to a certain degree

while the other system operates in French and emulates the French system of education. Both systems operate under the same administrative authority. Staffing is centralized, as are all other operational resources. Two participants for this study worked within the English system, while one worked within the French system.

Data collection was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I planned to travel to Cameroon to conduct interviews and collect data. Weeks before my travel date, the impact of the virus began to be felt in the U.S. with more intensity. A few days before my travel date, countries began to lock down their borders. At the same time, schools were also shutting down. Travel restrictions were put in place, and I was forced to cancel my travel arrangements. I contacted participants and initially could not get through to them. When I finally got through a few weeks later, they all explained that they were facing the same situation as me. Their schools had all shut down, and they were unsure what the next steps would be. They were figuring out what to do and how to carry on the education of their students. I was unsure about how to proceed. I contacted the university to find out about next steps, given my inability to travel abroad. The university responded with options to switch to electronic modes to collect data. Planned face-to-face interviews had to be changed to an electronic format. At this point, I contacted participants again. I was then faced with the challenge of availability of participants in terms of telephone, email, and other electronic media interviews. After multiple attempts over several months, I was able to set up and conduct interviews with all participants.

Initially, all participants were willing to partake in interviews by video. However, this proved to be challenging due to extremely slow connectivity and lack of enough data

and bandwidth from their end. As a result, two participants opted for telephone interviews while the third participant opted for email. I followed the same protocol as initially planned for face-to-face interviews. After initial communications, both telephone participants chose to go into their offices, as school administrators and officers were allowed to work from their offices. I chose to conduct interviews from my workspace in my basement where there was minimal movement, noise, or disturbance from members of my household. I used my telephone and computer to make and record calls. I used a printout of interview questions to keep track of questions and also take notes. I made sure to play back recordings to ensure audio quality. I also emailed interview questions to the participant who opted for email after numerous failed attempts at video calls.

Participant Demographics

Principal A

Principal A is a female who has been an educator for over 20 years. She is in her third year as a high school principal. Prior to becoming a high school principal, she was a vice principal for 2 years at a secondary or middle school. She has formal training as a teacher from the Higher Teacher Training College in Cameroon.

Principal B

Principal B has been working in education for over 15 years in various capacities. He started out working as a teacher's assistant and then went back to school to become a teacher. He worked in the private education sector in faith-based schools as a teacher for several years before being appointed as an elementary school principal in 2017. He has been a principal at his current school for 6 years.

Principal C

Principal C has been a middle school principal for 12 years. Prior to that, he worked as a regional inspector of education and then as an assistant principal. He has worked in education in varying capacities for 27 years.

Data Collection

Data were collected from three principals at three schools representing the three levels of education in the Cameroonian educational system: primary (elementary), secondary (middle), and high school. I collected interview data and artifacts from all participants. I was unable to conduct observations due to limitations on travel resulting from the health pandemic at the time. Due to the ongoing health pandemic, interview data were collected via telephone and email. Over a period of 8 months, I made many attempts to connect with participants via video and telephone calls. After many failed attempts, I succeeded in connecting with participants via telephone. These calls were not smooth and were either dropped or audibility was very poor. I therefore had to call back several times to complete the interview process with two participants. One participant requested to respond by email in the face of many failed attempts and difficulties with communicating by phone. Thirty-one artifacts were collected via postal service and scanned email attachments. The total time it took to collect interview data and artifacts from all three participants was 8 months (see Table 2).

Table 2

Participant Interviews and Transcribed Data

Participant	Contact Type	# of video and telephone attempts	Timeframe	Time in minutes	# of transcribed pages
Principal A	Interview	13 failed, 3 successful	March to October	#1: 20 #2: 84 #3: 45	29
Principal B	Interview	13 failed, 4 successful	March to October	#1: 65 #2: 35 #3: 45 #4: 25	27
Principal C	Interview and email	16 failed, 2 successful, 2 emails	March to October	#1: 15 #2: 8 #3: 5 email attachments	23
Totals	N/A	38 attempts	8 months	342 minutes	79 pages

All three principals also provided artifacts and documents in support of their responses. 31 documents constituted of 275 pages were collected and organized into the following five categories: administrative documents, assessment data, curriculum/instruction documents, professional development documents, and parent-teacher meeting notes (see Appendix B). Table 3 summarizes the number of documents and pages collected for each category.

Table 3

Supporting Artifacts

Category	# of documents collected	# of Pages
Administrative documents	4 documents	43 pages
Assessment data	4 documents	45 pages
Curriculum and instruction documents	4 documents	153 pages

Professional development documents	4 documents	25 pages
Parent-teacher meeting notes	4 documents	9 pages
Total	31 documents	275 pages

Note. A complete list of artifacts and contents of each document is presented in Appendix

B.

Data Recording

To record the interview audio data, I made calls from my cell phone, which I had on speaker. At the same time, I had the video feature on my computer open with the camera covered. When I succeeded in connecting with the participant, I then started the recording on my computer. I used this method because I had used it in the past, and the playback sound quality was acceptable.

Variations in Data Collection

I had to implement variations to the original data collection plan. Data collection was highly impacted by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. I had planned to travel to Cameroon to conduct the interviews and collect data, however, this was not to happen as countries locked down their borders. This was a traumatic experience as the participants and I struggled with travel bans and school shutdowns. This impacted the data collection process in many ways. First, I was not able to travel as planned. The planned face-to-face interviews had to be changed to an electronic format. The next challenge was the availability of participants to partake in video or audio interviews. After multiple attempts over several months, I was able to set up and conduct the interviews with all

participants. Two participants were able to do phone interviews while the third participant opted for email.

Another variation in data collection was my inability to observe participants in their natural setting as planned to permit data triangulation. Schools were shut down due to the pandemic and participants were in their homes with minimal access to their school buildings. Because I was also unable to travel to observe I had to substitute observation with reflexive journaling. Due to my history of working in the research setting, I took notes during the interviews to expatiate on responses. These notes served to inform follow-up questions during member checks and to enlighten the analysis of the data.

Unusual Circumstances Involving Data Collection

The data collection plan for this project was intended to be face-to-face interviews, observations, and collection of artifacts on the ground in the participants' working environment. This plan had to change due to the on-going pandemic and the travel restrictions that were put in place by most countries. The United States and Cameroon both had strict travel bans in place. I was unable to obtain a travel visa to travel to the research zone as a result of this ban. The university was cognizant of this situation and gave permission for me to conduct interviews via other electronic means. I therefore had to contact the participants to set up electronic interviews.

During the first three months of the pandemic, from April to June, it was impossible to set up any interviews. I made many failed attempts as outlined in Table 2 to connect via telephone and video. At each attempt, the participants and I would set up an

interview time that would end up not happening due to participants' unavailability or lack of connectivity.

I initially tried to set up video interviews to simulate the initial face-to-face plan, however, this proved challenging for a number of reasons. First, there was the lack of a stable internet connection, especially with the amount of bandwidth needed for video calls. Also, the participants noted that they would have to purchase more data plans than they were accustomed to in order to partake in the video calls. We therefore had to revert to regular telephone calls for the two participants who were comfortable with that. After many failed attempts to connect, the third participant opted for email communication.

Data Analysis

Conceptual Framework

This study was framed by the concept of LCL. LCL is a two-dimensional framework that is grounded in research and that is focused on the leadership behaviors that impact student achievement (Goldring et al., 2009; Porter et al., 2010). The two dimensions of this conceptual foundation are core components and key processes. It is the intersection of these two dimensions that results in increased student achievement (Goldring, Porter, et al., 2009; Porter et al., 2010). Core components refer to “characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach” (Goldring et al., 2009, p. 2). Key processes refer to transformational leadership behaviors that are “associated with processes of leadership that raise organizational members' levels of commitment and shape organizational culture”

(Goldring, Porter, et al., 2009, p. 2). Both core components and key processes are necessary for effective school leadership that produces expected results.

The primary research question, sub questions, and subsequent interview questions for this study were crafted based on the core components of the LCL framework. The goal was to elicit the key processes that the principals employed to attain the LCL core components. The data collected was analyzed within the scope of this framework.

I used the MAXQDA software to decipher 341 initial coded segments from the three interview documents and supporting artifacts. First, I uploaded the audio files from the two audio interviews to be transcribed by the software. Next, I listened to the audio files while reading through the transcriptions to make sure that it was accurate. After this was complete, I then proceeded to upload the email scripts, which did not need transcription. The interviews produced 79 pages of data. The codes that I used were pre-determined from the three research questions. The first reading and coding of the documents yielded many sub-themes. With a second reading, I was able to narrow down the 341 coded segments into forty-seven secondary codes. I achieved this by re-examining and regrouping the coded segments by research question. I then proceeded to examine and group the secondary codes into initial emerging themes that aligned to the LCL Framework.

When I received the artifacts, I proceeded to categorize them first by type into five categories. I then began triangulation of the data by aligning the documents to the emerging themes from the interviews and the Learning Centered Leadership Framework. Table 4 shows this alignment by research question.

Table 4*Artifacts Alignment*

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ1: How do principals perceive curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools? **SQ2:** How do principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools? **SQ3:** How do principals perceive connections to external communities?

	Emerging Themes	Artifacts/Documents	LCL alignment
SQ1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enrollment - Instructional Alignment - Instructional Monitoring - Instructional Resources and materials - Staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Administrative documents -Curriculum/instruction documents -Assessment documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High standards for learning - Rigorous curriculum - Quality Instruction
SQ2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional Learning - Staff Accountability - Student accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Administrative documents -Professional Development documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culture of Professional learning - Performance Accountability
SQ3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Partnerships - Parent-Teacher Association - School councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent/Teacher meeting notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connections to external communities

SQ1

SQ1 was about how principals perceived high curricula standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools. Participant responses for this question were collected through three interview questions that addressed three of the six

components of the LCL framework namely high standards for learning, rigorous curriculum, and quality instruction. These components also served as the predetermined codes to analyze the data. An exploration of the responses for the first sub research question considering the predetermined codes yielded an initial list of 183 coded segments. High standards for learning yielded 104 coded segments while rigorous curriculum and quality instruction yielded 41 and 38 initial coded segments respectively. A further exploration of the initial coded segments yielded a secondary set of 15 codes, which in turn yielded five initial emerging themes. The emerging themes included enrollment, instructional alignment, instructional monitoring, instructional resources and materials, and staffing. These emerging themes align to the first three components of the LCL Framework namely high standards for learning, rigorous curriculum, and quality Instruction. The responses to SQ1 were triangulated with the administrative, curriculum, and assessment documents to confirm the alignment. Table 5 summarizes the progression from initial codes to initial themes and their connection to the LCL Framework.

Table 5

SQ1 Progression from Initial Codes to LCL Framework

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?			
SQ1: How do principals perceive curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools?			
LCL-based predetermined codes and number of Initial Coded segments	Secondary Codes	Initial Emerging Themes	LCL alignment

- Standards for learning: (104 coded segments)	- Class sizes - Attendance - Discipline	- Enrollment - Instructional Alignment	- High standards for learning
- Curriculum (41 coded segments)	- Curriculum - Assessments -School-based/internal	- Instructional Monitoring - Instructional	- Rigorous curriculum
- Instruction (38 coded segments)	Instructional monitoring and supervision - External (Ministry) Instructional Monitoring and supervision - Curriculum - Teaching Aids (Didactic materials, textbooks) - After school Opportunities - Awards and Rewards - Strategic staff placement - Training - Attendance - Reporting	Resources and materials - Staffing	- Quality Instruction

SQ2

SQ2 involved how principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools. Participant responses for this question were collected through two interview questions which addressed two of the six components of the LCL framework namely culture of professional learning and accountability. These components also served as the predetermined codes for analyzing the data. An exploration of the responses for the second sub research question considering the predetermined codes yielded an initial list of 80 coded segments. Perceptions of a culture of professional

learning yielded 54 coded segments while perceptions of accountability yielded 22 initial coded segments. A further exploration of the initial coded segment yielded a secondary set of 19 codes which in turn yielded four initial emerging themes. The emerging themes included professional learning, staff accountability, student accountability, and some challenges. These emerging themes aligned to two of the six components of the LCL Framework namely culture of professional learning and performance accountability. The responses to the second research question were triangulated with the administrative and professional development documents to confirm the alignment. Table 6 summarizes the progression from initial codes to initial themes and their connection to the LCL framework.

Table 6

SQ2 Progression from Initial Codes to LCL Framework

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?			
SQ2: How do principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools?			
LCL-based predetermined codes and number of Initial Coded segments	Secondary Codes	Initial Emerging Themes	LCL alignment
- Professional learning: (58 coded segments) - Accountability (22 coded segments)	- Staff Professional responsibility - Staff Learning Opportunities Monitoring/supervision system - Observations - Leading by Example - Staff Professional responsibility - Staff Learning Opportunities	- Professional Learning - Staff Accountability - Student accountability - Challenges	- Culture of Professional learning - Performance Accountability

-
- Monitoring/supervision system
 - Observations
 - Leading by Example
 - Incentives and Awards
 - School Organized activities
 - After-School support
 - Incentives and Awards
 - Class councils
 - Extracurricular activities
 - School libraries
 - Textbooks
 - Student Motivation
-

SQ3

SQ3 explored how principals perceive their schools' connections to external communities. Participant responses for this question were collected through one interview question, which addressed one of the six components of the LCL framework namely connections to external communities. This component also served as the predetermined code to analyze the data. An exploration of the responses for the third sub research question considering the predetermined code yielded an initial list of 54 coded segments. A further exploration of the initial coded segment yielded a secondary set of 13 codes, which in turn yielded five initial emerging themes. The emerging themes included communication, partnerships, parent-teacher associations, school councils, and some challenges. These emerging themes align to one of the six components of the LCL Framework namely connections to external communities. The responses to the third research question were triangulated with the parent-teacher meeting notes to confirm the

alignment. Table 7 summarizes the progression from initial codes to initial themes and their connection to the LCL Framework.

Table 7

SQ3 Progression from Initial Codes to LCL Framework

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?			
SQ3: How do principals perceive connections to external communities?			
LCL-based predetermined codes and number of Initial Coded segments	Secondary Codes	Initial Emerging Themes	LCL alignment
- Community connection (54 coded segments)	- Home - Social Media - Community - Education - Non-Governmental Organizations - Support personnel - Tutoring - School sanitation - Advisory Roles - Budget input - Sports infrastructure - Portable water - Security	- Communication - Partnerships - Parent-Teacher Association - School councils - Challenges	- Connections to external communities

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Member checks were used and reported to establish trustworthiness of findings and thereby, internal validity. After transcription, I cross checked with my reflexive notes

and then with the principals for accuracy by email. I also used authentic citations from the interview responses to support results and thereby enhance the trustworthiness of the data, analysis, and results. In addition, the participants shared several artifacts in support of their responses. The shared documents were analyzed and aligned to the research questions and their corresponding emerging themes. These artifacts are outlined in Appendix B. The artifacts, reflexive journal notes, and the interview responses allowed me to engage in triangulation that resulted in no discrepancies.

Transferability

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), transferability or external validity is important if results of a study are to be applied to other similar situations. In this study I established transferability by applying rich, thick descriptions and variance in participant selection. Rich, thick description allows the research consumer to have a close-up mental encounter with the setting and findings and adds an element of shared experiences to the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016.) The Cameroonian setting is unique in linguistic and cultural diversity. It was therefore important to describe this setting in detail to paint a near clear visualization for the reader. Collecting and analyzing data from principals at three different educational levels also contributed to the external validity of the study from a maximum variation in participant selection standpoint (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016.) Using rich, thick description and variance in participant selection in this way helped in establishing the transferability of the findings. Both the urban and the rural educational landscapes in Cameroon are very similar in terms of their

setup. This similarity will allow findings to be connected to the urban and rural settings on the Cameroonian educational landscape.

Dependability and Confirmability

Confirmability and dependability are two other indicators of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Confirmability is the extent to which the research findings stem completely from the data collected from the participants and not from researcher bias or manipulation while dependability refers to how stable the data can remain over time (Elo et al., 2014.) I began analyzing the data as it was collected to help in establishing confirmability. During the data analysis stage, I returned often to the data to ensure conformity and consistency of interpretations. Confirmability of the results was also established when I analyzed and aligned the results from the artifacts to the responses and emerging themes. To establish dependability, I outlined in detail all steps in the participant selection process to make replication effortless. I also audio recorded the interviews to further ensure the dependability of the data collected and transcribed.

Research Results

The central constructs that were explored in this study are the core components of a successful school and the key processes that are linked to effective leadership as described by Goldring, Porter, et al. (2009) and that are based on the two-dimensional conceptual framework of learning-centered leadership.

To answer the central research question, I developed three sub questions and then further broke the sub questions into six interview questions. Six questions were presented to participants to elicit responses. The participants also shared several artifacts in support of

their responses. The shared documents were analyzed and aligned to the research questions and their corresponding emerging themes. These artifacts are outlined in Appendix B. The artifacts, reflexive journal notes, and the interview responses all informed the results of this research work. The results of this study are organized under the three main research questions. Six interview questions and artifacts were used to collect data from three principals. Two principals partook in telephone interviews while one principal responded via email. All principals provided artifacts and documents in support of their responses. Themes emanating from the three interviews were explored for commonality.

SQ1

SQ1 involved how principals perceived curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools. To answer this question, three interview questions were presented to the principals, one specific to high standards of learning, another specific to rigor in instruction, and a final question on their perceptions of quality instruction.

The three principals, Principal A, Principal B, and Principal C, narrated their perceptions of high learning standards and instructional rigor in relation to their daily tasks. They also provided documents in support of their responses. The interview responses were triangulated with the administrative, curriculum, and assessment documents to confirm alignment as previously shown in Table 4.

Their perceptions of how they ensured high quality student learning and instructional rigor centered mainly around students, staff, and curricula issues. The main

themes emerging from these perceptions were enrollment, instructional monitoring, instructional resources and materials, instructional alignment, and staffing as portrayed in Table 8.

Table 8

SQ1 Emerging Themes and Alignment with LCL Framework

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ1: How do principals perceive curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools?

Interview questions	Initial Emerging Themes	LCL alignment
- Standards for learning	- Enrollment	- High standards for learning
- Curriculum	- Instructional Alignment	
	- Instructional Monitoring	- Rigorous curriculum
	- Instructional Resources and materials	
- Instruction	- Staffing	- Quality Instruction Accountability

Enrollment

The three principals perceived class size, student attendance, and discipline as important factors with a direct impact on learning standards and instructional rigor.

Class Sizes. With regards to class sizes, Principal C stated that he did his best to balance class sizes, especially as enrollment tended to be always above capacity.

Principal B stated that age was an important factor for placing students in classes to ensure that the students are mentally mature to meet up with the requirements of the curriculum:

We make sure that when we are enrolling students and placing them in different classes, we consider the number of students per class and also take the age factor into consideration. We make sure that they have a bit of mental maturity to work with the listed curricula tasks for the class.

When asked to explain what they meant by mental maturity, Principal B explained that the age/class placement was a recommendation from the Ministry of Education.

Attendance. Attendance was another area where the principals expressed how they ensured quality teaching and learning in their schools. Principal C related how he worked with his staff to prevent loitering by monitoring student attendance and punctuality “so that they make the most of the lessons provided.”

Discipline. Principal C saw discipline as equally important in ensuring quality learning at his school:

We ensure the general discipline of learners as provided for by the internal regulations of the school. The discipline master and mistress are in charge of this and their work is based on ministerial directives. Discipline is the key to success.

This perception of discipline was the same for Principal A who stated that she took attendance and discipline very seriously and did all she could to maintain order and discipline in classrooms during school hours and recreation hours.

Instructional Alignment

Another theme that emerged for SQ1 was instructional alignment. The three principals all expressed their perceptions of high standards for student learning and instructional rigor through the lens of curricula focus and assessments.

Curriculum. Principal C iterated that he makes sure that the official curriculum from the Ministry of Education is adopted and used at his school. Principal B stated that the “curriculum that you receive, you make sure that it is being followed accordingly, that the prescribed flow is followed closely.”

He stated that he ensures this at the beginning of the school year when he meets with teaching staff.

Principal A stated that her vice principals are key players when it comes to ensuring that the prescribed curriculum is in use. She explained that on a weekly basis, the vice principals check to see that the syllabus prescription for that week has been covered. She carried on narrating that she uses instructional streamlining and evaluation methods to ensure that students have high standards for learning. Her teachers keep logbooks for instructional alignment purposes and also for evaluative purposes. Her vice principals examine these logs and report back to her on the status of alignment and pacing. Principal A said:

At the end of the week, the vice principal goes through the teachers’ logbooks for particular classes. He or she follows up to see whether the teacher has been teaching to the curriculum. Every week we have a coordination meeting in which the vice principals present a report of who teaches and who does not teach, who is

on pace and who has lapses, who has given make-up classes, etc. Sometimes when these vice principals have doubts, they revisit the logbooks.

Teacher logbooks are also examined for alignment at the end of each school term and at the end of the year. According to Principal A:

The teacher has a logbook entry for each lesson, the teacher fills in the logbook. So, at the end of each school term and also at the end of the academic year, the teacher has to fill in what he or she has taught students on that day, at that time.

To ensure instructional rigor, Principal A also indicated that she has stream coordinators for each subject area and their job is to ascertain that the teachers are planning and teaching to the curriculum and towards the same summative assessment goal. Principal A said:

The stream coordinator is there to coordinate instructional activities and goals within the subject area and level so that they teach the same thing at the same time to prepare the students for the same common examination at the end of the year.

Principal C, Principal B, and Principal A all expressed that they focus on teaching to the syllabus in alignment to the prescribed curriculum in their quest to attain curricula high standards and rigorous instruction for their students.

Assessments. Principal A and Principal C highlighted their use of formative and summative assessments to ensure alignment of instruction to the prescribed curriculum.

Principal A stated:

We do periodic continuous assessments to ensure high standards. And we also give students mock examination standard exams, especially those classes that are

supposed to write official exams at the end to prepare them. This is in addition to the regular term exams.

Both principals stated that they also organize end of term exams for all students and subjects to evaluate acquisition of knowledge in writing and orally.

Instructional Monitoring

Instructional monitoring and supervision emerged as a prominent theme from Principal C and Principal A. They both perceived instructional monitoring to be two-fold, internal and external.

School-Based Monitoring and Supervision. Principal A made it clear that her vice principals played a major role when it came to school-based monitoring and supervision of instruction. She stated that it was the job of the Vice Principal to monitor teachers' logbooks, check on pacing, and refocus staff on the syllabus and prescribed curriculum. The Vice Principal then reported back to her during their weekly meetings.

Principal A said:

Every week we have a coordination meeting in which the vice principals present a report of who teaches and who does not teach, who is on pace and who has lapses, who has given make-up classes, etc. Sometimes when these vice principals have doubts, they revisit the logbooks.

Principal C said that he immersed himself in monitoring and supervising instruction and curriculum alignment at his school alongside his Vice Principal due to his prior experience as a regional inspector of education. He said:

The current program of study in my school was set up under my supervision in conjunction with the department heads and the regional inspectors of education.

As a former inspector of education, myself, I get fully involved in the supervision and evaluation of instruction.

He further stated that he verifies “the alignment of curriculum and teaching units” through regular “systematic supervision” with his vice principals. The vice principals “are also responsible for checking and signing off the progress log books” and “carrying out internal inspections and observations to check if the curriculum is being applied as directed.” Principal C also stated that he holds administrative and instructional meetings with his vice principals, department heads, and discipline masters “to develop educational projects and analyze progress sheets and educational statistical data” weekly and at the end of each term.

External Monitoring and Supervision. According to Principal A, external instructional monitoring and supervision is conducted by National and Regional Inspectors of Education. These are content experts who visit the schools from time to time, announced or unannounced, to see what is going on in the classrooms. Principal A claimed:

Now you understand inspectors at the level of the region, it is their assignment. It is their assignment to come and follow up what teachers are doing in class, whether they are following, you know, this new one, which is a competence-based approach.

She stated that inspector visits are frequent, especially since they adopted a competency-based approach to learning at her school:

Now we have moved away from lecture style teaching to the competence-based approach for about 6 years now. So, the inspectors come, because what we do is, after writing and drawing up the schemes of work, we send copies to the delegation and eventually it goes to the inspectors. We have inspectors for all subjects. They come to schools to meet and observe the teachers. Before coming they inform teachers, but sometimes they surprise them. They come to observe what the teachers are doing in class around the new approach.

Principal A continues to explain that inspectors provide professional development opportunities through seminars and workshops for teachers based on their observations. Workshops are organized both at school and sometimes outside of school in collaboration with other educational organizations.

Instructional Resources and Materials

A fourth theme that emerged for SQ1 was instructional resources and resources. In response to the question on how they perceived high learning standards and instructional rigor, all three principals talked about what they did to ensure availability of resources and opportunities outside of the classroom. Curriculum support, class coverage, after school opportunities, and awards and rewards were prominent in their responses.

Curriculum Support. With regards to instructional resources, Principal B stated that he made sure that his teachers organized homework and tutorial support sessions on Saturdays to work with students. He also said that he made sure that teachers had all the

necessary textbooks and didactic materials that they needed for instruction. Principal C stated that he made sure that laboratories and a library were available for staff and student use. He also has a system in place to check that students had “the required textbooks prescribed from the curriculum.”

Class Coverage and After School Opportunities. Principal C related how he planned out class coverage when teachers were out. His system consisted in sharing responsibilities among designated staff and the students. He said:

We organize supervised studies with student leaders during the absences of teachers on leave. To do this, in addition to assigning a supervisor for this task, the student leaders are organized at the start of the school year. Every class has a leader, an assistant leader, and two class delegates who take charge and report to the administration.

Principal C also stated that he and his staff ensure that students have opportunities to get extra academic support and make up missed classes through after school programs. His staff also provides weekly tutorial sessions for exam classes.

Awards and Rewards. Another way that the principals said that they ensured high learning standards at their schools was by using awards and rewards as incentives for students to work hard. Principal A stated at her school, they “prepare and give out prizes and rewards for excellence to the best students, as well as partial tuition scholarships for the following school year”. They also give teachers awards and bonuses offered by the Parent-Teacher Association.

Staffing

The final theme that emerged from the information provided by the principals was in the area of staffing. All three principals indicated staffing as an important factor when it came to setting high standards for student learning in their schools. They specifically addressed strategic staff placement, teacher training, staff attendance, and reporting as critical for instructional rigor in their schools.

Strategic Staff Placement. All three principals said that they strategically selected and placed teachers to teach specific classes, especially classes that had to take official exams. Principal B summed this common thought when he said that “most often we reorganize staff schedules and give experienced teachers the examination classes in order to maintain rigor and high standards.” They also expressed that they were conscientious about staff loads, making certain to allocate fair scheduling and workloads to teachers.

Training. Staff training was expressed as an area of focus to ensure instructional rigor. Principal A stated that all classes at her school were taught by highly trained teachers from the Teacher Training Colleges in the country “to make sure that they are specialists in educational pedagogy.”

Attendance. Principal A was very clear about the importance of staff attendance in ensuring high standards and instructional rigor. She mentioned that she and her vice principals have a system in place to check staff attendance and instructional consistency and pacing. Principal A said:

At the end of each week, the vice principal for each section goes through the teachers' logbooks for their sections. They follow up to see whether the teachers have been teaching to the curriculum. After that, we have a coordination meeting in which the vice principals present a report of who has been teaching and who has not, who is on pace and who has lapses, who has given make-up classes, etc.

Principal C stated that he closely monitored teacher attendance in order to ensure that students were getting the most during their time in the school. He works with the discipline masters to check staff attendance:

Teachers' attendance and punctuality is very important so that learners are supported full time within the school establishment. And then I also have senior discipline masters who give reports of teachers who come to class or who are absent. Teachers' effective presence greatly affects how the curriculum is dispensed.

Reporting. The three principals stated that a big part of their vice principals' work was to make sure that staff absences were recorded appropriately, and queries were sent to the recalcitrant teachers under their supervision. Principal B explained the process of reporting:

The vice principals check the teachers' attendance and give feedback to the principal. We then call the teachers who are not keeping up with teaching and attendance and give them query letters. If they do not change their behavior, the next step is to issue an observation letter.

SQ2

SQ2 involved learning how principals perceived a culture of professional learning and accountability at their schools. The principals narrated their perceptions of professional learning and accountability from the angle of both instructional staff and students. They also provided documents in support of their responses. The interview responses were triangulated with the administrative and professional development documents that they shared to confirm alignment as previously shown in Table 4. The responses are summed into four main categories: professional learning, staff accountability, student accountability, and challenges (see Table 9).

Table 9

SQ2 Emerging Themes and Alignment with LCL Framework

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ2: How do principals perceive a culture of professional learning and accountability in their schools?

Interview questions	Initial Emerging Themes	LCL alignment
- Professional learning: - Accountability	- Professional Learning - Staff Accountability - Student accountability - Challenges	- Culture of Professional learning - Performance Accountability

Staff Professional Learning

The principals expressed that there were many ways and opportunities through which they ensured that a culture of learning was in place at their schools. Such opportunities included targeted professional development, peer to peer observations and collegial exchanges, observational feedback in safe conversations, and leading by example.

Targeted Professional Development. Prominent in their responses on the topic of professional learning was the importance of targeted staff development. Principal C expressed that he created opportunities for targeted professional development based on the needs of the students, especially when it came to teachers and materials for exam classes. C said:

We offer specific training for our teachers, especially those teaching our GCE classes by ensuring continuous training for a good understanding of the examination programs. We also provide them with some tools and instructional strategies during educational seminars and workshops.

Principal B also narrated that he paid attention to the learning culture at his school by creating study groups, workshops, seminars, and instructional meetings to share information. His teachers also hold periodic teaching councils for instructional planning. Principal A stated that she and her vice principals guarantee a culture of learning and professional behavior in their school “by requiring teachers to put into practice the teaching methods recommended by the educational inspectorate.”

She explained that they have been in transition to a competence-based teaching and learning approach, necessitating frequent visits to the school by the educational inspectors:

Now, we have moved away from lecture style teaching to the competence-based approach for about 6 years. So, after writing and drawing up the schemes of work, we send copies to the Delegation of Education and consequently, it goes to the inspectors. The inspectors then inform teachers and come to observe what the teachers are doing in classes.

Principal A further explained what happens after the inspectors visit the classrooms:

After that, they organize some seminars and workshops to follow up. They require teachers to produce educational projects and progress sheets and to fully monitor the schemes of work previously validated by us or by educational inspectors during their visit.

Principal A also related that when she became the principal, she made efforts to provide a multimedia room and internet connection in the school for teachers to do research and get information.

Peer to Peer Observations and Collegial Exchanges. Professional learning was also said to be enabled by providing opportunities for peer-to-peer observations followed by conversations to address things that were noticed. Principal B stated:

My assistant principal and I plan time to allow teachers to go into other classrooms to see how those teachers are teaching. They take notes on strategies and then discuss with the teacher after the lesson is over. We ensure that they are

communicating in a professional way to discuss strategies on how to ameliorate the lesson.

He explained that these peer observations expand teachers' professional behavior and give them room to teach and learn from each other. Principal A also explained what happens at her school:

There is something that we organize in different departments that we call internal inspection whereby teachers in the same content go to different classes to do peer observations followed by self-critiquing and debriefing sessions to learn from each other and build their department capacity.

Observations and Feedback. All three principals expressed that they and their assistant principals conducted observations in classes to see what teachers are teaching and how they are teaching. They conduct both announced and unannounced classroom visits and then meet with the teacher to talk about their observations and give advice on things that are going well and things that need attention. Principal C explained:

After observations, we have what we call professional conversations to tell the teacher about what we saw and if there is anything to fix in the lesson. We try to make this a very relaxed but professional meeting so that the teacher can express him or herself with confidence. We do not share what we discuss with other teachers but only share general information to help others.

Principal C also explained how they used a written communication system to give meaningful feedback to teachers through what he termed as pedagogic advice notebooks:

All teachers at my school also keep what is called the pedagogic advice exercise book. I have to examine these logs or lesson notebooks and then advise the teacher. Everything is confidential. These are used as a means of reference communication between the administrator and the teacher.

He further explained that they use these notebooks as an important document when they organize meetings for the mid-term evaluation of programs, lessons, and outcomes.

Model Teaching. Principal A expressed that she used model teaching to build confidence and a culture of learning in her school:

From time to time, I ask my assistant principals to plan and teach a lesson with a teacher or even just support a teacher in the class when they are teaching. This is different from the observations. After that, they both critique the lesson.

She stated that such lessons are usually open for any teacher to attend, and they are also shared with the specific department. She explained that this was very important because it made the teachers see that their administrator also knows the pedagogy.

Staff Accountability

The second theme that emerged with SQ2 was the importance of staff accountability. The principals' responses indicated that five areas of staff accountability were impactful when it came to ensuring a culture of learning and accountability at their schools. These areas are monitoring and supervision processes, Observations, staff professional responsibilities, leading by example, and incentives and awards.

Monitoring and Supervision Processes. Principals A, B, and C all expressed that they had processes in place to monitor and supervise staff instructional practices.

They all said that they had systems for formal and informal classroom visits and progress monitoring. These visits always ended with teachers and administrators conferencing to debrief and share knowledge. Follow up activities around observations happen at monthly department meetings where the vice principals engage teachers in meaningful conversations around things that they observe from the classrooms. Principal B claimed:

After observations, the vice principal brings the general observation notes to the departmental instructional meetings to discuss with all the other members of the department. They do this to make sure that everyone is learning and on the same page.

The vice principals are also in charge of pedagogy or instruction in the three schools. Principal A explained that her role is more of an administrative than instructional one, and therefore the vice principal plays a key role when it comes to instructional practices in the school:

We have vice principals in charge of pedagogy and each vice principal has his or her section that he or she controls. For example, my school is a bilingual school, and we have the Anglophone and the Francophone sections. If I have a vice principal who is in charge of, let's say chemistry, The vice principal is supposed to be in charge of all the pedagogic activities in the chemistry department in the whole school. What does that mean? This vice principal establishes the timetable first and the schemes of work based on the curriculum for chemistry.

Principal A explained that all teachers at her school keep logbooks in addition to their academic advice notebooks to keep accountability of their teaching lessons and units:

Every teacher fills a logbook entry for each lesson. At the end of each school term and at the end of the academic year, the teacher has to turn in a completely filled logbook or what he or she has taught students throughout the year.

She further explained how the vice principals utilized teacher logbooks to ensure that there was accountability from the teacher standpoint:

So, what goes on is that on a weekly basis, the vice principal checks to see that the syllabus or curricula prescription for that week has been covered. After that, we have a coordination meeting in which the vice principals present a report of who is teaching on pace and who is not, who has lapses, who has given make-up classes, etc., all based on what they see in the logbooks.

Depending on where the teachers are, they are then advised on the next steps to organize catch-up classes, when necessary or speed up as needed. Principal A said:

Another area where the principals have close monitoring is in the use of assessments. The vice principals are also charged with ensuring the quality of assessments in all subjects and ensuring remediation by teachers after the assessments are scored. When needed, they reach out to the Delegation of Education for assistance per Principal a:

Periodically, when there are some doubts about teaching and assessment alignments, we request educational consultations from the Delegation of Education with the specific subject educational unit in order to check alignment and measure the progress made and, if necessary, reframe curricula units as needed.

The educational leaders, vice principals, and department heads consistently assess the level of application and alignment of the curriculum to see if there are any difficulties or misalignments and provide adequate solutions.

Observations. The three principals narrated that they used observations as a tool to ensure a culture of accountability in their schools. Observations were either announced or unannounced. They were carried out sometimes by the principal, but mostly by the vice principals and the inspectors of education. Principal C explained:

We carry out monthly observation visits in classrooms. I do not go in the classrooms as much as my vice principals because of the other duties that I have. After every observation, the vice principals meet with the teacher and tell them what they found and then advise them on what to do next.

According to Principal A, peer to peer observations also play a big role in ensuring that teachers are accountable for their work:

We have internal inspections whereby teachers in the same content do peer observations followed by a self-critiquing or debriefing session to learn from each other and build their department capacity. We encourage this to alleviate panic while building a trusting work collaboration.

She explained that building trust amongst her teachers was very important in ensuring a school climate where everyone felt comfortable about their professional capabilities.

Staff Professional Responsibility. The three principals stated that as part of ensuring accountability in their schools, they monitored staff professional responsibilities in the areas of attendance and punctuality as well as instructional delivery and pacing.

The task monitoring attendance and punctuality is carried out by the assistant principals. They are the first to arrive at school and at the beginning of classes, they do rounds to see which teachers are present and which are absent. Principal B explained:

We hold teachers accountable by monitoring and recording the attendance and punctuality of teachers and students. Under the supervision of the assistant principals, the discipline masters make rounds at the beginning of classes to check the effective presence of teachers.

He explained that these rounds were necessary because there is no system in place that requires teachers to sign in. Also, the teachers are only expected to be present in the classes that they teach and can complete other instruction related tasks outside of the school.

Another way that staff attendance and punctuality are monitored is through the teacher logbooks. Principal A explained how this works:

At the end of the week, the vice principal goes through the teacher's logbooks for his or her section to see whether they have been teaching. They note and present a report of who has not been teaching. We then prepare a query that is sent to the teachers to explain their absences and their plans for makeup lessons.

Principal A stated that make-up lessons are usually planned for Saturdays. The teacher is expected to teach the same lesson as the one missed in order to meet up with the instructional pacing.

The principals also narrated that there was yet another evaluation and monitoring system that serves accountability. This system runs through the school and goes all the

way to the Ministry of Education. This monitoring system utilizes student grades.

Principal C explained the process:

There is an evaluation system using student grades. Teachers are invited to an evaluation meeting to discuss student grades periodically with their assistant principal. They bring their mark sheets and go through to give an account and explanation of why the student grades are the way they are.

The next step is for the vice principal to prepare a report with the grades and teacher statistics that they submit to the principal. The principal then moves these along to the next step. Principal C claimed:

They present to me the statistics and the reports of the meeting. There is a calendar of periodic documents that we send every week and every month to the divisional delegation for transmission to the Ministry of Education. So, they know what is going on in every department, in every school, in every town. So that is another way that we hold teachers accountable.

The reports are returned to the school with notations and recommendations for the general school program as well as for specific teachers.

Leading by Example. In their responses to questions related to accountability, the principles expressed that they did their best to be good examples in their schools in all aspects. Each of them had something to say with regards to punctuality. Principal C stated:

As the leader, I have to arrive at school before the teachers and students because they copy from me. If I make it a habit to be late, they will also copy that. So, I make sure to arrive before 7:30 a.m.

Principal A said:

I tell my assistant principals that we have to lead by example. For example, if you know that the rule is to arrive at seven thirty, you as the boss cannot be arriving at eight o'clock. So, we lead by example, we try to be there before seven 30 so that when the students and teachers come, we are already there.

Principal B claimed:

To show accountability to my staff as their leader, I ensure my behavior is an example. For example, if the school rules state that classes are supposed to start by seven thirty, I make sure to be there at least thirty minutes to one hour before. I am also always one of the last people to leave at the end of the day.

In addition to striving for punctuality, Principal B also stated that he models lessons for his teachers once a month. He related that after this, “the lesson is critiqued by the teachers during our instructional focus meetings”. He stated that he does this to show his teachers how to implement the instructional practices that are required of them.

Incentives and Awards. Principal C articulated that they have a teacher incentive at his school set up by the Parent-Teacher Association. They hand out excellence awards to teachers at the end of the year based on criteria that they define. According to C:

There is a teacher incentive program that is handled by the parent-teacher association and the assistant principals. They provide awards for teachers and

other staff at the end of the year. This encourages our teachers to try to do their best.

The School Council, made up of school and community members, also presents letters of recognition and certificates of encouragement to teachers according to Principal C.

Principal B said that his School Council works in conjunction with the Parent-Teacher Association and other community members to provide teachers and other school workers with incentives that include bonuses. B said:

They also prepare performance bonuses each term for teachers and other workers according to a distribution grid that takes into account each person's performance. Certificates of achievement and satisfactory service are also addressed to the most deserving staff at the end of year ceremony.

Student Accountability

The third theme that emerged with SQ2 was the importance of student accountability. The principals' responses indicated that four areas of student accountability were impactful when it came to ensuring a culture of learning and accountability at their schools. These areas are school organized activities, after school support, class councils, and incentives and awards.

School Organized Activities. The principals reported that they organized school-based activities such as academic competitions and study clubs to extend students' learning and by doing so, teach them to take accountability for their learning. Principal B said:

We ensure a culture of learning for our students through library activities such as spelling and reading competitions and study trips. The learning culture is reinforced by sensitizing learners to go to the public libraries, to use the Multimedia Resource center, organize study groups, and encourage clubs.

Principal B added that they sometimes organized special student presentations and workshop sessions with invited guest speakers.

After-School Support. Responses from all three principals indicated a focus on after school support for students. According to Principal A, her teachers are required to organize “make-up and remediation classes after school when they are absent.” She said:

Vice principals are in charge of ensuring that teachers who are absent plan and teach makeup classes. We also organize remedial classes. When the students work poorly in a subject, the teachers look for the cause and revise their methods through after school remediation classes. Some of the parents who can afford it locally contract home teachers to tutor their children.

Principal A continued to state that her school now has a website that they use to post review and remediation work for students. During the current pandemic, they used social media to reach students in efforts to keep them learning.

Incentives and Awards. Talking about student accountability, Principal B explained how they used incentives to keep students on track:

At the student level, rewards are promised at the start of the school year and awarded to the best students at the end of the school year during a solemn award ceremony. We invite their parents and other people from the delegation.

He reiterated that these promises of awards kept the students working hard during the year in anticipation of receiving an award at the end of the year. The principals also mentioned that the Parent-Teacher Associations at their schools come in periodically to bring gifts to students.

Class councils. Principal A stated that there were class councils set up at her school. These are run by elected students and have periodic meetings with the section assistant principal and discipline master. She stated that they “ensure that students take accountability by periodically meeting with the class councils to assess discipline, the work, and the moral state of the pupils and teachers in each class.” She added that class councils are sponsored by parents and other community partners.

Challenge

According to the principals, building a culture of learning and accountability is not easy for them and comes with some challenges. Principal A said:

There is a lot of poverty, and most students cannot afford to buy textbooks or extra materials. So, how do we create a culture of learning? For example, there are more than one hundred students in a class. And only about 20 of those students have the textbook.

She also has large class sizes that hinder learning. She stated:

The number of students is supposed to be sixty in every class, but we do not have that. We have classes that have at least one hundred to one hundred and twenty students. This is very difficult for the students and the teachers, but we cannot turn students away.

Principal B highlighted the lack of resources and poverty as a challenge to building a culture of learning at his school:

Let me start with my students. This is a challenge because we do not have the resources that can easily promote a culture of learning for students. For example, we do not have a school library. Also, very few parents can afford to register their children for external opportunities such as the American Cultural Center or the British Council libraries.

He explained that community partners try to come in with some resources from time to time, but that is not enough to keep students motivated.

SQ3

SQ3 involved how principals perceived connections to external communities. When asked how they perceived their connections to external communities as school leaders, all of the principals indicated that they had connections to their communities in various capacities. They specifically related their perceptions of connecting through communication, partnerships, parent/teacher associations, and school councils. They also provided artifacts in support of their responses. The interview responses were triangulated with the parent-teacher notes that they shared to confirm alignment as previously shown in Table 4. Their responses also brought some challenges to light. Table 10 outlines connections between the overarching research question and the emerging themes as well as their connection to the LCL Framework.

Table 10*SQ3 Emerging Themes and Alignment with LCL Framework*

Overarching LCL Framework based research question: What are the behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon?

SQ3: How do principals perceive connections to external communities?

Interview questions	Initial Emerging Themes	LCL alignment
- Community connection	- Communication - Partnerships - Parent-Teacher Association - School councils - Challenges	- Connections to external communities

Communication

Principals said that they communicated with parents through various means like letters, flyers, and radio announcements. Principals B and C explained that they used a lot of written communication to reach parents. Principal C explained his system for ensuring home/school communication:

Well, we have established a liaison or correspondence book for each student with the parents. We make sure that students copy things that we want to communicate with them in it so that they can take it home to their parents.

When asked what follow up on this system looked like, he said that they do not do any special follow ups to see if the parents received the messages.

Principal A said that she used paper communication channels prior to the pandemic, however, since the beginning of the pandemic and school shutdowns, she and her team have reverted to using social media to connect with students and families. She explained:

The pandemic has been bad and good for us. It made us change how we work. We are now using WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media software to communicate and connect with parents as needed. I even got a very good response for the first time to a survey through WhatsApp.

She said that this was an effective method as most families use social media of some kind and that she will continue to use it in the future.

Partnerships

Principals related that they have built relations with some partners in their communities. These partners include local community businesses, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations that intervene in various capacities to add value to the school community.

Community businesses. Principal C related that he had a good relationship with local companies and businesses that provide support to his school on a regular basis. He said:

A local road company donated books to the school two or three years ago.

Another example is the Colgate company that comes every term to give mouth health hygiene lessons to the students. Other businesses come in to sanitize the school surroundings from time to time.

Principal A perceived her relationship to her school's local community as good as well. She said that the relationship operated both ways. Sometimes, she went to request assistance from businesses and at other times they approached her to offer donations and assistance. According to Principal A:

Where my school is situated, we are neighbors to the presidential guard. I go to them when I need help during school events. I also solicit the council, the police commissioner, the gendarmerie, and any personalities through whom I can get things done for my school. Yes. I also go to people who supply water, light, all of that.

She went on to talk about how she harnesses her school location to the Presidency to find resources for the school. According to A:

Now, when I was appointed as the principal at this school, we didn't have regular running water, taps or water fountains. That was a big challenge.

I approached the water company. Now, when I, when my taps are not flowing, they supply water in my tanks, you know? I also wrote a grant request for toilets from the Presidency. They just finished construction.

Principal A said that she also requested and obtained security personnel from the Presidential Guard to deal with security issues. She stated:

So now we also have law and order officers patrolling around because my school has security challenges since it is not fenced. We have established direct connections with the police station, and we call the police from time to time to intervene.

She also expressed that the school has established relationships with food sellers who come to sell to students. They register with the school so that they know who students are buying from.

Educational Institutions. The principals also indicated in their responses that they have built good relationships with other educational institutions. Principal C explained how this works for his school:

We have a lot of vertical collaboration between the leaders and teachers. We also have horizontal collaboration between students with various establishments, especially the neighboring ones, through joint activities such as educational crossroads, lessons sharing, evaluations, sporting, and cultural activities.

He said that these collaborations were important for his staff and students to see what is going on in other schools and to improve their own practices. They also serve to create social relationships.

Nongovernmental Organizations. A group of partners that the principals talked about who are impactful in their schools were the local non-governmental organizations. Principal A talked about some of these organizations. She said:

We have NGOs here that come to our school to do sensitization work. There is a specific women's group that comes in once a month to have workshops with girls about pregnancy and health in general. We also have another group where our students register to do arts like painting, sculpting, etc.

While they all mentioned that international organizations such as UNICEF come in from time to time, the principals did not mention any specific work that these organizations do

in their schools. The principals mentioned that students at her school were in the process of setting up a UNESCO club, however, she did not give any details of what that looked like.

Parent-Teacher Association

The three principals all recounted that connecting with parents was very important for the life of their schools as they all considered parents as their first partners in the community. Principal B said:

Parents are our partners. We have the PTA. They come in to assist the school because, you know, the school fees now have been taken right to the barest minimum. And then imagine a school like mine that doesn't have so many things. We cannot afford enhancements. So, we need the PTA.

All the principals related examples of some of the things that the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) do for their schools that included additional staffing, tutoring services, school sanitation, resources, and student and teacher awards.

Principal A explained that the PTA plays an important part in ensuring that the school has enough teachers for all classes. They also pay for support staff for the daily running of the school. She said:

The PTA helps first with staffing by paying part-time teachers and classroom assistants when the government does not send enough teachers to the school. They also hire and pay support staff section disciplinarians, secretaries, after school tutors, toilet cleaners, and photocopy machine operators.

According to the principals, the PTA is also very involved with providing annual awards for students and teachers. They have representation in the school council and are involved in many decisions.

School Councils

School councils exist in all the schools per the principals. The school council is the body that oversees most decisions at the school. It has an advisory role and makes budget decisions. Principal B described the council and its work:

The school Council is made of a strategic group of people from various government bodies, the school, and the community. The PTA and some prominent people and partners in the community are also members. They meet two to three times during the school year. For instance, in June, they will meet to discuss the budget that I have prepared and make decisions about it.

He continued to explain that the school council plays an advisory role in all matters in the school. The council is a permanent connection to the external community.

Challenges

In their responses to the question of how they perceived their connections as school leaders to external communities, the principals also expressed that while they had good relationships with their communities and community partners, there were challenges that existed. Some of the challenges include sports infrastructure, portable water, and security.

Principal A expressed that her school does not have any sports infrastructure or equipment. She said that she is in communication with some community partners to make

that a reality. She also narrated her journey to get portable water and security in her school through community partners.

Summary

This chapter involved presenting findings from the data analysis. It was organized by research question.

SQ1 was about how principals perceived curricula high standards and instructional rigor for student learning in their schools. To answer this question, two interview questions were presented to principals, one involving high standards of learning and the other about rigor in instruction. Participants related their perceptions of high learning standards and instructional rigor in relation to their daily tasks. They provided documents in support of their responses. Interview responses were triangulated with administrative, curriculum/instruction, and assessment documents and artifacts they shared. Their perceptions of how they ensured high quality student learning and instructional rigor involved students, staff, and curricula issues. Main themes were enrollment, instructional monitoring, instructional resources and materials, instructional alignment, and staffing.

SQ2 involved how principals perceived a culture of professional learning and accountability at their schools. Participants related their perceptions of professional learning and accountability for both instructional staff and students. They provided documents in support of their responses. Interview responses were triangulated with administrative and professional development documents and artifacts they shared. Their

responses included four main categories: professional learning, staff accountability, student accountability, and challenges.

SQ3 involved how principals perceived their connections to external communities as leaders. They all said they had good connections with their communities. They had communication channels set up and were connected to local and outside partners. All participants responded they had strong parent-teacher associations and school councils, and they provided documents in support of their responses. Interview responses were triangulated with parent-teacher meeting notes they shared. There were still challenges that they had to work on, especially with regards to sports infrastructure, portable water, and security.

In Chapter 5, findings are discussed using the LCL framework, in addition to conclusions and recommendations for implementation and further exploration.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe leadership behaviors that are perceived by school principals as critical to their leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon. An exploratory multiple case study approach was used to address the research problem.

I addressed core components of successful schools and key processes that are linked with effective leadership using the conceptual framework of LCL.

To explore the main research question in the context of LCL, I used three sub questions to elicit in-depth responses from participants. I also collected artifacts that supported and confirmed interview responses. Key findings are summarized by research question as follows.

SQ1 involved learning how principals perceived high curriculum standards and instructional rigor for students in their schools. To answer this question, two interview questions were presented to principals, one involving high standards of learning and the other rigor in instruction. Participants narrated their perceptions of high learning standards and instructional rigor in relation to their daily tasks. Main themes were enrollment, instructional monitoring, instructional resources and materials, instructional alignment, and staffing.

SQ2 involved learning how principals perceived a culture of professional learning and accountability at their schools. Participants narrated their perceptions of professional learning and accountability according to instructional staff and students. Their responses

were grouped into four main categories: professional learning, staff accountability, student accountability, and challenges.

SQ3 involved how principals perceived connections to external communities. When asked how they perceived their connections to external communities as school leaders, all participants indicated they had connections with their communities in various capacities. They specifically related their perceptions of connections through communication, partnerships, parent/teacher associations, and school councils.

Interpretation of the Findings

The intent of this research study was to explore school leadership behaviors that had the potential to impact student learning as perceived by three school principals. Findings from this study confirmed the limited literature on education leadership, degrees of leadership distribution from teachers' perspectives, and effectiveness of education inspectors.

Findings indicated that participants had some general knowledge about indicators of instructional and shared leadership. Findings also indicated knowledge confirming LCL within the specific context of education in Cameroon. Participants in this study mostly engaged in behaviors and processes that supported their students' learning.

Results of this study indicated leadership practices in school buildings in Cameroon exhibit student-centered leadership. According to Goldring, Porter et al. (2009), core components refer to "characteristics of schools that support the learning of students and enhance the ability of teachers to teach" (p. 2), while key processes refer to transformational leadership behaviors that are "associated with processes of leadership

that raise organizational members' levels of commitment and shape organizational culture" (p. 2). Both core components and key processes are necessary for effective school leadership that leads to expected results. Core components include high standards for student learning, rigorous curriculum, quality instruction, cultures of learning and professional behavior, connections to external communities, and systemic performance accountability, while key processes include planning, implementing, supporting, advocating, communicating, and monitoring (Goldring, Porter et al., 2009).

Research questions and ensuing interview questions for this study were formulated to elicit and explore responses that highlighted key processes that participants used. Context is important in terms of interpretation of these findings as contextual purposes, traditions, history, norms, and ideals all contribute to the manifestation of leadership. Razik and Swanson (2017) stated the cultural context of a group or organization is instrumental in terms of how meaning is attributed to management tasks and leadership relationships. I discuss findings by research question in the context of the LCL framework within the Cameroonian educational scene.

SQ1 involved the first two core components of the LCL framework in order to explore and elicit processes and behaviors that were perceived as being impactful with regards to ensuring high curriculum standards and instructional rigor. In response to how they ensured these standards, participants described procedural behaviors.

Participants perceived high curriculum standards and instructional rigor in relation to their specific work contexts. Although they worked in three different types of schools, their perceptions were identical and there were common themes. Findings

indicted five themes emerging from responses: enrollment, instructional alignment, instructional monitoring, instructional resources and materials, and staffing (see Table 11).

Table 11

Emergent Themes and Key Processes for SQI

SQ1: Curricula high standards and instructional rigor					
Processes/ behaviors	Emergent Themes				
	Enrollment <i>-Class sizes</i> <i>-Attendance</i> <i>-Discipline</i>	Instructional Alignment <i>-Curriculum</i> <i>-Assessments</i>	Instructional Monitoring <i>-School-based/</i> <i>-External (Ministry)</i>	Instructional Resources and materials <i>-Curriculum</i> <i>-Teaching Aids</i> <i>-After school Opportunities</i> <i>-Awards and Rewards</i>	Staffing <i>-Strategic staff placement</i> <i>-Training</i> <i>-Attendance</i> <i>-Reporting</i>
Plan	X	X		X	X
Implement		X	X		
Support	X	X	X	X	X
Advocate			X		
Communicate					
Monitor	X	X	X	X	X

Findings of this study indicated that planning was an important process for ensuring high learning standards and rigor in instruction. The planning process started before schools were in session and continued throughout the year. The findings indicated that principals planned for all five emergent themes. It was expressed that during enrollment for instance, it was critical to plan carefully for class sizes, age discrepancies,

assessments, and staff placement. Planning for adequate instructional materials and resources and a roadmap for monitoring the instructional program was equally as important. This front-end planning process is in line with the literature on the role of leadership in ensuring schools effectiveness. School leaders who adopt proactive approaches in their work had the potential to obtain better student success. Day et al. (2016) argued that sustained school growth and effectiveness is possible when school leaders diagnose and understand the needs of their educational organizations as they operate within their specific complex contexts.

SQ2 focused on the third and fourth core components of the LCL framework in order to explore and elicit the processes and behaviors that were perceived as being impactful with regards to building a culture of professional learning and ensuring accountability. In response to this question, the principals described procedural behaviors within three of the six processes of the framework.

The three learning centered processes highlighted from the participants' perceptions are planning, supporting, and monitoring. The study findings indicated three themes emerging from responses: professional learning, staff accountability, and student accountability. These emerging themes fall in line within the planning, supporting, and monitoring processes of the learning centered leadership framework. Table 12 summarizes the intersecting of the emergent themes and key processes for SQ2.

Table 12

Emergent Themes and Key Processes for SQ2

SQ2: Culture of professional learning and accountability	
Emergent Themes	

Processes/ Behaviors	Professional Learning <i>-Staff Professional responsibility</i> <i>-Staff Learning Opportunities</i> <i>-Monitoring system</i> <i>-Observations</i> <i>-Leading by Example</i>	Staff Accountability <i>-Staff Professional responsibility</i> <i>-Staff Learning Opportunities</i> <i>-Monitoring system</i> <i>-Observations</i> <i>-Leading by Example</i> <i>-Incentives and Awards</i>	Student Accountability <i>-School Organized activities</i> <i>-After-School support</i> <i>-Incentives and Awards</i> <i>-Class councils</i>	Challenges <i>-Extracurricular activities</i> <i>-School libraries</i> <i>-Textbooks</i> <i>-Student Motivation</i>
Plan	X	X	X	
Implement				
Support	X	X	X	X
Advocate				
Communi- cate				
Monitor	X	X		

Findings from SQ2 indicated that planning, supporting, and monitoring were important processes for building a culture of professional learning and ensuring accountability within the schools. The literature on effective school leadership recognizes connectedness and collectivity as important traits within the fabric of an organization. Schools are complex systemic learning organizations that are characterized by visions for student and collective learning, as well as connectedness within unique and changing contexts (Kools & Stoll, 2016). The leader plays a crucial role within the complex school structure to develop capacity and a shared vision, while seeking common outcomes. According to Razik and Swanson (2017), school leaders with a systems perspective are more visionary and portray leadership that goes beyond simply managing educational resources to one that actively seeks to develop capacity in all stakeholders within the

system. Building a culture of learning and accountability implies capacity development of both staff and students. The principals in this study expressed that there were many ways and opportunities through which they ensured that a culture of learning and accountability systems were in place at their schools. There were opportunities for targeted professional development, peer to peer observations and collegial exchanges, and observational feedback in safe conversations. Programs were established to monitor, reward, and encourage student achievements as a measure of accountability for learning.

Some challenges were noted with regards to building a learning environment and accountability. All the principals talked about difficulties that they had to secure appropriate sports infrastructure, adequate school libraries, and textbooks for their schools. They perceived these needs as important enough to hinder some of the work that they were doing in the instructional arena. This finding is contrary to a study of educational leadership in a contextually challenging setting in Cameroon by Ashu (2018) who found that leader practices tended to be more distributive and used differences as assets rather than hindrances to enhance academic outcomes.

SQ3 centered on the connections to external community core component of the LCL framework to explore and elicit the processes and behaviors that were perceived as being impactful with regards to working with community partners to support the instructional program. In response to this question, the principals described procedural behaviors within three of the six processes of the LCL framework in the areas of communicating, advocating, and supporting. They also related challenges they faced when dealing when working within their communities.

The three learning centered key processes highlighted from the participants' perceptions are communicating, advocating, and supporting. The study findings indicated four themes emerging from responses: communication, partnerships, parent-teacher involvement, and school council involvement. These emerging themes fall in line within the supporting, advocating, and communication processes of the learning centered leadership framework. Table 13 summarizes the intersecting of the emergent themes and key processes for SQ3.

Table 13

Emergent Themes and Key Processes for SQ3

SQ3: Connections to external communities						
Processes / Behaviors	Emergent Themes					Challenges
	Communication	Partnerships	Parent-Teacher Association	School councils		
	-Home -Social Media	-Community -Education -Non-Governmental Organizations	-Support personnel -Tutoring -School sanitation	-Advisory Roles -Budget input		-Sports infrastructure -Portable water -Security
Plan						
Implement						
Support	X	X	X	X	X	X
Advocate	X	X	X	X	X	X
Communicate	X					
Monitor						

The findings from the third research question indicated that supporting, advocating, and communicating were important processes for ensuring connections with

the schools' communities. These processes are central to engaging with parents, partners, and other stakeholders outside of the school building. The literature on instructional leadership in context recognizes that context-based practices have an important influence on leadership effectiveness in culturally diverse educational settings (Norman et al., 2016). Norman et al. argued that successful leaders strategically incorporate culturally founded strengths, assets, and styles in purposeful, creative, and well-intended ways to create positive work environments. The principals in this study seemed to be cognizant of this and worked to achieve connectedness with their communities by seeking to advocate, communicate, and support community partner initiatives such as tutoring, advisory committee input, sanitation, social media platform support, and home communications.

Contextual variables play a major role in educational leadership, including connections with communities. The results from the third research question identified some challenges with regards to building connections with the community. All the principals noted difficulties in securing appropriate sports infrastructure, portable water, and consistent security for their schools from their community partners due to local practices that were beyond their control. For instance, working with the local water company was a big challenge due to the overall scarcity of portable water issues in the cities. They perceived these challenges to be maximal factors needed to ensure a true school-community connectedness. This finding is in alignment with the work of Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) who recognized the complexity of context for educational leadership and proposed guidelines for practice around the emerging concept of

contextual intelligence. Contextual beliefs, values, and logistics are instrumental in how school leaders in different contexts perceive their leadership.

Limitations of the Study

Case study research is effective for exploring complex issues that have very limited prior literature (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While this design was the most appropriate for this research study, it came with some limitations with regards to design, establishing external validity through transferability and dependability, as well as researcher subjectivity.

A design limitation of this study was the small number of participants and setting in the study. While I made sure to describe in detail the processes inherent to completing this research to allow possibilities for adaptation and transferability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018), the small number of participants might make it challenging to fully replicate the study.

Other limitations to design for this research study were found in the data collection and data analysis procedures. Data collection was completed virtually contrary to the original plan to collect data face to face within participants' contexts. A switch was made due to the inability to pandemic travel restrictions. Face to face data collection allows the participants and researcher to engage in deeper exchanges that might yield in-depth emerging themes from this exploratory study. This limitation might have reduced the amount of valuable data collected, and in extension the emergent themes.

Another limitation for this study was in relation to researcher subjectivity. I had some familiarity with the setting and this might have created a bias vis-à-vis the

participant selection and research outcomes. To counter this limitation, I ensured that the selected participants did not include people known by her in order to remain objective during the entire process. I also made every effort to stick to the interview protocol and not divert based on personal knowledge of the setting.

Recommendations

Recommendations Grounded in the Literature

The literature review for this study revealed that there was paucity of research with regards to educational leadership in general and instructional leadership for the Cameroonian educational context. This paucity revealed a gap in research in relation to educational and instructional leadership in this context. This researcher recommends further exploratory educational leadership studies based in the Cameroonian context to begin filling the gaps in the literature.

The review of the literature on effective leadership training and development also indicated a need for formalized training of school leaders within the contexts where they operate. All principals in this study related that they did not receive any formal training prior to being nominated to their positions as school leaders. This researcher recommends targeted training focused on learning-centered leadership practices while considering possible contextual bottlenecks.

Recommendations Grounded in the Strengths of the Current Study

One of the strengths from the findings of this study was the confirmation and extension of the existing knowledge on learning-centered educational leadership within the specific context of education in Cameroon. The principals in this study mostly

engaged in behaviors and processes that supported their students' learning, in accordance with the existing knowledge base linking school leadership to school effectiveness and student achievement. This researcher recommends further studies along these lines to fully establish the literature.

Recommendations Grounded in the Limitations of the Current Study

To address the design limitation concerning the small number of participants and setting in the study, this researcher recommends replication of the study with an expansion of the participants from three to multiple participants from the same school level. This would ensure transferability and thereafter, the study could then be replicated for other levels of education. The recommendation is also made to collect data in face-to-face interviews to fully engage in deeper exchanges that might yield more in-depth and significant emerging themes.

Implications

The problem of effective educational leadership for student achievement is important in the Cameroonian urban education setting. School leaders in Cameroon face the same kinds of pressures that other school leaders face elsewhere to bring result reflective of high standards of instruction even as they also face many challenges such as poor economic and social status, and cultural differences. This study sought to shed some light on the status of leader behaviors that are in use in addressing these pressures and challenges. Implications for social change and practice emanate from the study.

Implications for Social Change

This research study has the potential for social change at the individual and organizational levels. This potential can also be extended to policy in the near future.

The impact for social change at the individual level is possible at the level of the study participants. When asked about their impressions of the interview, they all said that they were pleased to have participated in the study because the interview questions were eye-opening and got them reflecting on their daily work, something that they did not do before. They said they had a new perspective on their work and intended to take time to reflect more on their leadership behaviors.

At the organizational level, the potential for social change is possible when the principals begin to consciously reflect on their work and make instructional decisions based on core components and key processes of learning-centered leadership. An understanding of the leadership components and processes necessary for high student achievement will make for more structured school buildings where students, staff, and all other stakeholders will thrive. This potential can be extradited to the larger organizational level and disseminated to all schools.

Recommendations for Practice

The results from this research study can inform the work of school leaders and other personnel at decision making positions on leadership behaviors to encourage and promote. Principals can use the knowledge from this work to inform how they plan, implement, support, monitor, advocate, and communicate within their instructional programs.

At the broader ministerial level, decision makers can use the findings from this study to inform leadership professional development and training. They can go further to consider these findings in planning for a much-needed educational leadership certification program.

Conclusion

This study sought to explore and describe leadership behaviors that are perceived by school principals as critical to their leadership effectiveness in three urban schools in Cameroon. The results indicated that principals were already exhibiting practices reflective of learner centered leadership even as they were not intentional about it. Rather, they used key processes that address the core components for student achievement in reactionary rather than proactive ways. This unintentionality can be attributed to a lack of formal leadership training. This is in line with the literature that identified the lack of formal school leadership training as a gap in the literature. The insights from this study provide a starting point for further explorations of learner-centered leadership in the Cameroonian educational setting as well as an incentive for considerations of a dedicated training and certification program for school leaders in the country.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The interview protocol for this study is developed following the interview protocol refinement (IPR) framework proposed by Castillo-Montoya (2016). The IPR is a framework that brings together the four critical steps necessary for a successful interview experience. According to Castillo-Montoya the steps of the IPR process include aligning research questions and interview question, developing open-ended questions that create opportunities for in-depth inquiry, having the protocol reviewed and refining with feedback, and finally piloting the protocol. Castillo-Montoya (2016) further argued that the IPR process helps in strengthening the reliability of qualitative interview protocols.

The following interview protocol is developed along these lines. In the first phase of the interview protocol, I sought to align the research questions (RQ) to the interview questions (IQ). I used a matrix as recommended by Castillo-Montoya (2016) to ensure that there were no gaps in coverage of the research questions. The central question for this study is to elicit behaviors that principals perceive as critical to leadership effectiveness in 3 urban secondary schools in Cameroon. Six sub questions stem from this central question and constitute the basis for the interview questions. The sub questions are as follows:

7. How do principals ensure high standards for student learning?
8. How do principals ensure that a rigorous curriculum is in effect in their schools?
9. How do principals ensure quality instruction in their schools?
10. How do principals ensure a culture of learning and professional behavior?
11. How do principals ensure connections to external communities?

12. How do principals ensure performance accountability at their schools?

Table A1*Interview Protocol Matrix*

	Participant Background/Close out	SQ1	SQ2	SQ3	RQ4	RQ5	RQ6
IQ1	X						
IQ2	X						
IQ3		1.1					
IQ4		1.2					
IQ5			2.1				
IQ6			2.1				
IQ7				3.1			
IQ8				3.2			
IQ9					4.1		
IQ10					4.2		
IQ11						5.1	
IQ12						5.2	
IQ13							6.1
IQ14							6.2
IQ15	X						
IQ16	X						

Based on the question distribution in the matrix, I developed the following interview questions (IQ):

IQ1. How long have you worked as a school principal?

IQ2. How long have you worked at this school?

IQ3. Please describe how you ensure high standards for student learning at your school.

IQ4. Follow-up question as needed.

IQ5. How do you ensure that a rigorous curriculum is in effect in your school?

IQ6. Follow-up question.

IQ7. Please explain how you ensure quality instruction in your school.

IQ8. Follow-up question.

IQ9. How do you ensure a culture of learning and professional behavior?

IQ10. Follow-up question.

IQ11. Please describe how you ensure connections to external communities?

IQ12. Follow-up question.

IQ13. How do you ensure performance accountability at your school?

IQ14. Follow-up question.

IQ15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

IQ16. What are your impressions of this interview?

In keeping with the IPR process, I shall await feedback on the protocol in order to refine and then pilot the questions prior to the field session.

Appendix B: Summary of Artifacts

	Artifact	Description	Focus
1.	School Internal Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preamble - School description - Student Responsibilities - Student Rights - Organization and Dispensation of Instruction - Grading and Reporting - Uniforms - Maintenance and Upkeep of Premises and School Equipment - General Student Behavior - Final Provisions 	Administration
2.	Action Plan SY21 - This document outlines priority and complementary yearlong actionable plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administrative Plan - Instructional Plan - Discipline Plan - Social Climate - Covid-19 Provisions - Distance Education and E-Learning Provisions 	Administration
3.	Beginning of Year Staff Meeting Report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Prayer 2- Performance of the National Anthem 3- Message from the Principal 4- Assessment of the past school year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a- Pedagogic report b- Disciplinary report 	Curriculum/Instruction

		<p>5- Regional Report</p> <p>6- Discussions, resolutions, perspectives, and annotations of action plans</p> <p>7- Appointment of head teachers, educational facilitators, and club supervisors</p> <p>8- Presentation of new teachers</p> <p>9- PTA updates</p> <p>10- Closing remarks and recommendations from the principal</p> <p>11- National Anthem in English</p>	
4.	Instructional collaborative meeting for first trimester - German course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assessment of working conditions: classrooms, materials, schedules - Election of the instructional leader - Distribution of teaching schedules -Creation of course outlines and progress monitoring tools - Instructional assessment strategies 	Curriculum/Instruction
5.	Instructional collaborative meeting for first trimester - Physics course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attendance - Minutes of previous meeting - Designation of level coordinators - Possible issues and possible solutions to propose - Inventory of instructional materials - Instructional remediation plan - Club activities - Future collaborative meeting themes and dates 	Curriculum/Instruction

6.	Instructional lesson tracking sheet	<p>Elements included on this sheet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Course name -Teacher name -Number of lessons planned for the year -Number of actual lessons taught for the year -Percentage of lessons covered -Number of hours planned for the year -Number of actual hours taught for the year -Percentage of hours covered -Teacher attendance record -Student attendance record -Analysis and comment (Notes) -Outline of new instructional strategies -Educational Inspector's recommendations -Instructional director's recommendations -Principal's recommendations 	Curriculum/Instruction
7.	Instructional Team meeting report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Department presentation - Team members - Working conditions: infrastructure and equipment - Situation of instructional needs - class distribution and sizes - State of Pedagogic implementation - Data on current student performance - In-house professional development plan - Model lessons - Textbook selection proposal 	Curriculum/Instruction
8.	Sample Instructional planning meeting report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -State of teaching staff: current staff and vacancies - Staff placement - Team lead elections 	Curriculum/Instruction

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of past year - Review of recent official exam results - Annual Assessment plan - Exploration of partners for possible internships 	
9.	Professional development: Training Educational Facilitators	On how to facilitate instructional planning meetings and the ensuing documents	Professional Development
10.	School Activities Calendar - 2nd trimester	Calendar of school activities: Instructional, assessment, community involvement, sports, partner programs	Administration
11.	School Activities Calendar - 3rd trimester	Calendar of school activities: Instructional, assessment, community involvement, sports, partner programs	Administration
12.	Detailed Annual Math lessons outline for 6e- Form 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments 	Curriculum
13.	Detailed Annual Math lessons outline for 5e-Form 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments 	Curriculum
14.	Detailed Annual Math lessons outline for 4e-Form 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments 	Curriculum
15.	Detailed Annual Math lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references 	Curriculum

	outline for 3e-Form 4	- Connections to life - Assessments	
16.	Detailed Annual Math lessons outline for “seconde”-Form 5	-Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
17.	Detailed Annual Math lessons outline for “Premiere”-Lower sixth	-Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
18.	Detailed Annual Math lessons outline for “Terminale”-Upper sixth	-Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
19.	Detailed Annual German lessons outline for “seconde”-Form 5	-Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
20.	Detailed Annual German lessons outline for “Premiere”-Lower sixth	-Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
21.	Detailed Annual German lessons outline for “Terminale”-Upper sixth	-Overarching weekly goals - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
22	Data: Results of end of year formal exams and entrance exams 2019	-OBC (Office du Baccalaureat du Cameroun) -DECC GCE Board (Government Common Entrance)	Assessment data

23	Data: Results of end of year formal exams and entrance exams 2020	-OBC (Office du Baccalaureat du Cameroun) -DECC GCE Board (Government Common Entrance)	Assessment data
24	Data: Results of end of year formal exams and entrance exams 2021	-OBC (Office du Baccalaureat du Cameroun) -DECC GCE Board (Government Common Entrance)	Assessment data
25	English Language Program of study for Secondary General Education, Anglophone sub-system: Forms III, IV and V	-Overarching weekly goals - Annual instructional overview - Units of study - Weekly objectives - Textbook references - Connections to life - Assessments	Curriculum
26	Sample lesson Plan	-Lesson plan elements - Materials - Assessment elements	Lesson planning and assessment
27	Professional Development: Preparing and delivering lessons	- On how to facilitate instructional planning meetings and develop lesson plans using the prescribed curriculum documents	Professional Development
28	Instructional Facilitator/Trainer's action plan	-Calendar of professional development activities for the school year	Professional Development
29	Intern Monitoring Report	-Report on supervising, monitoring, and evaluating student teachers	Professional Development
30	PD: The Lead Teacher's Role and Responsibilities	Professional development on teacher leader duties and strategies	Professional Development
31	Data: Summary of Results of end of year formal exams	-OBC (Office du Baccalaureat du Cameroun)	Assessment data

	and entrance exams 2022		
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