

Headteachers' Leadership Requirements for Effective Management of Primary Schools in Cameroon: Case Study of Primary Schools in Garoua 1 Sub-Division, Benuoe Division, North Region of Cameroon

Takang Jaspa David (Ph.D.)

University of Garoua, Cameroon

Abstract: Leadership is pertinent in any organization. The purpose of this study is to identify leadership requirements relevant in running primary schools in Cameroon and throw more insight into their relevance using teachers and headteachers drawn from primary schools in Garoua 1 sub-division. Four requirements were examined; motivation skills, instructional supervision skills, communication skills and human relation skills. Each requirement had 3 likert scale questions that respondents were to respond. The population of the study was all the teaching and administrative staff of all the primary schools in Garoua 1 Sub-division, Benuoe division, North Cameroon. The sample constituted 196 participants made up of 168 teachers and 28 headteachers got from twenty five primary schools randomly selected from all the primary schools in garoua 1 sub-division, Benuoe division. The findings reveal that headteachers earnestly need these four requirements for effective running of primary schools in Cameroon; but the human relation requirements stand tall as the most important requirement to effectively run a school. It was recommended that a specialized school for training school leaders be opened in Cameroon. Also, government should make sure regular seminars and workshops are organized so that contemporary skills, abilities and competences are acquired by headteachers especially regarding the requirements researched on above.

Keywords: Headteachers Leadership Requirements, Effective Management, Primary Schools.



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INTRODUCTION

Headteachers are the backbone of primary schools in Cameroon. They vet all teachers notes to be given to pupils. Headteachers have encountered various criticism in recent years over how to effectively manage schools as a result of interest placed on instruction and leadership issues. A well trained headteacher is pivotal in making sure our primary school achieve the desired goals. Ngemunang (2022), quoted (Fullan, 2002), saying ‘‘an outstanding school leader is a key figure responsible for the success and growth of a school, which is largely assessed in terms of teaching and students’ learning outcomes.

In an unpublished thesis from the university of Birmingham by Frederick ebote ashu titled “effectiveness of school leadership and management development in cameroon”, the abstract read as follows : “ in both developed and developing countries poor performance of head teachers is detrimental to school effectiveness, with consequent economic costs amounting to billions of dollars every year. These costs are perhaps particularly keenly felt in developing countries, where demand for a work force that is proficient in globally relevant competencies is especially acute, but where the effective school leadership that can help to deliver this educated workforce is especially patchy. One of the contributing factors to this poor performance is lack of structured leadership development programmes”.

Frederick (2013), quoting brungardt, 1996; day, 2001; Collins,2002; Rhodes et al., 2009, indicate that the last 53 years since the independence of Cameroon have seen an increasing international interest in leadership development courses and programmes for school leaders. This interest in intervening to develop leadership and management ability within schools derives in part from a developing concern in many educational systems regarding perceived leadership inadequacies amongst school leaders and in part from a belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to the effectiveness of schools by deepening the knowledge, expertise and behaviours of school leaders. Frederick, also noted that, despite the increasing prevalence of leadership development programmes, there has been relatively little rigorous evaluation of their effectiveness in actually supporting aspiring school leaders in their transition to headship; that leadership development programmes will actually result in improved leadership skills appears to be largely taken for granted in many educational systems.

Peter, L., and Alfred, K. (2018), in their article titled “ head teachers’ professional management needs and concerns : evidence from an educational district in Ghana, they noted that understanding the role and nature of preparation for leadership must be based on recognition of how work is defined and organized in the 21st century. That there is an increasing consensus among researchers in the field of educational leadership and management in both advanced and developing countries that that the leadership provided head teachers is absolutely crucial for schools.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The fundamental purpose of this study is to unravel the pertinent requirements necessary to effectively run primary schools using Garoua 1 sub-division in the north region of Cameroon as case study. The findings will assist policies makers, educational planners and policy implementers to do the right thing in all their governance activities. Variables to be researched are:

1. Motivation skills
2. Instructional supervision skills
3. Human relation skills
4. Communication skill

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Intense efforts, over several years have been made in Cameroon to improve its education system so as to significantly contribute to its economic growth and development. One area where this effort is constantly made is the domain of basic school leadership. Changes in the curriculum such as competence based approach (CBA) warrant highly-developed leaders with appropriate management abilities. In all educational systems head teachers are the pillars through whom leadership and management are carried out in schools. Head teachers make a difference and as such training should be a pre-requisite prior to assuming duty. They also require continuous professional development to help them improve instruction and pupils achievements. However,

there is the persistent absence of a specialized well structured institution to train primary school leaders. Although there are teacher training schools (ENIEG), the courses do not handle those aspiring to take up leadership positions. The draft document of the sector wide approach/Education in Cameroon 2005 pinpoint that the non-existence of a specialized institution for the training of school officials in Cameroon is a call for concern.

The absence of a structure to train school officials in Cameroon, introduce gaps in the leadership corridor in our basic education sub-system. Some gaps include; poor instructional supervision skills, confusing pedagogic and managerial roles, placing less emphasis on managerial function due to no competencies, poor handling of disciplinary matters, poor human resource management skills. All these setbacks arise due to the lack of a professional school to train school heads. From many literature review very few research have tackled this problem and this study shall go a long way to bring out findings regarding headteachers effectiveness using the variables of motivation, instruction supervision, communication and human relation.

RESEARCH THEORIES

Research theories used in this study are coiled from those used in the research by Ngemunang (2022), titled ‘‘principals’ leadership needs for effective management of secondary schools in meme and fako divisions of cameroon’’. They are professional leadership, instructional leadership and communicative leadership.

Professional leadership

Ngemunang referenced larry lashway 2002, joseph blasé 2000, as saying **professional leadership or development in the instructional leadership paradigm is concerned with the role of principals as leaders influencing the professional development of educators in their schools**. It also encompasses principals’ responsibility to develop professionally to perform their new role. Ngemunang also quoted sweitzer 2009 who view professional as comprising activities professionals engage in to achieve professional competence. It is further perceived as a variety of activities educators undertake to improve their practice.

Instructional leadership

Regarding instructional leadership, ngemunang referenced Marcia Masumoto and Sharon brown-welty 2009 as saying instructional leadership focuses on a principal’s influence on student achievement and how they positively affect teachers, which is identified through learners performance. She also quoted Kenneth Leithwood et al 2004 who emphasizes the role of the principal as an instructional leader in setting directions, guiding educators on matters of instruction and generally directing the school. researchers in the twentieth and twenty-first century view instructional leadership as encompassing the actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning.

Communicative leadership

In Ngemunang (2022), quoting Johansson et al (2011), they say communicative leadership refers to the way a leader communicates with employees. The general assumption is that communicative leaders have a profound influence on employee attitudes, well-being, and performance. Research has established that the benefits of good internal communication include job satisfaction, greater productivity, less absenteeism, improved quality of goods and services, reduced costs, and increased levels of innovation. Other studies confirm that employees who are more satisfied with top management’s communication are more likely to be committed to the organization and that personal feedback, supervisor communication and organizational information are important to how employees identify with their organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Frederick (2013), quoting Kirkpatrick, (1997, 2005), identify a variety of possible reasons as to why schools and educational systems in developing countries are not evaluating or reporting the results of their leadership and management development programmes. Firstly, the very complexity of modern educational systems, which require a complex and overlapping range of leadership and management skills, itself, makes the development of those skills, and then their consequent impact on school performance, difficult to assess in a consistent and scientifically rigorous way. secondly, whilst it is a challenge in itself to consistently measure the interpersonal skills and the work performance of individual school leaders, it is even more difficult to measure the impact of leadership change within schools on the effectiveness of an educational system as a whole, since this often involves analysis at multiple levels of educational systems. Thirdly, while tasks and challenges encountered on-the-job development is the most important source of learning, the truth is that all jobs are not developmentally equal, nor can they be expressed in an objective way, which possibly makes evaluation more difficult to assess the effectiveness of leadership preparation and management development in preparing heads for successful school leadership.

Peter et al (2018),quoting Townsend (2007),says school leaders perform pivotal roles in making schools very effective. Citing Alta et al cited in Esia-Donkoh (2014), insinuate the duties of school heads include planning, staff personnel services, pupils personnel services, curriculum and instructional development, improvement and appraisal, financial and business management, maintenance of school-community relationship and general tasks. Quoting ojo and olanyan (2008), head teachers are expected to manage and control schools. As lower level managers of the education service, they plan some activities mostly with their staff for the progress of the schools. Planning is very essential as it aids to find the philosophy, policies, programmes, procedures, practices and challenges of institutions. as a saying goes, if one fails to plan, he/she plans to fail. Headteachers therefore, need good knowledge and skills in planning to effectively lead their schools.

Elujekwute et al (2022), Arneet (2010), says the head teacher is the leading professional in the school. Accountable to the governing body, he provides vision, leadership and direction for the school and ensures that it is managed and organized to meet the aims and objective of the school. the headteacher, working with others is responsible for evaluating the school's performance to identify the priorities for continuous improvement and raising standards, ensuring equal opportunities for all; developing policies and practices; ensuring that resources are efficiently and effectively used to achieve the school's aims and objectives for the day to day management, organization and administration of the school. Elujekwute (2019), brought out the following qualities for an effective head teacher :

1. The head teacher should be sensitive to the feeling of others, by being considerate, helpful, responsive and friendly.
2. He must reasonably be of good health and physical stamina and he must show sympathy, confidence, gregariousness and demonstrable, capabilities to work with people.
3. Loyal to his ideals and ideas as well consistent generous, humble, honest, modest and fair to all.
4. Enthusiastic in informing others about the policies and regulations of the school system and discourages envy, jealousy and victimization.
5. Trusts others and takes blames for his own errors and firm, not harsh nor proud or wicked.
6. Approachable, easy to talk to, alert, has a sense of humor.

7. Willing to learn, adaptable and flexible and aware of the complex, social, political cultural and economic situations of the school.

A look at these qualities of a headteacher may scare one as it is quite difficult or almost impossible for an individual to have all the qualities. However, a good headteacher should understand that his raw materials and products are human beings. He should therefore endeavor to acquire as much of those qualities as it could enable him perform his enormous tasks or functions.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the quantitative research method using close ended likert scale questions on head teachers' management requirements. The responses warrant direct responses ranging from agree to strongly agree to disagree to strongly disagree tables, frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the data. The variables used as requirements in the research were : headteachers communication skills requirement, headteachers motivational skills requirement, headteachers human relation skill requirement, and headteachers instructional supervision skill requirement.

Population and sample

The population of the study constituted all the teachers and headteachers of primary schools of Garoua 1 sub-division, Benoue division, North Region Cameroon. To get the sample of the study, random sampling was used to select twenty five schools from the 115 primary school in the garoua 1 sub-division. From each school all the teachers and headteachers were used as participants of the study since teachers in primary schools are usually not many. the participants per school is found on the table below :

NAME OF SCHOOL	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	NUMBER OF HEADTEACHER	TOTAL
GBPS BIOU	12	2	14
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BEKA	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL MELEN DEM	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL WOURO-HOURSO	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL HAOUSSARE 2	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL KOLLERE 2	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NASSARAO	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PLATEAU 1	6	1	7
GBPS KOLLERE 2	12	2	14
PREMIER INTERNATIONAL	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL DJAMBOUTOU	6	1	7
GBPS FOULBERE	12	2	14
BETHANY	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL GAROUA 1	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BILE 1	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL OURO-LABBO 1B	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL	6	1	7

KANADI 1A			
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SONARI 1	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SONARI 2	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SABONGARI 1	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL KANADI 1B	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL OURO-LABBO 1A	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL SABONGARI HOURO KESSOUM	6	1	7
PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL GAROUA 2	6	1	7
LE HIRRONDEL	6	1	7
TOTAL	168	28	196

Total number of participants stood at 196 and out of this number 190 returned their response giving a response rate of 96.9 percent; a comfortable percentage.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument that was used in this research was questionnaire having close ended questions drawn from each of the variable used in the research and divided into 4 sections: A. motivational skills requirements B. Human relation skills requirements C. instructional supervision skill requirements D. communication skills requirements. Each of the variable had 3 likert scale questions. The responses ranged from agree to strongly agree and disagree to strongly disagree.. The instrument was validated by fellow colleagues researchers who read through and recommended some changes which was taken into consideration by the researcher. For more validity of the result the instrument was pilot tested with two primary schools in Garoua 3 sub-division.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION

Responses related to headteachers human relation skills requirements

item	Headteachers human relation skill requirements	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	percentage	Strongly disagree	disagree	PERCENTAGE	DECISION
1	Headteachers who are empathetic increase their managerial effectiveness	187	1	98.94	1	1	1.05	Strongly agree
2	Headteachers who solve teachers	183	3	97.8	2	2	2.1	Strongly agree

	professional difficulties all the time increase their managerial effectiveness							
3	Headteachers who always treat teachers with respect, increase their managerial effectiveness	189	1	100	/	/	/	Strongly agree

Regarding responses on headteachers human relation skills requirements, respondents strongly agreed that human relations skills exhibited by headteachers contributed most in their ability to manage effectively; especially headteachers who respect teachers showing a percentage of 100 %. Meaning that in a school headteachers should pay much attention to human relation concerns.

Responses related to headteachers instructional supervision skills requirements

item	Headteachers instructional supervision skill requirements	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	percentage	Strongly disagree	disagree	PERCENTAGE	DECISION
1	Headteachers who assure that teachers class notes follow the normal procedure increase their managerial effectiveness	160	10	89.4	5	15	10.5	agree
2	Headteachers who make sure teachers attend	152	11	85.7	7	20	14.2	agree

	seminars and workshops increase their managerial effectiveness							
3	Headteachers who attend in-service training increase their managerial effectiveness	141	14	81.5	6	29	18.2	agree

Regarding responses on instructional supervision skills, participants agreed knowledge of instructional supervision will enable headteachers to effectively manage the school. The participants responded with favourable percentages score of 89.4 ,85.7 ,81.5.

Responses related to headteachers motivational skills requirements

item	Headteachers motivational skill requirements	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	PERCENTAGE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	PERCENTAGE	DECISION
1	Offering gifts to teachers who are assiduous increase headteachers effectiveness	115	35	78.9	10	30	21.0	agree
2	Delegating some administrative powers to teachers increase headteachers managerial effectiveness	120	24	75.7	10	36	24.2	agree

3	Praising teachers for hardwork increases headteachers managerial effectiveness	119	33	80	18	20	20	agree
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Motivational skills requirement was another requirement respondents agree headteachers need to effectively manage schools. In this rubric, participants agreed praising teachers stool most significant having a percentage of 80. Followed by offering gifts to teachers who are assiduous having a percentage of 78.9.

Responses related to headteachers communication skills requirements

item	Headteachers communication skills requirements	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	PERCENT AGE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	PERCENT AGE	DECISION
1	<i>Regular school related information provided through school watsapp forum increase headteachers managerial effectiveness</i>	114	25	73.15	19	32	26.8	agree
2	<i>Organizing regular staff meetings increase headteachers managerial effectiveness</i>	111	32	75.2	17	30	24.7	agree
3	<i>Having weekly assembly for all</i>	113	31	75.7	20	26	24.2	agree

	<i>students and staff increases headteacher s managerial effectiveness s</i>							
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Headteachers communication skills also show participants agreeing its acquisition by headteachers will increase their managerial effectiveness. Having weekly assembly for all students and staff stood tall with a percentage score of 75.7.. organizing regular staff meetings had 75.2 percent agreement rate and 73.15 percent regarding having regular school related information provided through whatsapp school forum.

CONCLUSION

From the results it is indicative that human relation skills are absolutely imperative to be at the forefront in any effective management of a school. This concept of human relation has in recent years been practical in running schools. Elton mayo theory of human relation has proven that productivity in any work place depends on how the manager or leader relate with employees and not by increase pay or other aspects of motivation. Instructional supervisioon skills came after the human relation skills showing that, participants recognize the role pedagogy play in any educational institution. The rubrics gave a much higher percentage as compared to those of motivation and communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Specialized schools to train school heads at the basic education sub-system be created in Cameroon.
2. The courses at the current teacher training institutions be oriented to provide skills that can be used to run schools while waiting the time a specialized school will be created.
3. Headteachers should re-inforce in-service training of their teachers and themselves to acquire skills for effective management.
4. Headteachers are encouraged to undertake personal online lessons considering the development of technology in (ICT). Research in all fields through the internet is now easy .

DIFFICULTY ENCOUNTERED

The researcher faced some difficulties while carrying out this study. Firstly, some to get back the participants responses was not an easy tasks. The researcher made several trips to the schools to get back responses; in that process six responses could not be recuperated.

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