

**Investigating Teacher Leadership Practices in Cameroon
Secondary Education: A Case of Two Public Schools**

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ABSTRACT

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Teacher leadership is crucial in improving schools and enhancing student learning. In Cameroon, the hierarchical nature of leadership and the internal school structures encourage the partition of roles and responsibilities and a clear separation of power and authority. Teachers in Cameroon work within a more imposed system, where the national curriculum is design and impose on them. As a result, teachers do not perform activities geared towards leadership. To improve on teacher leadership practices in Cameroon and learn from exemplar systems (e.g., Finland), it is important to examine how teacher leadership is practiced and how it can be improved. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is twofold: investigate teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary schools; and explain how teacher leadership practices can be improved. This study used semi-structured interviews, from two public schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

The results suggest that teachers are involved in many different practices, such as teaching, learning, collaborative practices, participation in decision-making, shared professional practices. The results further suggest that teacher leadership can be improved through measures that recognize and motivate the efforts of teachers. Furthermore, when teachers are recognized for their expertise, they become motivated to take their jobs seriously. They can also encourage other staff to work efficiently by devising new strategies to improve on student learning. The findings suggest for future research to examine how teacher leadership practices can improve on student learning.

Keywords: Teacher leadership, student achievement, school improvement, teaching, learning, Cameroon, secondary school.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher leadership has evolved dramatically over the years and the role of teachers within secondary and high schools has greatly increased. The global emphasis on improving student achievement has brought about increased attention on the pivotal role of teachers in improving the quality of education. Researchers have noted that teachers are central to the task of building schools that promote high quality teaching and learning for all students. York-Barr and Duke (2004) have admitted that teachers usually assume leadership roles at both the instructional and organizational levels.

Teacher leadership is defined in the current study as teacher participation in school development and in the teaching and learning process (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This definition compels teachers to expand their area of activity beyond the classroom and to assume leadership responsibilities that impact on the whole school (Harris & Muijs, 2004; Angelle & Dehart, 2011; Harris, 2005; Alava, Halttunen, & Risku, 2012).

When teachers assume leadership as a critical facet of the school and take it into their classrooms or when they perform leadership by taking critical facets of the school into their classrooms, they become the foundation for school improvement (Barth, 2001). Likewise, teacher leaders facilitate and support the school in achieving its goals through leading, influencing others, and engaging in decision-making (Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake, 2016). This increase in the recognition of teachers' role has placed teacher leadership at the forefront of school improvement (Muijs & Harris, 2006).

Although teacher leadership plays a crucial role in school improvement and students' achievement, teacher leadership is not operational as a form of

leadership activity in Cameroon schools. The education system of Cameroon is centralized, and the administrative structures are generally arranged in a hierarchical and bureaucratic nature (Njoh, 1999; Forka, 2012). This gives the Ministries of Education absolute control over the affairs of schools. This type of centralized system makes it hard for schools to become autonomous in directing and managing their affairs (Harris, 2003; Milles & Schall, 2012). In other words, schools in Cameroon merely execute the rules and regulations put in place by the central government. This style of leadership is in opposition with leadership in the 21st century schools in which continuous change and reform are more prevalent (Frost & Durrant, 2003; Fullan, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2004; Lieberman & Miller, 2005). In his dissertation on the application of leadership tenets in Cameroon, Forka (2012) affirms that for leadership in Cameroon to be effective, it needs to be transformational.

Whereas leadership in some countries is typically viewed as a collective responsibility, leadership in the Cameroonian system is viewed from the perspective of an individual (Muijs & Harris, 2003). When leadership is acknowledged as an individual in a specialized role wrapped in formal power, teachers do not consider their roles as leadership (Lambert, 2003). As a result, teachers in Cameroon avoid assuming leadership roles. Ironically, when teachers create connection with students, accept responsibility for work outside their classrooms, and work in collaboration they are motivated to assume leadership roles (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007). In practice, this involves giving power to teachers and encouraging them to lead (Muijs & Harris, 2003).

However, teacher education and training in Cameroon is limited. It only provides teachers with survival techniques to handle and cope with classroom routines and customs (Tchombe, 2014). Furthermore, in systems where a national curriculum is designed and imposed on teachers without their active involvement, there is a risk that teachers' knowledge, competence, and motivation will decrease (Powell & Solity, 1990; Silva, Gimbert & Nolan, 2000).

As the literature suggests, the role of teachers should not be relegated to holding an imposed or recommended number of weekly lessons (Harris &

Muijs, 2005; Alava et al., 2012). Teachers should also be actively involved in leadership practices of the whole school (Angelle & Dehart, 2011; Harris, 2005). The Cameroonian context suggests that teachers are more concerned with adhering to the recommended weekly lessons required to successfully teach a course syllabus. As a result, they pay little attention to the quality of the learning outcome (Tchombe, 2014).

When leadership develops into a collective responsibility, it stimulates teachers to engage and share knowledge, skills, and competence with their colleagues (Lambert, 2003). In addition, teachers also become motivated to contribute to professional decisions about classroom practices (Powell & Solity, 1990). Therefore, how leadership is construed in Cameroonian schools can either motivate or de-motivate teacher participation (Lambert, 2003). Although the Cameroon government has opened more professional schools to train teachers, the proportion of teachers who meet national standards continues to drop (Tchombe, 2010). In addition, most schools lack the necessary resources for quality teaching and learning. For example, the lack of relevant text books for both teachers and learners to facilitate teaching and learning (Wirba, 2015). Moreover, most secondary schools have overcrowded classrooms and the curriculum often fails to meet the academic standard (Wirba, 2015; Tchombe & Nsamenang, 2012).

Furthermore, considering the important place information and communication technology holds in the teaching and learning process, most secondary schools in Cameroon lack computers and internet facilities. However, in schools where these tools are available, they are not effectively and efficiently used. This has a negative impact on students' education. It also puts them at a competitive disadvantage to their peers in other African countries, such as South Africa and Western countries (e.g., Finland).

The Scandinavian education system views leadership as a collective responsibility and thus values and practices teacher leadership. In the foreword of Crowther, Ferguson, and Hann (2009, p. xi), Hargreaves uses Finland as a practical example to show the power of teacher leadership for improved

student learning. Hargreaves underlines that teacher leadership in Finland is not a scheme, a career path, or a collection of functions but a decisive component of how the national system functions. In Finland, teachers are expected to assume leadership roles. This is because the system presents quality opportunities for teacher leadership to flourish. Teachers work together to conceive curriculum in each municipality. In the absence of the principal, teachers assume full responsibility of the activities of the school since they understand that the school is not just the responsibility of the principal but also a collective responsibility. Moreover, trust, cooperation, and responsibility are the core components of the Finnish teachers' culture.

Furthermore, Heikka and colleagues (2016) investigate teacher leadership in early childhood education center in Finland. The authors noted that current policy documents in Finland recognize the teacher as the most pedagogically competent expert in the early childhood education setting. As a result, teachers are treated as pedagogically skilful professionals and granted plenty of independence. Heikka and colleagues (2016) also emphasized how teachers are assumed to have leadership responsibilities within the scope of governing, controlling and leading pedagogy at the level of the team and the center. Their findings indicated that school leadership in Finland is consistent and entrenched in numerous activities of teachers. Moreover, they also reported that teacher leadership in early childhood education is a pedagogical obligation.

In addition, research by Hargreaves, Halasz, and Pont (2007) found that teacher leadership is one of the driving forces behind Finland's excellent performance in the OECD PISA tests. Hargreaves and colleagues (2007) suggest that this educational achievement has put Finland at the forefront of educational success across OECD countries. This highlights the relevance of the practice of teacher leadership in school success.

The current practices of school leadership in Cameroon would benefit from research and improvements in school systems where teacher leadership has experienced positive improvements. Indeed, experts and educational

leadership scholars are pressurizing the Cameroon government to reform and implement positive change in the Cameroon school system.

Teachers are at the heart of all reform efforts (Thornton, 2010). In addition, teacher leadership has the capacity to transform schools and enhance student achievement (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Thus, teacher leadership can contribute toward addressing the numerous challenges in the Cameroonian education system.

Empirical evidence on the practice of teacher leadership has focused largely on the situation in the developed world. The idea of teacher leadership is well advanced and established in the research discourse in countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia (Muijs & Harris, 2003). However, in Sub-Saharan Africa countries such as Cameroon, there is little academic research on teacher leadership. My review of the literature on educational leadership in Cameroon did not find evidence on how teacher leadership is practiced. In addition, my review did not find evidence for why teacher leadership has not evolved to match with what is going on in exemplar systems like the Finnish school system. To address these problems and improve the practice of teacher leadership in Cameroon and learn from exemplar systems (e.g., Finland), it is important to empirically examine how teacher leadership is practiced in schools and how it can be improved.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to explore how teacher leadership is practiced in Cameroonian secondary schools and how it can be improved. This is necessary for example in an era of reform, where teachers experience an expansion in their roles out of the classroom. This challenges their normal functions as educators-from that of leaders (Bowman, 2004). Thus, the task of this master's thesis is to investigate how educators perceive teacher leadership in Cameroonian schools.

In Cameroon, school leadership is in the hands of the principal, vice principals, and discipline masters, respectively. Consequently, the hierarchical nature of leadership and the internal school structures encourage the partition of roles and responsibilities and a clear separation of power and authority

between principals and their subordinates. As a result, the principal is considered as the core of school leadership.

This study was carried out in two public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The schools are bilingual, which represent the two systems of education in the country (the English and the French sub-systems). They are highly populated with a wide range of teaching and administrative staff. The schools were easily accessible, and their bilingual nature expanded the diversity of the informants. Moreover, the schools are situated in one of the English regions of Cameroon, where English is the main language of communication. This eased the interaction process between the researcher and the study participants. Besides, research has not been conducted in these schools to examine educators' perspectives on how leadership is practiced in schools. Therefore, the two schools were considered to suit the collection of data for this study.

2 TEACHER LEADERSHIP

2.1 Evolution of Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is fast developing (Muijs & Harris, 2003). The literature suggests that the concept is fluid and emergent and not stagnant (Anderson, 2004). The development of teacher leadership is deeply rooted in the realization that leadership does not develop from a few formally appointed leaders, but must develop from many individuals within an organization (Taylor, Goek, Klein, Onore, & Geist, 2011).

Scholars have suggested that teacher leadership is evolving in three waves (Silva, et al., 2000; Little, 2003). These waves gradually change the image of the school from a hierarchical organization (Sergiovanni, 1994) to an organization that emphasizes and integrates the notion of teaching and leadership (Pounder, 2006). Recently, there is an emphasis on fostering a positive teacher learning culture (Haiyan, Walker, & Xiaowei, 2017). This shows a slight move in the understanding of the concept from educational administration to management, and lately to leadership that appreciates activities geared toward teaching and learning (Harris, 2009).

The first wave occurred in the early 1980s and placed teacher leadership within the period of formal organizational hierarchy (Pounder, 2006) based on merit pay and career ladder (Little, 2003; Berry & Ginsberg, 1990; Malen & Hart, 1987; Hart, 1987). Career ladder is a set of fixed, promotional positions within the field of teaching. The career ladder system includes salary increment, broadened capacity to impact working life, extended control over system-wide decisions, and constant professional development (Malen & Hart, 1987). During this first wave, teachers who moved up the career ladder were considered as those who have a good mastery of teaching and learning and a sense of moral predominance (Sergiovanni, 1994). They were considered as managers who had the competence to drive schools toward efficiency and effectiveness (Silva et al., 2000). Teachers held formal positions, such as head of department, master

teacher, head teacher, union representative (Little, 2003; Silva et al., 2000). However, the head of department was the ideal teacher leader (Ponder, 2006).

The enforcement of the 1980s approach that included merit pay and career ladder structures was responsible for the many technical and political difficulties that restricted reforms and caused problems for the design of reforms that can attract and retain excellent teachers to the public-school sector (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990). Moreover, although this period allowed teachers to hold formal leadership positions, it paid little attention on their instructional practices (Silva et al., 2000). These challenges led to the second wave in the evolution of teacher leadership.

The second wave occurred in the late 1980s and mid-1990s, and included school reform initiatives (Little, 2003). In the late 1980s, school reform centered on suggestions for reinforcing teaching as a profession. It also focused on enhancing students' performance and providing opportunities for recognizing teachers (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997). Throughout this period, many schools benefited from the idea of instructional leadership (Leithwood, 1992). Instructional leadership means "an influence process through which leaders identify a direction for the school, motivate staff, and coordinate school and classroom-based strategies aimed at improvements in teaching and learning" (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013, p.7). Teacher leadership was designed to accommodate the instructional competence of teachers through the provision of functions for staff and curriculum development (Harris, 2005). Teachers were given positions such as team leaders, curriculum developers, and mentors to new teachers (Silva et al., 2000). However, teachers in these roles generally acted as agents to change instead of leaders who execute and/or introduce change (Harris & Muijs, 2004). During this wave, positions were still entrenched in a hierarchical organizational structure (Pounder, 2006). Moreover, curriculum developers and instructional designers still prepared and enveloped curriculum and instruction for teachers to execute (Powell & Polity, 1990; Pounder, 2006; Silva et al., 2000).

Furthermore, teachers executed leadership out of their work as classroom teachers. This created a need to empower teachers who can lead within their classrooms (Silva et al., 2000). However, when leadership is centered on instruction and is broadly shared, teachers and students can both take advantage of their ability to learn and improve (Hopkins, 2003). This is the contemporary view of teacher leadership, which is considered as the third wave.

The third wave began in the late 1990s and continues to the present (Little, 2003). It emphasizes on developing teaching from an occupation to a profession (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990). This period goes beyond leadership practices for school effectiveness and efficiency (Silva et al., 2000). It also considers aspects of teaching and leadership as well as a school culture that inspires teachers to learn (Haiyan, Walker, & Xiaowei, 2017; Pounder, 2006; Lieberman, 1995). Furthermore, in the third wave, policy makers have argued that the teaching profession will exclusively experience longstanding reforms. Such reforms occur through the distribution of educational decision-making and the empowerment of teachers to apply the right professional judgments (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990).

The third wave is marked by an increase in accountability and responsibility (Little, 2003). This compels teacher leaders to go above vision, take action, and become committed to the outcomes (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Moreover, leadership is recognized as a process rather than a positional concept, and teacher leaders possess transformational leadership qualities (Pounder, 2006; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Oord, 2013). Leithwood and Jantzi (1990, p. 7) argue that transformational leadership can be defined as “the enhancement of individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members”. It focuses on building the capability of the organization to decide on its goals and to encourage positive changes in teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2003). At this stage, teacher leadership can be developed in ways that constantly support the engagement of teachers and the improvement of the entire school system (Little, 2003).

Furthermore, the evolution of teacher leadership considers teachers as the core to the process of achieving organizational reform and innovation, for example, through collaboration and instruction (Harris, 2005). The outcome is a stretch in leadership beyond the framework of hierarchical organizations to leadership that gives teachers authority and inspires them to assume leadership roles. Thus, third wave leadership provides teachers opportunities to develop and improve their leadership skills (Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012). The third wave emphasizes re-culturing schools, enabling teachers to lead within and beyond their classrooms. For example, teachers can display leadership tasks that are visible in the everyday actions of their schools (Silva et al., 2000). Teacher leaders can also expand their work beyond the school to a larger professional network (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

A fourth wave in the evolution of teacher leadership was introduced by Pounder (2006). Pounder has claimed this additional wave is more extensive than former approaches. Pounder (2006) examined the similarities between teacher leadership and transformational leadership, arguing that a fourth wave of teacher leadership should consist of the transformational classroom leadership features of teacher leaders that consider both the school and university settings. Oord (2013) argued that apart from creating positive changes in the organization, transformation could increase the school's assistance to the whole society. Definitively, each of the reform periods has created movements toward aspects of teaching, learning and schooling. Consequently, there is information on how teacher leaders and teacher communities organize resources for learning and development (Little, 2003).

2.2 Defining Teacher Leadership

Educational leadership scholars have defined teacher leadership from various perspectives. The literature on teacher leadership assumes that teacher leadership requires a broad range of roles and responsibilities (Taylor, Goek, Klein, Onore, & Geist, 2011; Merideth, 2000). However, scholars do not agree on

a definition for teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Consequently, teacher leadership has assumed different explanations in different contexts, and has been defined differently by different researchers (Harris, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Recent studies on teacher leadership have viewed the concept from the perspectives of professional development, building a learning culture, professional learning communities, school improvement, the role of teachers in bringing about change and new teachers' perspectives on teacher leadership development (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2012; Haiyan, Walker, & Xiaowei, 2017; Liljenberg, 2015; Angelides, 2010; Hopkins, 2013; Szeto & Cheng, 2017; Lai & Cheung, 2015; Grant, 2006). Teacher leaders are commonly considered in the literature as those who are appointed to formal leadership positions, for example, full time leaders who assume additional leadership responsibilities. This is often in addition to their work as classroom teachers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leadership goes beyond formal roles and responsibilities. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) envisage teacher leadership in line with leadership that advances naturally among experts as they learn, share, and collectively confront challenges. This form of leadership considers the expertise of all staff members. It also gives teachers the opportunity to participate in leading schools towards improvement and students' achievement (Grant, 2006).

Lambert (2003, p. 422) gives a representation of a teacher leader as "a person in whom the dream of making a difference has been kept alive, or has been reawakened by engaging colleagues and a professional culture". This description creates a context that stimulates leadership from all teachers. Moreover, Margolis and Deuel (2009, p. 276) perceive teacher leaders as "individuals who are firmly rooted in bringing success to their own classroom, developing relationships, as well as involving themselves in larger concerns connected to other teachers and students". This definition creates a broader picture of the work of teacher leaders within their schools.

Some definitions emphasize influence of teachers in describing teacher leadership (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Anderson, 2004; Katzenmeyer &

Moller, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This is consistent with Northouse's (2015) description of leadership. He noted that leadership does not take place without influence, yet is concerned with the relationship that exists between the leader and the followers. York-Barr's and Duke's (2004) definition of teacher leadership note that the influence that teacher leaders have on school cultures creates an important turning point in the notion of teacher leadership. It admits that teacher leadership is focused on a dream of leadership based on influence and relationship, and not control and power (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2016). In addition, Anderson (2004) acknowledges teacher leadership as a reciprocal influence between teacher leaders and their principals.

Fairman and Mackenzie (2015) expanded the idea of the framework of York-Barr and Duke (2004) by showing the various ways in which the work of teachers can influence others to create the conditions necessary for enhancing student learning. They found that teachers through actions such as modeling, coaching, collaborating, and advocating, influenced others in the development of teaching and learning objectives. Although the core of teacher leadership is on how the work of teachers can influence others to improve on students' learning, little has been emphasized in the literature concerning this aspect.

Other definitions suggest teacher leadership as the core to school reform efforts (Szeto & Cheng, 2017; Silva et al., 2000; Little, 2003). Thornton (2010) describes teachers as those at the heart of school improvement efforts, and emphasizes that such efforts are destined to fail if the full participation and leadership of teachers are left out. Although this description emphasizes leaders as change agents, they must not necessarily occupy formal leadership positions. However, they should collaboratively partake in leading the change process (Harris & Muijs, 2004; Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011; Lieberman & Miller, 2005). For schools to improve, they must change (Frost & Durrant, 2003). To change schools, leaders must assist in the development of more quality leaders who can lead schools towards sustainability (Fullan, 2006). However, for the school to be recognized as a unit of change recommends that its capacity surpasses the capacities of individual members (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Teacher leadership has also been defined based on teacher leaders' abilities to lead collaborative networks within and beyond their schools (Angelides, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2004). Angelides (2010) describes teacher leadership based on teacher leaders' interaction with formal leaders to lead small networks within the school. Other researchers, however, focus on external networks that expose teacher leaders to other teacher leaders who promote better teaching practices (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2004).

Scholars have also envisaged teacher leadership in relation to collective teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1988; Bandura, Cioffi, Taylor, & Brouillard, 1988; Angelle, Nixon, Norton, & Niles, 2011; Ross & Gray 2006b; Brinson & Steiner, 2007; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Angelle & Teague, 2014; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000). Teacher efficacy refers to the confidence in teachers to accomplish student learning (Ross & Gray, 2006b). Angelle and Teague (2014) view teacher leadership and collective efficacy as the core to school improvement efforts. The definition of teacher leadership has also focused on leadership that can be distributed among formal and informal leaders (Yukl, 2012; Harris, 2013; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Some researchers stress their definitions on qualities that can develop teacher leaders' identity and on the respect teacher leaders will gain from their colleagues (Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007; Sledge & Morehead, 2006). For example, Sledge and Morehead (2006) envisage teacher leadership in line with qualities, such as interpersonal skills that improve trust, communicative and collaborative relationships with teachers, content knowledge, that involves deep understanding of subject matter, and how the process of curriculum development contributes to the transfer of knowledge content. This study found these qualities as relevant for teacher leaders to gain the respect of their peers. However, Merideth (2006) noted that such qualities emerge from knowledge, commitment, and experience which in most instances come with longevity in service. She went further to emphasize that teacher leadership

should not be limited to the number of years spent in service, but can be developed and cultivated in all teachers.

Other researchers envisage teacher leadership as a process rather than a positional concept (Pounder, 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Silva et al., 2000). Northouse (2015) admits that leadership is not a direct, one-way practice, but a shared practice, which is available to everyone. The definition of teacher leadership as a process moves in a similar direction as transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Hallinger, 2003; Angelides, 2010; Oord, 2013). For example, Pounder (2006) views teacher leaders as excellent teachers who apply transformational leadership features in their classrooms. On the contrary, when leadership is a process rather than a positional concept, it becomes problematic to express. This is because leadership involves a pattern of attitudes and typical features instead of responsibilities that are linked to official positions (Pounder, 2006). Thus, teachers embark on leadership styles that are best for their students (Öqvist & Malmström, 2016).

Researchers have also centered their definitions on more specific examples that describe teacher leadership as a practice (Lai & Cheung, 2015; Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2012; Andrews & Crowther, 2002). For example, Andrews and Crowther (2002) focus their definition on the work of teacher leaders rather than on their personal characteristics. Alexandrou and Swaffield (2012), however, emphasize on practice rather than on role, status, or position of teacher leaders. Some researchers have based their definitions on categorizing teacher leadership practices. Table 1 illustrates some of these categorizations.

TABLE 1 Some Categorizations on the Definition of Teacher Leadership

Scholars	Definition	Categorization
Lai & Cheung (2015)	Define teacher leadership practices within three dimensions that provide the foundation for building a comprehensive theoretical	- Creating awareness on the participation of teachers in curricular and pedagogic decisions. -Their endeavours in professional development.

	structure for teacher leadership in the context of educational change.	- Their growing importance in the school improvement process.
Harris (2005)	Defines teacher leadership based on four specific characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of collegial norms among teachers that can contribute to school improvement, development and effectiveness. - Giving teachers opportunities to lead which greatly affects the quality of teaching and relationships within the school. - Teachers work as instructional leaders where they influence curriculum, teaching and learning. - Re-culturing schools where leadership is centered on interpersonal relationships instead of just individual action.
Katzenmeyer & Moller (2009)	Likened teacher leadership to four distinct but related concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building organizational capacity. - Modelling democratic communities. - Empowering teachers. - Enhancing teacher professionalism.
Hairon, Goh, & Chua (2015)	Envisage teacher leadership as a multidimensional construct that clearly demonstrates how teacher leadership can enhance school improvement processes and establish a professional learning community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collegial and collaborative relations. - Teacher learning and development. - Change in teachers' teaching practices.

Scholars have also looked at the definition of teacher leadership in numerous ways such as: teachers leading within their classroom (Silva et al., 2000); a form of empowerment and teacher agency (Muijs & Harris, 2003); leadership that is centered on relationship (Muijs, Chapman, & Armstrong, 2013); a form of shared and distributed leadership (Harris, 2003); leadership that involves collective and collaborative learning (Sales, Moliner, & Amat, 2016; Harris, 2003), leadership beyond hierarchical models and traditional views of teachers' role (Frost & Durrant, 2003), and leadership that focuses on instruction (Harris, 2005). However, whichever definition an individual decides to embrace gives priority to collective action, empowerment and shared agency (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Table 2, contains the definitions and the main idea behind teacher leadership as given in some of the studies cited above.

It is worth noting that literature on the definition of teacher leadership has focused mainly on the teachers' and school leaders' perspective. However, Öqvist's and Malmström's (2016) recent study examines teacher leadership from the students' perspective. This study investigates the effects of teacher developmental leadership on students' educational motivation and performance and found that teacher leadership is relevant, and occupies a key position in the educational motivation of students.

A preliminary glance at the definitions of teacher leadership reviewed in this study suggests that leadership is not for an appointed few, but rather can occur naturally among staff members within the school system. Bush (2013) supports this view by reiterating that leadership may arise anywhere within the school system and is not confined to formal leaders. Moreover, Lambert (2003) considers redefining leadership for the new century to move away from expectations, which convince us to conclude that leadership resides in an individual and pushes us to focus on the tendencies, skills, perceptions, and personality traits that designates a person as effective. Escaping from this view therefore compels us to reconsider that "all teachers have leadership potentials" (Barth, 2001, p. 85).

TABLE 2 Definitions of Teacher Leadership

Author	Definition - Teacher leadership is:	Main idea
Lai & Cheung (2015)	"Maximizing opportunities for teachers to participate, to learn and to influence." (p. 688)	Developing teacher leadership practice.
Harris (2003)	"The exercise of leadership by teachers, regardless of position or designation." (P.316)	A form of shared or distributed leadership.
Muijs, Chapman, & Armstrong (2013)	"A set of behaviours and practices that are undertaken collectively. It is centrally concerned with relationships and connections among individuals within a school." (p. 768)	Leadership centered on relationship.
Andrews & Crowther (2002)	"Behaviour that facilitates principled pedagogical action toward whole-school-success. It derives from the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children, youths and adults. It contributes to enhanced quality of community life in the long run." (p. 154)	Focus on the work of teacher leaders rather than on their personal characteristics.
Harris (2005)	"Teacher leading colleagues with a focus on improving instructional practice." (p. 204)	Focus on instruction.
Frost & Durrant (2003)	"Not just a matter of delegation, direction or distribution of responsibility, but rather a matter of teachers' agency and choice in initiating change whatever their status." (p. 174)	Leadership beyond hierarchical models and traditional views of teachers' role.
Alexandrou & Swaffield (2012)	"Not determined by role, status or position, but it is fundamentally about	Focus on practice instead of role, status

	activity. It is something that teachers do, regardless of any formal designation.” (p. 160)	or position of teacher leaders.
York-Barr & Duke (2004)	“The process by which teachers individually or collectively influence their colleagues, principals, and other members of the school communities to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement.” (pp. 287-288)	Teacher leaders’ influence on their school culture.
Harris & Muijs (2004)	“Creating conditions in which people work together and learn together, where they construct and refine meaning leading to a shared purpose or set of goals. In practice it means giving authority to teachers and empowering them to lead.” (p.3).	Leadership that is fluid and emergent rather than stagnant.
Anderson (2004)	“To set directions and influence others to move in those directions. It is fluid, interactive process with mutual influence between leader and follower.” (p. 100).	Reciprocal interaction between teacher leaders and principals.
Lieberman & Friedrich (2007)	“Making a commitment to students, taking responsibility for contributing beyond one’s own classroom, and working collaboratively.” (p. 43)	Focus on developing a teacher leader identity.
Muijs & Harris (2003)	“The idea that all organizational members can lead, and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed or shared.” (p. 440)	Leadership as a form of empowerment and teacher agency.
Silva et al. (2000)	“The ability to navigate the structures of schools, nurture relationships, model	Characteristics of an effective teacher

	professional growth, encourage change, and challenge the status quo.” (p. 799-800).	leader.
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2.3 Situating Teacher Leadership onto other Models of Leadership

In this part of the study, different leadership models that are close to the idea of teacher leadership are treated. However, the titles of these models do not follow the categorization of established leadership theories in education but have been created and popularized by scholars and practitioners. A recent study by Hairon, Goh, and Chua (2015) found that teacher leadership has much the same characteristics as instructional and distributed leadership. Moreover, in a review of the literature on teacher leadership, York-Barr and Duke (2004) situate teacher leadership within four models of leadership: participative leadership, distributed leadership, parallel leadership, and leadership as an organizational quality. Consequently, this part of the study looks at teacher leadership in relation to instructional, participative, distributed and parallel leadership.

Instructional leadership

Some authors have defined instructional leadership as “an influence process through which leaders identify a direction for the school, motivate staff, and coordinate school and classroom-based strategies aimed at improvements in teaching and learning” (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013, p.7). Others have defined it as “an influential relationship that motivates, enables, and support teachers’ efforts to learn about and change their instructional practices” (Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond, 2003, p.4). Instructional leaders concentrate on developing the classroom practices of teachers as the point of focus for the school (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

According to the traditional perspective of instructional leadership, instructional leaders are exceptional teachers who use observation, feedback, and instructional designs in teaching and shaping how students learn (Horng & Loeb, 2010). The traditional view holds that if expansion in instructional leadership is to make a change in the achievement of students, those practicing it need to possess the requisite knowledge on how to develop teaching and learning (Fevre & Robinson, 2015). Instead of emphasizing everyday teaching and learning, instructional leadership emphasizes the need for schools to employ excellent teachers, provide them with suitable reinforcements and capabilities to be outstanding in the classroom (Horng & Loeb, 2010). It is necessary that instructional leadership inspires leaders to develop cooperation between teaching and learning on one hand, and capacity building on the other (Hopkins, 2003). Fevre and Robinson (2015) noted that it is one thing to recognize the relevance of instructional leadership and completely another to appreciate how to be an instructional leader.

Participative leadership

Participative leadership is a technique used by practicing managers to empower staff members (Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2009). This is important for how decisions that concern prominent facets of the school are made and how they can be accomplished (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Such as deliberating with staff members and considering their opinions before making decisions (Chen & Tjosvold, 2006). At the heart of teacher participation are favourable circumstances for teachers to involve in decision-making that concerns curricular and pedagogical practices (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

Contemporary actions on educational improvement usually consider participative leadership as the approved approach for school development (Somech, 2005). Even though the ideas and proposals of teachers should be considered, school leaders should keep in mind that participation does not mean exemption from decision-making obligations (Gress, 1974). However, participative leadership may be a way of promoting honest conversation by

fostering an interchange of productive opinions and rational and significant views that support the development of teachers (Somech, 2005).

Distributed leadership

The approaches of distributed leadership suggest that leadership in schools is disseminated and that schools should provide opportunities, for a more collaborative form of leadership (Liljenberg, 2015). In other words, leadership may emerge anywhere within the organization and is not limited to those who hold formal leadership positions (Bush, 2013). Spillane (2005) asserts that the practice of leadership can stretch across two or more leaders independently performing their functions. Spillane regards leadership practice from a distributed perspective based on the relationship between leaders, followers, and the situation. This perspective emphasizes the practice of leadership rather than leaders, their roles, functions, routines, and structures (Spillane, 2005).

Distributed leadership emphasizes that school heads are only part of the leadership practice in any school, as there are inevitably many other sources of influence and direction (Harris, 2013). The motivation for distribution arises partly from the growing recognition that principals and other senior leaders are overloaded, particularly in education systems with high levels of decentralization (Bush, 2013).

Tian, Risku, and Collins (2015) put forward an adverse view for a distributed perspective of leadership that does not depend on a simple pragmatic solution to reduce the workload of official leaders by creating more leaders. However, Harris (2013) emphasizes that distributed leadership should be developing leadership quality and capability. Moreover, a holistic view of distributed leadership is concerned with the synergies that occur when people come together to work, plan, learn, and act (Harris, 2009).

Distributed leadership is also relevant to the practice of pedagogy. In their study, Jäppinen and Sarja (2012) described distributed pedagogical leadership as the distribution of interest, vision, aims and values for achieving something more than the actors can perform separately. In other words, the

whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Leadership in schools can be distributed between the principal, officially designated leaders, assistants, student services, other support staff, students, and parents (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Jäppinen & Sarja, 2012; Tian et al., 2015).

Muijs and Harris (2003) put forward three arguments that situate teacher leadership within the scope of distributed leadership: 1) the actions of diverse groups of individuals, 2) a collective distribution of leadership, and 3) interdependency. Like teacher leadership, distributed leadership has reported positive impact on school improvement and change due to greater involvement of teachers in decision-making (Liljenberg, 2015). However, a generally known restriction on distributed leadership research occurs because of the various activities taken by individuals within the organization (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2009).

Parallel leadership

The literature considers parallel leadership as the equality that exists between teacher leadership and administration leadership in the developmental processes of the school (Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Andrews, 2008; Lewis, 2006; Andrews & Crowther, 2002). Parallel leadership plays a vital role in school improvement practices through general professional learning, pedagogy, and culture building in schools (Andrews & Crowther, 2002). Parallel leadership supports an environment that recognizes and strengthens the establishment of professional learning communities, improvement in school identity, performance of students, and development of professional esteem of teachers (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Andrews, 2008; Lewis, 2006; Dufour & Dufour, 2013). This suggests parallel leadership develops out of a culture that succeeds when all members of the education community are appreciated, and includes three distinct qualities: mutual respect, a sense of shared purpose and provision for individual expression (Andrews & Crowther, 2002).

A practical example of the implementation of parallel leadership in schools is the IDEAS (Innovative Designs for Enhancing Achievements in Schools) process developed in Australia, to introduce a mechanism for school regeneration that had the capacity to improve school outcomes (Andrews & Crowther, 2002; Andrews & Lewis, 2004; Andrews, 2008; Lewis, 2006). Parallel leadership in IDEAS schools supports the collaborative actions of teacher leaders and administrative leaders and the attainment of their individual potentials, ambitions, and functions (Andrews, 2008). This considers the professional community as the setting within which pedagogical leadership (teachers' role) works in parallel with strategic leadership (principal's role). Andrews and Lewis (2004) noted that this form of leadership leads to the establishment of new roles and relationships between teacher leaders and administrative leaders within the school. Besides, it represents a move away from the more traditional views of leadership based on positional authority and the notion of 'top-down' change (Lewis, 2006) to leadership that considers the contribution of different people within the school system (Lewis, 2006; Andrews & Lewis, 2004).

Similarly, Andrews and Crowther (2002) ascertain the necessity to encourage teacher leadership practices in schools in a quest to facilitate the development of parallel leadership. This shows the close relationship teacher leadership has with parallel leadership. However, parallel leadership disagrees with other concepts of distributed and shared leadership in that the leadership responsibilities of teacher leaders are equal in value to those of principals (Andrews & Crowther, 2002). Teacher leadership differentiates itself with traditional models of leadership in that power in teacher leadership originates from teachers, whose basic function is to teach and who must not necessarily hold formal positions of leadership (Hairon et al., 2015). However, the practice of teacher leadership is achievable on condition that the school makes provision for suitable support mechanisms and establishes an internal climate that favours the practice of teacher leadership (Harris, 2003).

2.4 Teacher Leadership Opportunities for Practices

The opportunities for the practice of teacher leadership can be organized in a variety of pathways. On the one hand, many teachers decide to follow the path that limits their role as educators in the classroom and on the other, a smaller number of teachers choose to extend their area of responsibility beyond the classroom and deal with concerns that are critical to the well-being and personality of the whole school (Barth, 2001). Barth noted that those teachers who share in the wider agency gain more than they lose, and that the future of education depends on a bulk of contemporary teachers who will expand their work as teachers to the entire school.

For organizational purposes, Murphy (2005) arranged teacher leadership opportunities into two broad pathways: role-based strategies and community-based strategies. The pathways to teacher leadership as proposed by Murphy (2005) are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3 Pathways to Teacher Leadership (Murphy, 2005, p. 82)

	Role-based strategies		Community-based strategies	
Area of expertise	Career strategies for teachers	Enlarging administrative structures and roles	Shared leadership	Communities of practice
Arrangement	Structural/hierarchical/institutional		Organic/communal/cultural	
Leadership perspective	Individual based		Organizational property/professional phenomenon	
Aim	Management/administrative		Instruction/learning	
Base	Administrative prerogative		Community product	
Influence base	Legitimacy/control		Expertise/social capital	
Sphere	Targeted work/limited		Distributed/generalized	
Job description	Functions executed by those in formal roles		Work as fixed in teacher role of all	
Accountability	To administrators (bureaucratic)		To colleagues (professional)	

Type	Formal/competitive	Informal/fixed/cooperative
Change	Planned	Emergent
Definition	From the point, organizational	From a network of relationships
Length of action	Limited	Ongoing
Relationships	Thin/separation from peers	Deep/collaborative
Effect	Minimal	Unknown

Adopted from Murphy J. (2005, p. 82): *Connecting Leadership and Social Improvement*

The paths taken by teachers have very unusual consequences for the teacher, the school, and the profession (Barth, 2001). For this reason, the development approach to school reform advocates for developing the larger system such that it encourages adult learning and equips teachers and staff with the assistance they need to do their jobs well (Starr, 2017). Therefore, as in any other professional development, teachers learning to become leaders require ongoing support and opportunities. This will ensure that over time, they can experiment with their newly acquired skills while they receive feedback from more experienced leaders, discuss problems that arise, and make appropriate changes (Loucks-Horsley, Stiles, Mundry, & Hewson, 2010).

2.5 Developing and Supporting Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership requires some favourable conditions to flourish. Lieberman and Miller (2005) noted that one influential factor for school reform efforts is to develop, support, and nurture the competencies of teachers who practice leadership in their schools. Research suggests many interrelated factors that must be considered in schools to develop and support the work of teacher leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Harris, 2003; Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000; Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997; Lieberman & Friedrich, 2007; Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster, & Cobb, 1995; Snell & Swanson, 2000; Silva et al., 2000; Boles & Troen, 1994; Danielson, 2006). The most important of these factors include: the organizational structure of the school, a supportive school

culture, professional development opportunities, teacher competency, relationships, and collaboration. The factors are discussed below.

Organizational structure

Structures must be put in place to enable the distribution of leadership within the school (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2009). The structural arena is interested in the extent to which teachers can individually perform new leadership roles and how the frameworks for the practice of leadership are created (Murphy et al., 2009). Structures ensure that tasks and responsibilities are allocated and that resources reach the right place at the right time (Bennett, Crawford, & Cartwright, 2002). Structures that support the learning and collegial responsibilities of teachers and are centered on teaching practices that are appreciated often lead to favourable conditions for the practice of teacher leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

In Cameroon for example, the hierarchical nature of leadership and the internal school structures often compel teachers to work in isolation and prevent them from becoming independent and assuming leadership roles in schools (Harris, 2003; Mills & Schall, 2012). Preferably, when the school culture is fashioned in a manner that removes such hierarchical arrangements, it enable teachers to gain their professional independence, undertake leadership responsibilities, and collectively engage in decisions concerning whole school reform (Stone et al., 1997; Coyle, 1997).

Studies have also shown the relevance of aspects of structure such as “space and time” in enhancing teacher leadership (Coyle, 1997; LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Stone et al., 1997; Murphy, 2007; Silva et al., 2000; Smylie & Denny, 1990). With the recognition that most of the tasks carried out by teacher leaders are often supplemented with teachers’ main duty of teaching students, assuming teacher leadership roles requires more time (Danielson, 2006). As a result, it is important for Cameroonian schools to set time and resources for teachers to come together to plan and discuss issues such as curriculum

matters, developing school-wide plans, leading study groups, organizing visits to other schools, collaborating with higher education institutions, and collaborating with colleagues (Harris, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2003). Although Luocks-Horsley and colleagues (2010) argue that simply making more time does not ensure more professional development opportunities for teachers, it is nonetheless important to use time in creative and unique ways that provide diverse and productive learning opportunities for teachers.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009) underlined some structures that can provide opportunities for teacher leadership to flourish. They include: study groups providing opportunities for teachers to teach each other, walk-through that provide meaningful dialogue about instruction and inspire inquiry as teachers and administrators learn about best research-based practices, teacher conferences that can be a powerful vehicle for teacher learning, school visitations where educators visit classrooms to observe specific teaching practices, and instructional conferences that are carefully planned and structured. Although, Dufour and Eaker (2010) noted that principals and teachers can be placed in new structures and go through the motions of new practices, unless educators develop new competencies and new commitments that lead to school re-culturing they will continue in their traditional practices and assumptions.

Supportive school culture

Significant school transformation will require more than changes in structure. In Cameroon for example, it necessitates a transformation in culture (the beliefs, expectations, and habits) that constitute the norm of the people throughout the organization (Dufour & Eaker, 2010). Cameroonian schools require a school culture that can provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate and engage in interactions concerning their own learning and instruction (Tschannen-Moran, 2009). To begin with, a teacher leadership culture should be established in Cameroonian schools that encourage teachers to take active part in both curriculum and pedagogic decisions and where educational leaders are willing

to widen the scope for the delegation of authority and responsibility (Ho, 2010). For example, in Cameroonian schools, teachers consider their participation in decision-making as impartial. They view themselves as passive participants whose opinions are not often respected but who are forced to implement decisions taken by the school administration without their consent. This action decreases their willingness to engage in school decision-making. Murphy and colleagues (2009) noted that a school's culture is able to determine teachers' willingness and abilities to accept the 'crown' of teacher leadership.

Developing and supporting teacher leadership also depends on a culture that provides opportunities for teachers to learn. A positive teacher learning culture depends on the following: formal systems that provide teachers with ample learning opportunities, a shared purpose concerning what the school wants to achieve, a collaborative, open, and trusting relationship that enhance collegial support and cohesion amongst staff (Haiyan, Walker, & Xiaowei, 2017). In cultures that foster learning, teachers are encouraged to try new approaches and learn new concepts (Danielson, 2006).

Research suggests that trust plays a vital role in the success of teacher leadership as a collective effort. In Cameroon, for example, the lack of trust between teachers and the school administration makes it difficult for teachers to take responsibilities out of their classrooms without waiting for instructions from the administration. In school cultures with a significant degree of trust, members are ready to devote their strength in supporting the goals of the organization instead of protecting their self-interests (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Angelle, Nixon, Norton, and Niles (2011) studied how teacher leadership, collective efficacy and trust can lead to school effectiveness, and found that collective trust between the administration, the teachers, the parents and the students is the reason for a culture of trust.

Professional development opportunities

Motivating teachers to assume leadership roles and establishing new structures for schools are not enough to develop and support the work of teacher leaders. In Cameroon, for example, there are no formal leadership training programmes for school leaders and teacher education and training only provides teachers with survival techniques to handle and cope with classroom routines and customs (Ebot-Ashu & Bisschoff, 2015; Ashu, 2014; Tchombe, 2014). Professional development programmes can help build the leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions of participating teachers as well as administrators at all levels of the Cameroonian education system (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010). Professional development has as objective, to support persons appreciate how to affiliate and form a social system of connections, establish responsibility, and approach resources (Iles & Preece 2006). In their study to investigate the relationship between teacher leadership and professional development, Alexandrou and Swaffield (2012) found that through a series of professional development activities teachers come to the fore as leaders both within and beyond their educational establishments.

The literature indicates that formal training in the form of university coursework or district-based professional development coupled with job embedded support such as coaching by principals or other administrators are critical factors for development (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Quality professional development can be enhanced when principals invite teacher leaders to examine school improvement data, develop school goals, and establish standard to select the most appropriate content and model for professional development (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). Moreover, fostering teacher leadership requires associating teacher leaders with professional establishments and educational conventions and presentations (Merideth, 2006).

Professional development for teacher leadership needs to focus not just on the development of teachers' skills and knowledge, but also on aspects specific to their leadership role (Harris, 2003). This can be achieved through

extending their shared competence to engage in leadership roles and processes, which advances with and without formal power or control (Iles & Preece, 2006). Moreover, professional development necessitates significant professional learning that counts on collaborative relationships (Frost & Durrant 2003). Indeed, the best professional development that can occur in Cameroonian schools is in the workplace as it provides opportunities for teachers to work together to address any relevant problems (DuFour & Eaker, 2009).

Teacher competency

To be successful, teacher leaders must develop skills to stimulate the exploration of instructional practice, increase receptivity to new ideas, and help forge connections between present practice and new initiatives (Lipton & Wellman, 2007). Jackson, Burrus, Bassett, and Roberts (2010) identify some personal skills that teachers should possess: work ethic, openness, teamwork, leadership, vision, position affect, risk taking and teaching related skills. Teacher leaders are responsible for recognizing the skills that contribute to student achievement, control the acquisition and exercise these skills, and realize the need to take responsibility for the success and failure of their students (Ross & Gray, 2006b).

In their two-year study of a group of ten teacher leaders, Snell and Swanson (2000) concluded that the goals of standard reform cannot be achieved without the leadership of highly skilled classroom teachers. Moreover, Yost, Vogel, and Rosenberg (2009) studied how teacher leaders develop skills and introduced a model of professional development called 'Project Achieve' implemented in an urban middle school. The focus of working with teacher leaders was to teach them how to be leaders so that they could work effectively with teachers with the understanding that effective teachers positively influence student learning. The researchers suggested that the teacher leader model was a viable strategy to increase teaching expertise and improve on student achievement. They emphasized that it is important for teacher leaders to understand how to enhance teachers' ability to reflect using different methods

and equally important to use the practice themselves as they reflect on their own work with teachers. For teacher leadership and professionalism to flourish in Cameroonian schools, educators must acknowledge the tremendous accomplishment of teachers and recognize, respect, and value their expertise (Stone et al., 1997). As a result, opportunities must be created to recognize and support the work of teacher leaders (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Harris, 2003; Barth, 2001; Danielson, 2006).

Positive recognition can take the form of providing incentives and remuneration for their work as teacher leaders (Harris, 2003). In Cameroon for example, teachers are positively recognized for their work by providing financial incentives, certificates of excellence, best teacher award, positive comments from students, colleagues and parents, and recommending teachers to the hierarchy for promotion in positions such as vice principal, senior master of discipline, head of department, class master or subject coordinator. In better-developed systems, this can take the form of mini-grants that teachers can apply. It can also be a new approach that they can use to learn new concepts and apply in their schools (Danielson, 2006). Childs-Bowen and colleagues (2000) proposed a simple but powerful strategy of genuine praise, that in many cases, people find to be more important than money.

Roles and relationships

Leadership is primarily concerned with the relationships and the connections among individuals within a school (Harris, 2003). At its minimum, teacher leadership describes the type of working relationship that exists between principals and teachers who assume new leadership roles. Mills and Schall (2012) noted that all descriptions of teacher leadership are based on relationships built on strong commitments to improving student learning. If one wishes to inspire colleagues this does not necessarily require formal leadership. It can also depend on the personal influence of excellent teachers who have a good relationship with other members in the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In practice, teacher leaders aim at improving the instructional

and cultural environments of schools by inspiring others in the school community to work in professional collaborative relationships to improve teaching and learning practices (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

In an exploratory study to investigate the development of new working relationships between teacher leaders and principals, Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992) found that principals and teacher leaders evoke strategies that influence the development of new roles and working relationships. Their findings suggest that teachers and principals may have to resolve interpersonal tensions and conflicts, establish trust, confidence, and a means for effective communication before they can develop effective and functional working relationships. Sinha (2016) explored the question of how early career teachers develop leadership capability by conducting an eighteen-month case study of two science teachers. They found that the work of teacher leadership depends on creating a legitimate basis of role differentiation from colleagues while also developing more collaborative relationships with school administrators. Such relationships can bring institutional support to the leader's initiatives. Moreover, Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) studied how teacher leaders influence others and understand their leadership, and found that teachers used a variety of strategies that necessitated working through professional relationships, such as either forging new relationships or starting from existing relationships.

Collaboration

Collaboration largely depends on the culture of trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2001) and plays a vital role in developing and supporting teacher leadership (Gray & Wood, 2001; Stone et al., 1997; Boles & Troen, 1994; Goddard & Goddard, 2001). Collaboration and collegial activities can enhance teacher leadership and professional practice (Stone et al., 1997) as well as the growth of all teachers (Miles, 2016). Collaboration can be defined as "when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process using shared rules, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain"

(Wood & Gray, 1991, p.146). Goddard, Goddard, and Tschannen-Moran (2007) surveyed 452 teachers to investigate their collaboration for school improvement and student achievement and reported a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement.

Teachers equally achieve great success in work environments that emphasize collegiality, communication, and collaboration (Derrington & Angelle, 2013). In schools characterized by a culture of collaboration, collaborative processes that are deeply embedded into the daily life of the school (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005) replace teacher isolation. Teacher leaders in such schools do not function in a vacuum but share their ideas and decisions with other members of the department (Angelle, & DeHart, 2011). In Cameroon, for example, teachers are expected to work in collaboration by sharing responsibilities for students' learning with fellow teachers and with the school administration. Collaboration between teachers is mostly seen during departmental meetings and seminars where teachers share their knowledge and expertise on the subject they are teaching. The objective is to improve on the performance of students and on the professional practices of teachers. In general staff meetings held twice a year, teachers and school administrators share ideas on how to improve on students' learning. For teachers to overcome the educational challenges put forth by external forces, their involvement in school decision-making should take into consideration the individual as well as the collective perspectives of teacher leadership (Ho, 2010).

Actions other leaders must take

Administrative leadership plays an essential role in achieving favourable circumstances for the practice of teacher leadership (Smylie & Mayrowetz, 2009). The main idea is that it is the leadership of administrators that establishes favourable circumstances for teacher leadership to flourish (Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009). Therefore, teacher leadership development can be enhanced when those in formal leadership positions, provide opportunities for teachers to exercise more leadership beyond their classrooms (Bennett,

Crawford, & Cartwright, 2002). Besides, the teaching profession becomes more interesting for teachers when the schools and districts provide teachers with opportunities to fully participate in the day-to-day running of the school (Lambert, 2003). Frost and Durrant (2003) noted that principals and other senior administrators play an essential role by focusing on collaboration, influence, and communication and by promoting a school environment, which supports individual agency and shared learning. They emphasized the role of external agencies such as universities in supplying vital supporting and challenging frameworks that are available, suitable, and directed towards enhancing learning.

Literature on teacher leadership establishes the relevance of the role of the principal in developing and supporting teacher leadership (Sinha, 2016; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Barth, 2001; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007). Principals should acknowledge that teachers have the potential and desire to lead beyond the classroom, therefore, teachers should be provided with the necessary opportunities (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). In order to develop teachers as decision-makers and to encourage them to participate in decision-making, it is recommended that principals would share decision-making authority with teachers (Lai & Chung, 2015). Principals would also promote and maintain the development of a collaborative culture in schools, transform school structures contributing to teachers' work as decision-makers, and provide resources (e.g. time and money) to enable them to perform their leadership functions (Lai & Chung, 2015). For example, previous research found that principals support changes in schools through roles such as advocating and coordinating the selection of curriculum, providing funds and other resources (e.g. meeting time), trouble shooting, monitoring progress, and providing professional development (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010). Furthermore, principals can also develop and support the work of teacher leaders in other ways, such as articulating teacher leadership as a central purpose of the school; relinquishing power to teachers; entrusting and empowering teachers; including committed teachers to school leadership; protecting teachers interested in assuming

leadership roles; sharing responsibility for failure; and giving positive recognition to teachers (Barth, 2001).

Moreover, Sinha (2016) recommend that instead of assuming a principal's position from the top of a hierarchical power relationship, principals should consider the leadership dynamics from the perspective of teacher leaders. However, the actions performed by other leaders strengthen the relevance of creating a learning community centered on new ways of teaching and learning and of working in collaboration to change views (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010).

2.6 Teacher Leadership and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

In PLCs, educators create an environment that fosters cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth by working together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone (DuFour & Eaker, 2009). The PLC model is a powerful new way of working together that requires the school staff to focus on learning rather than teaching. It is also a way of working collaboratively on matters related to learning, and its members hold themselves accountable for their work (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005). This ensures that results fuel continual improvement. Consequently, the powerful collaboration that characterises a PLC is a systemic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practices (Dufour & Eaker, 2009). PLCs are communities where teachers improve teaching and learning by learning together (Hairon, Goh, & Chua, 2015).

York-Barr and Duke (2004) noted that the development of teacher leadership is well supported in the framework of PLCs. Andrews and Crowther (2002) found that mutual understanding established through professional learning can influence the activities carried out in the classroom. Although time and working structures are necessary, a professional community produces excellent results by supporting the expansion of professional capital and encouraging the learning of teachers (Murphy, 2015).

Teacher leaders are viewed as promoters, and facilitators of PLCs (Sledge & Morehead, 2006). Studies have shown that where teacher leadership operates excellently, it plays an essential role in the creation of PLCs between and within schools, thereby creating favourable learning conditions for teachers and students (Harris, 2003; Fullan, 2003; Thornton, 2010; DuFour & Eaker, 2009; Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002; Barth, 2001). In these communities, all members can freely express themselves, and exercise their full potential in leadership (Frost & Durrant, 2003).

2.7 Teacher Leadership Roles

Teacher leadership roles provide opportunities for teachers to practice their leadership (Angelle & DeHart, 2011). However, teacher leadership roles should be clearly defined, such that each role is geared towards improving student learning (Miles, 2016). This section looks at the administrative, collaborative, instructional, and research roles of teacher leaders.

Administrative roles

The administrative roles of teachers can be situated within the expanded teacher leadership roles. Teachers act as leaders by assisting the school administration in the management of the school, evaluation of educational initiatives, and facilitation of professional learning communities (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Day and Harris (2002) argue that leadership in many schools is distributed over a wide range of teachers who oversee departments, specific field of study, and success of students. Literature on teacher leadership also suggests that teachers consider a new rank and take more action stance in administration and decision-making (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992).

Teachers, who participate in decision-making, also assist the school administration in the management of the school (Ho, 2010). Teachers take part in general administrative as well as personnel decisions (Smylie, 1992; Somech, 2010). In Cameroon, although the management of the school is in the hands of

school administrators, teachers sometimes provide their help. For example, to assign teachers and students to classes, determine the number of students per class, contribute ideas on registration of students in the end of course examinations, determine classroom allocation, and set decisions on admission and discipline of students. Smylie and Denny (1990) studied teacher leadership tension and ambiguities and found teacher leaders do not work directly with other teachers on classroom practice related issues. Instead, they spent most of their time in developing programmes, engaging in decision making, and working with administrators.

Collaborative roles

Teacher leadership recognizes the idea of collegiality, collaboration, and teamwork (Ho, 2010). In conditions of collaboration, the didactic specialist and the teacher first explain the problem; next, they establish ideas and examine situations, work outputs, and other data (Lipton & Wellman, 2007). Collaboration can suggest respect and the likelihood of a collegial relationship (Lipton & Wellman, 2007). For example, it can enable teachers to develop skills that may help them work in small groups with their colleagues, hold lesson planning sessions, plan and implement different kinds of workshops for teachers (e.g. small-group and school-wide workshops) based on the needs of teachers (Yost, Robert, & Michael, 2009). Consequently, it is important for teachers to work in collaboration with those who hold formal leadership positions in schools, to attain the school's vision (Frost & Durrant, 2003).

Harris (2003) argues that the leadership roles given to teachers should not only include assignment, control or allocation of responsibility, leadership roles of teachers should preferably involve collaboration, and mutual learning. Lai and Cheung (2015) interviewed teachers in nine schools in Hong Kong to understand what brings about change in schools. They found that teacher collaboration was most eminent at the subject level. Teachers teaching the same subjects worked collaboratively to design new subject curricular, institutionalize evaluation practices, and increase learner diversity.

Miles (2016) lists some of the collaborative roles teacher leaders can undertake. For example, teacher leaders manage small groups of fellow teachers for whom they provide real time feedback, organize planning sessions, facilitate and participate in sharing ideas, and create opportunities for collaborative work. The teacher leaders in this study share their time between teaching and working with other teachers.

Pedagogical roles

At the center of teacher leadership are favourable circumstances for teachers to participate in decisions concerning pedagogy and curricula activities (Lai & Cheung, 2015). It is the teacher's job to organize and manage the learning environment and to be sufficiently knowledgeable and competent to guide learners effectively through the approved curriculum (Fox & Henri, 2005). Smylie (1992) studied teachers' willingness to participate in decision-making and found that teachers are most willing to participate in curricula and instructional decisions. In such circumstances, students can experience an expansion in their learning because they are involved in pedagogic activities (Hopkins, 2013).

Although teacher leaders serve as instructional coaches, mentors, facilitators, collaborators, and share best practices with peers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Louks-Horsley et al., 2010; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Lambert, 2003), they also perform key functions in other instructional activities at the level of the school and district. For example, teacher leaders may give their support to members who are authorized to select textbooks and other didactic materials (Louks-Horsley et al., 2010). They can also assist in making decisions that concern the selection and writing of school curriculum (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Louks-Horsley et al., 2010). Moreover, teacher leaders can co-teach content courses with university faculties at the district level (Louks-Horsley et al., 2010).

Research by Yost, Vogel, and Rosenberg (2009) reveals the outcome of a mentoring model focused on developing the skills of six teacher leaders, who were appointed to leadership positions by the principal of the school. This

teacher-leader model focused on instructional leadership that focused on the teacher' needs. The teacher leaders in this study were responsible for modeling lessons, working one-on-one and in small groups with teachers, holding lesson planning sessions, and planning and implementing both small-group and school-wide in-service workshops for teachers at the school.

Research roles

In performing their roles, teachers engage in action research. Action research is fundamental to the developmental processes of the school and is the responsibility of every teacher (Frost & Durrant, 2003). Eaker, DuFour, and DuFour (2002), stated that when educators work in teams, they profit from time, purpose, specifications, access to data, and continuing support, as they are involved in collaborative investigation and action research. Action research involves implementation of innovative practices coupled with an assessment of those practices on student learning (Ash & Persall, 2000). It can also take the form of teachers' contribution to the education knowledge base where teachers examine practical concerns of teaching in the classroom. The conclusions drawn can provide answers to broader questions that a school district, university or other research groupings could be examining (Luocks-Horsley et al., 2010). Furthermore, teachers are also involved in research roles as learners of the content. Luocks-Horsley and colleagues (2010) studied the design of professional development for teachers in science and mathematics and reported that as learners of the content, teachers expand their appreciation and judgment of the content they are designing with their students. This study also suggested that by engaging in science research, teachers take active part in creating exploratory questions, designing and administering research and contributing to knowledge development. Luocks-Horsley and colleagues (2010) reported that such practices help teachers to become interested in research and experience their role as teachers moving from direct bearer or transporter of knowledge, to guides who assist students to become independent thinkers.

Formal and informal roles

Leadership can emerge from anywhere within the organization (Bush, 2013). Formal leadership happens when the principal appoints teachers to positions such as heads of departments, subject coordinators, and heads of leadership and school improvement teams (Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Muijs & Harris, 2006). Increased efforts to examine and determine the meaning of leadership has involved the positive acknowledgement of the practice of teacher leadership equally among teachers who are not appointed to formal positions of leadership (Smylie & Mayrowetz, 2009). Derrington and Angelle (2013) studied teacher leadership and collective efficacy and reported that teachers accomplish leadership roles that are acknowledged by fellow teachers, and contribute to the collective performance of the school. The authors also reported that teachers go the 'extra mile' to assist their peers, stay after school to help others, and share their expertise on a wide range of topics such as teaching, learning, and managing classrooms. These teachers are considered as informal leaders who do their work informally as opposed to those who take on formal leadership positions. Informal leadership roles can also include, coaching, leading a new team, and setting up action research (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Teachers in both formal and informal leadership positions can promote the occurrence of school change (Lee, Zhang, & Yin, 2011). However, formal and informal leadership are not incompatible or oppositional as some have suggested. Rather, they are different parts of leadership practice (Harris, 2013).

2.8 Effects of Teacher Leadership

The effects of teacher leadership go beyond the roles and responsibilities of a single teacher. Teacher leadership also considers the achievement of students as well as efforts for school improvement (Derrington & Angelle, 2013). In other words, teacher leadership has various effects on teachers, students, and the

school (Harris, 2005; Derrington & Angelle, 2013; Colak, Altinkurt, & Yilmaz, 2014; DeHart, 2011; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Hairon, Goh, & Chua, 2015; Barth, 2001). Barth (2001, p.79) stated, “there is a great deal in teacher leadership for everybody”.

Effects on the teacher leaders

Research suggests most of the beneficiaries of teacher leadership are teacher leaders (Harris, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Barth (2001) affirms that the lives of teachers who assume leadership roles are enhanced and empowered in meaningful ways. This enrichment is mainly centered on the professional learning and development of teacher leaders, their motivation, and their commitment to the profession (Smylie & Mayrowetz, 2009). In practice, teachers who assume new leadership roles experience personal and professional growth by making adequate use of what they have (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2016). Ryan (1999) asserts that teachers who take up leadership roles broaden their knowledge and skills and their perspectives about the organization.

One of the strongest evidence for teacher leadership is the inevitable and continual opportunities for growth and learning among teacher leaders and their peers (Barth, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Lai & Cheung, 2015). In organizations that learn, teachers are encouraged and supported as professionals, thus experience continuous expansion in their ability to advance and succeed (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Moreover, organizational learning significantly influences teachers’ work in the classroom (Silins & Mulford, 2004). Research by Smylie (1995) found that teachers who lead possess distinct learning techniques. Smylie (1995) suggests that the pathways to opportunities for working with colleagues and commitment to interactions deemed favourable for learning can appear strongest for teachers who undertake leadership roles. Smylie’s findings further suggests that these teachers were probably the greatest to surpass difficulties related to professional status that may prevent interaction and learning among colleagues.

Even without control or guidance from those in formal positions of leadership, the roles of teacher leaders greatly influence their work environments and deepen their responsibility and self-interest towards school improvement efforts (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Hallinger, 2003; Angelides, 2010). For example, teachers' involvement in decision-making inspires them to be committed to the decisions and increase their determination in carrying out those decisions (Smylie, 1992). Moreover, their participation in managerial decisions that concern school transactions and government broaden their sphere of concentration to how their actions impact on classroom and the entire organization (Somech, 2010).

Smylie (1995) found that motivation mechanisms to enhance instruction appear strongest for teachers assuming new roles, who may find meaning in these roles for their classrooms and who experience greater autonomy in their work. Furthermore, the work of teacher leaders greatly affects their practices and self-esteem as well as the instructional practices of fellow teachers (Harris, 2005). Some teacher leaders experience improvement in their morale, participation, and commitment in carrying out the goals of the school (Barth, 2001). Through different acts of professional development, teachers embrace leadership roles both within and beyond their school systems (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2016). Instead of staying as inactive beneficiaries of what their establishments, agree on, teachers who take up leadership roles assist their schools and, by that model, their own fate as educators (Barth, 2001). A study by Troen and Boles (1992) to explore female teacher leaders' views on teacher leadership, identify teacher leadership as a vehicle for professional growth. Teachers can further share their expertise with colleagues to improve on their practice (Sledge & Morehead, 2006).

Collegial effects

The efforts by teacher leaders to advance school and classroom development requires that teacher leaders function effectively with colleagues (Smylie & Mayrowetz, 2009). Teacher leaders themselves benefit from their practices and

extend the advantages to other teachers within the school. Ryan (1999) studied principal and teachers leading together and found that teacher leaders had a significant influence on the instructional practices of their colleagues. In addition, teacher leaders assisted colleagues outside their departments. For example, with instructional practices, assistance in dealing with difficult students, helping to plan new programmes, and offering advice on personal matters.

Smylie and Denny (1990) reported that teacher leaders develop distinct definitions of their roles primarily around functions of helping and supporting their colleagues to fulfil classroom responsibilities and improve their practice. Moreover, research by Lieberman and Miller (2005) demonstrates the work of two teacher leaders who lead in an era of school reform. This study shows how teacher leaders can assist their colleagues to resist change by creating a cycle of people who share and learn from each other. When teachers learn together in a trusting and open environment, they develop a variety of roles and relationships that assist school staff overcome problems related to creating meaningful changes in their practice (Loucks-Horsley, et al., 2010). In a recent study by Lai and Cheung (2015), teacher leaders collaborate with other teachers to define and determine the difficulties encountered in teaching, explore useful facts to deal with the difficulties, recommend and enforce resolutions, assess enforced resolutions, and propose productive feedback for their teaching.

School level effects

The positive effects of teacher leadership usually go beyond teacher leaders and their colleagues, and affect the school system. The literature on teacher leadership suggests that teachers in both formal and informal leadership positions can assist in creating change (Lieberman & Miller, 2005; Lee, Zhang & Yin, 2011). Angelle and DeHart (2011) affirm that the activities of teacher leaders can help transform schools, build democratic schools, and exploit teacher competency. In their study of school restructuring experiences of six

middle-grade schools, Pechman and King (1993) identified teacher leadership as one of the contributing factors in school reform efforts.

The teachers' willingness to participate in decision-making plays a pivotal role in school improvement and students' achievement. Smylie's (1992) research on assessing teachers' willingness to participate in decision-making, found that the participation of teachers in decision-making provides the administration with important information on problems that most schools face. The findings also emphasized that when such information is accessed and used regularly, it improves the quality of decisions in schools. Moreover, Somech (2010) noted that when teachers participate in decision-making it enables them to reinforce a feeling of justice and confidence in the school. Considering that teachers can protect their own good and obtain facts on the creation of resolutions, teachers in participative school milieus can expand their 'pool' of opinions, materials, and techniques, thereby contributing added value to instruction.

Teacher leadership can also bring about enhanced instructional outcomes, generate positive relationship with staff and students, and create the enabling conditions for others to learn in school (Harris, 2005). More importantly, it can stimulate the prospect of teachers becoming leaders at different instances, paving the way for large-scale collaboration (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Muijs & Harris, 2003). The work of teacher leaders can help improve professionalization of teaching (Ryan, 1999), and the professional climate in schools (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). Through teacher leadership, schools can realize improvement in organizational structures and empower teachers to share in school-wide decision-making that enhances school performance (Frost, & Durrant, 2003; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994).

Empowering others to lead alongside the principal builds collegiality and active participation in school improvement (Derrington & Angelle, 2013). Barth (2001) asserts that when teachers create a computer lab, or establish a new science curriculum, they extend valuable support to the exhausted and devastated principal and to the school itself. Moreover, by using influence,

teacher leaders, can have a profound effect on a school's success through promoting both student achievement and a collaborative school culture (Angelle, Nixon, & Niles, 2011).

Opportunities for professional learning are fundamental if the work of teacher leaders is to flourish (Murphy, 2007). Organizational learning is more likely to occur in schools where staff are looking out for opportunities to increase knowledge and improve skills and are provided with sufficient resources and time to develop professionally (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Silins and Mulford (2004) indicate that when distributed leadership is confined to teacher leadership, the school's capacity for learning is enhanced as a learning organization.

Effects on student learning

The principal objective of teacher leadership is to improve student learning (Lai & Cheung, 2015; Silins & Mulford, 2002). Students benefit when teachers engage in important school wide responsibilities such as remodelling the leadership culture of the school, for example, changing from dictatorship to democratic leadership (Barth, 2001; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Barth (2001) affirms that when schools practice democratic forms of leadership, students do not only believe in, practice, and sustain such form of government, they also benefit from exemplary behaviours and high achievement.

There is considerable evidence that who the teacher is and what the teacher does in the classroom has a greater influence on students' accomplishment (Barth, 2001). In other words, teacher leadership can have a direct positive impact on students' learning (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2016). Ryan (1999) found that influence of the work of teacher leaders on students was evident in schools. Teacher leaders provided many opportunities for students to have new learning experiences and thus enhanced their learning opportunities (Ryan, 1999). Moreover, Silins and Mulford (2004) found teachers' work in the classroom as the strongest predictor of students' commitment, participation and engagement in the school.

A recent study by Öqvist and Malmström (2016) investigated the effects of teacher leadership on students' educational motivation. They found that teacher leadership is pertinent and occupies a key position in the educational motivation of students. Their findings suggested that teachers with a high degree of developmental leadership create an environment that fosters educational motivation positively among students. They also found that, such teachers facilitate high student achievement scores.

Other effects

Despite the many findings in favour of teacher leadership, other studies have reported insignificant or negative effects of teacher leadership in schools. Taylor and Bogotch (1994) studied teachers' participation in decision-making and found that participation did not enhance outcomes for teachers or students. Slins and Mulford (2004) found that teacher leadership itself does not influence the positive views of students with respect to the functions of teachers, their participation, or commitment with the school. Smylie and Mayrowetz (2009) suggested that in extreme cases where regular teachers oppose the work of teacher leaders, they can become discouraged. They further suggested that the necessity to develop and support teacher leaders can create major difficulties that can complicate the commitment for improving administrators. Moreover, the simple presence of teacher leaders in schools ruptures the rule of equality that exists among teachers (Stone et al., 1997). Smylie (1992) affirms that participation of teacher leaders in decision-making can create personalized positions that threaten the egalitarian patterns between teacher leaders and their peers.

In their study Smylie and Denny (1990) found that teachers criticized the work of teacher leaders. Their criticisms mainly focused on detailed recognition of how the teacher leaders used their time, and how the actions of teacher leaders may result to personal gains. They proffered the following opinions:

- Some teachers suggested that the nomination of teacher leaders created distinction in ranks that threatened the egalitarian norm of the profession and the working relationships in the faculty.
- Several comments suggested that the roles of teacher leaders separated them too often from the classroom, an action that is considered as detrimental to educating children.
- One teacher mentioned that teaching in the classroom was contradicting with functions of leadership.
- Some teachers criticized the teacher leaders for engaging so much at the level of the district.

2.9 Barriers to Teacher Leadership

The numerous benefits of teacher leadership described in the literature reveals that teacher leadership will continue to grow (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2012) and that the work of teacher leaders plays a central role in the school reform efforts. However, it also unveils the difficulties and obstacles teachers can encounter as they embark on the journey of leadership. This part of the study looks at the structural, personal, and relational barriers that hinder the practice of teacher leadership in schools.

Structural barriers

Structures model what unravels in schools, affecting what can and what cannot be attained (Murphy, 2015). In Cameroon, for example, the hierarchical nature of leadership and the internal school structures produce severe barriers against teachers gaining autonomy and taking on leadership within the school (Harris, 2003). Besides, in Cameroonian schools, there exist organizational structures that encourage the partition of roles and responsibilities and a clear separation of power and authority between the principal and teachers. These present barriers for teacher participation in decision-making that teachers are unwilling to subdue (Smylie, 1992). By arrangement, bureaucracy and labour relations in

Cameroonian schools cut off school administrators from teachers (Stone et al., 1997). Duke, Showers, and Imber (1980) explored the views of teachers to ascertain the possible costs and benefits of involvement in school decision-making. They found that many teachers were reluctant to engage in decision-making because they saw limited opportunities that their engagement would make a change.

Moreover, in Cameroon for example, since the traditional top-down organization is exactly what most teachers and principals have experienced, most teachers prefer to perform their tasks in isolation and assume leadership roles within their classrooms, but not at the school level (Mills & Schall, 2012; Murphy, 2007; 2015). As a result, most of the leadership roles of teachers are restricted to the classroom instead of spreading to the entire school (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997). This creates obstacles for teachers to gain autonomy (Muijs & Harris, 2003), encourages lonely and deserted behaviours (Murphy, 2007), and lessens their knowledge on the bigger arena of the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Hoerr (1996) identified the strenuous and segregated workday of the teacher as the biggest hindrance that prevent teachers from taking up roles as instructional leaders.

Time has also been identified in the literature as the main barrier to the work of teacher leaders (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Coyle, 1997; Stone et al., 1997; Murphy, 2007; Silva et al., 2000; Smylie & Denny 1990). Time is needed to think, brainstorm, and for action (Coyle, 1997). However, it is hard for principals in Cameroon schools to make out time for observations that concern teaching and learning in school (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000). Without enough time outside the classroom and at a distance from students, teachers encounter challenges meditating on their own work let alone the commitments and objectives of the school (Coyle, 1997). In other words, teachers might be unable to take up their normal tasks and accept additional leadership roles (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997). In Cameroon for example, teachers who spend less time with their students give an impression that they are not concerned with the needs of the students (Murphy et al., 2009). Although the

daily organization of Cameroonian schools encourages teachers to invest more time in the classroom, this is a strain on teachers and on their leadership capability (Coyle, 1997).

Methods used in selecting teacher leaders have been observed in the literature as one of the structural factors that impede the practice of teacher leadership in schools. Murphy and colleagues (2009) found favouritism in the selection of teacher leaders as one of the structural barriers in fostering leadership. The researchers observed situations where the principal's bias in the selection of teacher leaders hindered the spread of leadership out of the leadership team. In a few schools involved in the study, the researchers observed that to be a member of the leadership team of the school, a teacher must be a part of the principal's inner-circle.

An additional obstacle that appeared in the literature is the absence of informed structural adjustments in schools. For example, in the study by Murphy and colleagues (2009), faculty members were uncertain on how to manage time and how to work as a group. This led to a decrease in their engagement. In that study, some teachers established arguments to be busy to avoid attending meetings while others chose to perform personal tasks instead of attending meetings.

Personal barriers

It seems that structures that promote teacher leadership at both the classroom and school levels experience enormous consideration among teachers (Murphy, 2007). However, the current structure of schools does not do much to promote the representation of teachers as leaders beyond their classrooms (Coyle, 1997). Surprisingly, teacher leaders themselves also impair teacher leadership. Teacher leaders fail to recognize themselves as leaders or to perceive other teachers as leaders (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Coyle, 1997). For example, for most teachers in Cameroonian schools, engaging with students is an intensive job, and gives them less time to spend with teachers (Murphy, 2015). Most teachers are not certain on their observation about effective teaching (Smylie, 1992). Coyle (1997,

p. 238) found that “for many teachers, leadership exists within the four walls of their classrooms, and the thought of anything beyond that is too complicated, time-consuming, and ultimately threatening”.

The teaching profession considers school functioning beyond the classroom as the appropriate area of expertise for those in formal leadership positions (Murphy, 2007). In Cameroon, for example, the deceptive supposition that teaching is for teachers and leading is for administrators have been practiced to the disadvantage of public schools for an extended period of time (Suleiman & Moore, 1996). In most Cameroonian public schools, teachers who are appointed as school administrators are compelled to abandon the classroom to advance as leaders (Cosenza, 2015). A change from this view however can produce disorientation and conflict in roles for the teacher who normally must change roles from leading students to that of leading other teachers (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Stone et al. 1997; Suleiman & Moore, 1996). As a result, teachers are generally unwilling to perceive themselves as teachers of teachers (Hoerr, 1996).

Relational barriers

Relational obstacles to teacher leadership appear both in the capacity of teachers to influence peers and in promoting effective relationships with school management (Harris, 2005). The unpredictability involved in creating equality in teacher leadership relationships is a steady threat for teacher leaders who choose to influence colleagues to work collectively towards the objectives of developing practice (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). For example, Smylie (1992) reported that teacher-principal working relationships exercise the strongest influence on readiness to engage in taking decisions. Teachers in that study seemed ready to engage in all fields of decision-making provided it was based on a good working relationship with their principals.

At the core of the teaching profession, are approved norms that all teachers are equal. This egalitarian philosophy may create barriers for the practice of teacher leadership and push teacher leaders away from other

teachers (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Stone et al., 1997). Moreover, while those in formal leadership positions do not necessarily demand recognition and power, teacher leaders may be specifically exposed to situations where they are ignored or humiliated because they do not gain formal power (Timperley, 2005). Besides, some school administrators may feel threatened by the presence of teacher leaders. Coyle (1997) affirms that in the district where she worked as a teacher leader, some administrators felt threatened by their leadership efforts and misunderstood them as efforts to accumulate power.

In their interview with six females who work in a variety of formal and informal leadership positions, Mills and Schall (2012) found that the stress involved in performing formal leadership functions broadens when teachers lack the means to a support system. Some teachers in this study disclosed attitudes that generally restrain other teachers from striving to undertake leadership roles and deepen the sense of disregard for teacher leaders. The study found that disregard for teacher leaders happened frequently among teachers in both formal and informal positions of leadership. It appeared that teachers in formal leadership positions were often undermined and confronted indirectly and sometimes publicly. Moreover, teachers opposed an individual removed from their level and placed in a superior position. As a result, teacher leaders occasionally are not acknowledged as teachers, yet do not have the authority and fame of leaders. This leaves many teacher leaders feeling abandoned. Lieberman and Friedrich (2007) reported the existence of risks in performing leadership roles in their own schools. They stated that an educator who makes her work known, risks being viewed as boasting contrary to the norm of equality. In addition, encouraging colleagues to analyze their own teaching can result in judgment and discord.

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

3.1 Research Topic and Research Questions

This study was conducted to understand and explore teacher leadership practices in the context of Cameroon secondary education. Understanding teacher leadership practices was based on teachers and school administrators' perspective of how the work of teachers can influence others to improve on student learning. Thus, this study aims at understanding teacher leadership practices in the context of Cameroon secondary schools. It also explores how teacher leadership practices can be improved.

The objectives were transformed into the two main research questions: The first research question explores how teacher leadership is practiced in schools. The second research question examines how teacher leadership practices can be improved.

1. How is teacher leadership practiced in Cameroon secondary schools?
2. How can teacher leadership practices be improved?

Providing answers to these questions is timely because it provides an opportunity for teachers, principals, educational administrators, and policy makers in Cameroon to reflect on the changing role of teachers within the school system.

3.2 Research Design

Research designs are forms of investigations within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that present precise orientation for research processes (Creswell, 2014). A research design consists of the different strategies included in the three last stages of the research process: data collection, data analysis, and report writing (Creswell, 2005). Gibson and Brown (2009) describe a research design as the advancement of a procedure for creating data used in managing a specific research interest. They distinguished two types of research

designs: preliminary design and working design. Preliminary design refers to the imagined procedure, and the working design refers to the strategies put in place to undertake these intentions in actual situations. Creswell (2014) identified five types of qualitative research designs: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnographies, and case study.

This study makes use of an interpretive case study research design, which focuses on understanding phenomenon through the explanations people give to them (Myers, 2013). A case study is a research plan established in many fields. It provides a detailed investigation of a case; the case can be a program, event, project, procedure, individuals, organizations, or a system (Creswell, 2014). Typically, a case study research design examines a limited number of cases (e.g., one or two cases) and establishes a detailed analysis of the case or cases (Creswell, 2008). The objective is to obtain a comprehensive analysis of the real case (Creswell (2008). Therefore, using a case study design, this research seeks to develop an in-depth understanding of teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary education. Specifically, the research focuses on two public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The study uses face-to-face semi-structured interviews to capture the views of teachers and school administrators in the two schools. Figure 1 illustrates the research design used in this study.

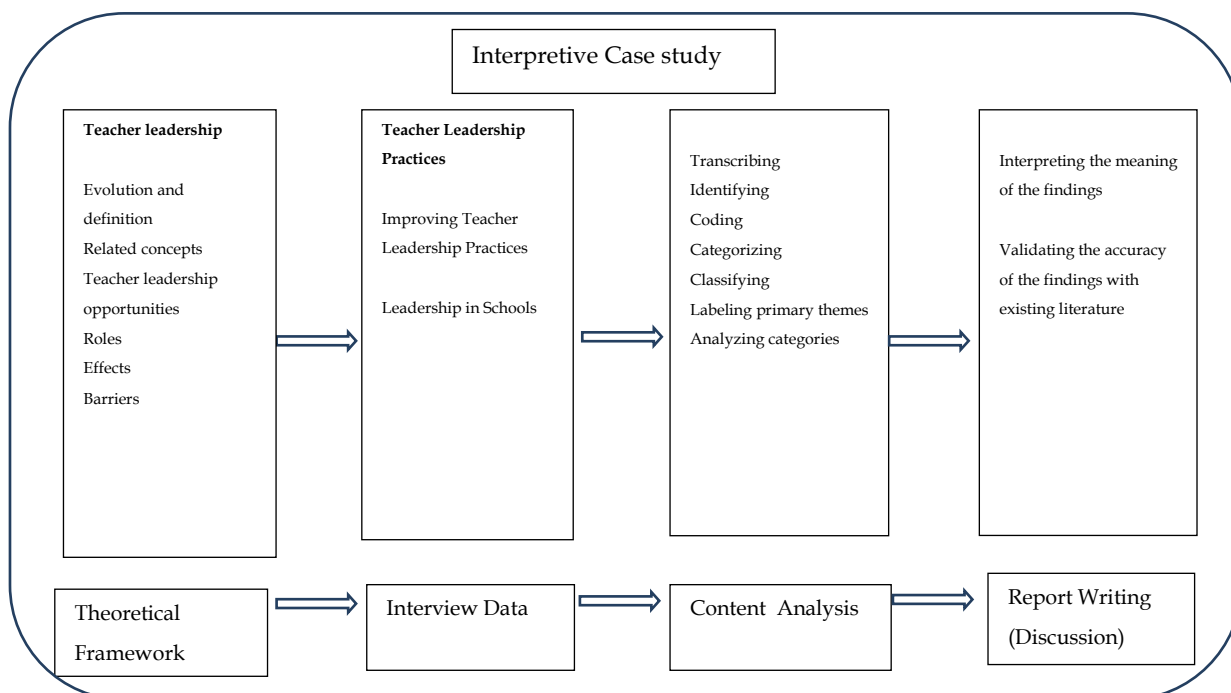


FIGURE 1. Research Design

The application of the research design is a vital element in handling information that enables the researcher to control the creation of relevant data.

3.3 Research Method

A research method describes the research design process and the specific procedures used for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Creswell (2014) identified three research approaches: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Qualitative methods include action research, case study research and grounded theory (Myers, 2013). Figure 2 illustrates the qualitative method employed in this study.

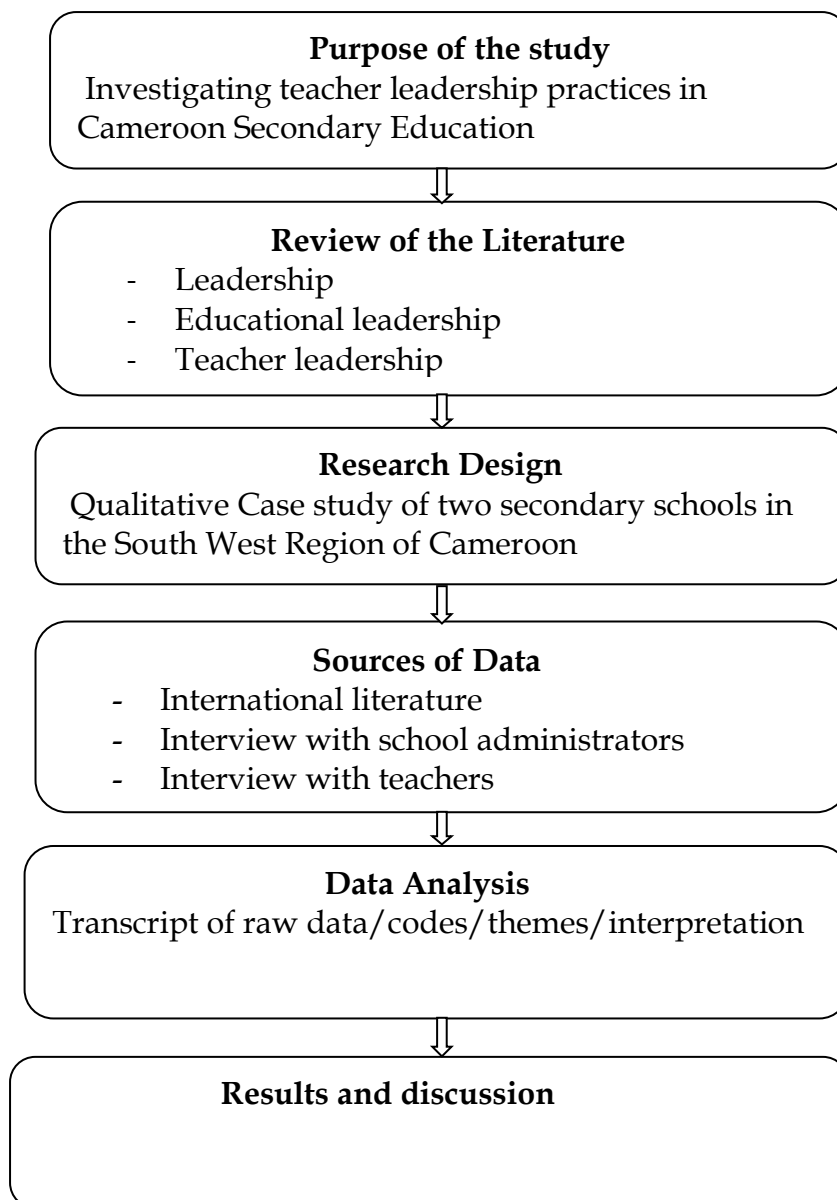


FIGURE 2. Research Method

This study utilizes a qualitative case study approach, which allows the researcher to generate qualitative data through interviews from two public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

3.3.1 The Suitability of Qualitative Research

The history of qualitative research can be traced in fields other than education as far back as 1800s and early 1900s. The philosophical explanations were developed based on evidence that reality can be understood by placing particular attention on how individuals make sense of the stimuli that get to their senses (Constantinou, Georgiou, & Perdikogianni, 2017). The historic

origin of qualitative research stems from fields such as anthropology, sociology, and humanities.

The number and types of methods in qualitative research were evident during the 1990s and into the 21st century (Creswell, 2014). The latter half of the 20th century experienced growth in concerns towards qualitative research. The emergence of interest in qualitative research comes from the fact that the traditional approach to research paid little attention to the views of the research participants, but laid more emphasis on the researcher's view on education. Qualitative research therefore stresses the relevance of the views of participants, emphasizes the setting and context in which the views of the participants are expressed, and outlines the perspectives of individuals with respect to educational issues (Creswell, 2005).

Qualitative research is an important method to appreciate facts based on a holistic process (Doyle & Buckley, 2017). The objective of qualitative research is to choose participants and sites that will better guide the researcher appreciate the research problem and question (Creswell, 2014). This does not necessarily involve random sampling or the identification of a large number of participants, as the case in quantitative research. Preferably, qualitative research requires the collection of data from a small number of individuals and sites. The data in qualitative research is often what people have said (Myers, 2013). In qualitative research, sampling strategies can be applied before or after data collection has started and each sampling strategy has, a distinct objective based on the research problem and questions the researcher would like to answer (Creswell, 2013; 2005). Qualitative research is suitable for studying topics that little is known. It also provides an in-depth understanding of the problem (Myers, 2013). Consequently, research questions in qualitative research can be broad as they seek to understand the experiences of the individuals being studied. Creswell (2005) identified three key characteristics of qualitative research:

- The need to listen to the views of informants in the study.

- The need to ask general open-ended questions and collect data in the work place and homes of the informants.
- The role of research in advocating for change and improving the lives of individuals.

Interviews are among the most common methods of data collection used by qualitative researchers. Other methods include observations, documents, and audiovisual information (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative researchers develop an understanding of their informants by observing their routine activities; examining documents they have created and listening to them describe their thoughts and behaviors (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). Creswell (2005; 2008; 2014) identified four instruments for data collection in qualitative research: observations, interviews and open-ended questions on questionnaires, documents, and audio-visual materials.

The research process for qualitative research is emergent and flexible. Qualitative researchers are interested in the everyday thoughts and actions of individuals, sympathize and relate with the study participants in order to have an insight on their perspectives about certain issues (Taylor et al., 2015). Typically, a qualitative approach is iterative, unfolding and changing as new information emerges. In qualitative research, the researcher places attention to the meaning the study participants bring to the research problem. Traditionally, the qualitative research process is subjective; however, researchers have to ensure that the outcome of the study does not reveal their own ideas and values, but rather should express the reflections and experiences of the informants (Constantinou et al., 2017).

Qualitative research in education is advantageous in that it has the ability to improve on the lives of teachers, learners, and the entire community (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). The objective of a qualitative research therefore is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of the central phenomenon. To achieve this, a number of approaches are implemented to assist researchers collect detailed information that provides in-depth knowledge on the behavior of individuals. Qualitative method is the ideal

approach for this study since little is known about the concept of teacher leadership in the context of Cameroon secondary education. Therefore, this study provides detailed knowledge of the central phenomenon. Besides, research to investigate teacher leadership practices has not yet been implemented in the two schools selected for the study and in the context of Cameroon secondary education as a whole.

3.3.2 The Participants and the Research Process

This study utilizes purposeful sampling techniques to select two public secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon and the study participants. Purposeful sampling is an approach in which the researcher deliberately chooses participants and sites to acquire information or explain the research problem (Creswell, 2013). The participants consist of eight administrators and fifteen teachers between the ages of 39 and 56. The study was limited to principals, vice principals, discipline masters, heads of department, and teachers selected from both schools. The teachers and administrators included both males and females who have worked in the schools for more than six years and can provide information that can improve our understanding of teacher leadership practices in schools.

Maximal variation sampling was used to select school administrators who can provide information from different perspectives. In qualitative research, maximal variation sampling is “a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher sample cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait (Creswell, 2013). From the administrators (principal, vice principals, discipline masters, head of departments), one respondent was identified from each group in order to obtain information about the diverse and complex views of teacher leadership practices in Cameroonian schools. The criterion for selecting the vice principal, discipline master and head of department was based on the number of years each has served in the school.

Further, the tasks of identifying teachers partly involved snowball sampling. In qualitative research, snowball approach is purposeful sampling

that advances later in a study and occurs when the inquirer asks respondents to propose other persons to be sampled for the interview (Creswell, 2013). Taylor et al. (2016) noted that “one of the easiest ways to build a pool of informants is snowballing – getting to know some informants and having them introduce you to others” (p.107). Accordingly, administrators who were interviewed nominated teachers that were interviewed. In addition, the researcher contacted others directly by visiting the two schools. This approach helped to expand the diversity of the informants. The teachers were selected from different classes (Forms 1 and 5 and upper-sixths form). Form 1 was selected because it is a foundation class in the secondary education system in Cameroon; Form 5 and the upper-sixths form are final examination classes. Form 5 students who pass the secondary school version of the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination (GCE) are admitted into high school while upper-sixths students who pass the high version of the GCE can begin university studies. Because the exams are very competitive, school principals typically assign only their best teachers to teach Forms 5 and Upper-sixths.

The method for data collection used was face-to-face semi-structured interviews. With permission from the informants, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview questions were open-ended. This approach allowed the informants to provide detailed information about the questions (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for probing. That is, getting the informants to clarify some of their responses. This helped to enrich the data gained from the interview process.

To acquire an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the informants on teacher leadership practices in schools, the interview questions attempted to provide answers to the two research questions. In this regard, two interview protocols were designed, one for administrators and the other for teachers (see appendix 1). For the first research question (i.e., How is teacher leadership practiced in Cameroon secondary schools?), the open-ended questions were directed towards the activities of teachers in and out of their classrooms, teacher participation in school development and in the teaching

and learning process. For the second research question (i.e., How can teacher leadership practices be improved?), the open-ended questions addressed the conditions available for supporting the work of teachers and how these conditions can be improved. The second research question also envisaged the role of administrators in helping teachers accomplish their tasks.

With the help of the vice principals and discipline masters, I organized time for the interviews. Each interview lasted between 35 to 40 minutes. I conducted the interviews during the free periods of the teachers and administrators. Consequently, time was respected to accommodate their busy schedules. The interviews with the school administrators were conducted in their offices while those with the teachers were conducted in any unoccupied office space provided by the school administration.

At the start of the interviews, the participants were informed of the purpose of the research. The participants were also notified that their responses would only be used for academic purposes. Moreover, because participants were unfamiliar with the concept of teacher leadership, I explained this at the start of the interviews. During the interviews, I also took brief notes. At the end of the interview, I thanked the participants for their participation and further assured them of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The face-to-face semi structured interviews with school administrators and teachers was an ideal approach to appreciate their opinions on the participation of teachers in school development and in the teaching and learning process in the context of Cameroon secondary education.

3.4 Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to come out with the findings and draw conclusions based on the responses gotten from the teachers and administrators. Qualitative content analysis can be defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systemic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005,

p.1278). Data analysis was also carried out during and after the data collection process. After each interview, I went through the interview questions to ensure they provide answers to the research questions. Moreover, I intensively analyzed a limited amount of data to have an understanding of the study phenomenon. This helped to avoid the collection of irrelevant data.

The data was transcribed and ready for analysis. The data analysis process considered interpreting the data from the perspective of the informants. The process also considered the physical, emotional and psychological protection of study participants and guaranteed their rights to privacy (Deventer, 2007). To avoid using the actual names of the participants, each was assigned a code. Teachers were assigned codes from T1 to T15 representing the fifteen teachers from both schools. Table 3 gives a representation of how the eight administrators from the two schools were labelled. "P" is for principal, "V" is for vice principal, "D" is for discipline master, and "H" is for head of department. "B" and "G" represent the names of the two schools.

TABLE 3 Labelling School Administrators with Unique Codes

Label	Respondent	Number of respondents
PB	Principal from school B	1
PG	Principal from school G	1
VB	Vice principal from school B	1
VG	Vice Principal from school G	1
DB	Discipline master from school B	1
DG	Discipline master from school G	1
HB	Head of department from school B	1
HG	Head of department from school G	1
Total		8

To make sense and familiarize myself with the data, I constantly read through and reflected on the responses of the study participants. I underlined and circled significant words and sentences. I also considered the subjective

meanings of the responses of the participants (Dina, 2012). This helped me to focus on the relevance of the views of participants, and the setting and context in which these views are expressed (Creswell, 2005).

The data analysis process involved coding the data to identify key themes. First, the huge sum of data was reduced by highlighting, cutting, and pasting the main ideas. Similar ideas were then grouped in a tabulated form and were given different colours (see appendix 2). The idea of highlighting, cutting and pasting was to ensure that the outcome of the study does not reveal my own ideas and values, but rather expresses the reflections and experiences of the teachers and school administrators (Constantinou et al., 2017). Second, to come out with the related themes, the data was analyzed at the sentence and paragraph levels (Open coding). At this stage, descriptive notions related to the study were analyzed. The analysis was based on the objective of the study and the research questions. Open coding also allowed the themes and categories to emerge from the data (Dina, 2012). Third, selective coding was used to group the data into categories (Urquhart, 2012). It involved summarizing the open codes into themes. The themes were carefully grouped to reflect the participants' reflection and meaning.

By coding the data, I could easily understand the information from the viewpoint of the participants and then provide a valid interpretation of these views (see appendix 3). This was the most difficult part of the analysis, which involved my intuition, judgment, intelligence, reflection etc. This was achieved through questions related to the research questions, the objective of the study, topic under discussion, my personal judgment, and the responses of the participants.

3.5 Ethical Consideration

In designing the research procedure for this study, ethical considerations and professional codes of conduct were considered to direct the research procedure, and to prevent possible damages that can emerge while conducting the study

(Van, 2009). The objective of ethical concerns in this study was to gather firsthand information that was influenced by the type and number of informants sampled for the study (Constantinou et al., 2017). This study also guaranteed the participants' rights to privacy (Van, 2009).

During the research process, face-to-face contact was established with the principals of the two schools to have their permission to collect data from their institutions. This was done one month prior to the date for data collection. During the meeting with the principals, the objective of the study and the informants needed for the study were clearly outlined. This meeting was made possible with the aid of a letter of acknowledgement from the Institute of Educational Leadership of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. The letter indicated the research topic, and acknowledged the researcher as a full-time student in the Master's Degree Programme on Educational Leadership.

Doyle and Buckley (2017) consider informed consent as one of the pillars in research ethics. To obtain consent, the purpose, and significance of the study as well as the general research design were conveyed to the teachers and school administrators. The study participants were also informed on the processes and procedures involved in their participation. Moreover, the participants were informed of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

During the research, the informants were given the opportunity to accept or reject their participation in the study and to quit the study when they deem necessary. At the end of the data collection process, the researcher did not forget to thank the respondents for their participation. In the data analysis process, confidentiality was further considered by assigning codes to all the teachers and administrators interviewed.

4 FINDINGS

This chapter presents findings on investigating teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary education. The study utilizes data gained through semi-structured interviews. The data capture the views of eight school administrators and fifteen teachers. The objective of the interviews was to explore how teacher leadership is practiced in schools, and how teacher leadership practices can be improved. In presenting the findings, direct codes are used to demonstrate some degree of objectivity in the study.

4.1 Exploring Teacher Leadership Practices in School

This part of the study investigates the tasks performed by teachers in school, how teachers share responsibility for students' learning, how teachers are motivated to execute their tasks, and the working relationship that exists between teachers and the school administration. To provide answers to the research question of exploring teacher leadership practices in schools, seven themes emerged from the interview data with teachers and school administrators. The themes in this results section show how the different practices of teachers interact to influence teaching, learning and school improvement. The themes are presented and discussed below.

TABLE 4 Emergent Themes on Teacher Leadership Practices and their Characteristics

Themes	Characteristics
Collaborative practices	Collective responsibility, working together, working as a team for students to succeed, sharing responsibilities for students' learning, supporting each other, cooperation from members of the same department, support each other, cooperation with the administration
Participation in decision	Concerns and ideas of teachers are respected,

making	dialogue with teachers, share ideas and vision with administration, participate in decision making, involve in admission committee, participate in staff and departmental meetings, participate in school improvement, make suggestions for school improvement, opinions of teachers are respected
Shared professional practices	Assist colleagues in class, direct each other on how to teach, share knowledge and teaching techniques, provide support to struggling teachers, observe colleagues in class and make comments, give advice young colleagues, demonstration lessons.
Instructional practices	Introduce students to new knowledge, encourage students to learn, ensure effective teaching, learning and discipline, managers of their classrooms; ensure curriculum implementation and review; routine classroom activities; support student learning, facilitate the teaching and learning process, identify and assist struggling students.
Taking action	Do not wait on the administration; move the profession and the school forward; expand their knowledge; give advice to young teachers and students; make use of the available resources in the environment to improve teaching and learning; educate the community; represent the educational community in the society, involve in research
Role modelling	Learning by example; leading exemplary behaviour; parent, counsellor, and role model

	to students; exemplary behaviour for students to emulate; modelling, guiding and advising students and colleagues; guide and mentor to students; mentor new teachers.
Professional relationship	One big family, freedom of expression, listening ear to teachers, relaxed and friendly, interdependent, sharing together, respect for seniority and hierarchy, discriminatory, cordial, respectful, friendly, challenge of authority, conflicting, impulsive and impellent, interpersonal, boss-subordinate interaction

4.1.2 Collaborative Practices

In an attempt to explore the tasks carried out by teachers, and how teachers accomplish their tasks, most respondents mentioned collective responsibility, working together, working as a team, sharing responsibility for students' learning, providing support to one another, and cooperation among members of the same department. The interview responses from the teachers and school administrators indicate some of the attributes of collaborative work. The responses were a clear indication of teacher leadership practices.

Based on the interview responses of teachers and school administrators, it was evident that the goal of every teacher was to work collaboratively for all students to succeed. To achieve success, teachers were ready to work collaboratively with fellow teachers and with the school administration: "Teachers and administration work collectively for the success of the school" (T3).

None of the activities carried out in school are done single handedly. Teachers do not only teach but are very willing and always taking part in and giving ideas to improve on the performance of the school. Commissions are set for the various activities with the principal, a vice principal or a teacher as head. (HB)

Much of the research findings on teacher leadership suggest that collaboration plays a vital role in developing and supporting teacher leadership practices (Stone et al., 1997; Boles & Troen, 1994; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Miles, 2016; Harris, 2005). Research describes teacher leadership as leadership that takes into consideration the collective and collaborative efforts of staff members (Sales et al., 2016; Harris, 2003; Ho, 2010). Harris (2003) argues that schools need to build a climate of collaboration among teachers. Research therefore acknowledges collaboration as the focus of teacher leadership, as it is based on change that is collectively accomplished (Harris, 2002).

The findings reveal that the objective of working together was to achieve student learning and to improve on the functioning of the school. One of the school administrators clearly stated that:

Although administration, teaching, and discipline have different heads in the school, all three are interrelated and don-tail for the school to run at its best...Learning in a school is a chain activity. When students in the junior classes are well taught (that is given a solid foundation), they will perform better in the higher classes. A break in the chain affects learning in all other classes.
(PB)

Literature on teacher leadership suggests that efforts towards school success are directed towards achieving a positive relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement (Goddard et al., 2007). Hallinger and Heck (2010) affirms that collaborative practices focus on organizational procedures that recognize staff and students, promote extensive sharing in decision making, and reinforce collective responsibility for student learning.

Some of the respondents mentioned that teachers are expected to work as a team by sharing responsibilities for student learning with colleagues and with the school administration.

In order to give a child holistic education, teachers have to work as a team. This is because what a child is taught is a combination of different elements (that is, subjects) that are taught by different persons. Therefore, there is collective responsibility for students' learning. Teachers work together in departmental meetings, seminars, workshops...Teachers also work with the school administration. There is always coordination meetings between teachers and the

school administration...There are usually instructions by administrators to teachers to show the two stakeholders are working together. (T1)

An administrator who shares a similar view mentioned that:

Teachers of the same subject went through the same training and so they work as a team for students to succeed. Again, no one knows it all. Where you find that a colleague is better in certain aspects, you can solicit him or her to explain that concept to your students while you watch and listen. (PG)

Literature on teacher leadership suggests that when teachers work in teams, they profit from time, purpose, specifications, access to data, and continuing support (Eaker et al., 2002). Teamwork can enhance student learning, collaboration, and the professional development of teachers (Miles, 2016). Moreover, working as a team can force team members to consider their individual objectives as inferior to those of the group (Bennett, 2008). Barth (2001) noted that when teachers as team members share a common objective, they often accomplish their individual tasks.

The findings of this study reveal that teachers see student achievement as a collective effort and are gratified when they share responsibility for student learning.

A true teacher can only be satisfied when he/she has shared responsibility for all students to learn since that is what is expected of them. The school is very large and can never be run by a single individual. As such, it is a collective effort... (T3)

The findings confirm the assertion of Derrington and Angelle (2013) that teacher leadership is a larger organizational arrangement that goes beyond the duties of a single teacher, and impact on the school as a whole.

The results indicated that in sharing responsibility for students' learning, teachers do not only teach the classes assigned to them. They work in collaboration with colleagues to make sure all students learn.

In the absence of a teacher in class, a colleague assists in the class control, making sure the students have some exercise to do or rather ask them to read a text. In short, all classes are for all teachers. You can change class at any time when the need arises. (T14)

Two weeks ago, a colleague took over my periods in the classes where I had to teach because I was sick. We discussed the topics I had to teach in those classes and she went to the classes during those periods to give the lectures. (T6)

During class council teachers of various classes share with the others, whether performance has dropped or improved. If it has dropped, teachers jointly look for the way forward. If there are notorious students, all the teachers are made to know and follow up such students. (T13)

The results further demonstrated that collaboration was carried out with school administrators in school, and with colleagues out of school. Literature on teacher leadership suggests that teachers can interact with colleagues within the school, and with other teachers out of school (Angelides, 2010; Ketzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Harris & Muijs, 2005).

At the departmental level, the head of department and the teachers handle curriculum matters. They propose questions for the pre-mock and mock examinations. Teachers organize end of year examinations for all the streams in the non-examination classes. They share ideas with faculty members on the performance of students in sequential examinations.

One of the teachers explained that:

During class council teachers of various classes share with the others, whether performance has dropped or improved. If it has dropped, teachers jointly look for the way forward. If there are notorious students, all the teachers are made to know and follow up such students. (T13)

Literature on teacher leadership asserts that when teachers are greatly involved in pedagogic activities, students can experience an expansion in their learning (Hopkins, 2013). One administrator (VB) gave a portrait of how the other administrators worked together with teachers in the absence of the principal.

In the absence of the principal in school, teachers contribute by making sure they are in their classes teaching and at the same time exercise control and discipline in their classes. Difficult cases of discipline are reported to the senior master of discipline in charge of that particular sector for action. A vice principal is assigned to sit in for the principal. All the other vice principals and discipline masters work in collaboration with the acting principal but the acting principal takes the final decision in matters. (VB)

The results of this study confirm findings in the literature, which suggest that collaborative practices focus on efforts towards school achievements. The achievements aim at developing the school and are distributed between the principal, teachers, school administrators and other staff members (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggest that teacher leadership

considers work with students, colleagues, and administrators. One teacher (T12) was clearly critical on working together with colleagues to share responsibility for student learning.

The teacher cannot be responsible for the entire school. A teacher can be responsible for a class...I cannot leave my class to control another class because some teachers deliberately abandon their students. So, if the class is empty because of lack of teacher, the administration will intervene. (T12)

This shows how teachers can be critical in their opinions of the work of their colleagues. Criticisms can greatly hinder teacher leadership practices in schools. In the study by Smylie and Denny (1990), teachers clearly criticized the work of teacher leaders on how they used their time, and how their actions can lead to personal advantages. Mills and Schall (2012) found that some teachers disclose attitudes that generally restrain other teachers from striving to undertake leadership roles and deepen the sense of disregard for teacher leaders.

In summary, the goal of every teacher was to work collaboratively for all students to succeed. Teachers and school administrators worked in collaboration by sharing responsibility for student learning. Teachers worked with colleagues and the school administration to achieve teaching, learning and discipline in the school.

4.1.3 Teacher Participation in Decision-making

Some respondents indicated that although school control is mostly done by administrators, the principal seeks the opinion of teachers before taking certain decisions that influence student learning. Through meetings and discussions on vital issues concerning the proper functioning of the schoolhouse, teachers and other administrative staff involve in decision-making. This study's findings reveal that teachers participate in decisions concerning pedagogy, admission, discipline, registration of students in end of course examinations, and in apportioning teachers to teach in the different classes.

The school control is mainly in the hands of the administrators; but important issues such as which teacher is good to teach an end of course examination class are discussed with teachers. At times, the principal seek the opinions of teachers

before taking certain decisions, for example during admission and disciplinary councils. (SG)

The principal seek the opinion of teachers on matters concerning the teaching and learning process. For instance, the opinions of teachers were sought concerning the position of the present form five classrooms. This has greatly improved our results since the classroom is close to the administrative building, which makes the supervision of students on their studies easy. (T9)

Research suggests that shared decision-making can lead to better decisions concerning curriculum, professional development, faculty meetings, schedule, and discipline (Barth, 2001). Literature on teacher leadership asserts that when teachers are involved in decision-making, students can experience an expansion in their learning (Hopkins, 2013). Moreover, when teachers participate in managerial decisions, it broadens their sphere of concentration from their own classroom to that of the entire school (Somech, 2010). Smylie, 1992 found that teachers' involvement in decision-making inspires them to be committed to the decisions and increase their determination in carrying out those decisions.

This study's findings reveal that teachers sometimes take initiative to share their ideas and vision with the school administration on matters concerning teaching and learning. One of the administrators explained that:

Out of their normal routines in the classroom, teachers form a think tank, share ideas and vision with the administration... Teachers discuss their class allocation in departmental meetings. Their decisions are respected as far as possible (PB).

Since teachers are closest to students, the principal listens and gathers important information from teachers to improve on teaching and learning. Teachers' participation in decision-making gives administration access to important information concerning student learning. In general staff meetings, teachers and administrators discuss on vital issues concerning the proper functioning of the schoolhouse.

The principal enhances openness, sharing and discussion in school in order to give out information and also to gather information and ideas from other staff members.

The principal respects the ideas and concerns of teachers because the teacher is very much present and closest to the students than the principal or other school

administrators. This is usually during staff meetings, class councils and disciplinary sessions (T3).

Literature on teacher leadership suggest that the teaching profession becomes more interesting for teachers when the schools and districts provide teachers with opportunities to fully participate in the day to day running of the school (Lambert, 2003). Smylie (1992) found that teachers' participation in decision-making provides the administration with important information on problems that most schools face. When such information is accessed and used regularly, it improves the quality of decisions in schools. Moreover, Somech (2010) noted that when teachers participate in decision-making it enables them to reinforce a feeling of justice and confidence in the school.

The results further illustrate that teachers sometimes have the feeling that they are not fully involved in decision-making. Most often, they consider their participation in decision-making as impartial and a mere principle. In practice, teachers view themselves as passive participants whose opinions are not often respected

Teachers are given the chance to give their opinions during general staff meetings, and administrators during administrative meetings. Teachers with opinions on how to improve the school can meet the principal in her office and propose their ideas. These opinions are noted but there are times that the decisions are noted but are not considered when taking the final decision... (SB)

Teachers do not make any contributions in the decision-making of the school. Since the opinions of teachers are most of the time not considered, they are not actively involved in improving the entire school (T10).

It is only in limited cases that the principal discusses and takes into consideration the concerns and ideas of teachers (HG).

Teachers are sometimes forced to implement instructional decisions that are taken without their consent. This decreases their willingness to engage in activities out of their classrooms.

...sometimes, decisions are taken without us knowing, we are only forced to do it. The concerns of teachers are hardly respected because whatever opinion the teacher gives is not usually accepted. For example, promoting students with seven averages to the next class has been denied by the teachers, but the administration still goes ahead and does it (T10).

Literature on teacher leadership argues that increased access to and use of information provided by teachers improve their morale, participation, commitment, and motivation in carrying out the goals of the school (Smylie, 1992; Barth, 2001). Teachers' involvement in decision-making inspires them to be committed to the decisions that are made and increases their determination in carrying out these decisions (Smylie, 1992).

In summary, although teachers participated in decision-making, they sometimes have the feeling that they are not fully involved. Teachers consider their participation in decision-making as impartial and a mere principle. In practice, teachers are considered as passive participants whose opinions are noted but are not considered in the final decision. This decreases their commitment and motivation in taking responsibilities out of their classrooms.

4.1.4 Shared Professional Practices

Shared professional practices emerged as another interesting theme in teacher leadership practices in school. All teachers mentioned how they share their professional practices with colleagues in the department. Teachers of the same subject meet to discuss on ways to improve on the subject. The objective of sharing professional practices is to improve on student learning through changes in teachers' teaching practices. Teachers are not only active in sharing knowledge on teaching and classroom management. They also discuss problems and challenges faced in teaching, and together suggest on how to overcome these challenges. This was visible in the responses of some teachers.

We ask for assistance from other teachers in the department in areas where we have difficulties. Colleagues at times discuss on some difficulties encountered during teaching and proposals are given by other colleagues to overcome such difficulties. (T11)

Teachers always see their colleagues to enlighten them on topics they have difficulties in, and can get inspiration from other teachers, which is a source of motivation. (T5)

Most often teachers of the same subject hold meetings to improve on the subject. The head of department usually ask colleagues to help on topics they understand

very well. Also, teachers seek advice from others on how to improve on their teaching techniques. (T14)

In departmental meetings, teachers direct each other on how to teach, share knowledge and teaching techniques, provide support to struggling teachers, and seek professional and instructional advice from colleagues. A head of department clearly articulated a discussion they had on a topic that was a problem for teachers in the department. Teachers in the department were looking for the best way to understand and teach the topic to students. They organized a demonstrative lesson session where teachers opted to teach the topic to colleagues. As the head of department puts it:

In our last departmental meeting...it was hot on expressing numbers to a given number of significant figures. (HB)

In addition, a week is organized for peer classroom observation. After each lesson, teachers give feedback and share ideas on how to improve on teaching. Moreover, there is follow-up by the head of department who is assumed to be matured and experienced in the teaching field. Heads of departments observe teachers in their classes to note their strengths and weaknesses, and help to improve on their teaching. One of the administrators explained that:

There was a practical case where the students were complaining that their mathematics teacher does not know how to teach. The head of department followed up the teacher by observing a couple of lessons, and gave his feedback after each lesson. (SB)

Out of school, teachers take part in capacity building seminars, workshops, and conferences, where they interact with teachers from other schools to improve on their practices: “Teachers are actively involved in seminars, meetings with teachers from other regions to better create awareness on methods to improving teaching and learning techniques” (T14).

Research suggests that one of the benefits of teacher leadership practices is knowledge creation and transfer (Harris, 2006). Teacher leadership practices succeed in work environments where the capacity of the faculty and that of individual teachers are considered (Derrington & Angelle, 2013). Findings of the study by Derrington and Angelle (2013) consider teachers who go an “extra

mile” to help others, as leaders who do their work informally. However, Reeves (2006) noted that when schools promote the belief that professionalism means sharing best practices, it can result in greater professional achievement, involvement of staff and students, and an improvement in professional practices.

In summary, teachers improve on student learning by sharing professional practices with colleagues. Through sharing professional practices, teachers share knowledge on teaching and classroom management, discuss instructional challenges on the job and go an ‘extra mile’ to help colleagues experience a change in their teaching practices.

4.1.5 Instructional Practices

The results reveal that the goal of every teacher is for students to succeed. Thus, concentration now is on teachers’ work with students in the classroom, and not very much on improving the entire school. In carrying out their functions teachers, focus on their instructional practices, where they influence curriculum, teaching and learning. Teachers work hard to complete the scheme of work and prepare students for end of course examinations.

Teachers strive to complete their scheme of work in the classes assigned to them by the end of the academic year. (VB)

Every teacher wants the students to succeed as such they are willing and get involve always in matters of teaching and learning in the school. (PG)

The findings of this study is consistent with research by Collay (2011) which asserts that educational leadership begins in the classroom and extend to all domains of teaching and learning.

This study’s findings reveal that teachers direct the teaching and learning process. They fully engage in teaching and ensure that students succeed. Teachers introduce students to new knowledge, provide study guide to enhance learning, and organize supplementary classes to meet up with slow learners. They ensure discipline in the classroom and make students

understand the consequences their behaviours have on their academic performance.

As a teacher, I introduce students to new knowledge. Students are given study guide to facilitate learning. In the case of discipline, they are exposed to the positive and negative effects of their action and then called to consciousness. (T1)

I do control in my class by encouraging the students to learn and achieve good results. (T8)

I am a teacher and a disciplinarian in my class. Precisely, I ensure proper classroom management (T2).

There is evidence that who the teacher is and what the teacher does in the classroom influence students' achievement (Barth, 2001). Research acknowledges that it is the teacher's job to organize and manage the learning environment and to guide learners through the approved curriculum (Fox & Henri, 2005). Silins and Mulford (2004) found that teachers' work in the classroom has the strongest predictor on students' commitment, participation and engagement in the school.

Teachers ensure students come early to class, do their assignments, follow-up lectures, and learn in a clean environment. They play the role of facilitators, and act as managers of their classrooms and students. They guide students in their learning, and give account on students' behaviour towards studies. Besides teaching students the subject matter, teachers engage in research. They search for helpful information and material to support students' learning. They do research on the internet, search for books, past examination questions and sometimes search for important information from teachers in other schools. This information is shared with students in the classroom and with colleagues in departmental meetings.

Teachers do go out to look for other books and question papers that can help the students. Even the principal encourages this and is always willing to pay for such materials... (T13)

Teachers are actively involved in whole school improvement by getting informative material from the internet to pass it on to students. They visit other schools and get information from other teachers. (T5)

Out of school, I do research on things that students do not understand or any beneficial information on students' achievement. (T3)

Studies on teacher leadership envisage action research as the responsibility of every teacher and an activity that is vital for school improvement (Frost & Durrant, 2003). Action research helps teachers to be competent in their content and reflective about how to teach it (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010). Marquarat, 2000 found that teachers' participation in action research enhances their ability to think in new ways about existing reality and problems.

This study's findings reveal that to improve on teaching and learning, teachers attend training seminars to acquire knowledge on the subject content and how best to teach it.

...Teachers sometimes personally pay for training seminars in order to acquire knowledge to improve on the profession and the school as a whole. (T12)

However, most teachers often lack the funds to finance these extra expenses. This sometimes affects their commitment to improving teaching and learning.

Most teachers do not attend seminars because of finances, so very few of them are willing to go an extra mile to learn on strategies to improve on school performance on their own. (SG)

Literature on teacher leadership suggests that teachers mostly take action by working as instructional leaders influencing curriculum, teaching and learning (Harris, 2005). Literature describes teachers who go an extra mile as those who are internally driven to expand their professional knowledge and skills (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012).

In summary, teacher leadership practice now is focused on teachers' work with students in the classroom and not on the development of the school as a whole. Most of the focus of teachers is preparing students academically for end of course examinations. Teachers fully engage in teaching to achieve students' success. They ensure student discipline, involve in research, and attend seminars to improve on teaching and learning. Through their

instructional practices, teachers influence curriculum, teaching, learning and discipline in school.

4.1.6 Taking Action to Improve on Student Learning

The findings suggest that actions taken by teachers are not only limited within the classroom. The actions go beyond the classroom and sometimes extend to the community. In the community, teachers are parents, wife, husbands, guardians, farmers and counselors. Teachers are representatives of the educational sector in the community. They are held in high esteem and are expected to act in a certain manner. This is because the community expects much from teachers and sees them as intellects. Teachers give advice to girl children in the community on the value of education. They educate the population on environmental and health issues, and act as community leaders. Teachers are often privileged to hold leadership positions in social and religious groupings in the community.

Out of school, we try to guide our students to be well disciplined. Prevent them from getting into video halls during lectures. (T8)

Out of the classroom, I play an advisory role to parents and students...(T11)

I am chief examiner of advanced level history, and president of development association meetings in the community. (T7)

Out of the classroom, I am a role model in the society and a community leader. (T1)

This study's findings confirm the assertion of Collay (2011) that schools are complex extension of the government, and teachers are representative of the government in the community. In the community, teachers are scholars, practitioners, generalists, specialists, facilitators, mediators, and moderators. Teachers are parents, siblings, children, members of religious groups, activists. Above all, teachers are leaders (Collay, 2011, p. 7).

This study's findings indicate that most of the roles performed by teachers are carried out informally. In taking action, teachers sometimes work individually, and at times with colleagues who influence students learning. As

seen earlier, most teachers accomplish their tasks by working collaboratively, participating in decision-making, and sharing professional practices with colleagues. Out of the classroom, teachers are giving opportunities to lead. This greatly affects teaching, learning and teachers' involvement in school improvement.

Teachers help to implement the vision of the school...Teachers also volunteer to head clubs and other extra-curricular activities and coordinate manual labor activities (SB).

Teachers are made coordinators of various club activities in the school. They are appointed as heads of departments and are mentors to new teachers in the field (VB).

As a teacher, I am the leader of the current events club of the school, and the coordinator of the social science subjects (T7).

As a teacher, I occupy a leadership role as the president of the staff socials of the school which brings both the teaching and administrative staff together (T11).

There are clubs that are headed and controlled by colleagues e.g. sports, farming, bilingualism, the school choir etc. (T13).

Literature on teacher leadership suggest that in executing their task, teachers play the role of instructional coaches, mentors, facilitators, share best practices, and collaborate with peers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010; Lambert, 2003). These roles are often considered in the teacher leadership literature as informal leadership. Moreover, research considers coaching, leading a new team, involving in research, assisting colleagues, sharing knowledge on teaching, learning and classroom management as informal leadership roles (Harris, 2006; Derrington & Angelle, 2009).

Teachers in this study take initiative to influence teaching and learning without waiting on the administration. Most of the tasks carried out by teachers are to improve teaching, learning and discipline in school.

I play a very active role especially in class when teaching to foster school discipline. (T11)

As a teacher I perform some informal roles in school such as: using things around my environment to produce didactic materials; assist colleagues in their classes; share information and expertise with colleagues. (T9)

My role as a teacher is to have a good classroom control for effective teaching, learning and discipline to be attained. (T10)

The results of this study are consistent with research by Fairman and Mackenzie (2012) where teachers in their case studies initiated their own learning and improvement efforts and did not wait on their administrators

Some teachers in this study acknowledged themselves as leaders who act by engaging directly with students and with colleagues.

As a leader, I sometimes create time to talk out things with students who always look disturbed or come late to school, or have poor performance. Also as a leader, I do organize all the activities related to the national week of bilingualism, encouraging the students to be bilingual in their own country. (T13)

The fact that a teacher takes pains to control his class is a leadership role. (T14)

However, most teachers do not see the leadership potential in their work, and fail to recognize themselves as leaders. They see themselves as people who should be led.

Some teachers don't see themselves as leaders, but as people who should be led. Some are contended with their positions... (T1)

Most of my colleagues claim that their own role is only to teach. They come and teach and go without any other role played. (T12)

Research evidence on teacher leadership suggests that when teachers fail to acknowledge themselves as leaders or to recognize the work of fellow teachers as leadership, it presents severe barrier to the development of teacher leadership practices (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Coyle, 1997).

The responses from the teachers and school administrators reveal that failure to recognize the work of teachers as leadership can be attributed to the traditional view that leadership is for school administrators, and with the belief that the teacher's place is in the classroom.

Some teachers are of the opinion that school control and discipline are in the hands of administrators. So they don't see themselves pursuing students... All they complain is that the salaries are too small for any extra work to be done. (SG)

Teachers are largely relegated to teaching, assessment of students and classroom discipline. (T2)

...Teachers are not mostly involved in activities to improve the school as a whole. There is no motivation, and most often their roles only end in the classrooms. (T4)

In Cameroon, for example, the deceptive supposition that teaching is for teachers and leading is for administrators have been practiced to the disadvantage of public schools for an extended period of time (Suleiman & Moore, 1996). Since the traditional top-down organization is exactly what most teachers and principals in Cameroon have experienced, most teachers prefer to perform their tasks in isolation and assume leadership roles within their classrooms, but not at the school level (Mills & Schall, 2012; Murphy, 2007; 2015). As a result, most of the leadership roles of teachers are restricted to the classroom instead of spreading to the entire school (Stone, Horejs, & Lomas, 1997). This creates obstacles for teachers to gain autonomy (Muijs & Harris, 2003); encourages lonely and deserted behaviours (Murphy, 2007); and lessens their knowledge on the bigger arena of the school (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). As a result, research on teacher leadership recommend for teachers to expand their area of activity beyond the classroom and to assume leadership responsibility that impact on the school as a whole (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Alava et al., 2012; Angelle & Dehart, 2011; Harris, 2005).

In summary, actions of teachers go beyond the classroom and sometimes extend to the community. Teachers perform their work informally without waiting on the administration. While some teachers acknowledge themselves as leaders who take action by engaging directly with students and colleagues, most teachers failed to see the leadership potential in their work.

4.1.7 Role Modelling

In exploring respondent's role in enhancing teaching and learning, and their expectations of leadership in school, most respondents demonstrated how they are expected to act as role models in school and in the community. The findings

suggest leading by example as a vital component in the practice of leadership in schools. Through leading exemplary behaviours, teachers consider themselves as leaders and role models for students, colleagues, and the community.

... I am a role model in the society and a community leader. As a leader and role model, I have always loved students to copy from me (learning through the hidden curriculum). This has always been done in numerous ways like taking part in school general assemblies and singing the national anthem with students. (T1)

School administrators also expect teachers to be good examples for students and colleagues.

From teachers we expect the demonstration of exemplary behavior. Teachers need to set their tests and exams on time, mark on time and submit results on time. They have to be punctual in their classes for students to copy. (PG)

I expect leadership that enhances growth – intellectual, but also value based (that is moral)... leadership that sets the pace by being the example. For example, in running elections for a student government, the students need to see transparency in the staff supervising the elections, not favoritism and partiality. (PB)

The findings indicate that as role models, teachers are parents, counsellors, and guide to students. They demonstrate exemplary behaviours by being assiduous, disciplined, and punctual. They model democratic practices in class and give advice to students and colleagues. Teachers are guide and mentors to new teachers.

My role as a teacher is that of a role model to the students. I am actively involved in the school by being assiduous and disciplined. (T6)

As a teacher, I play the role of a guide, and a mentor to everybody around me. In class, I exercise a democratic leadership role, where I give room for all the students to take active part in lectures. (T10)

Teachers and school administrators should set the example for others to copy. For example, I fight students' lateness by coming to school early for the students to emulate my example. (T7)

As a teacher, I act as a role model even out of the school; modelling, guiding and advising even those who are not my students. (T13)

In addition, when teachers are always present and punctual in their classes and provide students with vital information teaching, learning and discipline are enhanced.

Because teachers are the ones with students in the classroom, if they are present in the classroom and are on time in the class; teaching, learning and discipline will be achieved. (T10)

The findings of this study correspond with findings in the literature which envisage the teachers' work in the classroom as the strongest predictor of students' commitment, participation, and engagement in school (Silins & Mulford, 2004). Research evidence admits that learning in schools can be achieved when teachers themselves model this action for students to copy (Barth, 2001). Literature on teacher leadership suggests that when teachers make available opportunities for students to experience new forms of learning, it enhances their learning opportunities (Ryan, 1999). Moreover, Barth (2001) noted that what the teacher is, and what he does in the classroom greatly affects the achievement of students.

In summary, teachers are closest to students in the classroom. Their behaviour towards teaching and learning greatly affects how students learn.

4.1.8 Working Relationship

Most respondents mentioned cordiality in the working relationship between teachers and administrators. Cordiality enhances openness and sharing on issues concerning student learning.

The relationship is cordial. Since there is a cordial relationship, there is openness and sharing on issues that concern the students' welfare and performance. (T6)

The relationship is very cordial...Discussion and sharing are promoted through staff socials where teachers express themselves and are free to give their opinions on some issues raised. (T11)

The working relationship is cordial. The principal always dialogues with his teachers. As a result of this, teachers feel free to express their worries. (T5)

The results reveal that administrators and teachers depend on each other to enhance student learning. On one hand, the administration requires teachers to be duty and time conscious in executing their functions. On the other hand, teachers expect teaching aid and other didactic materials from the administration.

The administration depends on teachers for good management of the students. Teachers know their students' performance and they are mostly the people who give account on student's behaviour towards studies. (T14)

The relationship is sometimes informal. Through informal meetings, staff members consider themselves as a family and share food and drinks together. They also discuss and share vital information that will benefit students, colleagues and the entire school.

Our principal is a mother, we share and discuss with her at all moments. She is always excited with new ideas and would do all in her capacity to solve a problem. (HB)

We have social activities where we sit and feast together as one. There we discuss on various ways of helping the students. (T14)

...we fellowship in staff socials with the principal and other staff members; where we share food and drinks together. (T3)

We are one big family. The principal seeks teachers' opinions on subjects that are of general interest to the school. The principal gives teachers a listening ear and solve their problems. (T9)

Findings of the teacher leadership literature highlight that the success of teacher leadership is not only based on how teachers influence colleagues, but on their ability to develop productive relationship with the school administrators (Muijs & Harris, 2007; Harris, 2005). Mills and Schall (2012) noted that descriptions of teacher leadership are based on relationships built on strong commitments to improving student learning.

The findings suggest that there is respect for seniority and hierarchy. As a result, teachers often acknowledge their role in this relationship as subordinates who have to respect the instructions of their bosses.

...There is respect for seniority and hierarchy. (T8)

I play the role of an obedient subordinate vis-à-vis the school administration... (T10)

The hierarchical nature of the school and the lack of trust make it difficult for teachers to take responsibilities out of their classrooms without waiting on instructions from the administration. One of the principals mentioned that:

...It is not usually one of trust and collaboration, but a boss giving orders and the subordinates executing the orders. (PB)

Research evidence on teacher leadership suggests “top-down” management structures as a hindrance to the development of teacher leadership practices in school (Harris, 2005). The hierarchical nature of leadership and the internal school structures in Cameroon often compel teachers to work in isolation and prevent them from becoming independent and assuming leadership roles (Harris, 2003; Mills & Schall, 2012; Harris, 2005). Literature on teacher leadership suggests that, in schools where the culture of trust is promoted, members are willing to support the goals of the organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). Angelle and Colleagues (2011) found that the culture of trust depends on collective trust between the administration, the teachers, the parents and the students.

The results reveal that the relationship is sometimes discriminatory, wherein school administrators identify with a particular group of teachers who provide them with information. One of the teachers mentioned that:

The relationship is not cordial but discriminatory. Administrators take some teachers as their personal friends and get information only from them. (T12)

In some cases, the relationship is conflicting where teachers challenge the authority of their bosses. Tension usually arises when teachers require that remuneration be given for extra work done. Some of the teachers were hostile when they were criticized for their work. However, the school administration and teachers usually resolve their differences and take decisions in favor of the students.

It may be tense at times when teachers are reprimanded for poor work done; but we reason together and enjoy cordiality for the benefit of the students. (PG)

In some cases, the working relationship is conflicting in which some teachers challenge the authority of their bosses. But in many cases, the relationship is cordial wherein there is cooperation and respect for hierarchy. (T1)

Smylie and Brownlee-Conyers (1992) found that teachers and principals may have to resolve interpersonal tensions and conflicts. They have to establish trust, confidence, and a means for effective communication before they can develop effective and functional working relationships (Smylie & Brownlee-Conyers, 1992). Literature on teacher leadership suggests that principals have to provide resources (e.g., time and money) to enable teachers to perform their leadership functions (Lai and Chung, 2015; Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010).

The results indicate that school administrators are sometimes threatened by the presence of teachers with leadership skills. Moreover, there exist elements of rivalry, envy and unhealthy competition, which hinder the collaborative culture of the school.

...but elements of rivalry, envy and unhealthy competition within staff members destroy the spirit of cooperation. In many cases, teachers compete for appointment, even the lazy ones without skills. Some principals become aggressive towards colleagues with potential leadership skills and so become suspicious of rivalry. (T1)

This study's findings are consistent with the findings by Coyle (1997) who reported that school administrators feel threatened by the leadership efforts of some teachers and misinterpret their efforts as attempts to accumulate power.

In summary, the working relationship between teachers and school administrators is cordial, respectful, and friendly; though tense and conflicting at times. However, teachers and administrators need to resolve interpersonal tensions and conflicts, and develop effective working relationship that can ensure students' success.

4.2 Perspective on Improving Teacher Leadership Practices in School

This part of the study investigates conditions available to support the work of teachers, improving the working conditions of teachers, and the role of administrators to help teachers accomplish their tasks. To provide answers to the research questions, four themes emerged from the interview with teachers and school administrators. The four themes in this result section show how teacher leadership practices can be improved. The themes are presented and discussed below.

TABLE 6 Emergent Themes on Improving Teacher Leadership Practices and their Characteristics

Themes	Characteristics
Teacher recognition and motivation	Increase in financial incentives, words of encouragement, teacher recognition for their work, motivate teachers to achieve school goals, certificate of excellence to teachers, reward for good educational outcome, incentive at end of each term, reward and appointments, verbal encouragement, awards, incentives for hard work, best teachers' award, cash prizes for students' success, words of encouragement, material/financial motivation.
Enhancing teacher professionalism	Participate in subject-based and pedagogic seminars, professional development workshops and seminars, peer training, marking of official exams, provision of didactic material for teachers, sponsorship to attend seminars organized out of school,

	<p>networking with external partners to enhance teacher professionalism, workshops and conferences to improve on teaching and learning, seminars and workshops on leadership dynamic, capacity building workshops, internal seminars on time management and leadership, training workshops, leadership conferences, include leadership courses in teacher training curriculum, promote teamwork and trust, coaching from pedagogic experts</p>
<p>Empowering teachers to lead</p>	<p>Create opportunities for teachers to lead, encourage teachers to head clubs and other co-curricular activities, appoint teachers to leadership positions, opportunities for teachers to acquire more skills and build their capacity, recommend teachers to the hierarchy for promotion, head school commissions, opportunities for teachers to share their strategies with peers, autonomy in the work of teachers, involve teachers in decision-making, assign tasks to teachers, participation in all school activities, involvement in school administration, provide teachers with leadership information, involve teachers in the organization of school events, encourage teacher participation in student counseling, respect of teachers' opinion in teaching and learning, enhance democratic leadership,</p>

	enhance teachers' participation in curriculum development, empower teachers to do work effectively, taking initiative, provide offices for teachers with leadership positions
Opportunities for teacher learning and development	Refresher courses on leadership for teachers and administrators, time for pedagogic discussions, material and funds to ensure effective teaching and learning, multi-media center and library for research, discussions in departmental meetings, opportunities for further studies, busy work schedule for teachers, discussions on methods and ways of improving teaching and learning, inadequate time, time allocated for seminars, ensure a favorable work environment, improve teaching techniques, coaching of teachers.

4.2.1 Teacher Recognition and Motivation

The findings indicate that to improve the work of teachers, they need to be professionally recognized and motivated. For teachers to undertake any 'extra work', or perform their functions efficiently their expertise needs to be appreciated.

During each term, incentives are given to teachers. Those who work hard are given more. Moreover, during terminal exams like GCE, BEPC, BACC etc. teachers strive to improve on results since they know they are being supported and motivated for their hard work. (T15)

Certificates of recognition are given to meritorious teachers for the performance in their subjects during public exams... The fact that you are called up to receive

a certificate of excellence in front of your colleagues motivates you to work more.
(T14)

Teachers are often recognized during general staff meetings and official ceremonies.

Certificates are awarded to teachers on teachers' day, and best teachers' award during the end of year graduation ceremony. (T7)

Recognition can take the form of positive comments, awards, and cash prizes to teachers for students' success in official examinations.

Certificates of excellence for subjects with good results at official exams and cash prizes are given to teachers. (T8)

The responses from the teachers and school administrators indicated that efforts of teachers who coordinate co-curricular activities as well as other out of class activities are appreciated. Recognition is in the form of awards, and financial incentives at the end of each term. Teachers are given titles such as class master, subject and club coordinators. Excellent teachers are recommended to the hierarchy for promotion. Teachers also receive words of encouragement and positive feedback from students, colleagues, and parents.

The principal gives verbal encouragement and sometimes, there are end of year awards for academic excellence for teachers who head clubs...Teachers should be given material and financial assistance when possible. They should be motivated by words of appreciation and decorated if possible. (SB)

Teachers are appreciated for their performance by giving some special prizes to excellent teachers. Teachers are as well appreciated by students for their good work. (VG)

Literature on teacher leadership asserts that to advance the work of teachers, their expertise need to be recognized, respected, and valued (Stone et al., 1997). For this reason, schools need to create opportunities that recognize and motivate teachers to perform additional work in school (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Harris, 2003; Barth, 2001; Danielson, 2006).

This study's findings reveal that schools often lack the resources to support and motivate teachers to undertake additional functions and

responsibilities. While most teachers admitted that teachers who do an excellent job are recognized and rewarded, they often felt the incentive was insignificant. As a result, most teachers were reluctant to carry out any 'extra work'. They concentrated in performing their classroom routines.

The financial incentives given to teachers are so minimal to be considered as an encouragement. (T6)

So little motivation is given to teachers... (T12)

Teachers are not mostly involved in activities to improve the school as a whole. There is no motivation, and most often their roles only end in the classrooms (T4)

Literature on teacher leadership affirms that rewarding and recognizing the efforts of teachers is important in sustaining teacher leadership practices (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Recognition can take the form of incentives and remuneration (Harris, 2003). It can also take the form of a title like master teacher, additional compensation, reduced teaching load, responsibility for a budget, allocation of prime space, and an appreciative note from a parent (Barth, 2001). In well developed systems, this can take the form of mini-grants for which teachers apply to try a new approach or to learn something new and bring back to the school for consideration (Danielson, 2006). Therefore, for teacher leadership and professionalism to flourish, educators must recognize, respect, and value the expertise of teachers (Stone et al., 1997). As a result, opportunities must be created to recognize and support the work of teacher leaders (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Harris, 2003; Barth, 2001; Danielson, 2006).

In summary, it is important for educators to acknowledge the work of teachers and create opportunities to recognize and support their efforts. This motivates teachers to take their job seriously, and encourages other staff to work efficiently by devising new strategies to improve on student learning.

4.2.2 Enhancing Teacher Professionalism

Most respondents mentioned continuous professional development as an important element in improving the work of teachers in school. Teachers

participate in professional development and subject-based seminars to improve on their instructional skills. They also participate in workshops and conferences where they share their professional experiences and challenges.

In some schools like mine, capacity building seminars are organized to assist teachers. Facilitators come from outside to organize these seminars. The seminars are interactive, and teachers ask questions in the areas they have doubts (SB).

The working conditions of teachers can be improved through seminars, conferences, and workshops should be organized for teachers to learn (SG). We attend seminars, workshops, and conferences to improve on our teaching and learning techniques (T14).

Teachers should also put in more efforts in helping students and improving on their leadership capabilities by attending leadership conferences. (T12)

The results suggest that the fact that educators do not undertake any formal leadership training, refresher courses on leadership be organized in school for teachers and school administrators.

In my opinion, teachers should have short courses on leadership especially during the long vacation. (T15)

The government should organize training workshops or short leadership courses for both teachers and the school administrators who do not go through any formal training (T12).

Research suggests that professional development programmes can help build the leadership knowledge, skills, and dispositions of participating teachers as well as administrators at all levels of the school system (Loucks-Horsley et al., 2010). Alexandrou and Swaffield (2012) found that through a series of professional development activities teachers come to the fore as leaders both within and beyond their educational establishments. Literature acknowledges that the best professional development is in the workplace as it provides opportunities for teachers to work together (DuFour & Eaker, 2009).

The results indicate that teachers' participation in the marking of official exams, peer training, and the availability of material and financial resources can improve on the instructional practices of teachers.

... Teachers do participate in the marking of the GCE exams during which their skills are sharpened. (T7)

The school provides pens and exercise books for notes, and teachers are often sponsored to go for seminars organized out of the school. (T11)

The findings indicate that including courses on leadership in teacher training curriculum, and organizing internal seminars for teachers on leadership and time management can help build the leadership knowledge and skills of teachers.

Organize internal seminars in the school on issues of time consciousness and leadership. (T9)

Leadership should be added in programmes at the teacher training centers. (T12)

...Moreover, leadership should be a course in the school program for student teachers. (SG)

...By having seminars on leadership since it is not taught in schools. (VG)

Organize workshops and seminars on leadership dynamics. (T3)

Research suggests that professional development has as objective, to support persons appreciate how to affiliate and form a social system of connections, establish responsibility, and approach resources (Iles & Preece 2006).

In addition, coaching from head of department, vice principals and regional pedagogic inspectors enhances the professional development of teachers.

Mentoring is also done throughout the year by regional and National inspectors of secondary education, heads of departments, the principal and vice principals. (T13)

The literature indicates that formal training in the form of university coursework or district-based professional development coupled with job embedded support such as coaching by principals or other administrators are critical factors for development (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

In summary, enhancing teacher professionalism provides opportunities for continuous professional development, improvement in the instructional

practices of teachers, and the development of the leadership knowledge and skills of teachers.

4.2.3 Empowering Teachers to Lead

Most of the respondents indicated that supporting the work of teachers requires empowering teachers by giving them opportunities to lead. It was evident that the work of teachers can be improved by promoting values of teamwork and trust in school, and by giving teachers the autonomy to do their work effectively.

...Getting every member to lead in an activity, and instituting core values of team work, accountability, self service, and trust in school. (HB)

Teachers should be empowered and given leading roles in some school activities... (T6)

The findings indicate that teachers are appointed as head of department, coordinators of co-curricular activities, and mentors to new teachers. Teachers involve in school administration through their participation in the school management board. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to take part in decision-making. They are team leaders, heads of commissions, and coordinators of sporting, club, and manual labour activities. Teachers are heads of social groupings in the school, which bring together teachers and administrators.

Teachers are made coordinators of various club activities in the school. They are appointed as heads of departments and are mentors to new teachers in the field. (VB)

Out of class, teachers are class masters. There are teachers heading clubs and other out of class activities. (SB)

Participatory approach to administration whereby teachers are involved in decision making and not just recipients and executors of decisions taken by the boss with little regards for the teacher. (HG)

I involve teachers in decision making for example teachers are part of the school management board where important decisions concerning the school are taken. (PB)

...involve teachers in decision making situations, and assign tasks to others.
(T3)

Research suggests that teachers develop interest in their work, when they are provided with opportunities to fully participate in the day to day functioning of the school (Lambert, 2003). Literature on teacher leadership asserts that empowering others to lead promotes collegiality and active participation in school improvement (Derrington & Angelle, 2013). Snell and Swanson (2000) found that school reform cannot be achieved without the leadership of highly skilled teachers.

This study's findings suggest that improving teacher leadership requires opportunities for teachers to influence student learning through their participation in instructional decisions.

Teachers should be given opportunities in decision making with respect to the students they teach; especially when it comes to promoting them to the next class, or in choosing particular subjects for the students. This will make the students more conscious and will create awareness in them. For example, a teacher should decide who registers his/her subject in end of course certificate examinations. (T4)

For these conditions to be improved, teachers should be allowed to take part in curriculum development. (T13)

Literature on teacher leadership confirms that it is the teacher's job to organize and manage the learning environment, and to guide learners through the approved curriculum (Fox, 2005). Research suggests that although teacher leaders serve as instructional coaches, mentors, facilitators, collaborators, and share best practices with peers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Louks-Horsley et al., 2010; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Lambert, 2003), they also perform key functions in other instructional activities at the level of the school and district. For example, teacher leaders may give their support to members who are authorized to select textbooks and other didactic materials (Louks-Horsley et al., 2010). They can also assist in making decisions that concern the selection and writing of school curriculum (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Louks-Horsley et al., 2010).

The results indicate the importance of respecting the opinion of teachers in matters concerning teaching and learning, and promoting their participation in school activities.

The leadership role of teachers can be improved by motivating the teacher and considering his/her opinions too. (T10)

...Teachers should be given the opportunity to organize events in school like teachers' day and submit a report at the end. (VB)

...By encouraging all teachers to take part in the counseling activity of the school. (T8)

Participation of teachers in all school activities... (T7)

Teachers are empowered when they are given equal opportunities to lead, and are provided with office space to execute their tasks.

The appointment of teachers in the position of head of department should rotate from one teacher to the next. Also, teachers with leadership responsibilities should have offices. (VB)

By rotating teachers as members of committees... (T11)

Research on teacher leadership suggests that for teacher leadership and professionalism to flourish educators must acknowledge the work of teachers, recognize, respect, and value their expertise (Stone et al., 1997). As a result, opportunities must be created to support the work of teacher leaders (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Harris, 2003; Barth, 2001; Danielson, 2006).

In summary, improving teacher leadership requires opportunities for teachers to influence student learning through their participation in instructional decisions. It requires giving teachers the autonomy to do their work effectively. Empowering teachers greatly affects the teaching and learning process as well as teachers' involvement in school improvement.

4.2.4 Opportunities for Teacher Learning and Development

Most respondents mentioned the importance of time for teachers to meet and discuss on issues concerning students' learning. The findings suggest that the

only time and space for teachers to meet and discuss pedagogic issues is in departmental meetings and seminars.

Certain period of each term are reserved for the holding of departmental meetings during which the members of each department meet to plan strategies and to share the work. (T7)

Teachers are given time to discuss issues concerning the school through seminars and departmental meetings. (T5)

The school administration makes available time for teachers to meet and talk about issues concerning the school. For example, at the beginning of every school year, the syllabuses are presented to the various departments which they use as a guide to draw their schemes of work. (T13)

Time is made for teachers to attend seminars on competent based approaches and the findings are discussed in staff meetings under pedagogy. (T15)

Studies have shown the relevance of aspects of structure such as “space and time” in enhancing teacher leadership practices (Coyle, 1997; LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Stone et al., 1997; Murphy, 2007; Silva et al., 2000; Smylie & Denny 1990). Literature on teacher leadership asserts that without enough time, teachers encounter challenges meditating on their own work let alone the commitments and objectives of the school (Coyle, 1997). For example, LeBlanc and Shelton (1997) found that teachers might be unable to take up their normal tasks and accept additional leadership roles.

This study’s findings suggest that there is inadequate time because of the busy work schedule of teachers. Teachers often meet during break periods. This time is not enough for teachers to discuss on the methods and ways of improving teaching and learning. As well as issues concerning the entire school.

It is difficult for the administration to make out time for teachers to meet and talk about other matters concerning the school because the time tables are very charged. Curriculum matters are mostly discussed during departmental meetings, and often this takes place during break periods. (T4)

Research suggests that since most of the tasks carried out by teacher leaders are often supplemented with teachers’ main duty of teaching students, teacher leadership practices require more time (Danielson, 2006). Therefore, it is relevant for Cameroonian schools to set time and resources for teachers to plan

and discuss on; curriculum, school plans, study groups, school visits, collaboration with higher education institutions, and collaboration with colleagues (Harris, 2003; Muijs & Harris, 2003).

The results indicate that most respondents mentioned facilities such as the multi-media center and library for research. The facilities help teachers to improve on their knowledge, and to update their lesson notes. It is also necessary for teachers to be provided with didactic material and financial support to facilitate teaching and learning.

The principal distributes work according to areas where people are gifted and provide the necessary material needed. Sometimes the principal provide support to buy text books and teaching aids, and sometimes seminars. Sometimes it could be financial to facilitate movement. (HB)

There are many opportunities especially the availability of the multimedia center and the school library. (HG)

The school has a library where teachers can improve their knowledge. (VG)

Literature on teacher leadership suggests that opportunities for professional learning are fundamental if the work of teacher leaders is to flourish (Murphy, 2007). Research found that one of the strongest evidence for teacher leadership is the inevitable and continual opportunities for growth and learning among teacher leaders and their peers (Barth, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Cheung & Lai, 2015). In organizations that learn, teachers are encouraged and supported as professionals, thus experience continuous expansion in their ability to advance and succeed (Silins & Mulford, 2002). Moreover, organizational learning significantly influences teachers' work in the classroom (Silins & Mulford, 2004). In cultures that foster learning, teachers are encouraged to try new approaches and learn new concepts (Danielson, 2006).

The findings indicate that teachers are motivated to learn and develop through opportunities for further studies in higher institutions of learning.

...teachers are offered study leave and scholarship opportunities to enable them go back to school. Many teachers in towns with institutions of higher learning usually pursue higher education. (T1)

Teachers are also given the opportunity to apply for study leave in order to further their education in higher institutions of learning. (PB)

The literature indicates that formal training in the form of university coursework or district-based professional development, and job embedded support such as coaching by principals or other administrators are critical factors for development (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Research suggests that enhancing teacher leadership practices requires associating teacher leaders with professional establishments and educational conventions and presentations (Merideth, 2006).

In summary, improving teacher leadership practices require opportunities for teachers to learn and develop. The work of teachers requires time and space for meetings, opportunities for further studies, and working facilities to enhance teaching and learning.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses results on investigating teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary education. It investigates the results in connecting the two research questions' answers together by exploring teacher leadership practices in school and how teacher leadership practices can be improved.

5.1 Examination of Results

It is obvious that the main aim of education is that students learn. However, there is evidence that who the teacher is and what the teacher does in the classroom affects how students learn (Barth, 2001). In other words, teacher leadership can have a direct impact on student learning (Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2016). Therefore, it is important for teachers through their leadership practices to create opportunities to enhance student learning. According to the results of this study, it can be concluded that through collaborative practices, participation in decision-making, shared professional practices, instructional practices, role modeling, taking action, and effective working relationship, teachers influenced teaching, learning, and discipline in school. After exploring teacher leadership practices introduced in this study, it is evident that teachers and their practices matter in improving students' learning (Lai & Cheung, 2015; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Alexandrou & Swaffield, 2016; Silins & Mulford, 2004; Öqvist & Malmström, 2016; Ryan, 1999). Results of this study suggest that teachers through their leadership practices create real opportunities to improve on student learning.

Although the core of teacher leadership practices is on how the work of teachers influences others to improve on student learning, there is too little research on the effect of teacher leadership on student learning. Much of the research evidence concerning teacher leadership points to the benefits of teacher leadership practices on teacher leaders themselves (Harris, 2005; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). The benefits focus on the professional learning and

development of teacher leaders, their motivation, and their commitment to the profession (Smylie & Mayrowetz, 2009). Nevertheless, I argue that the lack of evidence on the effect of teacher leadership practices on student learning can be attributed to researchers' judgments on teacher leadership practices in school, as well as on prior description of teacher leadership practices established in the literature.

This study reveals that teachers have to reconsider their positions as leaders in influencing others to improve on student learning. Surprisingly, most teachers in this study failed to recognize their work or the work of their peers as leadership. It is important to note that this study was done in one country (Cameroon) and was limited to two public schools in the South West Region of the country. Therefore, the cultural issues also matter as to the obtained results. Further, the analysis indicated that the non-recognition of teachers' role as leadership was based on the educators' views that leadership is for school administrators. Most teachers considered their role to end in the classroom. This is a particularity for Cameroon public schools. However, this was also evident in the literature.

Research evidence on teacher leadership has found that when teachers fail to acknowledge themselves as leaders or to recognize the work of their peers as leadership, it presents barriers to the development of teacher leadership (LeBlanc & Shelton, 1997; Coyle, 1997). In Cameroon public schools, the teaching profession considers responsibilities out of the classroom as the area of expertise for those in formal leadership positions (Murphy, 2007). The deceptive supposition that teaching is for teachers and leading is for administrators, has been practiced to the disadvantage of Cameroonian public schools for an extended period of time (Suleiman & Moore, 1996). As a result, teachers are generally unwilling to perceive themselves as leaders (Hoerr, 1996).

To improve on teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary schools, a teacher leadership culture should be established that encourages teachers to take active part in both curricula and pedagogical decisions and where educational leaders are willing to widen the scope for the delegation of

authority and responsibility (Ho, 2010). Through teacher leadership, schools can realize improvement in organizational structures and empower teachers to share in school-wide decision-making that enhances school performance (Frost, & Durrant, 2003; Taylor & Bogotch, 1994). As a result, the role of teachers should not be limited to holding an imposed or recommended number of weekly lessons (Harris & Muijs, 2005; Alava et al., 2012). Teachers should also be actively involved in leadership practices of the whole school (Angelle & Dehart, 2011; Harris, 2005).

Following the exploration of teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary schools, it was evident that teacher leadership practices can be improved through teacher recognition and motivation, enhancing teacher professionalism, empowering teachers to lead, and providing opportunities for teacher learning and development. It was clearly indicated in the results that when teachers are recognized for their expertise, it motivates them to take their job seriously. In addition, it encourages other staff to work efficiently by devising new strategies to improve on student learning. To enhance teacher leadership and professionalism in Cameroonian schools, it is important for all educators to acknowledge the work of teachers and provide opportunities to recognize and support their focus on student learning. They also have to recognize, respect, and value their expertise (Stone et al., 1997). Further, professional development should be considered in developing the leadership skills of teachers and school administrators. Rewarding and recognizing the efforts of teachers may be of importance particularly with a view toward sustaining teacher leadership practices (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Therefore, opportunities must be created to recognize and support the work of teacher leaders (Childs-Bowen et al., 2000; Harris, 2003; Barth, 2001; Danielson, 2006). In sum, this study informs educators, stakeholders, and policy makers in Cameroon to start reflecting on the changing role of teachers in the school system. In order to enhance teacher leadership practices in school, it is further recommended that sufficient time be allocated for teachers to meet and discuss opportunities on improving student learning.

5.2 Reliability of the Study

Research suggests that quality plays an essential role in qualitative research (Seale, 1999; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Golafshani, 2003). The credibility of a qualitative research depends on the competence of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). Glyn (2000) noted that denying the role of the researcher threatens the quality of the research. To embrace my role in this research, I travelled from Finland to Cameroon. I had face-to-face interviews with teachers and school administrators in two public schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. To enhance reliability, a detailed presentation of the research topic, research design, and process was provided. This is to enable future researchers to follow a similar research process, and for the research to be applied in a different setting. Moreover, the research questions were clear, which made the quality of the list of interview questions to be more reliable.

During the data collection and analysis process, the subjective meanings of the responses of the participants were taken into consideration (Dina, 2012). The data analysis process considered interpreting the data from the perspective of the participants. The study stressed on the relevance of the views of participants, the setting and context in which the views of the participants are expressed, and the perspectives of individuals with respect to educational issues (Creswell, 2005). To enhance quality in the results, I ensured that the outcome of the study does not reveal my own ideas and values, but rather expresses the reflections and experiences of the teachers and school administrators (Constantinou et al., 2017). By coding the data, I could easily understand the information from the viewpoint of the participants and provide a valid explanation of these views. Open coding also allowed the themes and categories to emerge from the data (Dina, 2012).

To enable “the reader experience the participants’ actual language, dialect, and personal meanings” (Johnson 1999, p. 284) the exact words of the participants were provided in direct quotations. Direct codes were used to demonstrate some degree of objectivity.

5.3 Ethical Considerations

In designing the research procedure for this study, ethical considerations and professional codes of conduct were considered to direct the research procedure, and to prevent possible damages that can emerge while conducting the study (Van, 2009). The objective of ethical concerns in this study was to gather firsthand information that was influenced by the type and number of informants sampled for the study (Constantinou et al., 2017).

During the research process, face-to-face contact was established with the principals of the two schools to have their permission to collect data from their institutions. This was done one month prior to the date for data collection. During the meeting with the principals, the objective of the study and the informants needed for the study were clearly outlined. This meeting was made possible with the aid of a cover letter from the Institute of Educational Leadership of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. The letter indicated the research topic, and acknowledged the researcher as a full-time student in the Master's Degree Programme on Educational Leadership.

Doyle and Buckley (2017) consider informed consent as one of the pillars in research ethics. To obtain consent, the purpose, and significance of the study as well as the general research design were conveyed to the teachers and school administrators. The study participants were also informed on the processes and procedures involved in their participation. Moreover, the participants were informed of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

During the research, the informants were given the opportunity to accept or reject their participation in the study and to quit the study when they deem necessary. At the end of the data collection process, the researcher did not forget to thank the respondents for their participation. In the data analysis process, confidentiality was further considered by assigning codes to all the teachers and administrators interviewed.

5.4 Future Research and Limitations

Educational research has the potential to develop the professional competences of educational practitioners and assist learners in their learning processes (Atkins & Wallace, 2012). Therefore, it is important to increase our knowledge on educational matters through educational research.

Firstly, this study is a qualitative case study to explore teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary schools. I recommend for future research to consider a quantitative study that is designed to cover a larger group of educators. It should consider the understanding of teacher leadership practices in a larger geographical area.

Secondly, students are the focus of teacher leadership practices in school. However, research evidence on teacher leadership has paid little or no attention to the views of students in exploring teacher leadership practices. Future researchers should focus their attention on the perspective of students on teacher leadership practices and on how teacher leadership practices can improve on student learning.

Thirdly, much of the research evidence concerning teacher leadership points to the description of teacher leadership practices in school. It is relevant for researchers to focus on an in-depth study to explore if the description of teacher leadership is based on researchers' judgments of teacher leadership practices or on prior description established in the literature.

Lastly, I will recommend for future researchers to carry out research to explore teacher leadership practices in private and mission schools. Moreover, a comparative study on teacher leadership practices in public and private schools should be conducted. This is because public and private schools are not governed in a similar manner.

This study has some limitations. To begin with, although the relevance of the results cannot be underestimated, they are limited to be generalized to all secondary schools in Cameroon. This is because the results are limited to the responses of the fifteen teachers and eight school administrators. It is important to note that this study was done in one country (Cameroon) and was limited to

two public schools in the South West Region of the country. Therefore, the cultural issues also matter as to the obtained results. Again, the Cameroon education system has different schools ranging from public, denominational, and private schools. These schools are governed differently because of their economic, cultural, social, political, and religious specificities. Therefore, this study is limited in terms of generalization. However, the study was not intended to be generalized to a population but to understand teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary education. The study was intended to inform teachers, school administrators and policy makers of the changing role of teachers within the school system.

6 CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to investigate teacher leadership practices in Cameroon secondary schools. Teacher leadership has evolved dramatically over the years, and the role of teachers within secondary and high schools has greatly increased. The global emphasis on improving student achievement has brought about increased attention on the pivotal role of teachers in improving the quality of education. Teachers are central to the task of building schools that promote high quality teaching and learning for all students. There has been increased recognition of the central role that teachers play in school improvement and students' achievement. However, in Cameroon, teacher leadership is not operational as a form of leadership activity in schools. The education system of Cameroon is top-down and centralized, and the administrative structures are generally arranged in a hierarchical and bureaucratic nature. Whereas leadership in some countries is typically viewed as a collective responsibility, leadership in the Cameroonian system is viewed from the perspective of an individual. As a result, teachers in Cameroon avoid assuming leadership roles and teacher education and training is limited, only providing teachers with survival techniques to handle and cope with classroom routines and customs.

The current study has argued that the current practices of school leadership in Cameroon would benefit from research and improvements in school systems such as Finland, where teacher leadership has experienced positive improvements. Although teacher leadership is well advanced and established in the research discourse in countries such as the USA, Canada, and Australia, in Sub-Saharan Africa countries such as Cameroon, there is little academic research on teacher leadership. My review of the literature on educational leadership in Cameroon did not find evidence on how teacher leadership is practiced. In addition, my review did not find evidence for why teacher leadership has not evolved to match with what is going on in exemplar systems like the Finnish school system.

To address these problems and improve the practice of teacher leadership in Cameroon and learn from exemplar systems, this study empirically examined how teacher leadership is practiced in schools and how it can be improved. The results indicate that teachers are involved in many different practices, such as teaching, learning, collaborative practices, participation in decision making, shared professional practices, instructional practices, and role modeling. The results further suggest that teacher leadership can be improved through measures that recognize and motivate the efforts of teachers and enhance teacher professionalism. Teachers should also be empowered to lead by exposing them to opportunities that improve the learning and development of leadership skills. Indeed, when teachers are recognized for their expertise, they become motivated to take their jobs seriously. This study informs teachers, principals, educational administrators, civil society, and policy makers in Cameroon to reflect on the changing role of teachers within the school system. Accordingly, it is suggested that future research examines teacher leadership practices in public and private schools and how teacher leadership practices can improve on student learning.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Interview questions

Interview questions for school administrators

1. How school administrators perceive the work of teachers
 - i. What tasks do teachers perform in school?
 - ii. How do teachers accomplish their tasks?
 - iii. How are teachers held accountable for their work?
 - iv. Can you describe the working relationship between teachers and the school administration?

2. Developing the work of teachers
 - i. What conditions are available to support the work of teachers?
 - ii. How can these conditions be improved?
 - iii. What is your role as administrator to help teachers accomplish their tasks?

3. Perception of leadership in Cameroon secondary education
 - i. How can you describe leadership in Cameroon secondary schools?
 - ii. What type of leadership do you expect in schools?

Interview questions for teachers

1. The role of teachers in school
 - i. What is your role in enhancing teaching and learning?
 - ii. What activities do you perform out of the classroom?
 - iii. How do teachers share responsibility for students learning?
 - iv. What motivation do you get from colleagues (other teachers and school administrators)?
 - v. How would you describe the working relationship between teachers and the school administration?

2. Developing teacher leadership
 - i. What conditions are available to support the work of teachers?
 - ii. How can these conditions be improved?

3. Perception of leadership in Cameroon secondary education
 - i. How can you describe leadership in Cameroon secondary schools?
 - ii. What are your expectations of school leadership in Cameroon?

Appendix 2 Grouping similar colours

1. Teacher leadership practices in school

Administrators	First degree coding (open coding)	Second degree coding (selective coding)
PB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers' willingness and involvement in school improvement Share ideas and vision with administration for school improvement. routine classroom activities 	
PG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teachers are involve in teaching and learning activities participate in school admission committee participate in curriculum review 	Instructional practices
VB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure curriculum planning & implementation participate in class council, disciplinary council participate in seminars 	Administrative practices
VG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching administration marking of entry exams participate in departmental meetings on how to teach share ideas with principal on how to improve the school 	Collaborative practices
DB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Representation of teachers opinion in different structures Participate in staff and departmental meeting 	
DG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advised/ counsel students on public exams registration peer evaluation peer recommendation for subjects allocation 	
HB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> participate in teaching participate in school improvement heading school commissions 	
HG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching, make suggestion for school improvement Make proposal for teacher subject allocation. 	
Teachers		
T1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce students to new knowledge. provide students with study material ensure students discipline Work of teacher reflected in student learning involve in curriculum planning participate in admission board and disciplinary council role modeling community leader 	
T2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure proper classroom management and discipline participate in decision making involve in admission committee Act as a disciplinarian, a counselor, a parent and a role model to the students. coordinate co-curricular activities 	Instructional practices administrative role

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share opinions and ideas on pedagogic issues. 	
T3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check students notebook • devoted to improving teaching and learning • identify and help struggling students • Research to enhance teaching and learning. 	collegial/collaborative practices
T4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • syllabus coverage • Work together at the level of the department. 	Research role
T5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure student discipline • Support students learning. • provide students with informative material from the internet • networking with teachers from other schools 	Role modeling
T6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role model to the students. • Act as a disciplinarian. • Act as a parent and guardian. 	Teacher learning and development
T7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as role model • ensure classroom discipline • chief examiner of advanced level history • leader of the current events club of the school • Coordinator of the social science subject 	Other practices

Appendix 3 Developing themes and interpretation

Teacher leadership practices	Open coding	Selective coding	Interpretation
p1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of teachers in school improvement • Share collective responsibility for students learning • Collaborate with each other • collaborate with school administration • Work together with colleagues • networking with teachers from other schools • Work in collaboration with administrators to ensure student discipline • Assist colleagues in their classes • Share school improvement ideas with administrators • Discuss effective teaching and learning techniques with teachers from other schools • Share ideas and opinion on students' learning and discipline • cooperate with members of the same department • cooperate with school administrators • work as a team for students to succeed • Work together to support student learning and discipline • Support each other to ensure that all students succeed • Teachers and other administrators work together in the absence of the principal • None of the activities carried out in school are done single handedly • Satisfaction derived from sharing responsibility for student learning • Critical opinion on working together with other teachers 	Collaborative practices	<p>All respondents mentioned aspects of collaborative practices in accomplishing their tasks, which is a strong indication of teacher leadership.</p> <p>The goal of every teacher is to work collaboratively for all students to succeed</p> <p>Teachers are ready to work as a team with colleagues and with the school administration</p> <p>The objective of working together is to achieve teaching, learning and discipline in the school.</p> <p>Teachers see student achievement as a collective effort and are gratified when they share responsibility for student learning.</p>
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in school admission committee • participate in class council, disciplinary council • Represent teachers' opinions in different structures of the school 		<p>The principal seek the opinion of teachers before taking certain</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in staff and departmental meetings • participate in school improvement • make suggestion for school improvement • Make proposal for teacher subject allocation • principal seek opinion of teachers • Respect the opinion of teachers • seek opinion of teachers in admission and disciplinary matters • Share ideas and vision with administration for school improvement. • share ideas with principal on how to improve the school • participate in admission board and disciplinary council • participate in decision making • involve in admission committee • school administration cannot be done without teachers • Decide on the number of students per class • Participate in admission committees • Seek opinion of teachers in teaching and learning • The principal enhances openness, sharing and discussion • The opinions of teachers are not often considered in the final decision • Forced to implement decisions taken without their consent • opinions of teachers are not respected • concerns and ideas of teachers are considered in limited cases 	Participation in decision making	<p>decisions that influence students' learning.</p> <p>Since teachers are closest to students, their participation in decision-making gives administration access to important information concerning schooling.</p> <p>Teachers and administrators discuss on vital issues concerning the proper functioning of the schoolhouse.</p> <p>The opinions of teachers are noted, but most often not considered when taking the final decision.</p> <p>Teachers consider their participation in decision-making as impartial and a mere principle. In practice, teachers are viewed as passive participants whose opinions are not often respected.</p> <p>Teachers are sometimes forced to implement instructional decisions taken without their consent. This decreases their willingness to actively engage in activities out of their classrooms</p>
P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite a colleague to help teach a topic • direct each other on how to teach 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share knowledge and teaching techniques • provide support to struggling teachers • peer classroom observation • advice to student teachers and junior colleagues • peer support • seek professional and instructional advise from colleagues • feedback from peers and head of department • demonstration lessons • observing senior colleagues • Provide peer feedback • Assist colleagues in topics they do not understand • Share instructional material • Guide each other • Share schemes of work and teaching techniques • Assist other teachers in areas of difficulties. • Give feedback on teaching practice • Share instructional experiences and challenges • share knowledge on difficult topics • Share knowledge on how to improve on teaching • Share information and expertise with colleagues • Share opinions and ideas on pedagogic issues. • Teachers are inspired by the work of other teachers • Provide support to young and less experienced colleagues • Teachers encourage each other • Teachers in the department support each other. • teachers receive words of encouragement from other teachers 	Shared professional practices	<p>Teachers improve on teaching and learning by sharing professional practices with colleagues.</p> <p>Through sharing professional practices teachers share knowledge on teaching and classroom management, discuss instructional challenges on the job and go an 'extra mile' to help colleagues experience a change in their teaching practices.</p>
P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce students to new knowledge • encourage students to learn • ensure effective teaching, learning and discipline • managers of their classrooms; • make use of the available resources in the environment to improve teaching and learning • routine classroom activities • Teachers' tasks are limited to the classroom • involve in teaching • ensure curriculum implementation and review • marking of entrance exams • provide students with study material • check students notebook • identify and assist struggling students 	Instructional practices	<p>Concentration at the moment is on teachers' work with students in the classroom and not very much on the development of the entire school.</p> <p>In carrying out their functions teachers focus on their instructional practices, where they influence curriculum, teaching and learning</p> <p>Teachers facilitate the teaching and learning process and encourage</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support students learning • Ensure syllabus coverage • Work of teacher reflected in student learning • ensure proper classroom management and discipline • Provide teaching aid to enhance student learning. • Discuss with students on how to enhance discipline in class. • Facilitate the teaching and learning process • research on skills to enhance teaching and learning • provide students with informative material from the internet • search for books and study materials to enhance student learning • Involve in research • Participate in seminars • Involve in curriculum review • Ensure curriculum planning and implementation 		<p>students to learn. They fully engage in teaching to ensure that students succeed</p> <p>Teachers ensure discipline in the classroom and make students understand the consequences their behaviours have on their academic performance.</p> <p>Apart from teaching students the subject matter, teachers engage in research. They search for helpful information and material to support students' learning.</p> <p>Teachers attend professional development seminars to expand their knowledge.</p>
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