

# Educational Leadership and Management Studies

Vol. 33 No.3, June 2024



# ELMS

# Principals' Leadership Function as a Correlate to Educational Wastage in Secondary Schools in the South West Region, Cameroon

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## Abstract

The study aimed at investigating Principals' leadership functions as a correlate of educational wastage in Secondary Schools in the South West Region. The Theory of Transformational Leadership by Burns elucidated principals' leadership functions and the Academic Mediation Theory by Vincent Tinto Led for educational wastage. This paper is based on the results from a Principal Leadership Questionnaire for Educational Wastage (PLQEW) survey that was done in Cameroon as part of a bigger research project. The questionnaire data collected from teachers and principals from the field was first processed using Epi-Data 3.1 whereby, all the participants' responses were keyed, in accordance with each of the test items. Quantitative data was exported to SPSS version 25 for further consistency, data range and validation checks with the purpose to first identify invalid codes (data cleaning) with the aid of exploratory statistics. The findings revealed that there was a strong correlation between principals' leadership function and educational wastage. As contribution to knowledge, a distinction was made between the principal's leadership function and that of Administration and management. Some strategies to curb educational wastage in secondary schools were suggested. The following recommendations were made. Principals should receive formal training in their specialization of educational leadership and management prior to their appointment.

**Keywords:** Principals' Leadership Functions, Educational Wastage, Secondary Schools in Cameroon

## Introduction

The duties of secondary school principals requires that they ensure the school's educational programmes are well implemented by enhancing the availability of appropriate school resources, maintain academic records and provide a friendly teaching and learning environment. Principals in every school in the world perform the leadership function as being one of their functions which allows them to influence the activities of their subordinates towards the achievement of school goals and objectives.

**How to cite this paper in APA format:** Ayuk, A. C., Ebot-Ashu, F., Agborbechem, P. T. (2024). "Principals' Leadership Function as a Correlate to Educational Wastage in Secondary Schools in the South West Region, Cameroon". *Educational Leadership and Management Studies*. 33 (3), 100-122. ISSN 2056-6409 (Online).

Access Online:

<https://wp.me/PfxB3Y-3Hv>



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Received 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024

Peer Reviewed from 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 to 20 March 2024

Accepted 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Achoka (2007) observed that the leader in any group is considered as having the best ideas, possessing the greatest understanding of situations and providing the best guidance. The effectiveness of school greatly depends on the professional conduct of the principal and the leadership role he/she fulfils (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; Ebot Ashu, Ngantchop, Lavngwa, 2022). Without formal training in leadership and management, the

principal may be handicapped especial as the post of principal in our secondary schools is through appointment.

According to the 1998 Law on education in Cameroon, the teacher is the main guarantor of quality education, thus their perception of principals' function as the CEO of the institution formed a veritable web in this study. By this, we looked at perception of principals' leadership functions as correlates of educational wastage. Teachers perceive principals as managers of instructional programs as they monitor teaching and learning, provide materials needed for effective pedagogy to enhance the quality of teaching and learning with the objective to improve on school result (students' academic performance) (Ebot-Ashu et al., 2022; Ebot-Ashu, 2021), because poor students' academic performance result in repetition, stagnation and even dropout in some cases which signify educational wastage.

With reference to educational wastage, this concept has been widespread both in the developed and developing nations and there is much belief among educational economists. According to Tirozzi (2001), educational development would lead to accelerated economic growth, more wealth and income distribution, greater equality of opportunity, availability of skilled human power and low crime wave (Pinto, 2018). Despite that, secondary schools still record high failures rates and repetition leading to academic stagnation and dropout. To some extent students do not acquire the required skills and knowledge necessary for their change of grade level and may need remediation.

The problem of educational wastage has continued to manifest itself as long as resources were put in place for the process of transformation of human through training for development. Borrowed from the field of economics to the language of education, wastage in education describes the various aspect of failure of an educational system to achieve its stated objectives. Generally, wastage in education can be viewed as underutilisation or total neglect of human, material, financial resources allocated for education or double expenditure on resources to educate the students they remain in the same class year-after-year.

It should be noted that our society is still flooded with early school leavers, who have failed to complete upper secondary school. A failure to complete compulsory schooling, a failure to gain qualifications or school leaving certificate may result in premature withdrawal from school.

According to Samuel (2017), early school leavers are those who have only achieved primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than two years and include those who have only a pre-vocational or vocational education which did not lead to an upper secondary certification (Samuel et al., 2017). The delivery process of secondary education has been marked by numerous challenges some of which have culminated in wastage due to ineffective principalship and lack of proper managerial, conceptual, and technical skills (Fonkeng, 2006; Ebot-Ashu, 2020). These forms of wastage have hampered and are still hampering the attainment of the educational objectives as stated in the 1998 law on education in Cameroon and to an extent led to failure in achieving the purpose of secondary education in Cameroon.

### Research Question

The main research question of this study was to examine principals' leadership functions as correlates of educational wastage in secondary schools in the Southwest Region of Cameroon.

### Justification to the Study

The plethora of literature ravelled on educational wastage presented little information on the impact of school principals Leadership function as a correlate to educational wastage. In all schools' principals are to carry out the leadership functions which entails that, they crave a vision for the school, this can be done by setting goals and objectives related to improving educational outcomes (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018; 2022), by so doing reduce dropout rates, repetition and academic stagnation. They innovate changes that lead to school success, so as to inspire stakeholders to work collaboratively towards reducing wastage. They initiate and influence the activities of the staff towards achieving school goals, they carryout proper instructional leadership, whereby they lead by examples and promote effective teaching practices that enhance student learning and engagement (Ebot-Ashu, 2021; Tirozzi, 2001). This can be done by providing professional opportunities for teachers to improve on their instructional strategies. Principals are required also provide a conducive learning environment for all as well as, positive an inclusive school culture that supports students' success and reduce wastage.

One critical argument in this study revolves around the issue of curbing educational wastage in secondary schools in the southwest region of Cameroon and the untold effects on the society.

According to this researcher, the fact that secondary education still experiences high failure and repetition rates leading to academic stagnation, a towering increase in the number of school drop-out and unruly and indiscipline students resulting in school inefficiency, necessitates an investigation on principals' Leadership functions as a correlate educational wastage since they are the heads of secondary schools.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be practically relevant as at now to the government and other stakeholders of education, principal, teachers, students, parents and future researchers. The study will serve as an eye opener to the government as it will offer them credible strategies on the appointment of principals of schools, whose functions are becoming more demanding. Samuel et al (2017), ascertained that the contemporary secondary school environments have become more complex and need seasoned, competent, experienced, dynamic as well as well-trained leaders who will give proper accountability, good governance and quality assurance. If there is a correlation between school administration and students' success, then there must be a correlation between poor administration, management and leadership of school and educational wastage.

Furthermore, the findings will acquaint policy makers on the inadequacy of principals' leadership of secondary schools and may therefore give them some autonomy at the level of the school environment to function well to attain higher achievements. Principals will benefit from this study as it will acquaint them of their leadership functions and offer them credible tactics to restrain such trends and improve on quality supervision of instruction that will curb repetition, stagnation and dropout.

Teachers will benefit from the findings of the study because it will unveil some of the problems which lead to poor teaching and learning in various secondary school and as the principals adopt and implement some strategies suggestion in the study in their bid to solve these problems, teachers will be favoured. This study will also be beneficial to the students as it will help to avail the of certain lapses on school administration by so doing encourage them resist all the challenge that might deviate their attention from receiving quality education that remains the pivot of their academically development and subsequent economic and social growth (Ebot-Ashu, 2021; Tirozzi, 2001; Pinto, 2018). Parents will benefit

from this study as it will assist them join in the fight against educational wastage, cognizance of the fact that, the homes and community receive the multiplier effect. If a child makes it in school, there will be more skills acquired and consequently higher productivity. Researchers will benefit from the study as it will unravel the mirth that still hover around failure, repetition, academic stagnation and dropout, despite the much effort and resources set aside for educational purposes.

This section focused on the rationale of the study which is to investigate principals' leadership functions as a correlate of educational wastage in secondary schools in the Southwest Region of Cameroon. It presents the problem statement justification and significance of the study. Section two will deal on literature reviewed theoretically and conceptually base of what others have written about the topic. Next will be section three, which is research methodology. Section four, which is dedicated to the presentation of findings, and section five, which is dedicated to discussion, conclusion and the contributions to knowledge, and recommendations for further research about the topic.

### **Literature Review**

This section reviews theories and concepts that are relevant and related to the variables under investigation. Principals' leadership function depicts the roles and responsibilities that the principals carry out in a secondary school upon their appointment by the stakes. According Ebot-Ashu (2018) and Ebot-Ashu et al. (2022), leadership involve: shared vision, instructional leadership strategies, innovation and change, keeping the school environment healthy, motivate both staffs and students, building and nurturing healthy school community relationship, manage finance effectively, apply transformational leadership in supervision of instructions in secondary schools (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; Tirozzi, 2001).

Wastage in education connotes inefficiency in the use of educational resources by school administrators, poor relationship between inputs and output (Samuel, 2017; Tambi & Ndemmaze, 2020; Adamu, 2001). The purpose of this study is to look into the leadership function of principals as correlates of educational wastage in secondary schools in South West Region which shall include; principals' leadership functions act as correlates of educational wastage. This section is divided into

three sections: theoretical review, conceptual review and chapter summary.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Theory of Transformational Leadership by Burns (1978) elucidated principals' leadership functions and the Academic Mediation Theory by Vincent Tinto Led for educational wastage. The Theory of Transformational Leadership was found appealing to this research. It was first proposed by Burns (1978) to distinguish those leaders who have strong motivational relationship with their followers and subordinates and those who widely focus on exchange with transformational leadership interaction to create results. Transformational leadership is a conscious, moral and spiritual process which provides patterns of equal power relationships between leaders and followers to achieve a collective goal or real transformation (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; Tirozzi, 2001; Pinto 2018). This theory is relevant to this research because as a principal, you have to recognise the needs of the school as well as your staff in order to stimulate and provide higher level needs inside of them, not leaving out the needs and aspirations of learners. The principal's actions enable the school to improve on their performance in all circumstances. The principal is in the most advantageous position to provide the needed leadership in the management of the schools. He should maintain good relationship between the school and the community by involving all members of the school community in the decision-making process.

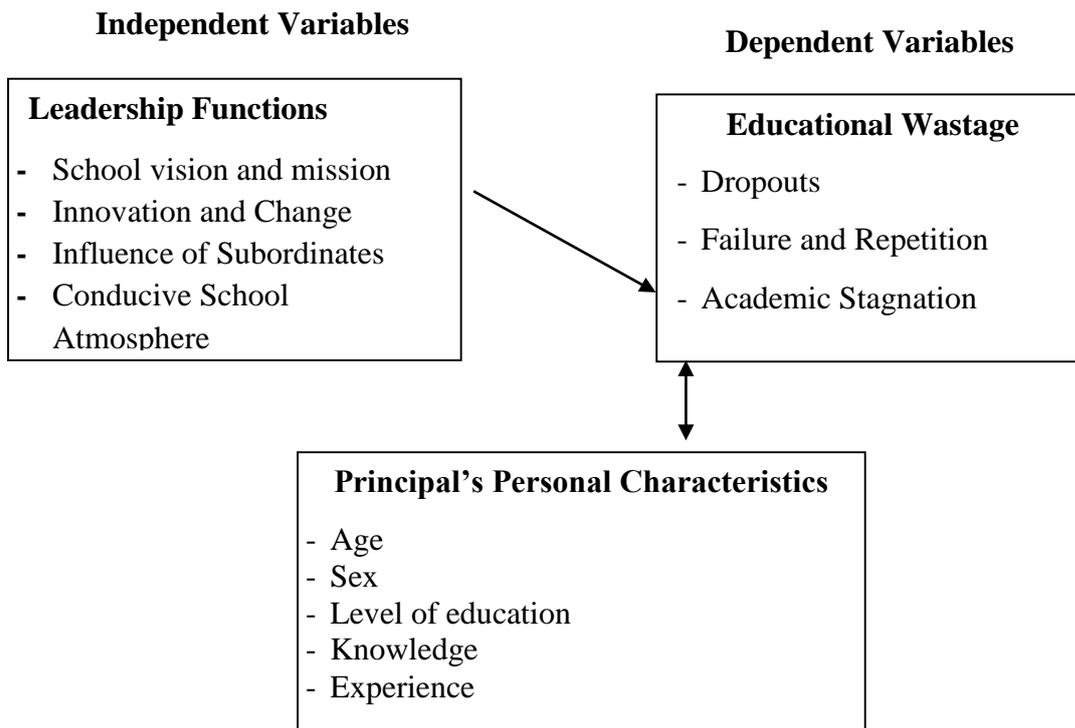
Lastly, the Academic Mediation Theory by Vincent Tinto Led was used to explain the concept of wastage. This theory propels that poor academic achievements are one of the strongest predictors of dropout. Agreeably, no successful learner will want to abandon school except otherwise. This theory examines the mediation effect of poor academic achievements on other factors such as deviant, affiliation, personal deviance, family socializations and structural strains associated with school dropout essentially (Samuel 2017; Tambi & Ndemmaze, 2020; Samuel et al., 2017). It looks at

how poor academic achievements interact with and affects the relationship between high school dropout and other factors. The model for this theory was shown to statistically fit at an acceptable degree to wastage dropout of school regardless of how well the students are doing in school. These factors include absentees, grade retention, special education, poor performance and grades repetition (Samuel 2017; Tambi & Ndemmaze, 2020; Samuel et al., 2017). This theory of educational wastage affects every other part of the public secondary school system, but the most affected person is the student. It is also the major aspect of all educational wastage for this theory is concerned with the student's academic fulfilment and successful secondary education competition. Academic mediation theory relates with the present study for it presents how poor academic performance leads to failure, repetition and school dropout of students and a student who fails academically is a product of educational wastage.

### **Conceptual Review**

The fundamental concepts as they pertain to the literature were reviewed according to themes as stated in the main research question to investigate and establish a firm foundation for this study and its arguments. The concepts under review are: principals' leadership functions, educational wastage.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Diagram**



Source : Researchers, 2024

**Principals' Leadership Function as a Correlates of Educational Wastage**

Many of the definitions of leadership share the view that leadership is a process whereby an individual, not necessary one occupying a formal position, influences the actions, behaviours, beliefs and feelings of others not by coercive methods (Titanji, 2017). In Cameroon, within formal educational organisation, the principal is appointed to head the secondary school (Mbua, 2003). According Ebot-Ashu (2014; 2020) 'leadership can be hard to define and it means different things to different people'. He opines that; the concept of leadership is linked with vision and facilitation and that leadership within human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilise, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers. In the transformational leadership model, leaders set direction and help themselves and others to do the right thing to move forward. They create inspiring vision, and then motivate others to reach that vision. To do so, he encourages the team to perform to their optimum all the time and drives the organization to success

(Ebot-Ashu, 2020; 2022; Tirozzi, 2001; Pinto, 2018). A good leader seeks continuous improvement.

Generally, from the foregoing definitions of leadership, a number of basic features of the term are evident. These are that:

- Leadership involves people (followers or subordinates).
- Leadership involves the use of influence.
- Leadership process involves an unequal distribution of power among leaders and group members (Titanji, 2017; Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2022).
- Leadership is a process engaged by certain individuals in an organization.
- Leadership focuses on the accomplishments of goals.

In addition to lead, individuals must add to their authority and power personal attributes and social skills. Titanji, (2017) and Ebot-Ashu (2014) ascertains that considering the diversity and type of schools and context, it is difficult or even impossible to talk about a definite list of leadership skills that will serve all leaders in all situations yet certain skills appear consistently in leadership

literature such as; skills to persuade, to influence, to create and to nurture a healthy interpersonal relationship with others. The effective principal considers both the needs of workers and the goals of the organization (Ebot-Ashu, 2020; 2022). Ebot-Ashu also concerns himself with needs, goals and performance of the organization. The school principal is therefore called upon to be both systems and persons-oriented. The principal exerts double leadership-in the community at large and within the community of his school. In large community, he is sensitive to realities in getting educational goals and communicating how school process is meeting those goals. Within the school, the emphasis is on improving the institutional process and on building and maintaining a cohesive social system that seeks to improve the learning environment.

### Elements of Leadership

Titanji, (2017) and Ebot-Ashu (2014) argues about principals like other leaders in organization must consider the following elements if they must strive to achieve school goals and objectives;

- Development of subordinates; they must see to it that their close collaborators acquire growth in their various ranks.
- Developing an environment for growth;
- Sharing authority and responsibility with subordinates; this involves delegation of power to subordinates according to the specialties.
- Encourage subordinates to accept responsibility and to take initiatives.

Leadership involves a social influence process in which intentional influence is exerted by one individual over others to structure activities and relationships in a group or organization.

Today, in a rapidly changing era of standards-based reform and accountability, a different conception has emerged – one closer to the model suggested by “Jim Collins’ 2001 Good to Great”, as cited by (Titanji 2017) which draws lessons from contemporary corporate life to suggest leadership that focuses with great clarity on what is essential, what needs to be done and how to get it done. This shift brings with it dramatic changes in what public education needs from principals. They can no longer function simply as building managers, tasked with adhering to district rules, carrying out regulations and avoiding mistakes. They have to be (or become) leaders of learning who can develop a team delivering effective

instruction. Wallace and Poulson, (2003) suggests that this entails five key responsibilities:

- Shaping a vision of academic success for all students, one based on high standards.
- Creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail.
- Cultivating leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their parts in realizing the school vision.
- Improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn to their utmost.
- Managing people, data and processes to foster school improvement.

Akindele (2010) looked at the theoretical framework for managing educational wastes in Edo State in his study. Purposive sampling was used to pick 120 principals, 80 males and 40 females, from the total population of principals. The % t-test and ANOVA statistics were used to analyse five hypotheses generated for the study. The premise that there is no substantial variation in perceptions of educational wastes based on gender was found to be false. As a result, there is a considerable variation in educational wastages between male and female principals on wastages. The conclusion was that male principals were more concerned about wastage than female principals. They concluded by stating that the literature emphasized several formulations of the idea of educational wastes, with the researcher paying particular attention to the emergence of human capital theory.

### Educational wastage in Cameroon

In Cameroon, educational wastage has been a problem despite much effort by the government to increase access to education and even improve on quality through policy statements and the training of more qualified teachers (Adamu, 2001). It is thought to have originated as a result of failures, class repetition, academic stagnation, and drop-outs leading to increase deviancy and crime wave in the country (Tambi & Ndemmaze, 2020). Many factors seem responsible for this wastage and in 1995 school management appeared as one of the key factors. Thus, (Kaume, 2018) described it as an investment that does not yield comparable returns because both money and human resources are wasted if a student leaves school without completing a course or fails in class.

Fonkeng (2005) ascertained that, for the number of students who enrol in the primary level, less than 60% complete the cycle, less than 50% complete secondary school and not up to 30% move up to the high school level where completion still remain elusive. The true picture of repetition and stagnation are glaring in forms 5 and 7 where a good number of students do not make it in the end of course examination. This researcher attests to this fact having been teaching these classes for a good number of years. From a more universal view, (Yusuf, 2014) stated that, failure of the system to provide universal education, the failure to recruit students within the system, the failure to hold students (retention) within the system, failure of the system to set appropriate objectives, and inefficiency in the achievement of objectives are the three constituents of educational wastage. These characteristics are in display in our educational system showing the prevalence of educational wastage. In Cameroon the Automatic or Social Promotion Act of (2006) has compounded this issue. Also, the fact that principals do not have the latitude to criticize this Act because they are answerable to hierarchy remain a major problem. The following forms of educational wastage exist:

- High failure rate
- High rate of absenteeism
- High rate of class repetition
- failure to retain students within the school system (high rate of school dropout)
- Academic stagnation
- Non-completion of syllabuses and schemes of work
- High rate of deviancy

According to Yusuf (2014), educational wastage is a combination of class repetition and drop-out. Repeaters waste resources and generate wastage, while those who do not finish their course or dropout are ineffective manpower and waste as well.

According to Samuel (2017), the consequences of educational wastage are devastating to both the individual and the state and include joblessness, lower-income earnings, increased deviancy, violence demonstrated by students, high rate of cyber criminality, public dependency, and bad health as evident in our schools and communities. Educational wastage also manifests in our system through the failure of the educational system to attract students into it, the failure to retain students

in the system, the failure of the system to define acceptable objectives, and inefficiency in achieving those aims.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodology used in carrying out the study centred on Principals' Leadership Functions as a Correlate of Educational Wastage in Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. A Principal Leadership Questionnaire for Educational Wastage (PLQEW) survey which is a self-assessment form, completed by both teachers and principals, documenting perceptions of leadership function as a correlate of educational wastage. The PLQEW is an effective tool for teachers and principals' self-evaluation about their role and educational wastage in secondary school in Fako region of Cameroon.

### Questionnaire Design

A person-to-person PLQEW with closed-ended questions was designed in order to establish valid and reliable data with which to describe teachers and principals' perception of their function in relation to educational wastage. The first part of the questionnaire consists of the introductory notes/consent form which clearly states the title of the topic and the purpose of the research while soliciting the respondents' participation in the study. The second part of the questionnaire consists of a list of questions aimed at identifying who the participants are. In other words, this section targeted the demographic information of all participants. Finally, the third part of the questionnaire consisted of a list of test items or specific question based on leadership functions and educational wastage. The questionnaire consists more of close ended and few open-ended questions with the intention to give teachers and principals the opportunity to share their own personal view about principals' functions as correlates educational wastage.

The closed ended questions are rated using the four-point Likert scale that ranged from; "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree". The reason for using the Likert scale is to allow the teachers to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement to the test items. For each variable under principals' functions, a maximum of 10 items are formulated for the purpose of convenience and massive response. These items measure the sub-indicators for each of the principals' function of interest to the study.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

The researchers used multiple sampling techniques from random to purposive in order to stratify the population to be used for the study. Taking all these into consideration, the sample size for teachers is

401 and 29 for principals. Table 1 below shows the sample distribution per sub-division of secondary schools both public, confessional and lay private. It also showed the distribution of teachers and principals of those schools.

**Table 1: Distribution of Sample**

Sub-Divisions	Teachers and Principals						Total number of principals
	Public		Confessional		Lay Private		
	N	S	N	S	N	S	
Buea	343	88	67	17	68	17	8
Tiko	34	9	23	6	34	9	2
Limbe	76	19	33	9	76	17	6
Kumba I	135	35	32	8	34	9	4
Kumba II	164	42	43	12	44	12	3
Kumba III	167	43	26	7	36	10	2
Bangem	43	11	0	0	32	8	2
Tombel	23	6	0	0	28	7	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>29</b>

**Key:** N=total number of teachers and Principals represent the number to be sample

As depicted on table above, out of the teachers and principals that make up the sample, 253 came from public schools, 59 from Confessional schools and 89 from Lay Private schools.

**Sampling Technique**

Finally, the convenient sample is being used in administering questionnaire to the teachers and principals based on their availability and willingness to take part in the study for the sake of confidentiality.

**Table 2: Demographic Information for Teachers and Principals**

Demographic information	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	212	53.8
	Female	182	46.2
Age range	Below 30 years	87	22.1
	30-40 years	175	44.4
	41-50 years	82	20.8
	Above 50 years	50	12.7
Highest qualification	DIPES I	41	10.4
	DIPES II	133	33.8
	Bachelor's Degree	153	38.8
	Master's Degree	53	13.5
	PhD	14	3.6
School type	Public	239	60.7
	Lay Private	107	27.2
	Confessional	48	12.2
Longevity as a teacher	0-5 years	122	31.0
	6-10 years	157	39.8
	11-15 years	11	2.8
	Above 15 years	0	0

**n=394**

Among the 394 teachers and principals successfully sampled for the study, 53.8% (212) are male and 46.2% (182) are female. With reference to age range, 44.4% (175) of the teachers fall within the age range of 30-40 years, 22.1% (87) are less than 30 years, 20.8% (82) fall within the age range of 41-50 years and 12.7% (50) are above 50 years. Based on highest qualification, 38.8% (153) of the teachers have Bachelors' Degree as their highest qualification, 33.8% (133) have DIPES II, 13.5% (53) have Master's Degree, 10.4% (41) have DIPES I as highest qualification and 3.6% (14) have PhD. With reference to school type, majority of the teachers 60.7% (239) are from public schools, 27.2% (107) are from Lay Private and 12.2% (48) are from Confessional schools. Finally, based on longevity in-service, 39.8% (157) of the teachers have been teaching for 6-10 years, 31.0% (122) have been teaching for 0-5 years, 28.2% (111) for 11-15 years and 1.0% (4) for above 15 years.

### Validation and Reliability of Questionnaire

*Face Validity:* The face validity was guaranteed through scrutiny, modification and proof-reading of items in PLQEW by colleagues reframed some items to make them look simple and less ambiguous to facilitate understanding.

*Content Validity:* Content validity focused on the extent to which the content of the instrument corresponded to the content of the theoretical concept it was designed to measure (Amin, 2005). This was to ensure that the test items on the instruments correspond to the indicators of the variables under the study. The content validity index of the instrument ranged from 0.81 to 1.0. However, despite the satisfactory content validity index, some proposals made by some of the judges not satisfied with some items were also taken into consideration and adjustments were made to further improve on the validity of the instrument.

### Reliability of Instruments

To ensure that the questionnaire was reliable for the study, a pilot study was conducted on 10 teachers from one of the schools not chosen for the study. Data collected from the 10 teachers was tested using the Cronbach Alpha test for each of the construct. Furthermore, a detail item-by-item statistics were computed so that one could clearly see the reliability coefficient value for each item.

Using this test, a Coefficient value of 0.7 and above will imply that the respondents are objective and

consistent in their responses meanwhile a coefficient value of less than 0.7 will imply that some of the test items or all are problematic.

### Analysis of Quantitative Data

The data collected from the field was first processed using Epi-Data 3.1 whereby, all the participants' responses were keyed, in accordance with each of the test items. The data base was were exploited using the SPSS version 25 for further consistency. After thorough verification, the quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages and multiple response set used to calculate summary of finding for each variable. To test the hypothesis, the Spearman rho test was used because the data for the variables were not normally distributed based on the statistics of the assumptions trend of the data. Statistics from the test of normality tested using the advanced inferential statistical test (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) showed that data were approximately normally distributed for all variables ( $p$ -value  $> 0.05$ ). This implies that the data do not significantly deviate from the normal distribution pattern. Given that data were approximately normally distributed, the Pearson test which is parametric was used in testing the hypotheses.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration was taken into account by the researcher. A letter was presented to the respondents and appropriate authorities where data was collected before access was granted for the instruments to be administered. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants or respondents were made to understand the type of information needed from them and how the information was to be used. The issue of confidentiality and anonymity was also seriously considered and the information given was strictly used for the benefit of the study. All information from participants was not be disclosed to a third party except the statistician. The next section will deal on the presentation of findings.

### PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This section presents findings of the study derived from primary data on principals' Leadership functions as a correlate of educational wastage in the South-West Region of Cameroon. Data were successfully collected from teachers and principals. The returned rate for questionnaire stood at 98.3%. The findings are presented based

on the overall research question that guided the study as stated in the hypotheses tested. All statistics are presented at 95% confidence interval with error margin set at 0.05. Below is the specific

research question of the study: How do Principals' Leadership Functions act as a Correlate of Educational Wastage in Secondary/High Schools in the Southwest Region?

Table 3: Teachers' and Principals Opinion on Principals' Leadership Functions

Statements	Stretched		Collapsed				
	SA	A	N	D	SD	SA/A	D/SD
My principal does not make his vision known to the staff at the beginning of the year.	35 (8.9%)	51 (12.9%)	13 (3.3%)	160 (40.6%)	135 (34.3%)	86 (21.8%)	295 (74.9%)
My principal stimulates a task-oriented atmosphere without considering whether the learning environment is conducive.	94 (23.9%)	106 (26.9%)	46 (11.7%)	79 (20.1%)	69 (17.5%)	200 (50.8%)	148 (37.6%)
My principal is so glue to the test of application, so much so that it is difficult to take decisions on complex issues of students' discipline.	108 (18.5%)	86 (21.8%)	55 (14.0%)	73 (27.2%)	72 (18.2%)	194 (49.2%)	145 (36.8%)
My principals institute disciplinary measures that affect his collaborators, so that some teachers face burnout	98 (24.8%)	80 (20.3%)	33 (0.08%)	99 (25.1%)	84 (21.3%)	178 (45.1%)	183 (46.4%)
My principal carries out financial motivation to encourage assiduity and effective teaching.	92 (23.4%)	103 (26.1%)	41 (10.4%)	86 (21.8%)	72 (18.3%)	195 (49.5%)	158 (40.1%)
My principal gives us time to adapt to necessary changes in school procedures and internal policies.	69 (17.5%)	98 (24.8%)	40 (10.2%)	109 (27.6%)	78 (19.8%)	167 (42.4%)	187 (47.5%)
My principal has a strong positive influence on the staff that accentuates effective teaching.	86 (26.9%)	100 (48.2%)	27 (6.9%)	76 (11.7%)	105 (6.3%)	186 (47.3%)	181 (45.9%)
My principal does not involve parents in decision making concerning student progress	76 (9.1%)	70 (10.2%)	36 (9.1%)	110 (40.6%)	102 (31.0%)	146 (37.0%)	212 (53.8%)
My principal has collaborative team spirit with both students and teachers which create a positive school culture.	81 (20.5%)	84 (21.3%)	27 (6.9%)	113 (28.7%)	89 (22.6%)	165 (41.9%)	202 (51.2%)
My principal does not relent his effort to send students home for poor conduct.	64 (16.2%)	123 (31.2%)	58 (14.7%)	91 (23.1%)	58 (14.7%)	187 (47.5%)	149 (37.8%)
<b>Total Response/Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>803 (20.4%)</b>	<b>901 (22.8%)</b>	<b>386 (9.8%)</b>	<b>996 (25.3%)</b>	<b>864 (21.9%)</b>	<b>1704 (43.1%)</b>	<b>1860 (47.1%)</b>

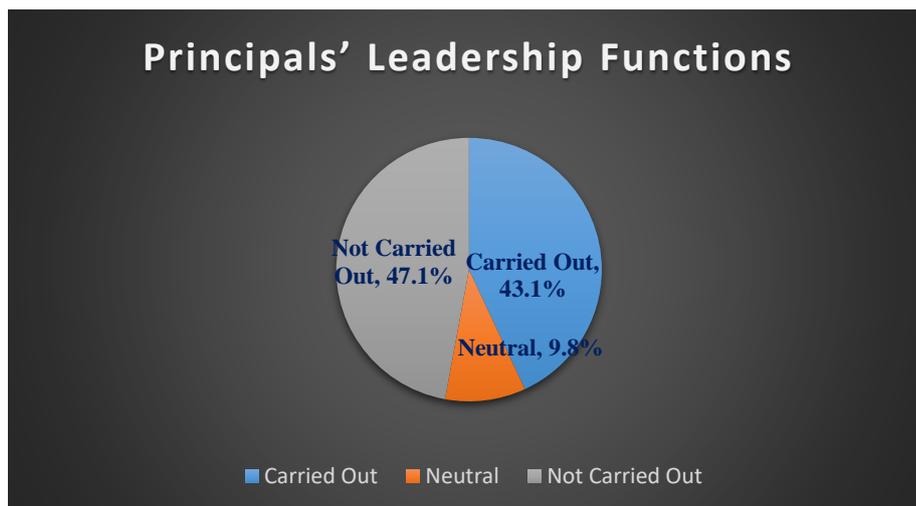
**Items with coding reversed during calculation of total response**

In overall, 47.1% of the teachers indicated that their principals do not carry out leadership functions while 43.1% reported they did and 9.8% neutral. Specifically, 47.3% (186) of teachers opined that their principal has a strong positive influence on the staff that accentuates effective teaching while 45.9% (181) disagreed. Similarly, 74.9% (295) of the teachers equally disagreed that their principal does not make his vision known to the staff at the beginning of the year while 21.8% (86) accepted. In addition, 53.8% (212) of the teachers disagreed that their principal does not involve parents in decision making concerning student progress while 37.0% (146) accepted. Similarly, 51.2% (202) of teachers disagreed that their principal has collaborative team spirit with both students and teachers which influences a positive school culture while 41.9% (165) accepted.

On the same weight 50.8% (200) of teachers agreed that their principal stimulates a task-

oriented atmosphere without considering whether the learning environment is conducive while 45.7% (148) disagreed to this aspect. Again 45.1% (178) agreed that their principal institute disciplinary measures that affect his collaborators, such that some teachers face burnout while 46.4% (183) disagreed. To elucidate, 42.4% (167) also opined that their principal gives them time to adapt to necessary changes in school procedures and internal policies while 47.5% (187) disagreed. Also, 49.2% (194) of the teachers disagreed that their principal is so glue to the test of application, so much so that it is difficult to take decisions on complex issues of students' discipline while 36.6% (145) accepted. Finally, 37.8% (149) disagreed that their principal does not relent his effort to send students home for poor conduct while 47.5% (187) accepted. The overall finding on principals' leadership functions is also presented on the figure below.

**Figure 2:** Teachers’ Opinion on Principals’ Leadership Functions



**Table 4:** Comparing Opinion on Principals’ Leadership Functions by School Type

School type	Principals’ leadership functions			Total	
	Carried out	Neutral	Not carried out		
Public	N	112	25	102	239
	%	46.9%	10.5%	42.7%	
Lay Private	N	50	10	47	107
	%	46.7%	9.3%	43.9%	
Confessional	N	35	3	10	48
	%	72.9%	6.2%	9.3%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>394</b>

Comparing respondents’ opinion on principals’ leadership functions by school type, findings showed that more of the teachers in Confessional schools and Lay Private schools 72.9% and 46.7% respectively reported their principals to carried out their leadership functions more than those from Public schools 46.9%.

**Testing of Hypothesis**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the principals’ leadership functions and educational wastage.

**Ha<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between the principals’ leadership functions and educational wastage.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is principals’ leadership functions while the

dependent variable is educational wastage. Scores of the independent variable were computed from 10 items measured using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire while scores of the dependent variable were also obtained from 10 items measured using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation using the raw score method. The formula using the raw score method is;

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{[n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2][n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2]}}$$

Where x is the independent variable, y is the dependent variable and  $r_{xy}$  is the correlation coefficient for x and y. The result of the analysis is presented on table--below.

**Table 5: Relationship between Principals’ Leadership Functions and Educational Wastage**

Variable	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$			
	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	$\Gamma_{xy}$	<i>p</i> -value
Principals’ leadership functions (X)	13773	499463	317671	0.425**	0.000
Educational wastage (Y)	8927	218835			

(*n* = 394) *p* < 0.01; *df* = 394; critical  $\Gamma_{xy}$  = 0.0978

The result of the analysis revealed that the calculated  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value 0.425 is higher than the critical  $\Gamma_{xy}$  -value 0.0978 at .05 level of significance and degrees of freedom 394. Furthermore, the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This result implies that

principals’ leadership functions does has a significant relationship with educational wastage. This is when principals adequately carried out their leadership functions, educational wastage will significantly reduce at moderate level and vice versa as indicated by a correlation value of 0.425.

**Table 6: Summary of Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	N	Min-value	Max-value	Mean	Standard deviation
Principals’ leadership functions	394	1	4	2.57	1.212
Educational wastage	394	1	4	2.77	1.176

Results from the summary of descriptive statistics showed that on a mean scale of 1-4 with a cut-off point of 2.5, none of the variables have a mean value 3.0 and above. However, all mean values were above the cut-off point of 2.5. The overall mean value for principals’ administrative functions is 2.64, while that for principals’ management functions is 2.62. The mean value for principals’ leadership functions is 2.57. The mean values for the three components of principals’ functions not slightly above 2.5 and not up to 3.0 implies that level at which the principal carried out their administrative, management and leadership functions are moderate. This signifies the need

for significant improvement in the principals’ functions for a significant proportion of them. The mean value for educational wastage is 2.77 which is the highest. This indicate that there is significant wastage of educational resources. (See appendix for detail descriptive analysis per item).

**Educational Wastage**

The presentation of the findings of the Quantitative data ended with the dependent variable (educational wastage) after the independent variables which constitutes the overall research question.

**Table 7: Teachers' and Principals' Opinion on Educational Wastage**

Statements	Stretched					Collapsed	
	SA	A	N	D	SD	SA/A	D/SD
When students fail in our school, some feel discouraged and move to other schools.	199 (30.2%)	148 (37.6%)	33 (8.4%)	63 (16.0%)	31 (7.9%)	267 (67.8%)	94 (23.9%)
It takes time for some students in the school to adjust when they repeat a class, this increases their stagnation in same class	75 (19.0%)	171 (43.4%)	38 (9.6%)	84 (21.3%)	26 (6.6%)	246 (62.4%)	110 (27.9%)
I have noticed that recently most students lack that intrinsic motivation to embrace their studies when they repeat a class	94 (23.9%)	180 (45.7%)	37 (9.4%)	63 (16.0%)	20 (5.1%)	274 (69.5%)	83 (21.1%)
When most students fail their examination schooling becomes boring to some	96 (24.4%)	201 (51.0%)	26 (6.6%)	45 (11.4%)	26 (6.6%)	297 (75.4%)	71 (18.0%)
Academic stagnation is as a result of lack of students' interest in schooling in our contemporary society.	122 (31.0%)	182 (46.2%)	38 (9.6%)	36 (9.1%)	16 (4.1%)	304 (77.2%)	52 (13.2%)
Some of my students have health challenges that our school environment cannot accommodate them, this impinges their studies.	82 (20.8%)	151 (38.3%)	59 (15.0%)	68 (17.3%)	34 (8.6%)	233 (59.1%)	102 (25.9%)
Students nowadays have very low self-esteem and are non-challans because of the Social Promotion Act	143 (36.3%)	163 (41.4%)	28 (7.1%)	41 (10.4%)	19 (4.8%)	306 (77.7%)	60 (15.2%)
Some students attend school but not effectively present in their classes because of lack of strict administrative control.	104 (26.4%)	155 (39.3%)	31 (7.9%)	61 (15.5%)	43 (10.9%)	259 (65.7%)	104 (26.4%)
Peer influence has a toll on students as indiscipline has aggravated in the school campus.	179 (45.4%)	156 (39.6%)	14 (3.6%)	25 (6.3%)	20 (5.1%)	335 (85.0%)	45 (11.4%)
Most at times students do not have any remorse when they absent classes or (skip) school as principals fine it difficult to dismiss.	155 (39.3%)	117 (29.7%)	38 (9.6%)	55 (14.0%)	29 (7.4%)	272 (69.0%)	84 (21.3%)
<b>Total Response/Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>1169 (29.7%)</b>	<b>1624 (41.2%)</b>	<b>342 (8.7%)</b>	<b>541 (13.7%)</b>	<b>264 (6.7%)</b>	<b>2793 (70.9%)</b>	<b>805 (20.4%)</b>

In aggregate, 70.9% of the teachers and principals agreed to educational wastage in their school while 20.4% disagreed and 8.7% neutral. Specifically, 77.7% (306) of teachers and principals attested that students nowadays have very low self-esteem and are non-challans because of the Social Promotion Act that while 15.2% (60) disagreed. Similarly, 77.2% (304) of the teachers opined that academic stagnation is as a result of lack of students' interest in schooling in our contemporary society while 13.2% (52) disagreed. Furthermore, 75.4% (297) of the teachers accepted that when most students fail their examination schooling becomes boring to some while 18.0% (71) disagreed. In addition, 69.5% (274) of the teachers agreed to have noticed that recently,

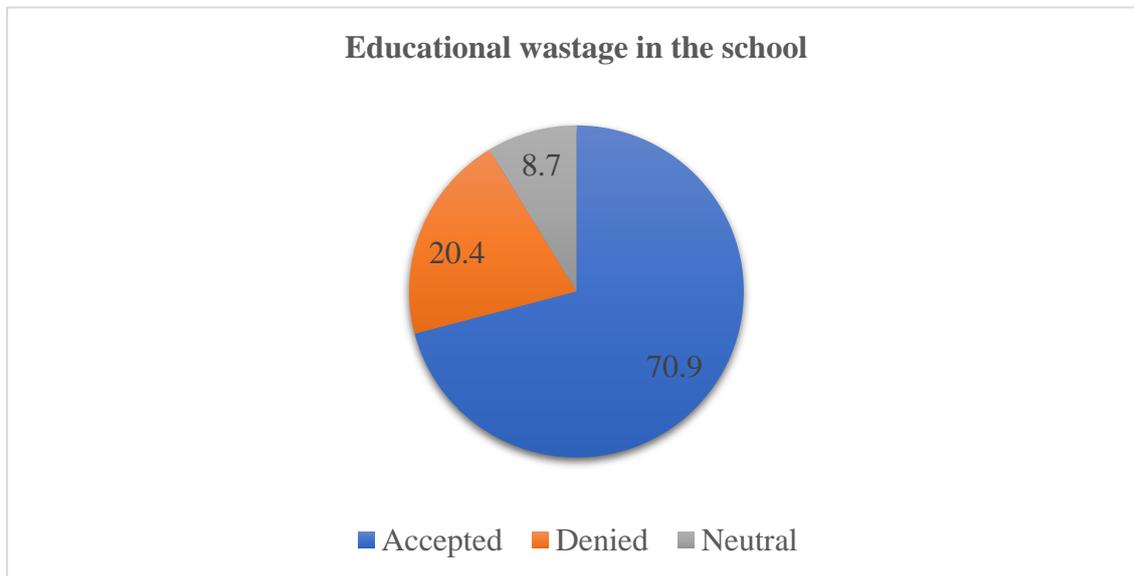
most students lack that intrinsic motivation to embrace their studies when they repeat a class while 21.1% (83) disagreed. Furthermore, 69.0% (272) of the teachers opined that most at times students do not have any remorse when they absent classes or (skip) school as principals fine it difficult to dismiss while 21.3% (84) disagreed. Similarly, 67.8% (267) of the teachers agreed that some of their students feel discouraged when they fail while 23.9% (94) disagreed.

Again, 65.7% (259) of the teachers and principals opined that some students attend school but not effectively present in their classes because of lack of strict administrative control while 26.4% (104) disagreed. To

elucidate, 62.4% (246) of the teachers confirmed that it takes time for some students in the school to adjust when they repeat a class, which increases stagnation in same class while 27.9% (110) disagreed. Finally, 59.1% (233) of the teachers accepted that some of their

students' studies is affected due to their health challenge that their school environment cannot accommodate while 25.9% (102) disagreed. The overall finding on educational wastage is also presented on the figure below.

**Figure 3:** Teachers' and principals Opinion on Educational Wastage



**Table 8:** Comparing Opinion on Educational Wastage by School Type

School type	Educational wastage			Total
	Accepted	Neutral	Denied	
Public	N 180	21	38	239
	% 75.3%	8.8%	15.9%	
Lay Private	N 71	10	26	107
	% 66.4%	9.3%	24.3%	
Confessional	N 28	4	16	48
	% 58.3%	8.3%	33.3%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>N 279</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>394</b>

Comparing respondents' opinion on educational wastage by school type, findings showed that more of the teachers in Public schools followed by those from Lay Private

schools 66.4% and lastly, Confessional schools 58.3%. In other words, educational wastage was reported more in public schools and less in Confessional schools.

**Table 9: Summary of Findings**

Research questions	Statistical technique	Findings
<b>Research Question One:</b> How does principals' leadership functions act as correlates of educational wastage in secondary/high schools in the Southwest region?	Percentage, mean, Pearson test and thematic analysis	Descriptively, 47.1% of the teachers indicated that their principal did not adequately carry out leadership functions while 43.1% agreed that they do and 9.8% neutral. The overall mean value of 2.57 on a scale of 1-4 below 3.0 implies that a significant proportion of principals do not carry out their leadership functions at high level but, at moderate level. And, further analysis showed that principals' leadership functions do have a significant relationship with educational wastage. In fact, the statistics showed that when principals adequately carried out their leadership functions, educational wastage will also reduce at a greater extent and vice versa (Calculated R-value 0.425 > than the critical value 0.0978 at .05 level of significance, $p$ -value $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, the hypothesis that state there is a significant relationship between the principals' leadership functions and educational wastage in secondary high schools in the region was accepted.
<b>Educational wastage</b>	Percentage, mean	Findings showed that 70.9% of the teachers agreed to educational wastage in their school while 20.4% disagreed and 8.7% neutral. The mean value for educational wastage of 2.77 which is the highest indicate that there is significant wastage of educational resources although is not that high since the overall mean value is below 3.0 on a scale of 1-4.
<b>Regression</b>		In overall, statistics from the regression analysis showed that a unit of improvement in principals' leadership functions with all other factors held constant results in -0.299 decrease in educational wastage at a significant level of 0.000. The variability explain by the model was significant (F- test value =19.541, $p$ -value 0.000). The total variability explain by the model is 38.1% ( $R = 0.381$ ) while 61.9% was not explain. This implies that aside principals' leadership functions, they are other factors that could significantly contribute to reduce educational wastage but not captured by the model or study.

## Summary

This section has presented the findings of the study in accordance with the research question and hypotheses tested. The findings were presented using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study showed that principals' leadership functions significantly correlate with educational wastage but, also revealed the need for principals to improve on the level at which they carry out their functions. Finally, further analysis using the regression technique showed that improvement in principals' leadership functions could contribute to the reduction of educational wastage by almost 40%.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussions of the findings were done in accordance with results derived from the hypothesis tested. They were supported with related conceptual and theoretical review. This section also consists of the conclusion,

contribution to knowledge, recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

### Principals' Leadership Functions Act as a Correlates of Educational Wastage in Secondary/High Schools in the Southwest Region

The findings of the study revealed that principals' leadership functions do have a significant relationship with educational wastage. Effectively leadership entails that the principal makes his vision known to his collaborators, enhance a conducive learning environment for both staff and students, maintain discipline, carry out positive motivation and incorporate teamwork with his collaborators. This is corroborated by Ebot-Ashu, (2014; 2018; 2022) who ascertained that principals require a lot more of intelligence, dynamism, open mindedness, competence, team spirit and personal commitment (Tirozzi, 2001; Pinto, 2018) in order to blend school resources both human, material and financial in order to control wastage (Yusuf, 2014). This

will go a long way to enhance academic performance as well as student retention in school. Titanji (2017) also ascertained that, the challenge for every educational administrator and leader is to influence members in ways that lead to goal accomplishment. This implies that the leadership capabilities/competences of principals have significant implication on educational wastage (Samuel, 2017). Thus, the hypothesis that states; there is a significant relationship between the principals' leadership functions and educational wastage in secondary schools in the region was accepted.

However, despite the significant and positive implication that leadership capabilities have on school wastage, descriptive statistics of the study revealed that a significant proportion of principals do not carry out their leadership functions at high level but, at moderate level which is a call for concern. Appointment to post of principal is mostly politically motivated, hence mediocre staff are sometimes appointed to manage the affairs of the school though, inefficiently and as a result educational processes and resources are wasted, consequently poor goal achievement (Titanji 2017; Ebot-Ashu, 2020; 2021). Specifically, a significant proportion of teachers indicated that their principals do not hesitate to send students home for poor conduct especially as students have become so unruly. This kind of leadership is capable of increasing student burn out and premature withdrawal from school. One of the functions of the school is to train a holistic child. Nonetheless a proportion of teachers noted that their principals focused so much on the text of application to make decision on complex disciplinary issue in the school milieu which affects both the teachers' productivity and the ability for many students to study effectively. It is demonstrated that it is important for principals to be mindful of the potential impact discipline effects on school effectiveness and students' performance, especially as Mbua, (2003) describes them as the CEO of secondary schools and are saddled with the responsibility of keeping the school environment very healthy for both students and teachers. A concern was also raised by a significant proportion of the teachers who opined that their principal does not carry out financial motivation to encourage assiduity and effective teaching.

This may result to lack of interest and obviously translated into unsatisfactory students'

performance and consequently influencing some form of wastage. From the study some teachers accepted that their principals made sure the vision is made public to all collaborators at the beginning of the school and so stimulated a task-oriented atmosphere to meet up with the objectives of the school and the national objectives as well by ensuring that the learning atmosphere is made conducive for all. Mbua (2003) ascertained that the school environment is to be made conducive for both the teaching staff and students so as to enhance effective attainment of school goals and objectives, if not they will encourage indiscipline, strikes that will influence student failure and dropout. In contrast another significant proportion of teachers revealed that their principals do not make their vision known to the staff at the beginning of the year and stimulates a task-oriented atmosphere without considering whether the learning environment is conducive and that this sometimes leads to teacher burn-out which leads to shortage in the number of teaching staff leading to student failure. Some of these poor leadership manifestations by some principals, enhance inefficiency in as such schools are more likely to suffer from teachers and students' burnout. This in line with Titanji, (2017) who ascertain that many educational administrators and leaders at all levels of schooling in Cameroon have not received training in school administration and leadership and the result is that they are likely to be preoccupied with structural concerns and activities such as routine communication, and performing traditional functions like; planning, controlling, organising and monitoring. Adequate attention is unlikely to be paid to human resource issues such as motivating collaborators, providing continuous professional development opportunities and political issues such as building and nurturing healthy school community relationship.

In as much as a good number of teachers accept that in decision-making the principal involves the staff and sometimes the parents some disagree to this point and that in most cases his decision in class councils remain final as the supervisory head of the school for which remains is the appointee (Fonkeng & Tamanjong, 2009). With this kind of attitude, it might become very difficult for parents and the community to support or assist such schools when in need of resources to enhance its management. Poor principals' leadership has

ruined the success of many schools and consequently contributing to educational wastage.

Our findings tie with that of Chiedozi (2017) who conducted a study in Oyo State to determine how principals utilize instructional leadership strategies to improve secondary school effectiveness and reduce educational wastage. The study revealed that there is need for principals to improve on their leadership functions so as to accentuate and motivate teachers' commitment to teaching which will go a long way to improve on students' performance thereby curbing some forms of educational wastage. Furthermore, in the study of Ebot-Ashu (2014) poor leadership was to result in wastage in financial resources which equally correlate to secondary school wastage. Every school demands proper management of finances which enable the school to acquire other resources (material and human). Titanji, (2017) further highlights on this point when he opined that, in the real world of practice, educational administration and leadership are complex processes during which administrators and leaders work with and through others to satisfy the interest of multiple educational stakes. They struggle to do this with limited resources put at their disposal and that the decision they make are not always based on a thorough examination of all opinion related to issues but sometimes on intuition and experience. Therefore, it was logical to accept to that when leadership is poor, other operations of the school are negatively affected.

From the study one can deduce that in as much as a good number of respondents agreed that principal give them time to adapt to necessary changes in school procedures and policies indicating a supportive leadership perspective, another proportion disagreed to this assertion. We all know that change is a gradual process that take time to adapt, this will allow teachers and even students to understand and strategies in order to understand and internalise new procedures and policies, thus facilitating the implementation process. As reiterated in the Transformational Leadership by Burns (1978), principals or leaders with appropriate leadership style are capable of creating good results in every organization, managing their subordinates well and this makes them admired. Teachers are inspired to work and students inspired to learn when principal put forward outstanding leadership practices. Good

leadership build relationship between school and community for the benefit of the school (Fonkeng & Tamnjong, 2009). Equally, Ebot-Ashu (2014) said good principals' leadership remains one of the most critical variables or ingredients in creating and maintaining school effectiveness. Principals' leadership is reported not only to impact teachers' commitment, motivation and effectiveness but is equally reported to impact students' academic performance and learning thereby reducing repetition and drop-out form school (Ebot-Ashu, 2018; Titanji).

The findings of the study equally revealed that principals' leadership functions do have a significant relationship with educational wastage. Effectively leadership entails that the principal makes his vision known to his collaborators, enhance a conducive learning environment for both staff and students, maintain discipline, carry out positive motivation and incorporate teamwork with his collaborators. This is corroborated by Ebot-Ashu et al, (2022) who ascertained that principals require a lot more of intelligence, dynamism, open mindedness, competence, team spirit and personal commitment in order to blend school resources both human, material and financial in order to control wastage. This will go a long way to enhance academic performance as well as student retention in school. Titanji (2017) also ascertained that, the challenge for every educational administrator and leader is to influence members in ways that lead to goal accomplishment. This implies that the leadership capabilities/competences of principals have significant implication on educational wastage. Thus, the hypothesis that states; there is a significant relationship between the principals' leadership functions and educational wastage in secondary schools in the region was accepted. Our findings tie with that of Kaume-Mwinzi (2017) who conducted a study in Oyo State to determine how principals utilize instructional leadership strategies to improve secondary school effectiveness and reduce educational wastage (Samuel et al, 2017). The study revealed that there is need for principals to improve on their leadership functions so as to accentuate and motivate teachers' commitment to teaching which will go a long way to improve on students' performance thereby curbing some forms of educational wastage.

However, despite the significant and positive implication that leadership capabilities have on school wastage, descriptive statistics of the study revealed that a significant proportion of principals do not carry out their leadership functions at high level but, at moderate level which is a call for concern. Appointment to post of principal is mostly politically motivated, hence mediocre staff are sometimes appointed to manage the affairs of the school though, inefficiently and as a result educational processes and resources are wasted, consequently poor goal achievement (Titanji 2017; Ebot-Ashu, 2022; 2021). Specifically, a significant proportion of teachers indicated that their principals do not hesitate to send students home for poor conduct especially as students have become so unruly. This kind of leadership is capable of increasing student burn out and premature withdrawal from school. One of the functions of the school is to train a holistic child. Nonetheless a proportion of teachers noted that their principals focused so much on the text of application to make decision on complex disciplinary issue in the school milieu which affects both the teachers' productivity and the ability for many students to study effectively. It is demonstrated that it is important for principals to be mindful of the potential impact of discipline in school effectiveness and students' performance, especially as Mbua, (2003) describes them as the CEO of secondary schools and are saddled with the responsibility of keeping the school environment very healthy for both students and teachers. A concern was also noted by a significant proportion of the teachers who opined that their principal does not carry out financial motivation to encourage assiduity and effective teaching.

This may result to lack of interest and obviously translated into unsatisfactory students' performance and consequently influencing some form of wastage. From the study some teachers accepted that their principals made sure the vision is made public to all collaborators at the beginning of the school and so stimulated a task-oriented atmosphere to meet up with the objectives of the school and the national objectives as well by ensuring that the learning atmosphere is made conducive for all. Mbua (2003) ascertained that the school environment is to be made conducive for both the teaching staff and students so as to enhance effective attainment of school goals and objectives, if not they will encourage

indiscipline, strikes that will influence student failure and dropout. In contrast another significant proportion of teachers revealed that their principals do not make their vision known to the staff at the beginning of the year and stimulates a task-oriented atmosphere without considering whether the learning environment is conducive and that this sometimes leads to teacher burn-out which leads to shortage in the number of teaching staff leading to student failure. Some of these poor leadership manifestations by some principals, enhance inefficiency in as such schools are more likely to suffer from teachers and students' burnout. This in line with Titanji, (2017) who ascertain that many educational administrators and leaders at all levels of schooling in Cameroon have not received training in school administration and leadership and the result is that they are likely to be preoccupied with structural concerns and activities such as routine communication, and performing traditional functions like; planning, controlling, organising and monitoring. Adequate attention is unlikely to be paid to human resource issues such as motivating collaborators, providing continuous professional development opportunities and political issues such as building and nurturing healthy school community relationship.

In as much as a good number of teachers accept that in decision-making the principal involves the staff and sometimes the parents some disagree to this point and that in most cases his decision in class councils remain final as the supervisory head of the school for which remains is the appointee (Fonkeng & Tamanjong, 2009). With this kind of attitude, it might become very difficult for parents and the community to support or assist such schools when in need of resources to enhance its management. Poor principals' leadership has ruined the success of many schools and consequently contributing to educational wastage.

Our findings tie with that of (Kaume-Mwinzi, 2017). who conducted a study in Oyo State to determine how principals utilize instructional leadership strategies to improve secondary school effectiveness and reduce educational wastage. The study revealed that there is need for principals to improve on their leadership functions so as to accentuate and motivate teachers' commitment to teaching which will go a long way to improve on students' performance

thereby curbing some forms of educational wastage. Furthermore, in the study of Oputa (2008) poor leadership was to result in wastage in financial resources which equally correlate to secondary school wastage. Every school demands proper management of finances which enable the school to acquire other resources (material and human). Titanji, (2017) further highlights on this point when he opined that, in the real world of practice, educational administration and leadership are complex processes during which administrators and leaders work with and through others to satisfy the interest of multiple educational stakes. They struggle to do this with limited resources put at their disposal and that the decision they make are not always based on a thorough examination of all opinion related to issues but sometimes on intuition and experience. Therefore, it was logical to accept to that when leadership is poor, other operations of the school are negatively affected. Equally, in the study of Achuka (2007) and Adamu (2001) on factors contributing to educational wastage in public secondary schools in the municipality division of Kwara State indicated that both male and female principals struggle with educational wastage, influenced by their leadership capabilities.

From the study one can deduce that, in as much as a good number of respondents agreed that principals give them time to adapt to necessary changes in school procedures and policies indicating a supportive leadership style perspective, another proportion disagreed to this assertion. We all know that change is a gradual process that take time to adapt, this will allow teachers and even students to understand and strategies in order to understand and internalise new procedures and policies, thus facilitating the implementation process. As reiterated in the Transformational Leadership by Burns, principals or leaders with appropriate leadership style are capable of creating good results in every organization, managing their subordinates well and this makes them admired. Teachers are inspired to work and students inspired to learn when principal put forward outstanding leadership practices. Good leadership build relationship between school and community for the benefit of the school (Fonkeng & Tamnjong, 2009). Equally, Ebot Ashu (2014; 2018) said good principals' leadership remains one of the most critical variables or ingredients in creating and maintaining school effectiveness. Principals' leadership is reported not only to impact

teachers' commitment, motivation and effectiveness but is equally reported to impact students' academic performance and learning thereby reducing repetition and drop-out form school (Ebot-Ashu, 2022; Titanji 2017).

## Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to examine principals' leadership functions as correlate a of educational wastage. Data were collected from both teachers and principals. Majority of the teachers agreed that there is a prevalence educational wastage in their school and that principals' leadership function had a significant correlate with educational wastage. This implies that if all principals effectively carry out this function, educational wastage will significantly reduce in relation to other factors.

Despite the enormous efforts put in place by stakeholders in the running of the schools, the situation on ground as depicted in the findings of the study showed that a significant proportion of the principals do not perform their functions as required. This implies that a lot still need be done to improve on school leadership if educational wastage is to be minimised in our secondary schools. In other words, a good number of principals still need to adequately carry out their functions as expected. The statistics on the regression analysis, showed that a unit of improvement in principals' leadership function with all other factors held constant will results in a significant decrease in educational wastage by almost forty percent.

However, in as much as it is imperative for principals to effectively carry out their leadership functions, we agree with Fonkeng and Tamanjong, (2009) that the administration of secondary schools in Cameroon today is a complex process because in terms of numbers some of them have become very large entities, so that there is a paradigm shift from just administration of secondary schools to engulf the functions of leadership which may be cumbersome to principals who have not received formal training in these fields. Educational wastage has been a global challenge that many countries of the world have been trying to curb. Worthy of note is the fact that school administration and leadership occupy a unique place in the entire education system and it becomes absolutely expedient to give it prominent attention. In fighting educational wastage, it is important that good

admission policies by put in place, and principals should obtain some basic training to enhance effective follow-up of the pedagogic process (the teaching-learning process), make sure remedial teaching is done, and school policies or texts respected. Research has demonstrated that dropouts suffer more joblessness, earn less income, and are more prone to criminality, public dependency, and poor health than high school graduates.

Theoretically, Henry Fayol theory on Management/Administration and the leadership theory of Burns stipulates that the managerial ability, administrative competences and leadership capability has an enormous influence on the success of every organization the school not left out. As depicted in the findings of our study, while there are other factors needed to be considered in the mitigation of educational wastage, principals who are the heads of secondary schools need to perform their functions effectively to better curb educational wastage. This is so because educational wastage has many economic, social and even political consequences to a nation. Some of the economic consequences that could emanate from educational wastage include high

unemployment, increase educational expenditure (private and social cost), low productivity, and inadequate skilled manpower, high rate of poverty / low-income status as well as high crime wave.

Furthermore, with reference to social consequences, dropouts suffer from low self-esteem, emotional instability and even suicide. Politically, high educational wastage might disfavour a particular political regime in power in the eyes of the citizens. Thus, with the above consequences that high educational wastage has on the nation, communities, families and individuals, it is imperative that proper measures be adopted and implemented to curb it in our educational system.

**Contribution to Knowledge**

Adequate information is reviewed on how Principals can curb educational wastage in schools as well as some models on how to fight educational wastage in schools. This study tried to identify the thin line that distinguishes the three functions; administration, management and leadership.

**Table 10: Principals’ Leadership Functions and Strategies to Manage Educational Wastage in Secondary/High Schools**

Principal’s Leadership Function	Strategies to Manage Educational Wastage
School Vision is Shared to Collaborators and the Public at the beginning of the school semester	Enhance conducive learning environment for both staffs and students; Maintain discipline in carrying out positive innovation; incorporate teamwork with collaborators
Leadership Competences	Intelligence, dynamic, Open Minded, team spirit, personal commitment to manage both human, material and financial resources to eliminate educational wastage
Influence Members	Influence Members in a Way that Led to Goal Accomplishments
Instructional Leadership	Motivate teachers’ commitment to teaching and improve students’ attainment
Keeping the School Environment Healthy for Both Teachers and Students	Promote discipline to attain school effectiveness
Motivate both Staff and Students	Provide Financial Assistance, awards and certificate to promote good practices
Professional Development through In-service Training	Concerns with effective routines like communication, planning, controlling, organising, monitoring, staffing, evaluating etc,
Building and Nurturing Heathy School Community Relationship	Motivating collaborators, providing continues professional development opportunities, building and nurturing students discipline and attainments
Decision Making	Involve Staffs and students sometimes in decision making
Management of Finance	Enable the school to acquire other resources (Material and human resources)
Apply Transformational Leadership	Create good results in every organisation, manage subordinates well, inspires teachers to work well, help build good relationship with the community
Adapt to Necessary Changes in School Procedures and Policies	Enable teachers, students to understand policies and procedures

Source: *Researchers, 2023*

Table 11 outlined the leadership functions of principal involves vision, leadership competences, influence, innovation, motivation and inspiration in order to get the right things done. Principals in performing their leadership function need to avail of their school vision to the others members of the school community. Enhance a cordial relation with all and void all forms of discrimination. The students as well need follow-up, sensitization, motivation, discipline in order to enhance their academic performance and progress about the vision of the school. Communication with parents has to flow to keep them informed. Principals should make sure at all times that the school environment is conducive for teaching and learning. Education is a social endeavour and, reducing educational wastage should be a joint collaborative effort although the task lies more on principals and the stakeholders. As revealed in the findings of the study, principals in Confessional and Lay Private schools perform their functions more effectively compared to those of the public secondary schools in the region.

### Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, it was generally recommended that principals should be offered frequent capacity building programs so as to enhance their leadership competences. Specifically, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) In order for principals to properly carry out their functions, they should be given the opportunity to acquire a certain degree of academic training in school management and leadership so as to enhance proper effectiveness in schools. This will go a long way to reduce some forms of educational wastage.
- 2) Appointment of principals should be metamorphosed to include academic qualification, longevity, training and

mentor-mentee. In-service refresher course be organised for newly appointed principals. This can be done at regional and divisional levels taking into consideration the school environment and resources available.

### Limitations of the Study

Research on its part is a challenging exercise. In the course of this study, we encountered the following difficulties;

- 1) It was a bit challenging to ascertain responses from respondents who in most cases were not ready to collaborate and made the exercise time consuming.
- 2) The socio-political situation of the country also limited this study in terms of the methodology, the sample size was purposive to accommodate accessible schools only. This GCE marking exercise of 2023 facilitated the process as many teachers of selected schools were served with the questionnaire.

### Suggestions for Further Research

The study focused on principals' leadership functions as correlates of educational wastage in secondary schools in the south west region. Further research could be carried out in areas such as;

- 1) Principals' functions and the clean school policy at the age of digitalisation.
- 2) Principals Leadership functions as they impact on school effectiveness.
- 3) A comparative study could be undertaken on principals' functions as correlates of educational wastage in public and private secondary school in other regions of the country.

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