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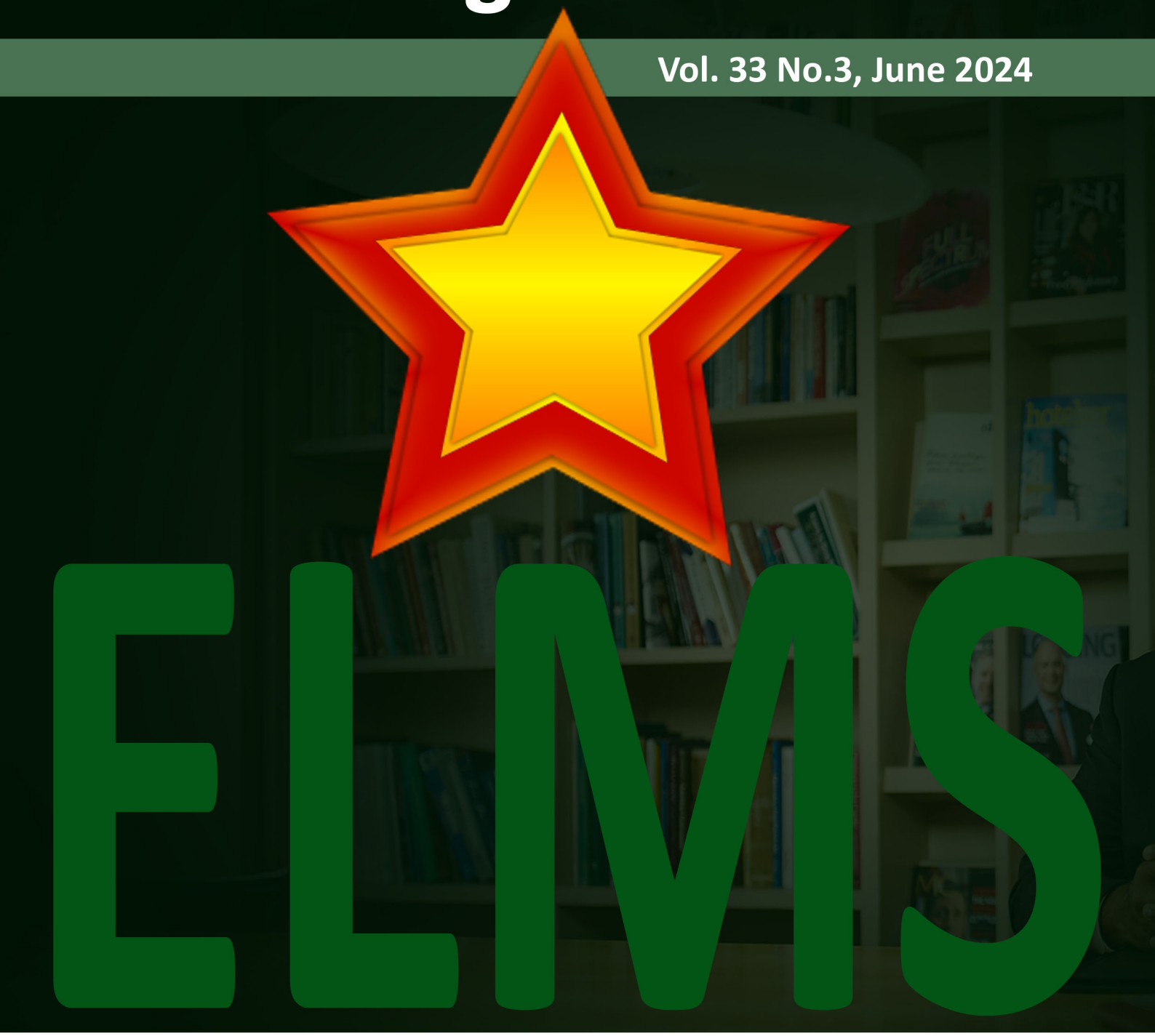

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Principal's Leadership Skills Effectiveness and Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in Southwest Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine "Principals' Leadership Skills Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary School in South West Region, Cameroon". The objective was used to set an overall research question which was formulated and transformed into two working Hypothesis. The study's survey instrument (Questionnaire) was distributed to teachers from 65 secondary schools which comprise of public schools, denominational schools and lay private schools. Interviews were carried out with 20 principals in the south west Region of Cameroon. Descriptive measures of central tendency were used to analyses aspects of questionnaire data while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic approach or view point of principals. The result showed that every Principal should have the following leadership skills vision, influence, effective communication, motivation, problem solver, manage emotions, adapt to change, positive thinker, open to continuous learning, good decision maker has an effect on conflict resolution in secondary schools in Cameroon. The thematic analysis depicting how principals and teachers use their leadership skills in the identification of the conflict, active listening to the parties, open and honest communication, collaboration, problem-solving, managing emotions, exercised in the school environment to resolve conflicts.

Keywords: Principal's Leadership Skills, Conflict Resolution, Secondary Schools, Southwest, Cameroon

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Introduction

It is worth noting that true leadership seeks continuous improvement and studies to understand and resolve societal challenges. A good leader with excellent leadership skills can help transform people in their various teams into stars or say creative beings. Good leaders in the 21st century is responsible to improve and developed subordinates' leadership skills through influence and encouraging employees to take part in career professional development programs (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe & Fuaty, 2021).

Leaders with good leadership skills have positive attitude and behaviors and assumed by those looking to establish, love, peace and unity within their organization or community (Tchoumbou, Ebot-Ashu, Makole, Nkum, Tah, 2023). These leaders are committed in achieving organizational goals. A good leader encourages the team to perform their optimum best all the time simply to drive organizational success (Ebot Ashu, 2014; 2018; Hamadou, 2023;

Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017). Good leaders tend to develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training and experience. While, Ebot-Ashu et al (2021) argues that the act of leadership is learned, the skills and knowledge possessed by the leaders can be influenced by his or her attitude which will go a long way to the beliefs, values, ethics, and character of followers (Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021; Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017). Sombat (1999), view skills as the ability of a person who shows expertise with professional, correct, rapidly and suitability from body and mind till it is accepted among the public. Conclusively skills will mean the ability of a person who can work with expertise and professionalism that affects the operation in any organization with effectiveness and efficiency. Principal leadership skills will be seen as the ability of the principal of an institution to perfectly possess the ability to carry out his or her task and functions such as supervising activities of a school, making decision that will enable the school in general to attain its goals (Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017; Alhourani, 2013). The principal has as duty to perform different types of leadership task for effective principal-ship, as the educational policy developer and coordinator of the institution as a whole.

In explaining conflict from its nature as perceived in the different behavioral disciplines, Leithwood and Hallinger (2002; 006) reveal that: Anthropologists turn to believe that conflict arises from cultural and societal differences. It is believed that conflict arise due to differences in the people's language, religion, culture and believe; The economists have a different perspective about conflict and believe it occurs because there are disagreements in the formula for allocation of scarce resources (for production purposes); The sociologists and political scientists view conflict from a different view point, they see it as been engendered from class system which includes the lower, the middle and upper classes, or sometimes, the have and the have not or in egalitarian terms, the proliferates and the bourgeois; Psychologists and psychiatrists go a long way to analyze conflict in terms of personalities (Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017; Alhourani, 2013). The disorderliness is perceived as personal and intra-psychic. Personal conflict goes on throughout life.

The presence of conflicts in schools has been well acknowledged by educationist. Meek (1992) reports that almost three thousand high school students are attacked physically each month during conflict in the United States of America. In Cameroon, cases of students' activism leading to strikes on campuses and sometimes spreading beyond campus are a cause of great concern for educational policy makers. Hamadou (2023), offer other interpersonal conflict occurring in some secondary schools in the southwest region includes: teachers been at logger heads with their head of departments and others collaborators because of unfavorable courses and time allocated to them; students been at total conflict with their teachers because they felt they were unfairly treated; male teachers treating female students unfairly especially during examinations; parents attacking or detaining teachers for not treating their children correctly in school, conflicts between principals and teachers for taking their names to higher authorities for possible sanctions; students guidance criticizing the method and ways of the school administration and the increment of school needs and fees coupled with the mismanagement of the parent teacher association (PTA) or the school management board (SMB). In Cameroon secondary schools research have neglected the aspect of conflict resolution. It is for this reason that this study seeks to investigate the relationship between principals' leadership skills effectiveness in conflict resolutions in secondary schools in the south west region of Cameroon.

This section of the paper dedicated to introduction consists of the following components: statement of the problem, research objective and hypothesis, justification of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and summary.

Statement of the Problem

Principal leadership skills play a vital role in affecting the student's achievement, environment, attitude and overall climate of a school. Principals are the cornerstone on which learning communities' function and grow (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe & Fuaty,

2021). Schools which function effectively could be transformed into effective learning incubators, where students are not only educated but challenged, nurtured and encourage to be very productive in school. Successful principals are effective leaders, this means being able to inspire and motivate teachers and students, as well as developing a shared vision for the school at large (Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe & Fuaty, 2021; Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017). Principal's role and responsibilities should be delegated effectively in creating a healthy working environment. Leadership is second only to classroom instruction as an influence on student learning. A successful leader should understand the building community, empowering teachers and cultivating leadership skills, they utilize data and resources, they have a vision and a plan, they create collaborative and inclusive leaning environment (Ebot-Ashu, 2018; Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017).

According to Hornby (1995) conflict is considered to be a serious disagreement, struggle and fight arising out of differences of opinions, wishes, needs, values and interest between and among individuals or group. Schermerhorn (1984) says conflict is disagreements that exist in a social situation over issues of substances (substantive conflict) and emotional antagonism (emotional conflict). As for Nitze (2003), conflict can be considered as the result of opposing interests involving scarce resources, goal divergence, and frustration. It is a situation that occurs when two or more parties with perceived incompatible goals seek to undermine each other's goal-seeking capabilities. Conflict therefore, is conceived as a purposeful struggle between collective actions that use social power to defeat or remove opponents in order to gain status, resources and to force values over social group (Himan, 1980; Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017). It can be seen as a disagreement, opposition, misunderstanding and hostility between two or more persons, groups or organizations. Conflict is a phenomenon that does not exist only between people, groups, and organizations but could also occur within an individual. McNamare (2006) view conflict within an individual can occur when two or more values, perspectives and opinion are contradictory in nature and have not been aligned or agreed about. This might result from dilemma, expressed by phrases such as "between the devil and deep blue sea" or "caught in the horn of dilemma". For example, a principal may be quite obsessed about how to deal with a situation in his or her school which would likely result to a strike, hence stoppage of classes. This situation may generate conflict within the principal. It can also occur when one is not living according to one's values; when one's interests are threatened; or when there is from fear of the unknown or from lack of fulfilment.

Research Objectives

The main research objective of this study seeks to understand the relationship between principals' Leadership skills effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West region of Cameroon?

General Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between principal's leadership skills effectiveness and conflict resolution among staff members and students in secondary school.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between principal's leadership skills and conflict resolution among staff members in secondary school.

Justification of the Study

School leaders today required leadership skills to ensure the smooth running of the school environment. Principal's leadership skills are essential component to make thoughtful decisions in the school and learning environment in order to achieve the set goals and objectives. Today principal must have the ability to influence, inspire and communicate his or her vision effectively is part of the leadership traits that is possessed for the smooth functioning on any learning institution as prescribed by Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe & Fuaty (2021).

Looking at the news item from the various communication media in Fako in the year 2014, reported that a student stabbed another to death in one of the mission schools around the country's territory. In another headline, a student brutalized a community member to death, while

a student stabbed another to death in one of the state schools around the country's territory. Principal's leadership skills are needed in any school environment to make sure every single thing which concerns violence in the school is resolve well and amicable. Ngwana (2012) also mentioned certain events in some high schools over the years that cannot be overlooked. He made mention of a high school in Douala in the year 2001, where a student who had been dismissed by a decision made by the disciplinary council waylaid the school discipline masters and stabbed him to death. In another high school in Yaoundé in 2002, a discipline master killed a student while meeting out corporal punishment on him. All the above conflicts in schools lead the researchers with a lot of worries and unanswered question leading to investigate the relationship between principal's leadership skills effectiveness and conflict resolutions in secondary schools in the South West Region Cameroon.

Significance of the Study

This study may serve the following persons in our contemporary world: Policy makers, researchers, school principals and other school administrators in secondary schools. Firstly, to policy makers, the findings of this study may inform the policy making process by outlining the importance of Principals' leadership skills effectiveness in managing conflicts in secondary schools. Good leaders are supposed to design and implement policies that bring out the best abilities in his or her team members to work together and better manage conflicts in schools. The study is equally helpful to the Ministry of Secondary Education in enacting laws and policies which are friendly in managing conflicts in the Southwest and Northwest Region of Cameroon where there are political crisis disturbing the smooth running of education.

Secondly, the findings of this investigation may stimulate more meaningful training and development for researchers will have the opportunity to acquire relevant information that will guide them in their research as far as leadership skills and conflicts resolution is involve. The finding of this study will serve as a sign of basic reference and equally act as a motivation for in-depth research in this area. Researchers interested in this current phenomenon may have an opportunity to go through the work and be able to make extensive research from its other necessary contributions.

Thirdly, school administrators and school principals need to understand leadership skills for conflict resolution help in driving projects to completion more effectively without commotion. This happen when school leader's established vision, fostering innovation and work collaboratively with others to deliver organizational goals and objectives. Leadership wise, it is significant in the like that, it will help principals in playing a pivotal role in affecting the students' achievement, attitude, climate and the overall environment of the school.

Scope of the study

This study is delimited to schools in the southwest region of Cameroon. The content scope involves leadership skills of secondary principals. More especially, four conflict resolution skills are examined in this study; Mediation skills, bargaining skills, negotiation skills and reconciliation skills.

Summary and Outline of the Study

This paper is divided into four remaining sections. Section two, review of related literature, will discuss the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that informs the study. Literature from a wide range of relevant topics is synthesized in order to provide a better understanding of this research domain. Section three will look at the research methodology, addressing issues such as research design, area of the study, population of the study, instrument used for data collection, validation of such instruments and administration, procedure for data analyses and ethical considerations. In section four, the findings from the field will be presented according to the overall research question and its hypothesis while section five will deal with discussing, conclusions, contributions to knowledge and understanding, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

Leadership Theory

Theories of leadership are usually one of the four different types. While transformational and

distributional leadership theories have recently emerged, most can be classified from "Contingency", "Transactional", theories "Transformational" theories to "Distribution theories" are very important for conflict management (see table 1).

Table 1: From 'Contingency in the 60s' to 'Distributed' Leadership in the 21st Century

Contingency Theory	Contingency theory is a behavioural theory based on the claims that there is no best way to manage or lead an organisation. To comprehend what adds value to managers' or leaders' effectiveness, researchers used the "*contingency model"* in exploring the relationship between personality traits, situational variables, and manager or leader effectiveness variables.
Transactional Theory	Comparable to the contingency theory of management is the transactional approach which emphasises the importance of motivating and directing followers, focusing on shared benefits derived from a form of 'contract' through which the leader distributes such incentives as rewards or acknowledgement in return for the dedication or loyalty of the followers (Northhouse, 2001).
Transformational Theory	Leadership and Management studies of the 70s and 80s on one occasion focused on the individual characteristics of managers and leaders which power their effectiveness and the achievements of their organizational performance.
Distributed Theory	Since the 1980s management and leadership researchers have placed great importance on the call for high-quality leadership practices. The model of distributed leadership practices has been promoted, as exemplified by the National Professional Qualification (NPQH) for Headship, emphasises the role of a school leader's and organisation performance (Harris and Spillane (2008)

Source: *Adapted from Ebot-Ashu, 2014*

Table one above explores leadership theories that have become visible in the literature since the 1960s, specifically: contingency theory and distributed leadership in the 21st century for the development of school leaders' leadership skills. These leadership theories have had a particular influence on the content of conflict resolutions in educational organisation in Cameroon and other part of the world.

The Conflict Resolution Theory (Burton, 1980)

"Conflict avoidance is not conflict resolution". Burton distinguishes between conflict resolution, management and settlement. To him, management is by alternative dispute resolution skills and can confine or limit conflict; settlement is by authoritative and legal processes and can be imposed by leaders. Burton says conflict resolution means terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem. To him the theory emphasizes a social process approach and a formal approach to conflict resolution. That conflict resolution comes by changing the process and by developing new ways to handle conflicts and by avoiding unproductive confrontations. With a social structural approach, conflict resolution is

achieved primarily through social reform (or resolution). The society needs to be changed so that primary points of tension are eliminated. With a formal approach of resolving conflict, we engage in such activities as solving equations and identifying points of equilibrium; these activities help us give a formal description of the conditions where we would find a solution to conflict.

Effective Leadership Skills of Secondary School Principals

Leadership skills can be seen as one of the most essential components in positioning executives in making very important decision that will go a long way to affect the future of the organization and some of those decisions might include, creating a vision, mission and goal. Principals require the ability to properly allocate and manage resources, the ability to properly communicate and supervise instructions and staffs performance, to be honest in every aspect related to the organization vision and prospectives, to be confident, committed and creative as well (Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe & Fuaty, 2021; Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017). The above-mentioned skills which go a long way in ensuring peace and stability in a school environment (Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017).

Ebot-Ashu et al. (2021) are however advocates correlating leadership with the analysis of their inherent characteristics vis-à-vis self-awareness, problem solver, influence others, intelligence, innovation, emotional intelligence, motivate staffs and students, positive thinker, manage emotions, adapt to change, positive thinker etc. (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Ebot-Ashu et al, 2021; Hallinger & Heck, 1998) They are of the opinion that there are lots of leadership skills that could be employed by principals in order to have a grip of the whole school and consequently move the school forward academically and peacefully (Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017; Alhourani, 2013). These range from the monitoring of teachers' activities, use of committee system in schools, performance appraisal, participatory decision making, delegation of duties and regular staff meeting. In this same light, competence and persuasiveness of the school principal are located in a context where organization is based with a set of preconditions; recruitment and selection for this role. When school leaders skillfully address conflict, positive outcomes include a deeper understanding of complex issues, growth of collaborative teams emerge (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003; Ebot-Ashu, 2014). Leaders who use conflict leadership skills can provide guidance and direction towards conflict resolution. As a leader, staying vigilant, fostering open communication, clarifying roles, managing resources judiciously, addressing power dynamics and openness to continuous learning can help prevent conflict in school.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflict, therefore, is conceived as a struggle between collective actors who use social power to defeat or remove opponents in order to gain status, resources or to force values over social groups (Himen, 1980). According to Dzurgba, (2006), conflict is a social problem in which two or more persons, colleagues, students, families, parties, communities, or districts disagree with each other. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) says conflict is a felt struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, and goals, or over differences in desires for esteem, control, and connectedness (Dzurga, 2006; Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). Conflict then can be seen as a disagreement, opposition, misunderstanding, or hostility between two or more persons, groups, or organization.

According to Nicklas and Mikael (2005) conflict is not static but dynamic. This nature of conflict can be represented on the upside-down u-shape curve called "The Life Cycle of Conflicts". This life cycle of conflicts begins with stable peace, then unstable peace, interpersonal, open conflict, crises, and ends with war. This sequence is essential for the understanding of conflicts and when one can

intervene in order to solve it. It was noticed that a particular conflict can recur several times and it may not necessarily begin from stable peace and end at war.

Flippo (1980) remarked that, "a total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, boring, and a strong indication that conflicts are being suppressed". The inevitability of conflict was established by Kerzner (1998), when he asserted that “conflict is part of the change and therefore inevitable”. Conflict is a part of organizational life and may occur between individuals, between the individual and the group, and between groups (Weihrich, 1992). It is therefore not surprising to find conflict in the administration of secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Mitchell (1981), says conflict has a structure consisting of three parts: attitudes, behaviors and situations. The model below adapted for Mitchell shows how those parts interact, thus creating solutions of how conflict can be solved.

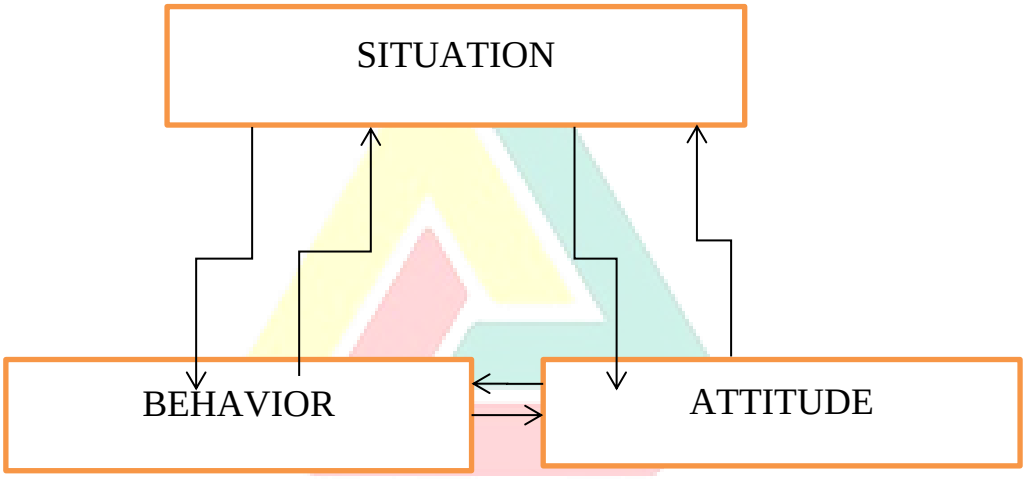

Figure 1: *Conceptual Representation of Principals’ Leadership skills and Conflict Resolution among staff*

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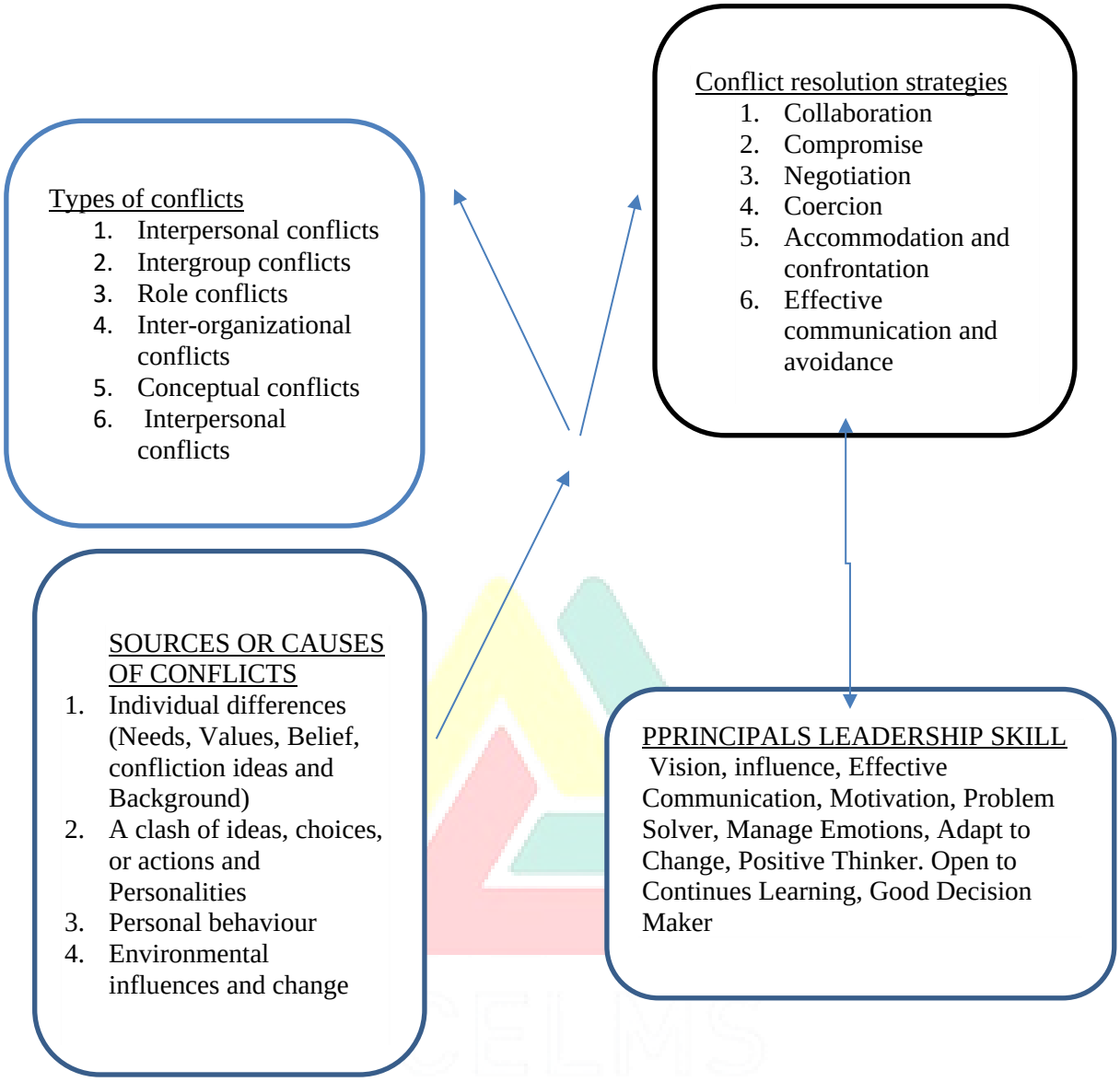

Figure 2: *Mitchell's Model of Conflict Structure*

The above model shows that situations can impact behaviors and attitudes and vice versa. This therefore, means that a situation can influence the behavior and the attitude of someone; behavior can influence the attitude and a situation. And an attitude can also alter one's behavior and subsequently. For example, a situation impacting behavior can be seen when an ambitious teacher or principal fails to obtain excellent results for his subject or school in the G.C.E exams. Mitchell (1981) makes allusion to a case where a teacher continually hates the vice principal because he imposed an unfavorable timetable on him. School principals have to bear in mind that situations, attitudes and behaviors are the core causes of conflicts in the school. A situation might provoke behaviors or an attitude that might subsequently lead to a conflict. A behavior can also initiate an attitude or a situation which might finally bring about disagreements. School principals must therefore, consider these when handling conflicts among staff because this will guide them to come out with fair judgment.

Summary, this section has reviewed theoretical and conceptual frameworks on Principals' Leadership skills and Conflict Resolution among staffs in secondary school in the Southwest Region of Cameroon have

been discussed. The next section will examine the research methodology of the study.

Research Design

The study employs a survey design and more specifically a concurrent triangulation mixed method approach since both instruments that is the questionnaire and the interview guide were administered during the same period as in (Creswell, 2003; 2009; Ebot-Ashu, 2014).

The dominant approach is quantitative employing a structured questionnaire. This quantitative approach, in a concurrent triangulation mixed-method perspective, is substantiated by a qualitative study whereby the opinions of principals were sought on their leadership skills effectiveness on conflict resolution in the Southwest Region of Cameroon. The integration of mixed methods approach in research increases the strength and reduces the weaknesses of either the qualitative or the quantitative methods of data collection. The suitability of the mixed approaches in research is to provide stronger evidence for conclusion through collaborated findings and as well generate more complete data, so that findings derived from an approach can be employed to enrich the insight achieved through the second (Creswell et al., 2011).

The population of the study consists of 100 teachers and students from public, denominational and lay private secondary schools, of Buea, Limbe, and Tiko Sub-Division in the South West Region of Cameroon. The accessible population of this study was made up of twenty-five (20) principals selected from lay private secondary schools, public schools and denominational schools. The target population under investigation consist of nine public, seven denominational and four lay private secondary schools.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were presented as follows.

Table 2: ***Distribution of Demographic Characteristics of Teachers and Students***

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentages
	Teachers		
Sex	Male	128	70.3%
	Female	54	29.7%
	Total	182	100.0%
Teaching experience	1 - 5 years	22	12.1%
	6 -10 years	86	47.3%
	11 - 15 years	50	27.5%
	16 years above	24	13.2%
	Total	182	100.0%
Type of school	Pubic	95	52.2%
	Private	39	21.4%
	Mission	48	26.4%
	Total	182	100.0%
	Students		
Sex	F	115	60.2%
	M	76	39.8%
	Total	191	100.0%
Type of school	Public	96	50.3%
	Private	50	26.2%
	Mission	45	23.6%
	Total	**191**	**100.0%**
Class	Class 1-3	25	13.1%
	Class 4-6	56	29.3%
	Class 7	110	57.6%
	Total	191	100%

The respondents consisted of 128 (70.3%) males and 54 (29.7%) female teachers. This show that majority of the respondents were males. The working experience of the respondents were 1-5 years 22 (12.1%), 6-10 years 86 (47.3%), 11-15 years 15 (27.5%) and 16 years and above 24 (13.2%). Thus majority (47.3%) of the respondents were between 6-10 years of working experience. Also, majority of the respondents were from public schools 95 (52.2%) followed by Mission schools 48 (26.4%) and then Private 39 (21.4%). For the students, most the respondents were female 115 (60.2%) followed by males 76 (39.8%). Also, majority of the respondents were from Public schools 96 (50.3%) followed by Private 50 (26.2%) and then Mission 45(23.6%). The class distribution for the students were Class 1-3 25 (13.1%), Class 4-6 56 (29.3%) and Class 7 110 (57.6%)

Instrument for Data Collection

The researchers made use of a questionnaire for teachers and students and an interview guide for principals of Southwest Region of Cameroon. The questionnaire used in the study was constructed in conformity with the overall research question. The questionnaire was divided into five sections A, B, C, D and E with response options labeled V = Very Often, O = Often, NO= Not Often, NVO = Not Very Often. Section "A" was made up of demographic information such as name of school/type of school, sex, longevity in post held, highest qualification and number of staff members. Logically for convenient sake only 25 Principals were interviewed. Again, with the intention to get an in-depth understanding of Principal's leadership skills effectiveness and conflict resolutions in Southwest Region of Cameroon. The researchers personally administer the questionnaire and recorded interviews which were later transcribed for analysis.

Validation and Reliability of Questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using the estimate of internal consistency or internal reliability. To ensure high reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (α) which is the most appropriate reliability test to use when items are not dichotomously scored, was used. The reliability estimates ranged from 0.72 to 0.83 for the continuous data for each construct in the study. These values were considered high enough to justify that the instrument was reliable enough for use in the research. The result of the reliability estimates are shown in Table 3

Table 3: ***Cronbach Co-efficient Alpha reliability estimates of the research instrument subscales (N=50)***

Variables	No of items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Reliability Estimates
Principal's Leadership skills	10	29.18	4.208	0.72;

Validation and Reliability of Interview

For the qualitative approach to this investigation, to ensure validity, triangulation of data sources was done by the researcher. That is themes were established based on converging different sources of data collected from 25 Principals form different schools. For the qualitative approach to this study, to guarantee some degree of reliability, the researcher constantly compared interview data and data obtained from study of documents with given codes to ensure there was no drift in the definition of codes (no shift in the meaning of codes). Also, the researcher

negotiated with data analysts who cross-checked the codes for inter-coder agreement.

Methods of Data Analysis (Quantitative and Qualitative)

The data derived from the research was both qualitative and quantitative. As such quantitative and qualitative methods of analyses were used in analyzing data. Descriptive measures of central tendency, including the mean, percentages, frequency distribution, tables were used to analyze some aspects of the questionnaire data. Also, the qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using the thematic approach whereby opinions or viewpoints were grouped under umbrella terms of key concepts/themes.

Quantitative Data Analyses

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in this study. Descriptive statistics was used to describe data while inferential statistics was used to analyse data collected from the field using questionnaires, in order to verify formulated hypotheses. Data gathered from questionnaire copies were segmented into meaningful analytical units and coded. These codes were generated directly from data examination. The procedure was repeated for all returned questionnaire copies and the responses were then analyzed using percentages.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation

The most commonly used index of correlation is the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (Index). This index measures the degree and direction of the relationship between two variables X and Y. It is a measure of the strength of linear dependence (Correlation) between two variables X and Y, giving a value between +l and -1 inclusive. The Formula is:

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

Where, n= Sample size (i.e. number of paired observations)

$\sum xy$= sum of cross products of x and y,

$\sum x$ and $\sum y$ are sums of x and y scores respectively,

$\sum x^2$ and $\sum y^2$ are sum of the squares of x and y scores respectively,

$(\sum x)^2$ and $(\sum y)^2$ are sums of x and y scores squared respectively.

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Index may be used to summarize the relationship between two variables. It is important, however to inspect the Scatter plot of the two variables prior to calculating a Pearson r to make sure that the relationship is best summarized with a straight line, that is, there is a linear trend. As the correlation coefficient approaches 1.00, the relationship between the two variables observed in the scatter plot approaches a straight line, and the ability to predict one variable is based on the knowledge of another. In study, it will be used to verify independent hypotheses.

Multiple Linear Regressions

Multiple regressions are concerned with the use of many predictors variable to predict a criterion variable. Multiple regressions also permit the researcher to determine the importance of each of the predictors and rank order or prioritize the predictors in order of importance.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The study employed a concurrent triangulation mixed-method approach whereby beside the close-ended or structured questions, qualitative information was collected through

interviews to have in-depth information from heads of institutions and teachers. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed following the thematic approach whereby concepts or ideas were grouped under umbrella terms or key words. The primary documents of textual data were coded for every independent idea as it emerged from the data and for frequency of concepts following the positivism principle, but the interpretation of findings was dominantly qualitative. However, the frequency or grounding also reflects how many times a concept emerged and was a major indicator of emphasis. In the context of this study, to satisfy this requirement, findings were organized in code-grounding-quotation tables whereby themes or codes were clearly explained or described, followed by their grounding or frequency of occurrence and at the same time backed by their related quotations.

Ethical Considerations

Permission was sought to go to the various schools involved and administer the questionnaire and collect interview data. This study considered the research values of voluntary participation, anonymity and protection of respondents from any possible harm that can arise from participating in the study. Respondents were also informed of their right to refuse or abstain from participating in the study. Furthermore, the study assured the respondents confidentiality of the information given and protection from any possible harm that could arise from the study since the findings were to be used for the intended purposes only.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study on "Principals' Leadership Skills Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon".

Presentation of Findings Based on Research Questions and Hypotheses

- What relationship exists between principals' leadership skills effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School in the South West Region of Cameroon?

Research Hypothesis

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School.

Ha_1: There is a significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills and effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School.

General Description of Data/Variables

This study was designed to investigate "Principals' Leadership Skills Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon". Descriptive statistics for all variables in the study are presented in Table 4

Table 4: *Descriptive Statistics of the Variables Used for the Study*

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principal's Leadership skills	373	29.18	4.208
Principal's skills on conflict resolution	373	29.53	3.012

The scores Obtained were analyzed, presented and interpreted to accept or reject each of the three null hypotheses guiding this study.

The findings here bring out how Principals' Leadership skills effectiveness in conflicts resolution in Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

Table 5: *Distribution of Respondents According to the Principal's leadership skills*

Principals' Leadership Skills	***Stretched***				***Collapsed***	
	SA	**A**	**D**	**SD**	**SA/A**	**D/SD**
I work in line with the vision of the school	121	230	20	2	351	22
	32.4%	61.7%	5.4%	0.5%	94.1%	5.9%
I communicate effectively with the student to enhance harmony and love.	143	177	43	10	320	53
	38.3%	47.5%	11.5%	2.7%	85.8%	14.2%
I don't know how to make correct decision in class when conflict arises.	37	83	161	92	120	253
	9.9%	22.3%	43.2%	24.7%	32.2%	67.8%
I always delegate tasks to my students	113	165	77	18	278	95
	30.3%	44.2%	20.6%	4.8%	74.5%	25.5%
I don't know how to solve problems in my class when there is lots of noise	39	73	139	122	112	261
	10.5%	19.6%	37.3%	32.7%	30.0%	70.0%
Marks are always used as a sign of motivation to my students.	87	131	126	29	218	155
	23.3%	35.1%	33.8%	7.8%	58.4%	41.6%
I don't know how to manage the emotions of my students	46	94	134	99	140	233
	12.3%	25.2%	35.9%	26.5%	37.5%	62.5%
It is difficult to adapt to changes of new technology in my school.	58	124	110	81	182	191
	15.5%	33.2%	29.5%	21.7%	48.8%	51.2%
I account positively to affairs related to my students.	123	187	50	13	310	63
	33.0%	50.1%	13.4%	3.5%	83.1%	16.9%
I am open to continuous learning of new evolution.	162	148	51	12	310	63
	43.4%	39.7%	13.7%	3.2%	83.1%	16.9%
Multiple response set (MRS)	929	1412	911	478	2341	1389
	24.9%	37.9%	24.4%	12.8%	62.8%	37.2%

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

The findings from the table above reveals that majority of the respondent (94.1%) agreed that the principal works in line with the vision of the school whereas 5.9% of the respondents disagree with the statement. With majority (94.1%) respondents agreeing with the statement, it therefore implies that leadership skills have significant effect on conflict resolution in schools. Also, majority of the respondents (85.8%) agreed that their principal communicates effectively with the student to enhance harmony and love while (14.2%) of the respondent disagreed with that. Again 32.2% of the respondents agreed that they don't know how to make correct decision in class when conflict arise while 67.8% of the responded disagreed with that, it there implies that leadership skills does not have a significant effect on conflict resolution in schools. Furthermore, majority of the responded (74.5%) agreed that they delegate tasks to their students whereas 25.5% disagree with that. 30% of the responded agreed that they don't how to solve problems in their classes whereas 70% disagreed with that. Moreover, 58.4% of the respondents agreed that they always use marks as a sign of motivation to their students while 41.6% disagreed to that

statement. 37.5% of the respondents agreed that they don't know how to manage the emotions of their students whereas 62.5% of them disagreed to that. In addition to that, 48.8% of the respondent agreed to the fact that it is difficult for them to adapt to changes of new technology while majority of them disagreed to that (51.2%). With majority of the respondents (83.1%) agreed that they account positively to affairs related to their students while a minority of 16.9% of them disagreed to that. 83.1% of the responded agreed that they are open to continuous learning of new evolutions while 16.9% disagreed to that.

Testing of Hypothesis One

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School.

Ha_1: There is a significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is Principal's Leadership skills while the dependent variable is effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School in the South West Region of Cameroon. The scores of the independent variable were gotten from the responses recorded from the ten items of a four-point Likert scale questionnaire that measured the principal's Leadership skills. The scores of the dependent variable were gotten from the responses recorded from the teachers' ten items questionnaire that measured effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School in the South West Region of Cameroon.

The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis.

The formula using deviation from the mean method is;

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

Where x is the independent variable, y is the dependent variable and Γ_{xy} is the correlation coefficient for x and y. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 6: *The Correlation of Principal's Leadership Skills and Effectiveness in Conflicts Resolution in Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.*

Variable	$\sum X$ / $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ / $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	Γ_{xy}	p-value
Principal Leadership skills (X)	10885	324235			
Effectiveness in Conflicts Resolution in Secondary Schools (Y)	11013	328539	322466	**0.229***	**0.000**

N= 373; *p<0.05; df(n-2) =371; critical Γ_{xy} =0.124
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated Γ_{xy} - value of 0.229 is greater than the critical Γ_{xy} - value of 0.124 at 0.05 level of significance with 371 degrees of freedom. Also, the p-value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05. With the result of this analysis, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills and effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School

Since Principal leadership skills significantly influence the effectiveness of

conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon, a further exploration of the correlation coefficient revealed that the $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.229$ is positive. This indicates that as Principal leadership skills in the schools improves; the Effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools will improve. The extent to which Principal leadership skills influences Effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon is 5.2%

To evaluate Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution

Table 7*: Distribution of Respondents According to Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution*

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	SA	A	D	SD	SAA	SDD
I always listen to both parties in class when conflicts arise in order to solve them.	53	117	10	2	170	12
	29.1%	64.3%	5.5%	1.1%	93.4%	6.6%
I am able to recognize the emotions of my students	54	107	19	2	161	21
	29.7%	58.8%	10.4%	1.1%	88.5%	11.5%
I don't know how to express ones thought while listening to others perspective	13	34	110	25	47	135
	7.1%	18.7%	60.4%	13.7%	25.8%	74.2%
I always identify the root cause of a problem in my class.	36	128	12	6	164	18
	19.8%	70.3%	6.6%	3.3%	90.1%	9.9%
I always find areas of compromise to come to a mutual agreement in class.	49	120	12	1	169	13
	26.9%	65.9%	6.6%	0.5%	92.9%	7.1%
I am always patient when resolving a problem in class.	42	112	23	5	154	28
	23.1%	61.5%	12.6%	2.7%	84.6%	15.4%
I do not take into consideration the different background of my students when solving a problem.	35	27	92	28	62	120
	19.2%	14.8%	50.5%	15.4%	34.1%	65.9%
I am always creative in bringing new approaches that can help resolve problems.	57	113	9	3	170	12
	31.3%	62.1%	4.9%	1.6%	93.4%	6.6%
I always ground rules to resolve conflicts.	46	83	37	16	129	53
	25.3%	45.6%	20.3%	8.8%	70.9%	29.1%
The school environment is quite and void of conflict	28	90	42	22	118	64
	15.4%	49.5%	23.1%	12.1%	64.8%	35.2%
Multiple response set (MRS)	413	931	366	110	1344	476
	22.7%		51.2%	20.1%	6.0%	73.8%

Source: *Field Survey, 2023*

The findings from above reveals that the majority of the respondents (93.4%) agree that they always listen to both parties in class when conflicts arise in order to solve them while 6.6% of the respondents disagree to that statement. More over 88.5% of the respondents are able to recognise the emotions of their students where as 11.5% of them disagree to that. In addition to that 25.8% of the respondents agree that they don't know how to express ones thought while listening to others perspective while majority of the respondents (74.2%) disagree to this statement. Again, 90.1% of the respondents agree to the fact that they always identify the root cause of problems in their

classes whereas 9.9% of the respondents disagree to that. A majority of the respondents, 92.9% of the respondents agree to the fact they always find arrears of compromise to come to a mutual agreement in class while 7.1% of the respondent disagree to that. Moreover, 84.6% of the respondents are always patients when resolving problems in class whereas 15.4% of the respondents disagree with that. A minority of the respondents (34.1%) agree to the fact that they do not take in to consideration the different background of their students when solving a problem whereas the majority making a percentage of 65.9% disagree to that statement. Furthermore 93.4% of the respondents are always creative in bringing new approaches that can help resolve problems whereas 6.6% of the respondents disagree to that. Again, 70.9% of respondents always ground rules to resolve conflicts in class while a minority of 29.1% of them disagree to that. Moreover, 64.8% of the respondent strongly agrees to the fact that the school environment is quiet and void of conflict whereas a minority of 35.2% of the respondents disagree to this statement.

General Research Hypothesis

Ho: Principal leadership do not significantly influence the Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon

Ha: Principal leadership significantly influence the Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon.

The general hypothesis that guided this study was: Principal leadership skills significantly influence the Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon.

The principal's leadership involved in the Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools was studied with respect to the following predictors or indicators such as; Principal leadership skills (X_1) do not significantly influence the effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

To test this hypothesis, a Multiple Regression Analysis was carried out to investigate whether the predictors; Principal leadership skills (X_1) could significantly predict the effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon.

The final regression analysis results showing the contribution of each of the predictor variables to the criterion variable Y, is shown in Table 8

Table 8: *Regression analysis results of predictor variables on the criterion variable*

Multiple R	0.288[a]
R^2	0.083
Adjusted R^2	0.075
Standard Error	2.896

a. Predictors: (Constant), Principal's leadership skill

ANOVA

Source of variation	***Sum of Square***	**Df**	***Mean Square***	***F***	***p-value***
Regression	279.821	3	93.274	11.120	0.000b
Residual	3095.187	369	8.388		
Total	3375.008	372			

Coefficients

Variable	***Unstandardized Coefficients***		***Standardized Coefficients***	***t***	***P-value***
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
(Constant)	22.612	1.215		18.607	0.000
Principal leadership skills (X_1)	0.063	0.046	0.2 34	1.351	0.177

Critical F-value ($F_{3,369}$) = 2.63 Calculated ($F_{3,369}$) = 11.120 p<0.05

The results of the regression indicated that the model explained 08.3% of the variance. The calculated F-value of 11.120 is higher than the critical F-value of 2.63 at 3 and 369 degrees of freedom indicating that the overall regression was statistically significant; thus, the selected predictor variables: X_1, X_2, and X_3 significantly predict effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools (Y) in the South West Region of Cameroon. Also, Principal leadership skills (X_1) (B= 0.063, p=0.177) did not significantly predict effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools (Y) in the South West Region of Cameroon.

From this table, the constant has the unstandardized B value of 22.612 and for the predictor variables (X_1), (X_2), and (X_3) are 0.063, 0.090 and 0.077 respectively. The prediction equation thus obtained was:

$$\mathbf{Y = 22.612 + 0.063\,X_1 + 0.090X_2 + 0.077X_3}$$

This equation means increasing principal leadership skills will increase effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools (Y) in the South West Region of Cameroon. Thus, the predicted Effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools (Y) in the South West Region of Cameroon for each of the respondents can be determined if the values for X_1, X_2, are X_3, are known. Hence if all these values are all zero, the respondent will have a score of 22.612

Summary of Findings

Hypothesis	Statistical tool	Findings
Hypothesis One Ho1: **Ho_1:** There is no significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills and effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School.	**Pearson Product Moment Correlation**	There is a significant relationship between principal's Leadership skills and effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary School. ($\Gamma_{xy=}$ 0.229> 0.124, p=0.000 < 0.05). An increase in principal's Leadership skills in the schools will improves effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The null hypothesis was rejected

This section presents findings from the data collected from twenty (25) principals that were interviewed on the topic "Principals' Leadership Skills Effectiveness and Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon".

In this first theme, participants' responses are with respect to items related to principals' Leadership skills which have two categories.

Category 1: Thematic analysis depicting how teachers communicate with their students to resolve problems/conflicts in class.

In this category, participants' responses are with respect to items related to how teachers communicate with their students to resolve problems/conflicts in class.

Table 9*: Thematic analysis depicting how teachers communicate with their students to resolve problems/conflicts in class.*

Code	Code description	Quotation
Listen	To pay attention to someone.	"They listen to both parties and draw their conclusion". "They listen to the students". "They listen to the students". "They listen to the students and get different versions of the story before drawing conclusion". "They take turns. Nobody speaks when it is not their turn. The teacher listens more and does more of moderation". "My teachers always practice patience and empathy in communicating with the students to solve their problems; they listen to students and display emotional intelligence".
Counseling	Assistance from a professional in the resolution of personal difficulties.	"They organize small counseling session and see the way forward to the conflict and see how to solve them".
Investigation	The process of inquiring into or following up.	"They do their investigation before drawing conclusion to resolve the conflicts". "They forward the worries to the right quarters for further investigation".
Understand	To stand underneath, to support.	"They bring the students to understand each other".
Shout	A loud burst of voice.	"Some shout at the students, some work with the class prefect order in the classrooms". "Some shout at the students, others ignore the situation, some teachers meet the students after class, some pause the session to iron out the issue before continuing to teach".
Report	To relate details of an event or incident.	"They report to the administration for appropriate actions to be taken for minor conflicts, they settle the matters in classrooms". "They meet the class prefect and get what was wrong and call the attention of the class master who solves the problem and report to the school administration if need arises".
Dialogue	A conversation or other form of discourse between two or more individuals.	"The teachers Dialogue with the students to find out what the main issue is before trying to look for a solution".
Complain	To express feelings of pain, dissatisfaction, or resentment.	"In case of a problem the first person they complain to is the discipline master or to the class delegate who takes it to the administration".
Communication		". There is a friendly communication between teachers and students in crisis situation to arrive at a mutual solution'.
Punishments	The act or process of imposing and/or applying a sanction.	"Some give them punishments in class, some take them to the senior discipline master, some take them directly to the vice principal and principals, some send the students out of their classes, some even beat or fight with students". "The teachers continuously stare at the students for some time, some will ask them to stand up or even kneel down, others will give punishments like grass cutting or classroom cleaning".
Conflict	A clash or disagreement, often violent, between two or more opposing groups or individuals.	"In case of any conflict, the case is taken to the senior discipline master for a solution".

With regards to principals' Leadership skills and effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon and how teachers communicate with their students to resolve problems/conflicts in class, the findings from the interview conducted with 20 principals revealed that, some teachers listen to both parties before drawing their conclusions as seen in the following quotations: *"They listen to both parties and draw their conclusion". "They listen to the students and get different versions of the story before drawing conclusion". "They take turns. Nobody speaks when it is not their turn. The teacher listens more and does more of moderation". "My teachers always practice patience and empathy in communicating with the students to solve their problems; they listen to students and display emotional intelligence".*

Moreover, some Teachers investigate the issue before any action as express by some: *"They do their investigation before drawing conclusion to resolve the conflicts". "They forward the worries to the right quarters for further investigation".*

Also, some Teachers shout to the students while others report to the administration as seen in the following quotations: *"Some shout at the students, some work with the class prefect order in the classrooms". "Some shout at the students, others ignore the situation, some teachers meet the students after class, some pause the session to iron out the issue before continuing to teach".*

"*They report to the administration for appropriate actions to be taken for minor conflicts, they settle the matters in classrooms". "They meet the class prefect and get what was wrong and call the attention of the class master who solves the problem and report to the school administration if need arises".*

In addition, some Teachers give direct punishments to the students as seen below: *"Some give them punishments in class, some take them to the senior discipline master, some take them directly to the vice principal and principals, some send the students out of their classes, some even beat or fight with students". "The teachers continuously stare at the students for some time, some will ask them to stand up or even kneel down, others will give punishments like grass cutting or classroom cleaning".*

To conclude, some teachers Dialogue with the students to find out what the main issue is before trying to look for a solution, there is a friendly communication between teachers and students in crisis situation to arrive at a mutual solution and in case of any conflict, the case is taken to the senior discipline master for a solution.

Category 2: Thematic analysis depicting how teachers make decisions in resolving conflicts in class.

In this category, participants' responses are with respect to items related to how teachers make decisions in resolving conflicts in class.

Table 10: *Thematic Analysis Depicting How Teachers Make Decisions in Resolving Conflicts in Class*

Code	Code description	Quotation
Investigation	The process of inquiring into or following up.	"Proper investigation is done". "Investigation is done, the concerned are sent to the administrative unit". "Some will punish the students upon investigation if found guilty". "Investigation is done in class, punishment on the culprit, general advice to the class". "They carry out proper investigation before reaction". "Investigation of the issue at hand is done before any conclusion is been made". ""They investigate the matter because you cannot trust students, the administration comes in, parents are invited if need be for follow up". "Proper examinations of the issues are taken and consultations before decisions are arrived".
Administration	The school government under the rule of a particular leader.	"The Administration comes if need be"
Correct	Free from error, true, accurate.	"They check the correct information before drawing conclusion".
Report	To relate details of an event or incident.	"A written report is made and forwarded during weekly staff meeting". "Some will beat, some will report to the staff room/principal, some will make a written report, some punish the students immediately, and some will console/advice the students". "They decide and implement, then report. Generally they make wrong decisions because the majority does not master the school rules and regulations".
Fair	Just, equitable.	"They try to be fair; they make sure that decisions are consensual/ popular. The students are given the chance to make suggestions".
Evaluate	To draw conclusions from examining.	"They evaluate the decree of the conflict and do a self-evaluation of whether to bring the conflict to the level of the staff meeting or find an amicable solution".
Meet	To come face to face with someone by arrangement.	"They meet the class prefect and get what was wrong and call the attention of the class master who solves the problem and report to the school administration if need arises".
Needs	A requirement for something.	"Teachers take into account the needs of those involved in the conflict and how the decision will affect them".
Listening	To pay attention to someone.	"Listening to the students' problem, sending the culprits to the senior discipline master, asking them to be honest in telling the truth, at times corporal punishment, telling parents about the children's behavior, advising the students".
Disciplinary	For the purpose of imposing punishment.	"Take students to the disciplinary council, send students away from their classes".
Punish	To administer disciplinary action.	"Some punish the students in class; some will take to the senior discipline master depending on the gravity of the crime".

With respect to principals' Leadership skills and effectiveness in conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon subscribed that teachers make decisions in resolving conflicts in class. The findings from the interview conducted with 20 principals revealed that, some teachers carry on investigation before drawing their conclusions as seen in the following quotations: *"Proper investigation is done". "Investigation is done, the concerned are sent to the administrative unit". "Some will punish the students upon investigation if found guilty". "Investigation is done in class, punishment on the culprit, general advice to the class". "They carry out proper investigation before reaction". "Investigation of the issue at hand is done before any conclusion is been made". ""They investigate the matter because you cannot trust students, the administration comes in, parents are invited if need be for follow up". "Proper examinations of the*

issues are taken and consultations before decisions are arrived".

Moreover, some Teachers will report to the hierarchy before making any decision as expressed below: *"A written report is made and forwarded during weekly staff meeting". "Some will beat, some will report to the staff room/principal, some will make a written report, some punish the students immediately, and some will console/advice the students". "They decide and implement, then report. Generally, they make wrong decisions because the majority does not master the school rules and regulations".*

Also, some Teachers listen to the students before making any decision as seen in the follow quotations: *"Listening to the students' problem, sending the culprits to the senior discipline master, asking them to be honest in telling the truth, at times corporal punishment, telling parents about the children's behavior, advising the students".*

However, some Teachers decision is to punish the students while others is to send them to the disciplinary council as seen in the following quotations: *"Some punish the students in class; some will take to the senior discipline master depending on the gravity of the crime". "Take students to the disciplinary council; send students away from their classes".*

In conclusion, the Teachers meet the class prefect and get what was wrong and call the attention of the class master who solves the problem and report to the school administration if need arises. Teachers take into account the needs of those involved in the conflict and how the decision will affect them.

Summary

The overall research question which talks on the extent to which principals' leadership skills has an effect on conflict resolution in the secondary schools in the south west Region of Cameroon showed that the different leadership skills which are actually exhibited by the principal in a school milieu has a way in which it affects the way in which this conflict is been resolved. It's revealed that majority of the responded agreed that the principal used his or her leadership skills in resolving conflicts in schools.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This section discusses the findings of the study, draws conclusions, advances recommendations, propose suggestions for further research and state the limitations of the study. This study is meant to investigate "Principals' Leadership Skills Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon".

Discussion of findings related to research questions

Principals' Leadership skills in secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon?

This study investigated principals' leadership skills effectiveness in conflicts resolution in secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. Both the findings agreed that Principals' vision of the school if well communicated to every member of the educational community and external public significantly influence the effectiveness of conflict resolution in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon (Ebot-Ashu et al, 2021; Hamadou 2023; Hallinger and Heck, 1998). A further exploration of the correlation coefficient revealed that correct decision making in daily problems will reduce problems or conflict (Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017). This indicates that Principal who motivates and manage emotions of staffs and students helps in reducing conflict resolution in secondary schools (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hargreaves & Fink, 20003).

The findings and literature equally agreed that Principals should adapt to change and be positive tinkers which is similar to the study of Janeth (2014) who conducted a study on headmasters managerial skills on effective school management and concluded that leadership skill together with human relation skills which is one of the vital skills a principal most possess has a significant role to play in leadership and management of the school hence helping in resolving conflicts in school (Alhourani, 2013; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

It is worth noting that educational leadership has been found to be a very important characteristic of school effectiveness (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017; Ebot-Ashu, 2014). The leaders definitely portray leadership skills which the principal been the educational leader of the school will portray. A skilled and effective principal is someone who facilitates the use of the inputs to the school, in order to ensure the achievement of set goals. The principal is set to oversee all the processes involved in the running of the school for overall effectiveness and efficiency (Ebot-Ashu, 2014). Principals' leadership skill, according to (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003), is used to denote expertise developed in the course of training and experience. The common factor for the different types of skills according to Ebot-Ashu (2014) is that been a leader you necessarily have to match the demands of a particular task to the appropriate skill necessary for the effective achievement of the said task so much so that there is effectiveness and efficiency.

According to Bolden et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis of concepts of leadership, mostly suggested looking at the definition of leadership it involves a "winning over" process which is mainly concerned with facilitating the performance of an individual or a communal task. Taxonomy of explanatory leader behaviour was developed; it summarized a range of material from different organizations to provide an orderly explanation of leadership expertise for the use of modifying and designing leadership development training programs (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003).

Again, according to the situational theories, it is out to explain leader's ability by looking at the influence of the situation of the leader's expertise and behaviour which will lead to the concept of situational leadership (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; Hamadou, 2023). Both the literature and findings agreed to the fact the principal who support the development of staffs and students about conflict resolution in schools goes a long way in resolving conflicts in secondary schools in Cameroon.

Effectiveness of Conflict Resolution Strategies in Secondary Schools

Conflict resolution theory is built on concept such as identity, ethnic victimization, group victimization, egoism of victimization, continuation of victimization are normal behaviors that results into conflicts in Cameroon primary and secondary schools. Both the findings and literature understood the concept of demonization and dehumanization seeks to explain the sources of enormity between two groups or individuals which might subsequently lead to a conflict (Himen, 1980; Volkan, 1988; Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). Flippo (1980) advocated for the school stakeholders' to identify the root cause of conflict, listen to both parties in conflicts. It's the duty of the both principal and teachers to understand the emotions of individuals, team or community involve in conflicts as advocated by Nicklass & Mikael (2005) and Wilmot & Hocker (2011). It's the duty of the educational community to communicate effectively with staffs and students in making compromise for mutual agreements that enhance harmony and love (Kerzner, 1998; Weihrich, 1992). Mitchell (1981) advocate that educational stakeholders must be patient when resolving conflict; this message extend their understanding to take considerations on how to manage students with different background, are some of the

elements which shows that leadership skills on the management of conflict is important in educational establishments (Dzurgba, 2006; Wilmot & Hocker, 2011).

It is worthy to note any organization like a school cannot be effective when the leadership skills is poor, the school will surely suffer when it comes on the attainment of its goal when the head who is the principal cannot effectively lead the school towards attainment if this said goals. School principals and teachers must learn to be creative in bringing new approaches to resolve conflicts amongst staffs and students (Hamadou, 2023; Paraskevopoulou and Ioannidou, 2017).

Conflict is seen by some authors as a natural disagreement between staff and some ground rules must be followed to resolve conflicts (Molindo, 2014). This may be so because teachers differ in their values, needs, beliefs, behaviors and perceptions. Also it is for this reason that principals are expected to portray leadership skills during conflict resolution amongst staff.

Hamadou (2023) and Mbua (2003) states that principals with higher level of interpersonal skills are better able to adapt and use the different strategies in conflict resolution especially when conflict occurs among members of the administrative office. Both the findings and literature adds that principals should be more empathic to what motivate the conflict, create an atmosphere of trust and takes others' needs and motivation into account when resolving the conflict (Himen, 1980; Dzurgba, 2006). This opinion of Mbua was evident in the finding of this study where by one way in which one of the principals said conflict can be reduced or resolved is too respect the needs of others as seen in the statements of one principal value other's needs and that they are sensitive and empathic to what motivate staff members.

A few scholars have made sustained contributions to the question of how formal leadership from principals affects a variety of school outcomes (Hallinger, 2003. Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Heck & Hallinger, 2009, Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990, 2000, 2005), but many others have contributed to the accumulation of evidence that principals do in fact, make a difference. Administrators also need to focus on teacher motivation because effectively motivated teachers provide the most favorable setting for students. External motivators are not effective however. The observation and comparison by Flippo (1980) appear to demonstrate that extrinsic motivation in the form of bonus pay may not have long term success without complementary intrinsic motivators, such as meaningful teacher involvement. Teachers appreciate financial bonuses but do not respond to them as policy makers believe.

Again, Jones (2005) states that principals should have a full mastery in conflict resolution, to create an orderly, respectful, harmonious, peaceful and team building among staff members in schools to ensure a compatible and healthy environment conducive for learning and teaching, they should equally master the management of relationships among people in this essence the acquisition of leadership skill will make the principals make colleague get along with others peacefully for the smooth functioning and running of the school.

Contribution Knowledge

Figure 2: *Principals' Leadership Skills Effectiveness in Conflict Resolution among Staff Members in Secondary Schools in Fako Division, South West Region of Cameroon*

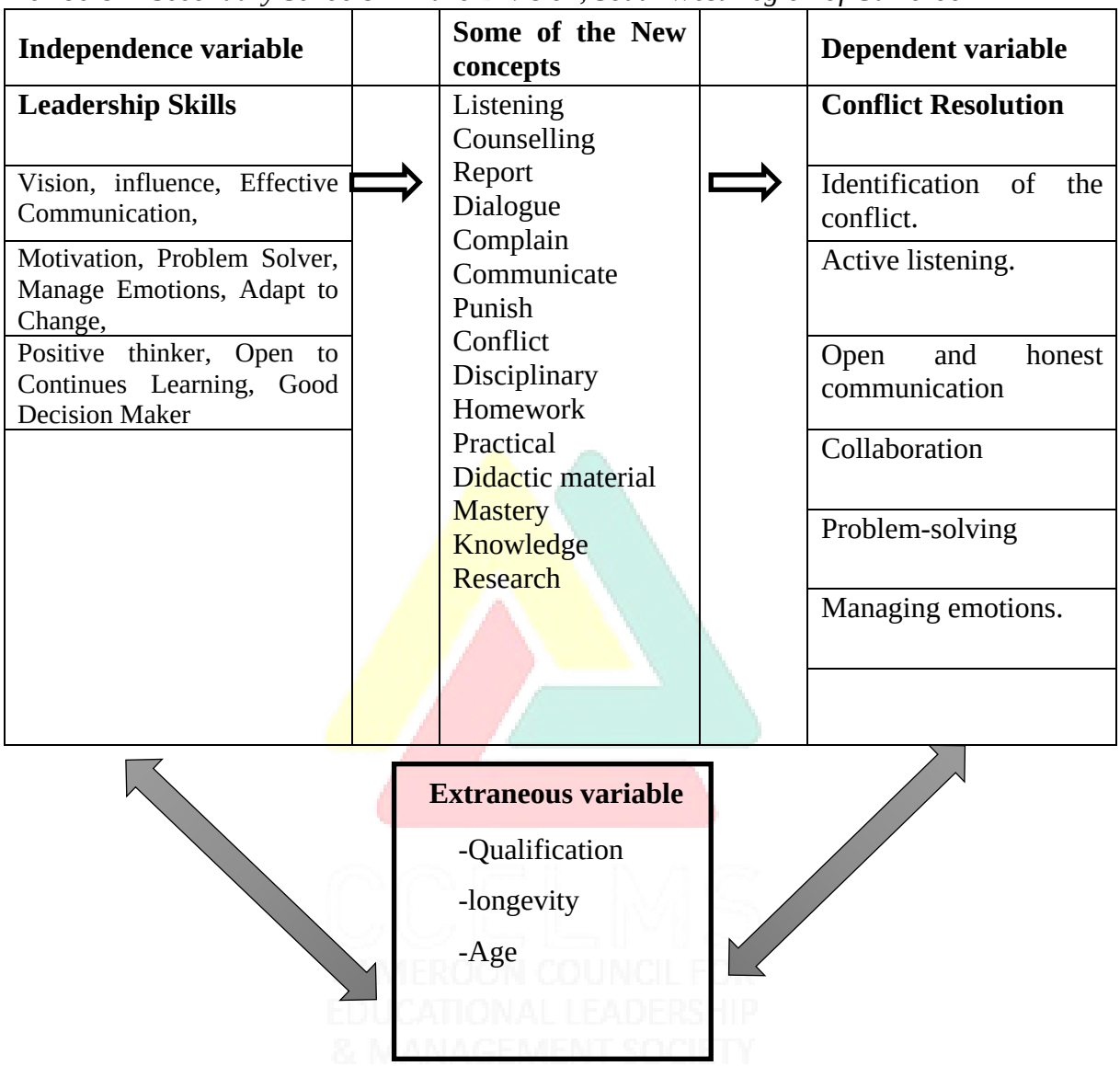

Figure 2 provide a framework about principals' Leadership skills effectiveness on conflict Resolutions. The framework provides a range on healthy Leadership skill: Listening, Counselling, Report, Dialogue, Complain, Communicate, Punish, Disciplinary, Homework, Practical, Didactic material, Mastery, Knowledge, Research can influence Conflict Resolution in secondary schools positively, Based on the findings and literature concluded that conflict resolution is well resolved when the principal and his or her team use their leadership skills in the identification of the conflict, active listening to the parties involved in Open and honest communication, collaboration, problem-solving, managing emotions, exercised in the school environment.

This section summarized the findings of the study with respect to the research hypothesis and relates to principals' Leadership skills effectiveness on Conflict Resolution. Based on the findings, major conclusions and recommendations were made to school leaders in secondary education on how conflict can be better resolved in secondary schools in the south west region of Fako. This section also states

some limitation and suggested further research work on Principal's leadership skills and conflict resolution in secondary schools.

Limitation of the study

1. Some teachers were bias to responding to the questionnaire for fear of exposing their principal behavior and attitude in managing conflicts in schools. But upon explanation of its good intense and benefits to the overall educational system and how their responses are to be confidential, they became cooperation.
2. Some questionnaires were not returned.
3. Some items in the questionnaires were not answered leading to missing values.
4. Very little or no Information is available which is related to the subject matter on conflict Resolution.

Recommendations

Based on the literature reviewed and findings made the following recommendations were made.

Principals need the following leadership skills: effective communication, empathy, problem-solving, negotiation, and the ability to make good decision, manage emotions, adapt to change. Negotiation, mediation and arbitration are good for dispute resolution. The Cameroon Ministry of Secondary Education should help educational stakeholders accept conflict is natural and happens in every ongoing relationship. Cameroon educational authorities must learn to be calm agent and operate strategically, listen actively to complains and analyze the conflict situations, mediating discussions, encouraging empathy, work together in identifying common goals.

Suggestions for further Research

Research can be carried out to investigate how Principal's managerial and administrative skills could help in Conflict Resolution in Secondary Schools as a whole.

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