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Principals' Leadership, Management and Administrative Roles as a Correlate to Conflict Management in Secondary Schools in the Fako Division Southwest Region of Cameroon

¹Paidia Aboh Nteh & ²Frederick Ebot-Ashu

¹ Master of Educational Administration Researcher, Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon | ² Associate Professor, Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon

Abstract

This study examines the various ways to improve principal leadership, management and administrative role and responsibilities approaches on conflict management in secondary schools in the Fako Division, Southwest Region of Cameroon. The study adopted a case study research design. Interviews and documentary review were used to collect data from principals. The target population for the study was 15 secondary school principals used to measure principals' leadership, management and administrative roles on conflict management. Principals were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the data collection. Data was analysed using pattern coding.

The findings revealed firstly, principal leadership role for resolving conflict management consists of a good visionary, innovative, influencing, establish psychological safety within the school, collaborating, communicating, experience, reduce the barriers to experimentation, create an effective communication system, foster an environment of diversity, give emphasis on the value of teamwork, listening and a means of mentoring younger colleagues and students against conflict. Secondly, the principal's management role for conflict resolution consists of planning, organising, controlling, budgeting, training, negotiating and mediating. This as well can be adopted for the principals' executing his or her administrative role to resolve conflicts in secondary schools consists of the social, financial and pedagogic functions.

The study recommends that principals, teachers and the administrative staff should all learn about the principal's functions to resolve conflict management. This will enable them to become a much better future leader. It also recommends that; the government and school proprietors should think of security and safety before determining the location of a school, since the location of some of the school is what makes it prone to attacks and conflict. Principals should have the spirit of innovation which comes not only from being inspired by great books and experience, but also by admiring nature natured itself is a product of creativity.

Keywords: Principals' Leadership, Management, Administrative, Roles Conflict, Management, Secondary Schools, Southwest, Cameroon.

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Introduction

Conflicts often occur in schools, organization and any other social system. Despite these battles in our communities some managers/administrators or leaders are not fully equipped with the administrative, management or leadership skills in resolving conflicts. Hornby in (1995), holds that, conflict is considered to be a serious disagreement, struggle and fight arising from differences of opinions, wishes, needs, values and interests between and among individuals or groups. Conflict between individuals can happen when two or more values and opinions are contradictory in nature and have not been agreed upon in a win-win situation, when one is not living according to one's values; when one's perspective are threatened; or when there is discomfort from fear of the unknown or from lack of fulfilment (Namara, 2006). Schermerhon (1984), defines conflict as disagreement that exists in a social situation over

issues of substance (substantive conflict and/or emotional antagonisms emotional conflicts).

Principal's effective conflict management tends to strengthen communication among teachers enhancing collaboration and mutual trust at the same time. Contrarily, principal's ineffective conflict management tends to affect school climate, communication and cooperation among teachers negatively. Furthermore, principal's characteristics such as sincerity, integrity, empathy, communication skills and transparency may be useful on effective conflict management (Ebot-Ashu, 2018; 2021). It was recommended among others that the guidance and counselling committees in schools should be strengthened so that they can educate the students on better ways of handling conflict. School authorities should complement reward students' good behaviours and to encourage them to behave well in school. Peer mediation teams should be established with selected students who are well behaved and equipped with conflict resolution skills to help the schools handle interpersonal conflict. The district education office, civil society, or any community-based or non-governmental organization, which is interested in conflict management so that basic schools in the district would have relatively reduced conflict environment, could train this group periodically. It is also necessary for students to be educated on all the conflict resolution mechanisms in the schools and sanctions for certain offences (Mosbenson, 2021).

Karimatul and Bagus (2019) examined the Role of the Head of School in Conflict Mangement in the industrial revolution. A descriptive survey was used for the study, and was guided by three research objectives. In the findings, Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu (2023) proposed a general conflict management strategy as follows: (1) a win-lose strategy, (2) a lose-lose strategy, and (3) a win-win strategy. By using the strategy of win-lose, one side wins and one side loses, including the use of authority or power to suppress was a party. Could be, the losing party will behave non-productive, less active, and not identify themselves with the goals of the organization. A lose-lose strategy means that all parties to the conflict become losers. This strategy can be in the form of a compromise (both sacrificing their interests), and arbitration (using a third party). Win-win strategy, namely conflict is solved through the method of problem solving or problem solving (Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu, 2023). The school principal as a leader in the school in the face of conflict dap at considering various existing conflict management strategies adapted to the conditions of the conflict at hand. Principals need to think positively in resolving

conflicts and conflict management strategies are solutions to help principals resolve conflicts in schools. Some of the things that need attention and the recommended is the start of a passive attitude toward the active orientation, and highly dependent on the level of maturity of the parties in conflict (Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu, 2023; Nader, 1989). The role of the principal needs to have the power to change the behaviour of the individual he leads through authority as a leader in the school in order to implement appropriate conflict management strategies in resolving conflicts that occur at school. The conflict management strategy that can be carried out by principals in the era is to maximize services. The intended service is to provide education, understanding of changing times and trying to minimize conflict. Teachers must be given an understanding in the beginning that the current era is far different from their era in the past. So that it takes openness and adjustments to the demands of the times and technology. This method is a preventive measure to avoid the possibility of conflicts that arise.

The steps in conflict management that must be done by the principal are as follows: (1) planning conflict analysis, this step is intended to define or determine what conflicts arise in the administration of the education unit. Educational leaders can do it at any time when there are indications of conflict. The education leader in this step must be able to determine the source of the cause. Factors that influence it, its types, and the involvement of parties to the conflict (Ontario Ministry of Education 2012; Brandon and Ronnertson, 2007). If all of this is clear, finally the actual conflict can be formulated clearly and firmly, (2) conflict evaluation is an effort to determine the quality of a conflict that has been formulated. The quality of a conflict can be viewed from two aspects, namely its intensity and breadth. Both are interrelated with each other, (3) Selection of conflict strategies as follows: understand several principles in the implementation of conflict management, based on the principles above, choose between the chosen conflict management strategies, implement the chosen conflict management strategy, evaluate the implementation of conflict management strategies chosen to know its success, the strategy that has been chosen can be maintained if it shows good results , but if the results are not good or not good then it is necessary to choose another strategy in a sustainable manner.

It is along this requirement that this research study aims at analysing the principal's leadership, management and administrative role as a correlate to conflict management in secondary schools. This section was structured from the general introduction,

the background of the study was followed by the statement of the problem, purpose and research question. The scope of the study was presented after the justification and significance of the study. Lastly the summary of the study.

Background to the Study

School conflict in Cameroon can be traced far back before the creation of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in 1979. In 1979, there was an educational ordinance No G370/477/MINEDUC of 1979, creating the Parent-Teacher-Association (PTA) in Cameroon for primary schools and colleges, for both public and private schools due to the conflict of power and who is supposed to do what and when. The ordinance was amended by a ministerial circular letter No. 23/11/25 of 14th May 1990 stating the function of the PTA that is construction of classrooms, recruitment of teachers, infrastructural development of school and psychopedagogic upbringing of the children. Decree No. 2001/041 Of 19th February 2001, organising public schools and colleges, citizens were given the power to participate in the management of public primary and secondary schools by the composition of school management boards. The above policy documents in one way or the other affected the leadership roles of school principals especially in carrying out project and making decisions.

The most peculiar is the ordinance No G370/477/MINEDUC of 1979 which gave room for Parents and Others association or stakeholders to question principal's leadership roles in secondary schools in Cameroon. Ebot-Ashu (2021) holds that, the education policies of the Republic of Cameroon are implemented by more than seven educational ministries. He further opined that, due to this complexity, the educational system has witness and is still witnessing serious managerial and control malfunctioning in the implementation of educational policies in different educational ministries and this has given rise to conflicts in schools. The need to resolve these conflicts is very important and in a school system, principals are at the helm of it all. The laid down guideline of education in Cameroon on Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 stipulates that the school principals have delegated powers to organize manage and control effective teaching and learning in their schools. Nonetheless, many school principals have found themselves taking up challenging positions and assuming a number of administrative roles. Not only are they expected to lead curricular changes but they are also required to be decisive change initiators, implementers as well as ensure continuation of the change. As school administrators, they directly

influence the workers' attitude, interest, and change their behaviour towards commitment to work and objectives. As leaders, the school principals need to guide their followers as they minimize conflict, fear and resistance to certain educational change. The leaderships they practice as school principals has been understood to play an important role firstly, to the propensity of conflict within staffs and secondly, the management of these conflict. Ebot-Ashu (2021) identified these leadership style to include; visionary, strategic, transformational, charismatic, democratic, cross-cultural, bureaucratic, transactional and laissez-faire and authoritarian or autocratic which guides the action taken by leaders when faced with diverse situations.

According to the document Policy Orientations in Secondary and Technical Education in Cameroon, as cited in Ebot-Ashu (2021), The Minister of Secondary Education, Professor Nalova Lyonga in the school year 2017/2018 picked up the theme of: "Second-Generation" Secondary Education for the Training of Citizens Capable of Promoting Bilingualism, Multiculturalism and Living Together". Such an orientation, already expressed in Article 15 of Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on the Orientation of Education in Cameroon, meet our firm determination to engage our learners in the culture of civic values and guarantee of a Cameroon proud of its diversity, its rich cultural heritage and by taking great advantage of the harmony between its children.

Through terms such as "bilingualism", "multiculturalism, and "living together, this theme reflects our determination to promote the spirit of tolerance, to inculcate knowledge, know-how that is, a culture, a civic and moral conscience, to our learners so that our school carries out, better than before, all its missions. This school must, therefore, prepare all students to be responsible citizens, able to contribute to the development of a democratic, united and pluralistic society, open to all cultures. The most radical policy shift in an organisation was the separation of technical vocational education from general education. This policy has gone a long way to reduce the occurrence of violence, hate, and conflict within the schools and its surrounding environment

Statement of the Problem

To meet the challenges of educational standard and higher expectations of education in Cameroon, the issue of conflict and interpersonal conflicts among staff members has to be treated appropriately. When looking at the arena in which schools operate and the vast numbers of people who inhabit and work either

directly or indirectly on the education of the students and the daily running of schools, it is easy to see conflict often arise. Within the school system, the various stakeholders (administrative staff, students, teachers, parents, school boards and community members) have varying problems, needs, views, demands and expectations.

These differences or expectations create room for conflict in schools, some of which include teachers falling out with their head of departments and other colleagues' because of unfavorable schedules given to them; teachers threatening principals because they have forwarded their names to higher authorities for sanctions; vice principals bullying at teachers for constant absence from classes; distribution of work among personnel, financial resources and issues, in and out of class teaching activities and practices, rewards, punishment, assessment practices, use of power-authority, being late for class, political views, negative attitudes of some personal, passing grade levels and scoring system, issues regarding the legislation, dressing code, assignments and placements for staff and distribution of resources, male teachers failing female students because they turn down their request for sex relationship; unauthorized absenteeism of some teachers, personal ambitions, parents attacking or detaining teachers for 'maltreating' their children in school; and parents opposing administrators over increases of fees or mismanagement of PTA funds.

Where conflict exists, there is a dysfunctioning of the institution, disharmony and other negative occurrences with attendances, problems of poor teachers' participation and output with corresponding poor result among students. These have serious consequences on the internal and external efficiency of the establishment as a whole and the development of the nation in general. The principal's managerial skills for conflict framework by Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu (2023) support this work in the sense that, conflict comes as a result of the differences in the social class of individuals and groups in the society, as societies are made up of the strong, the rich, the weak and the poor. The strong/rich turns to exploit the weak/poor through the use of brutal force. In such a situation, there is no mutual benefit which at the end breeds disagreement, uncooperative spirit and destructive attitude which subsequently lead to conflict.

Given the prevalence of these conflicts and their profound effect on staff output and students' academic performance, principals of secondary schools are required to effectively use their leadership, management and administrative skills to manage

conflicts in schools. Educational research, particularly in the field of conflict management, has discovered that conflicts, if not resolved well, may have negative effects on the school, particularly on school climate (Mbua, 2003; Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu, 2023; Brandon and Ronnertson, 2007). Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu (2023) estimated that 65 percent of performance problems results from conflicts between staff members. In addition, he says that unresolved interpersonal conflict represents the largest effect of productivity, yet it remains largely unrecognized. This subsequently affects the morale, input and productivity of the school. It was for this reasons that, this study was out to investigate principals' leadership, management and administrative roles and its affect to conflict management in Secondary Schools in Fako Division, South-West Region of Cameroon.

Research Questions

How does principals' leadership, management and administrative roles affect conflict management in secondary schools in the Fako Division Southwest region of Cameroon?

Justification of the Study

It's true fact that vey limited researchers have research on Principals' leadership, management and administrative functions as a correlate to conflict management in secondary schools in Cameroon. There has not been an improvement in the rate at which conflict occurs in schools. Principals are the ones who lead and mostly deals with the setting of school goals and planning the functioning of schools. In most cases some principals are not aware of the possible signs of conflict in order effectively use their skills to act in diverse situations encountered within the school environment. Their perceptions are important in understanding the leadership, management and administrative roles in conflict management. Leaders are known to be subtle good in finding solutions to conflicts within any organization and investing the role of this approach on conflict management in secondary school is greatly important as it will create room for negotiations, dialogue and peace initiatives towards finding lasting solutions to conflicts within the school and the community at large. Ebot-Ashu (2021) holds that authoritarian leaders are meticulous planners and expect that their subordinates will trust that they have come to the best possible decision on their own without needing insights to from others. A good example of a proponent of such a leadership approach is Saddam Hussein as some authors puts it. The need to investigate how this solitary leadership approach can

help school managers manage conflicts within their schools is imperative. This study is geared towards solving a problem and making recommendations and conclusions. The study lastly provides various strategies through which the principals' leadership, management and administrative roles can be enhanced and most especially and used in ensuring effective management of conflict. That is why this research seeks to further provide more knowledge and better ways to effectively apply leadership, management and administrative approaches that can improve conflict management and resolve school conflict between teachers.

Significance of the Study

This research work is significant to principals in that it would identify and bring out their views and perceptions about their leadership, management and administrative roles in the prevalence of conflict management in secondary schools. These views or perceptions are known to affect the ways, roles and strategies they employ in the management of conflict in schools. The findings would also help principals of secondary schools and other education stakeholders to adopt measures to manage conflict in secondary schools. It equally adds to the literature on conflict resolution and management between teachers in secondary schools. Importantly this study present ways through which principals' leadership, management and administrative roles in conflict management can be improved upon.

This study will assist policy makers with quality diagnosis on views and perception of Principals's leadership, management and administrative roles to resolve conflicts. It will go a long way to provide them with strategies and recommendations that could be used to improve on school and principals' leadership, management and administrative skills for conflict resolution. The study will enlighten Policy makers on the need to introduce conflict and conflict resolution programmers in secondary schools and universities as part of their curriculum. Organize seminars and retraining programmes for staff members should be informed on conflict management. To the World of Research, the study is also significant because it will bridge the gap between theory and practice by bringing the major theoretical approaches to understanding principals' views of leadership, management and administrative roles and approaches to resolving conflicts in schools.

Scope of the Study

Content wise, this study focused on principals' leadership, management and administrative roles affect conflict management in secondary schools in the Fako Division Southwest region of Cameroon. Geographically, this study will cover the secondary school principals in Fako Division. Principals were selected from some public general and Technical secondary and lay private secondary schools in Fako Division in the South West Region of Cameroon to elicit their views and ascertain the extent to which principal leadership affect conflict management. Theoretically, the study focused on some leadership theories and Conflict Resolution theory of Burton, 1980. Conceptually, leadership consist of distinctive traits that individuals pose, but this study focused on personality perspective of a leader/principal, which suggest that, the act of behaviour, power relationship between leaders and followers, transformational process and the viewpoint of knowledge and skills that make a leader effective in managing conflict in school.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical review of the study examines the parameters that relates to Principals' leadership, management and administrative roles as a correlate to conflict management. The study makes use of the leadership theories of Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2021; and the conflict Resolution theory of Burton (1990).

Leadership Theory

Ebot-Ashu (2014; 2021) explains that leadership has evolved over time and has taken different forms. Oyetunyi (2006) asserts that the leadership paradigm has changed over the last decades; and that it has transited from the traditional leadership approaches to the new perspectives. Schermerhorn et al. (2000:287) and Hoy and Miskel (2001:409) categorize greatman, trait, behavioural and situational or contingency theories under traditional leadership perspectives, and transactional, charismatic, transformational and distributive leadership theories under the new leadership perspectives (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2021; Griffith, 1993). According to Ebot-Ashu (2014; 2021), leadership theories recognize that effective leadership depends on the interaction of three factors namely: the traits and behaviours of the followers, the characteristics of the followers and the nature of the situation in which leadership occurs. Leadership theory is relevant to the study in that, it brings forth the idea and fact that school principals in their leadership roles are dealing with diverse groups of

persons like teachers, students, the community, the local and regional authorities, as well as traditional rulers within the community (Harris & Chapman, 2002; Harris, 2002). These groups of persons or rather stakeholders have different and varied views and perception as far the school goals and objectives are concern and they may react or act differently towards the attainment of these goals. In so doing the principal need to use different leadership theories and leadership styles that fits the person or group of persons.

The Conflict Resolution Theory (Burton, 1990)

Avoiding conflict is not conflict management. Burton (1990) distinguishes between conflict resolution, management and settlement. To him;

- i. Management is by using alternative dispute resolution skills and can confine or limit conflict
- ii. Settlement is an authoritative and legal processes and can be imposed by leaders.

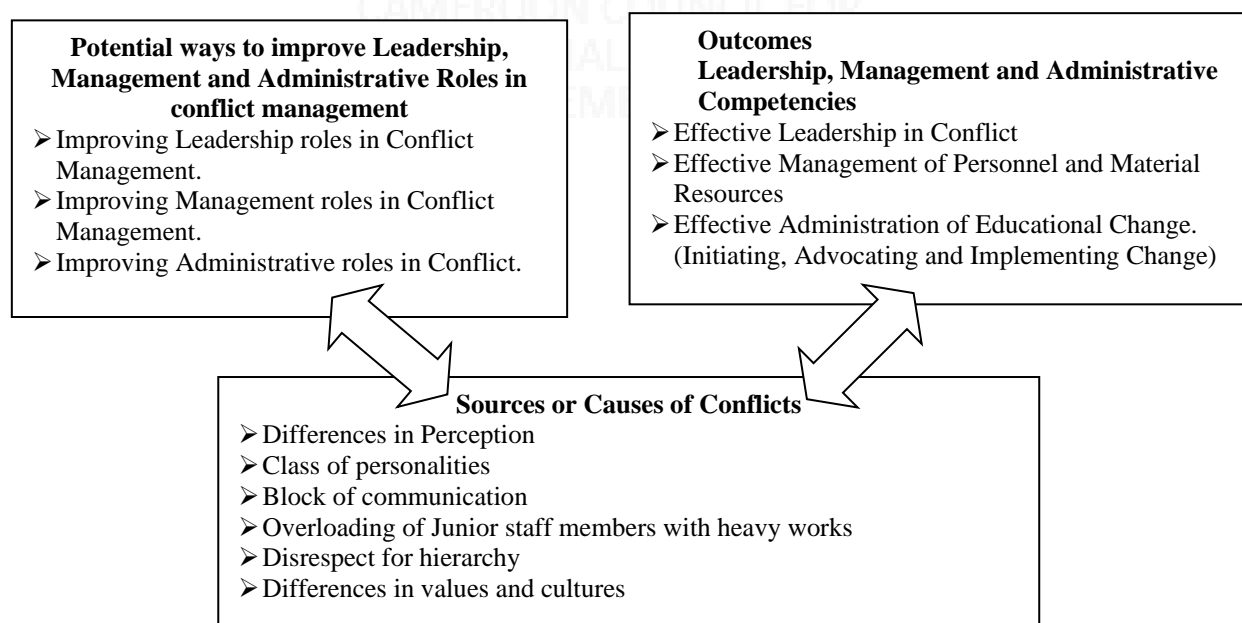
Burton (1990) in his theory of conflict resolution holds that, conflict management means resolving conflicts by methods that are analytical and that get to the root cause of the problem that sparked up the conflict. The theory emphasizes a social process approach and a formal approach to conflict management. Conflict resolution and management come by changing the process, by developing new

ways to handle conflicts and by avoiding unproductive confrontations (Rubin, 1994). This theory is relevant to this study in that, it brings out the different approaches and strategies of conflict resolution. To this study, the traditional approaches to conflict resolution in schools have largely been on mediation and negotiation with the principal being the judge. Conflict management by Chinda (2015) is the reduction, elimination, or termination of all forms of conflicts. According to Chinda conflict management strategies require negotiations, bargaining, mediation and arbitration. Burton notes that; problem solving considers individual and group needs as identity and recognition, as well as institutional changes that are required to satisfy these needs (Rubin, 1994). Principals as leaders should therefore recognize and understand the needs and viewpoints of his or her staff members to effectively know how to handle their problems using the right method. These approaches will only work when the conflicting parties are amenable to negotiation and have something tangible to gain from the resolution of the conflict.

Conceptual Review

The conceptual review examines the major concepts relevant to principals' leadership, management and administrative roles as correlate to conflict management in secondary schools.

Figure 1: Conceptual Representation of Principals' Leadership and Conflict Management



Source: Researchers 2024

Principals' Leadership, Management and Administrative Roles as a correlate to Conflict Management

School leadership, management and administration has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Effective school leadership, management and administration is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling. As countries are seeking to adapt their education systems to the needs of contemporary society, expectations for schools and school leaders are changing (Harris, 2002; Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2021). Many countries have moved towards decentralisation, making schools more autonomous in their decision making and holding them more accountable for results. At the same time, the requirement to improve overall student performance while serving more diverse student populations is putting schools under pressure to use more evidence-based teaching practices. As a result of these trends, the function of school leadership across Africa and other parts of the world is now increasingly defined by a demanding set of roles which include financial and human resource management and leadership for learning. In many countries, principals have heavy workloads; many are reaching retirement, and it is getting harder to replace them. Potential candidates often hesitate to apply, because of overburdened roles, insufficient preparation and training, limited career prospects and inadequate support and rewards. The developments have made school leadership a priority in education systems across the world. Policy makers need to enhance the quality of school leadership, administrative and management role to make it sustainable in order to improve Principals' school leadership practice.

Principals' Leadership Roles as a correlate to Conflict Management

Vision: The concepts of a school vision, mission, conflict and conflict prevention, have assumed a high profile at organizational, national, regional and international levels. Lives have been lost, property has been destroyed, development projects have been derailed, productivity has declined and socio-economic progress has been stalled as a result of conflict inherent in many spheres of people's lives. Kreitner (1995)

and Robbins & Alvy (2004) observe that no matter how clear an organization's vision and mission are and how well conflict may be managed, conflict is unavoidable. Hall (1996) who argues that conflict is an inherent organizational process echo this. An organizational vision and mission can be unclear and disliked (Ebot-Ashu, 2018; 2021; Yukl, 2006; Zhang, 1994). Also, conflict could be destructive or constructive depending on how it is managed. Kreitner (1995) notes that as long as a conflict trigger appears to stimulate constructive conflict, it should be allowed to continue but as symptoms of destructive conflict appear, steps must be taken to remove the destructive trigger. This seems to suggest the need for school personnel to have relevant skills to articulate and craft a school vision and mission that allow prediction of destructive conflict triggers (Goleman, 1998). Regular staff development programmes on the use of a school vision and mission need to be mounted so that teachers and heads are equipped with relevant skills and strategies to manage conflict (Griffith, 1993). Staff development would also help heads and teachers to differentiate between constructive and destructive conflict as described by Griffith. The need to formulate a clear and shared school mission is necessary for aiding conflict prevention in primary schools.

Effective Communication: One of the greatest skills that aids in conflict resolution is effective communication (Ebot-Ashu, 2021; Yukl, 2006). Effective communication is a strong tool in conflict resolution, enabling individuals to overcome differences and build stronger relationships. The power of effective communication lies in its ability of the principal foster empathy, create connections, and pave the way for lasting resolutions in all areas of life (Goleman, 1998). Good principals should be assertive when sharing on an emotional level without being too forceful or too passive.

Experience for appointment: Strategies to attract, recruit and support high performing school leaders include professionalise recruitment. Recruitment processes can have a strong impact on school leadership quality. While school-level involvement is essential to contextualise recruitment practices, action is necessary at the system level to ensure that recruitment procedures and criteria are effective, transparent and consistent. Succession planning proactively identifying and developing potential leaders can boost the quantity and (Hersey & Blanchard, 1985). Eligibility criteria should be broadened to reduce the weight accorded to seniority and attract younger dynamic candidates with different

backgrounds. Recruitment procedures should go beyond traditional job interviews to include an expanded set of tools and procedures to assess candidates. Finally, those who are on the hiring side of recruitment panels also need guidelines and training.

Listening: Conflict arises in all institutions and schools are no different. The sign of a good school is not that there is no conflict but rather when it occurs, it is managed effectively. Listening skills can be effectively used in conflict situations between students as well, and if necessary although fortunately much less often, between staff (Goleman, 1998). It might sound right but happy students make better learners and happy staff make better teachers (Hudson, 2016).

Collaborative Strategies: Many conflict specialists support collaborative problem-solving strategies; this is a risk because one party engages in a dialogue and moves towards the opponents based on the celebration of differences, a desire to learn from them and a desire to collaboratively satisfy everyone's underlying interests (Cloke and Goldsmith 2003). Brandon and Ronnertson (2007) investigate collaborative problem solving and negotiation as they describe the strategies and interventions that mediators use most frequently to help parties through mediation process and that are most likely to result in comprehensive agreement that settles their dispute.

Mentoring: According to research, many of newly assigned principals face many difficulties in the first year of the profession, and therefore they feel alone and crushed by numerous responsibilities. However, the new principals who are matched with an experienced mentor state that they get professional support about their problems from the mentor and consequently, they overcome this troublesome period easier than the ones who do not have mentors (Allen & Eby, 2007). Mentoring brings benefits to every participant in its practice: mentees, mentors, supervisors and the organization(s) for which they work. Mentees have an opportunity to gain wisdom from someone who has passed through the way before them (Cowan, 2006; Caldwell & Carter, 1993; Allen & Eby, 2007; Wilson & Elman, 1990).

Principals' Management Roles as a Correlate to Conflict Management

Ebot-Ashu (2021) avers that all principals of effective schools know that good school management and administration are crucial in restoring the learning culture. Effective principals will plan, organize, manage finance effectively, mediate and negotiate because even in the healthiest of schools, conflicts will arise. Unresolved conflicts break communication

and are antitheses to the school vision. Hoban (2004) avers that conflicts remain one of the greatest challenges confronting effective teaching and learning in schools. Administratively, Olaleye & Arogundade, (2017), revealed that the head of school use stakeholder meetings and consultations at their schools on a regular basis to resolve issues and suggested that schools should provide training on conflict resolution tactics to aid in dispute resolution (Hoban, 2004).

Research conducted in the past on school principals' management roles consist of planning, organising, budgeting, mediation and negotiation (Ezeuwa, 2005; Ebot-Ashu, 2021) illustrate that principals need these competencies if they are to be able to resolve conflicts in their schools (Ebot-Ashu, 2021). In his recent study, Msila found that school leaders are not prepared at all in conflict resolution skills. Furthermore, this author discovered that school managers need to be equipped with these skills given the rampant conflicts in schools today. Planning, organising, budgeting, mediation and negotiation are the missing link in the creation of working schools (Hersey & Blanchard, 1985; Ebot-Ashu, 2021). These management competencies are among the most crucial tasks of the school principal in conflict resolution. It ensures that communication is ever healthy in a school and also leads to an effective school climate. As pointed out in the discussions above, when school climate is positive and communication is flowing, this will have a positive influence upon the results (Hersey & Blanchard, 1985; Hoban, 2004). Planning, organising, bugeting, mediation and negotiation have the propensity to transform low performing schools. Ezeuwa (2005) reports on one study on school climate, argues that school climate is associated with improving or decreasing pupil achievement. Furthermore, she contends that improving school climate helps schools and can turn around low performing schools. Conscientious district officials will always empower their principals with skills of being able to avert conflicts. School principals will only have the mediation and negotiation skills highlighted in this paper if they get the necessary professional development. There are many authors who have shown the need for continuous professional development of school principals (Bush 2007; Ebot-Ashu, 2021).

The Zenex/ACE Research and longitudinal study showed that school principals in South Africa lack certain skills necessary or are not exposed to pertinent aspects related to their jobs. These include; Mentoring, networking, training in leadership/management, lack of parental and community involvement; and understanding change

dynamics (Bush et al. 2009; Ezeuwa, 2005; Ebot-Ashu, 2021). Furthermore, the Zenex/ACE Research cited above illustrated that school principals in many South African schools need to be supported as they try to build effective schools. Negotiation and mediation skills usually do not form part of training. Many in-service training short courses and programmes merely mention conflict management. However, this is usually treated in a mundane fashion and not regarded as a specialist area. Moreover, it is frequently not taught by conflict management specialists. Given the rife conflict in South African schools today, it will help immensely to have school managers who have the capacity to bring forth social justice leadership in schools by (among others) being able to be useful negotiators and mediators in time of difficulties. School principals should always see the bigger picture of change management and pupil success (Hersey & Blanchard, 1985; Hoban, 2004). There are two things that effective school leaders will always need for their school to produce good results. These are effective planning, organising the duties of teachers and students, teacher commitment and teacher cooperation are important for conflict resolution. An effective mediator, and negotiator will will build healthy communication in his or her school. Arguably, good schools have worthy negotiators at the helm. Conflicts in schools are the main obstacles to effective communication. When the conflicts are not resolved, they lead to this ineffective communication. However, skilled negotiators will use their expertise to rebuild healthy school climates.

Principals' Administrative Roles as a Correlate to Conflict Management

Administratively, Olaleye & Arogundade, (2017), revealed that the head of school use stakeholder meetings and consultations at their schools on a regular basis to resolve issues and suggested that schools should provide training on conflict resolution tactics to aid in dispute resolution.

Pedagogically, Okumbe, (2018), discovered that schools used dispute resolution approaches and when it came to resolving disagreements between principals and teachers, mediation was frequently used. Enaohwo & Eferakeya (1989) demonstrated that head of school techniques such as forcing, avoidance, and silence are unhelpful in resolving conflict. On the topic of managing conflict in organizations in New York, Enaohwo & Eferakeya (1989) analyzed the various styles of behavior by which interpersonal conflict may be handled, and as a result, he developed a model of the styles of handling interpersonal conflict by quoting the results of theories done by Follet, 1926/1940, who discovered three main ways of

dealing with conflict: dominance, compromise, and integration. Okumbe, (2018), concluding that students are not just raw materials in the education business but also valuable human resources and as a result, effective student management is required. The school administration must ensure that the actions of pupils and the operation of the organization are closely monitored. This necessitates the use of an educational manager who is well-versed in educational management practices.

Financially, Ebot-Ashu (2021) explained how schools and colleges have changed into enterprise wherein income making is crucial. Inside the twenty first century is anticipated to run establishments as enterprise worries lots of school heads are losing from political interference if conflicts ought to be averted in schools. Head of schools can prevent conflicts in their schools if the community fully supports the educational programs (Okumbe, 2018). The school and community connections should be marked by collaboration, engagement, and dialogue. The community

must be aware of the school's activities. The administrator's job is to teach the community not only what it wants, but also to increase aspirations for what the school is doing. Conflicts can be avoided if the principal is able to communicate the educational programs to the community (Enaohwo & Eferakeya, 1989) to gain more financial support.

Socially, Ebot-Ashu (2021; 2018) revealed that, in order to improve employee productivity and moral, it is important for managers to allow employees to help set department or organizational goals and resolve their conflicts amicably. Employees will work harder to reach goals if they're involved in setting them. If kept uninformed, they may also assume the worst - which their jobs are at risk. Managers need to stress both positive and negative aspects of change and be honest about the company's future. Kadioglu & Yilmaz (2018), viewed that, informed employees are happier employees; they function better, feel like part of the team, and adjust to change more easily. If management's goal is to maintain high employee morale within their organization, part of the process will involve empowering employees to act independently when appropriate by being able to resolve conflicts that arise from within and from outside. Giving employees the room to grow professionally - and that includes allowing them to make mistakes will increase their self-esteem and self-efficacy, thereby boosting their morale in the midst of conflicts.

Summary

The literature review for this study focused on the theoretical and conceptual review. Under the theoretical review, two main theories of leadership (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2021) and conflict resolution theory (Burton, 1990) were used. The concepts examined included Principals' Leadership, Management and Administrative Roles as a correlate to Conflict Management

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the case study design. This design was ideal because the study sought to examine

in detailed the principals' views on leadership, management and administrative roles as an independent variable and conflict management as the dependent variable. Qualitative research according Shashi and Shanti (2011) is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., relating to quality or variety. Such type of research is typically descriptive and harder to analyse than quantitative data.

Sample Population

The sample size or population consist of 15 respondents who will be secondary school principals within secondary schools in Fako Division.

Table 1: Distribution of Sample Population

SCHOOL CATEGORIES	NAME OF SCHOOLS	SAMPLE PRINCIPALS
Government	Government High School Bokwoango	1
	Government High School Buea Town	1
	Government High School Limbe	1
	Government High School Bonadikombo	1
	Government Bilingual High School Limbe	1
Total		5
Denominational	Baptist High School Buea	1
	PCSS Buea	1
	Saker Baptist College Limbe	1
	Baptist Comprehensive College	1
	Presbyterian Girls Secondary School Limbe	1
Total		5
Lay Private	Inter Comprehensive High School Buea	1
	SOBICOL Buea	1
	St. Bilingual College Buea	1
	Kulu Memorial College Limbe	1
	College L'espoire	1
Total		5
Grand Total		15

Sampling Procedures and Sampling Size

The sampling technique used in this study is the purposive sampling technique to select just the principals who constitute the sample of the study. The researcher purposely samples 15 secondary schools that are fully operational and alongside 15 secondary school principals from Government General and Government Technical, lay private and denominational secondary schools in Fako Division as illustrated in table 1 above.

Instruments and Data Collection

The instruments used are interviews and documentary review. The interview method of collecting data involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. Content validity was done by sampling the opinions of senior colleagues were asked to address the appropriateness of the content, the comprehensiveness of the instruments, the logicity of the instruments in getting at the intended variables, the adequacy of the sample of items or questions in representing the complete content that was intended to be measured and the appropriateness of the format of the instrument. Validity was ensured that all documents with valid signatories who work within the schools and play their part in this study. A pilot study of 3 principals and 2 vice principals was

carried out within the Sub-Division for a pilot study to test the reliability of interview questions. It should as well be noted that, those involve in the pilot testing was not allowed to take part in the main study. From the responses, the researcher categorizes all the responses and theme them accordingly. This was used to identify the views and perceptions of principals on leadership, management and administrative roles and how it affects conflict management in secondary schools.

Administration of Instruments

Interview was administered to 15 secondary school principals in Fako Division. The researchers went round the selected schools and book audiences for a specific date to administer the interviews to the respondents with the authorization. The researchers also clarified how confidential the information obtained from the respondents were going to be kept and used just for academic purpose. Some were done during the demand or purchase of documents for review.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data obtained by a researcher from interview and documentation was coded, transcribed, explained and presented qualitatively through content and thematic analysis as per the overall research question. The analytical technique of pattern coding (Miles et al. 2013) was used to interpret the interview. Abbreviation-Numerical code was assigned to represent the various schools (1-15), based on a principal's role and Utterance made, representing each school of the study. For example, LVISUtt1 refers to Leadership role of Vision, Utterance number 1 also standing for school number 1. The Administrative role is coded in a way that indicates that, all the various schools and their principals made an utterance. Under their administrative services, we have Administrative (AADMUtt1-15), Social (ASOCUtt1=15), Pedagogic (APEDUtt1-15) and Financial (AFINUtt1-15) functions; but only the repeated utterance that answers the research question is recorded under UT.

Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations were considered to protect the interest of the respondents and that of the researchers: Permission to carry out the interview to participants were taken from the various participants. Prospective participants gave their consent by filling in the consent form that was provided before the interview was administered. Confidentiality of respondent's personal data were ensured that their data will not be included in the

finding of the study. The construction and administration of the interview and the review of documents was gender friendly in such a way that both male and female (principals) were involved in the administration of the instrument. There review of documents were inclusive, that is all accessible relevant documents were reviewed equally under the same themes irrespective of culture, or publisher.

Summary

The Researchers used a case study design. The study areas were Fako Division, Southwest Region of Cameroon and the accessible population consist of Secondary school Principals in Buea, Limbe and Muyuka. A purposive sampling technique was used to get the sample. The researcher made use of and interview guide, documentary review and observation as the instrument for data collection. The validity and reliability of the instruments were ensured. The qualitative data collection was analysed through content and thematic analysis.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

As earlier stated in the introduction, this study focuses on principals' leadership, management and administrative roles on conflict management in secondary schools in the Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon. The results are presented in line with the above research question that guided the study.

Ways to improve Leadership Roles in Conflict Management

Vision: In order for there to be improvement, the principal/leader needs to clearly articulate the school's vision; Spend two weeks gathering information about your school and engaging teachers, parents, student and community leaders in conversations about what they think the school does well and what needs to improve. The unit Perspective on leadership: leading the school's self-review might give you some ideas. In your Learning Diary, plan two joint meetings for the management committee and your teachers in order to improve your core values and makes sure the vision statement respected. Make the employees to understand that the impact of conflict in the school's environment can resort to a disruption of their effectiveness, and slow down the achievement of organizational goals. Once a set of actions have been identified, it is the responsibility of the school leadership team to monitor those actions and ensure that they lead to school improvements. In the leadership units on reviewing and planning, you are encouraged to think in terms of a cycle of planning,

action and review. All actions should be monitored and evidence should be collected to inform the preparation of a new plan for the next year. Periodically, as part of this process it will be necessary to revisit your vision statement and ensure that it remains 'fit for purpose'. As the school improves or as government policy changes, new priorities will emerge one may need to adjust your vision (LVISUtt1).

Influence: A principal can improve his influence on his subordinates by developing expertise skills in whatever role he does, such that it does not go unnoticed, and also having a special and unique way of managing the issues/affair of the organization. Principals needs to adjust their mindset by not focusing only on the organisational goals and how conflict will slow down school effectiveness. Instead, start getting personal and get to know more about the situation at hand, the background and names of the people involved; call the names of the people when addressing them privately, because people who are usually victims of conflict in an organisation are those who feel and think they are neglected. Therefore, calling their names create an awareness that you know them, understand them, while avoiding to criticise their action but rather encourage them that they can fix it and do better. (LINFUtt2).

Innovation: Since innovation has to do with the creative ability of a leader to come up with new things or ideas. How then can this be improved when innovations don't just come by sitting in the office waiting. The best way to have new ideas is for a leader to engage himself in studying more and reading books of other great/successful leaders. The more a leader advances in more knowledge, the more innovative he becomes. In that way, he will be able to come up with new strategies to resolve conflict within the school. There are the five ways leaders/principals can practice innovation leadership:

Establish psychological safety within the school. Staff and students who feel psychologically safe tend to share more ideas. They feel free to speak their mind, show their creative side, and explore more risks and opportunities.

Reduce the barriers to experimentation. Make it easy for your team to try out new concepts. Provide them with idea challenges and allow them to try out their ideas, even on a small scale.

Create an effective communication system. Communication plays a vital role in innovation. Ensure that instructions, strategies, and expectations

are all disseminated properly. Moreover, make sure to keep information flowing rapidly and openly.

Foster an environment of diversity. Encourage people to work well with one another despite their differences, because disparate perspectives can significantly contribute to solving conflicts and ensuring great outcomes.

Give emphasis on the value of teamwork. Inspire your teachers and students to share their opinions, no more how contradicting their thoughts maybe with that of their colleagues. Creative conflicts can help you see the pros and the cons of putting concepts to life (LINVUtt3).

Collaboration: Collaboration can be improved by first enhancing communication; the principal working together in collaboration with an offended party, there should be a mutual understanding of each other's actions and words and be able to interpret them in a way that can influence a change in one another to resolution to take place. The school staff should be well informed and trust every decision/action necessarily in working together as a team especially in resolving conflict. Coming together to work as a group in order to develop solutions to problems present in their school, often times relevant to the instruction that they provide in an effort to improve student achievement. In other words, school leaders are using their influence to impact the positive outcomes. (LCOLUtt4).

Communication: To improve communication; Establish a plan with specific actions that you're both willing to take to implement the solution. Express your appreciation for everything the person contributed in solving conflict (LCOMUtt5). Communicate your willingness to meet again to check on progress. Remember that as a leader, even though you can initiate a constructive conversation, the effort always involves dialogue and discussion among the people involved. Adopt a positive attitude toward the conflict, find the best in people and in the situation, and maintain your sense of humor. Absorbing these lessons will make you a leader who is able to calm conflict.

Experience: The application of classroom-based knowledge is an experience that can change in the course of time, but the application of conflict resolution strategies in the past does not really change, but rather upgraded or improved as the years go by to suit different conflicting situations. Therefore, improvement comes by continuously being exposed to every new and upgraded knowledge relating to leadership and conflict management (LEXPUtt6).

Listening: If conflict does arise, the most important skill that may come to the rescue is active listening without interrupting or showing anger. After that, delay response by taking a break to do reflective thinking. Delaying response does not mean you avoid the conflict, by so doing you replace stressful thoughts with calm ones, which helps to develop a flexible mindset that enables you to make adjustments or decisions to prevent problems in the future (LLISUtt7). It is helpful to imagine what the conflicting parties are thinking and feeling. Do not assume you understand all the facts. Set aside your assumptions and ask questions to understand others' perspectives and to confirm or disconfirm your assumptions. Lastly, acknowledge when you understand by rephrasing, restating, or summarizing to show that you actually listening.

Mentoring: Mentoring is one path that seeks to provide guidance for new principals in problem solving independently, instead of merely providing content or intervening to solve problems. In improving mentorship skills as a leader, especially during conflict, inexperienced conflict resolution principals should be trained, as qualified principals require meticulously prepared pre-service and in-service principalship activities. Mentoring is a remarkable model which aims to combine theory with practice in principal training. It develops beginner principals with the help of a senior principal's support and supervision in a real school environment. Thus, mentoring is used by many countries in principle preparing programs (LMENUtt8).

Ways to improve Management Roles in Conflict Management

The following shows how principals improve their management roles/functions in relation to managing conflict;

Planning: Set the stage. Start by creating a platform or atmosphere of openness, constructive criticism, and problem solving (MPLAUtt9). Making the organization to understand that you are focused on the future, not the past and that you are optimistic things will work out. Follow these guidelines to set the stage for planning and problem-solving: Express your sincere desire to understand. If you're involved with the conflict, admit responsibility for your contribution, and ask what you can do to make amends. Emphasize that you want to work together to achieve a mutually satisfactory solution. In doing so, principals will access a free flow of information and closing up every communication gap, which is responsible for piling up hurts and offenses into full blown conflict. Principals should endeavour to make use of dialogue

strategy in preventing conflict in schools, because when one is offended and is not given an opportunity to express oneself, it might later develops from offence to a political stage where you start gathering people to rebel to belief in his plight and rebel against the organisation. This is dangerous; therefore such independent attitude should be watch out in the school. They should be sensitive to know that usually, conflict sparks up from within (an insider) not external, which is referred in war as the 5th column.

Organising: Organization is directly connected with planning and efforts of the people. It is a medium, through which goals and the objectives enlisted by the administration are achieved. Having an operating model is a tool used to define how the organization will improve its strategic or tactical plan into its operating environment. It encompasses all core work, competencies, tools and technologies like ICT in the process of Planning and Organisation of school activities which the school/organizational structure will need to execute the plan of action taken toward the resolving of conflict (MORGUtt10). Principals have to become aware of different plans and organizing skills required as a secondary school teacher and head of the institution. Understand the needs of alternative education and integrate it into the curriculum.

Controlling: In improving control, schools should have policies that governs their educational system and disciplinary council that punishes crimes that occurs within the school created purposefully to resolve conflict. In case of any violations, the parties involved will be disciplined to ensure misconduct will not occur often in school. In addition, leaders should improve teachers curriculum by adding lessons that teaches the student on how to prevent, manage and resolve conflict. Conflict management can be improved by setting ground rules and school policies, which will help to guide the organization from further conflicts (MCONUtt11).

Budgeting/Resources Allocation: There has to be a translation of strategy into operational terms, through specific action plans, programs, budgets and procedures. Improvement involves successfully identifying and allocating the required capital, human resource, and executing the necessary organizational changes which is very important because the Budget helps in preparing for emergencies towards conflict resolution. Conflicts are incidence that is usually not planned for, it can take the school by surprise, that is why there is a need for the school not the run out of resources that can put the school back in place in case its faced with conflict. (MBUDUtt12).

Training: When no one in an organization knows how to handle conflict, it is a guarantee it will only get worse. Resolving conflicts is one of the core duties in a leader's career. Stepping up and doing so provides an example of how to navigate conflict, as it occurs and ensure it does not lead to a full-fledged fight. Training employees on conflict management skills creates leaders at every level, and constructs a school environment where people treat one another with respect, kindness and empathy, which strengthens interpersonal relationships, by developing increase feelings of security even when conflict occurs. Improvement comes when even staff members/teachers are able to conduct themselves and lead others and peace, especially in the absence of the principal (MTRAUtt13).

Negotiator: For leader to improve his negotiation skills, one needs to speak from the heart but yet with formality and authority (MNEGUtt14). It's better to express emotions in a forthright, appropriate way rather than having pent-up emotions gush out. To appropriately address emotions:

- i. Express information in a way that casts no blame.
- ii. Be sure that expressing emotions is helpful.
- iii. Don't let your own hot buttons interfere with the process.
- iv. Be specific. Instead of "I feel bad," say, "I am frustrated because ..."
- v. Use the "I" word instead of "You," as in: "*I am disappointed that the conflict came to this point.*" Not: "*You are to blame for this mess.*"
- vi. All these are done in order to foster goodwill despite the difference in interest which helps to teach students how to respect the concerns of all sides in a conflict, which will help to avoid future conflicts by leaving both parties equally satisfied with no barriers to communication.

Mediation: Regarding things for improvement, it becomes clear the need to provide information about mediation services at schools, to train all students and to expand the roles of mediation. There are several different ways to improve mediation, and one of which is by introducing peer mediation programs. In curriculum-based programs, conflict resolution is taught in the classroom. Peer mediation can be a specific unit on conflict resolution, or combined with other subjects such as writing or art. Teaching children problem-solving skills at a young age means that they will have those skills for the rest of their lives. School-wide programs can have significant results in elementary schools, where students usually have the same teacher who can reinforce conflict-resolution skills on a daily basis. In these programs, conflict resolution skills are taught first to counselors

and administrators and then to teachers and finally to students. In secondary schools, conflict-resolution programs tend to take the form of elective courses or clubs. In higher education, students can either volunteer or become paid mediators since they deal with things like roommate and rent disputes, relationship issues etc. (MMEDUtt15).

Ways to improve Administrative Roles in Conflict Management

The following shows how principals improve their administrative roles/functions in relation to managing conflict;

Administrative functions: This is one of the most important roles of the school administrator. The principal must be able to define his duties, responsibilities, power and authority in a manner that best realizes the purpose of the institution. One of the administrative roles of the principal is to direct and take the best decision in resolving conflict that occurs in school and check on the conflicting party until the problem dies down; that results to the school becoming an energised purposive in order and this advances the school. The school principal must prep the staff to ensure that they keep staff conflict out of classroom in that way, it does not escalate and influence the students and others. (AADMUtt1-15).

Social functions: The educational system as an open system and a social organization thrives on effective interrelationship within it and with its relevant publics. This role makes it necessary that the principal must know the community, take an active part in the growth and improvement of the community and encourage the staff to do likewise. He also should facilitate community participation in the life of the school and provide for interpretation of the school to the community. The school administrator endeavor to promote school-community relation through the participation of the school in community activities and projects. This could be achieved by means of organized visits to places of interest in the community, organise extensive inter-school program of athletics debate and other activities. The principal must coordinate all these services and activities to provide maximum help to students and teachers (ASOCUtt1-15).

Pedagogic functions: One of the important roles of the principal is that of improving the educational program. The principal should provide a climate of efficiency, cooperation, service and stimulation within which the school program that exist can operate most effectively (APEDUtt1-15a). Also the school administrator should provide leadership and

coordination in periodic and continuing evaluations of the effectiveness of the total school program in meeting the needs of the students and lastly, the school Administrator should provide leadership and coordination in continuing revisions of the total school program to meet the needs of the students (APEDUtt1-15b). This means that the principal will provide efficient schedules reasonable, workloads for employees, and the best utilization of available professional and material resources. The principal works with teachers in allocating children among classes to form the best learning groups. He endeavors to minimize unnecessary interruptions and inconveniences that interferes with the teaching-learning process (APEDUtt1-15c).

Financial functions: Establishing procedures for handling income and expenditure, procurement and quotation as well as rules on acceptance of advantages, and other financial management criteria and procedures. All procedures are carried out according to the relevant laws and regulations to avoid conflict of interest and the misuse of resources (AFINUtt1-15a). Understanding the financial limitations and flexibility of the school; set goals and formulate the right financial management strategies. All of these duties require the consideration of factors such as available school resources, background, the needs of students, regularly approving and revising school budgets, reviewing and analysing income and expenditures on a regular basis, ensuring that resource allocation follows the school development plan, understanding that the school income must be handled in accordance with relevant requirements, regulations and rules (ensuring that other financial management bodies follow those guidelines), organising controls budgets, including accounting and reporting systems that will monitor finances, hiring an accountant as an auditor for regular school account tracking and evaluations and reporting the use of school funds to the relevant parties (AFINUtt1-15b).

Summary of Findings

The findings were based on improving principals' leadership, management and administrative roles on conflict management in secondary schools in the Fako Division South West Region of Cameroon.

Discussion of Findings

This section deliberated on Principals' Leadership, Management and Administrative Roles in Conflict Management. The following views were obtained from the interview transcripts of the respondents;

Ways to improve Leadership Roles in Conflict Management

Vision: Most conflict that arises stems from colleagues having differing definition of success in their head. When they try to walk down a path towards their vision, conflict sparks up because they are try to create different procedures and outcomes. The way to improve such situation is to ensure the members of an organization should work from a shared vision. To do this, Ebot-Ashu (2018; 2021) agrees that, they create an inspiring vision, and then motivate and inspire others to reach that vision. In that case, they all will be speaking one visionary language. Even the Bible agrees in Genesis 11:6 that, when the people one and they all have one language, nothing can be restrained from them. And as such, conflict will be prevented because one of the way conflicts occurs is through differences or disagreements that if not well taken care of, it will affect the communication of a shares vision, just like Masitsa (2005) stated that, unresolved conflicts break communication and are antitheses to the school vision. Therefore, the school is able to achieve its educational goals peacefully with a shared vision.

Influence: A leader can improve his level of influence by changing the lives of his followers, because to lead is to work on people until they become better human beings. A leader is should not just be a name or title for show, it should go beyond transforming the lives of other through one's influence, to the point that they will not only trust you, but also feel indebted to you, thereby you will have little or no problem of conflict within the organization; just like Yukl (2006), said principals substantially influence student well-being and achievement as well as the lives of teachers and other staff. Leaders can turn the people in their teams into stars, people who have improved and developed their skills through the influence of their leader. Principals, as managers and leaders, must be able to empower the teaching staff and education staff financially to gain more love and trust from the people, which will be very useful during times of conflict. Ebot-Ashu (2014; 2021) agrees that when a principal exert substantial influence on the subordinates, the greater the control he exercised and the more favourable the situation is for him/her. Having control due to influence, Yukl (2006) said, when the principal is confronted with the existing conflict, the readiness and decisions taken are very influential in the process of providing resolution. Therefore, resolving conflict is less complicated in school where the leader has a great influence on the people.

Innovation: Improving the spirit of innovation comes not only from being inspired by great book, but also by admiring nature and being inspired by it because nature itself is a product of creativity. Principal should be ready to embrace change; being open to new and unusual ways of doing things or solving conflict and not being static in the way they run their organization. This relates to Ebot-Ashu (2014) who encourages self-study education, training and experience. With this done, it will not be difficult to find solutions to different conflicting issues that rise up in the organization. Past research conducted on school principals shows that there are a number of skills that principals need if they are to be able to resolve conflicts in their schools. Yukl (2006) and Ebot-Ashu (2014; 2021) had the same view. In addition, Msila found out that school leaders are not prepared at all in conflict resolution skill and that school managers need to be equipped, given the rampant conflicts in schools these recent times.

Collaboration: Principals should encourage active communication, because when communication is enhanced, collaboration is being improved. In related research by Zhang (1994) four styles on managing conflicts were identified as competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance and accommodation. However, Ebot-Ashu (2021) demonstrated that head of school techniques such as forcing, avoidance, and silence are unhelpful in resolving conflict. Avoidance is contradictory when relating with collaboration. Goleman (1998) says that collaborating to resolve conflict takes a great deal of time and energy. Therefore, the aim is to come together to resolve conflict and not to avoid it. If the leaders avoid conflict, it is the same as avoiding his responsibilities.

Communication: Communication can be improved by creating unity at all levels. When the subordinates are united with the leader towards solving conflict. It creates the bond of loyalty not only to the leader but the entire organization, and there will rarely be a chance for conflict to affect the school. This is great related to Ebot-Ashu (2021) where he maintains that interpersonal conflict or conflict among staff members can be resolved constructively and peacefully through effective communication skill of the school head. Furthermore, Ebot-Ashu (2021) adds that, communication skills and transparency may be useful on effective conflict management (Hoban, 2004). Conflicts can be avoided if the principal is able to communicate the educational programs to the community as supported by Yukl (2006) to gain more support.

Experience: Principals who are promoted to handle post of responsibility not matched by their

qualifications, exhibit unnecessary show of power and lack skills in dealing with colleagues because of inadequate experience and training as supported by Mbua (2003), and this may lead to interpersonal conflict, as staff members who are senior to the principal in terms of ages and experience may be imposing and rude. Ebot-Ashu (2021) agrees that disrespect for hierarchy is a cause of interpersonal conflict in secondary schools. Therefore, for Principals to improve experience and gain respect, there has to be an addition of training. During training, you learn not only from your experience, but also from other leader's experiences, their strengths and their limitations, as confirmed by Yukl (2006) where he says that effective leadership should be a priority, and hiring principals should be based on needs and not necessarily based on classroom experience as teachers. Lack of practical and unrealistic approach to conflict cause the leader to be abstract, detached and idealistic.

Listening: To improve this skill, the government/proprietors have to make sure that in all leadership development programs, active listening should be taught. Also, leaders can learn on their own through the internet. This is greatly supported by Ebot-Ashu (2014) that say, one should take turns listening to each other's side. This is a very important step and one that requires good listening skills. When one better understands each other, conflict will be far away from them. Goleman (1998) adds that, Leaders should Practice humility: Humility empowers us to recognize the humanity of people who don't act like us, look like us, or hold different values and beliefs. Humility also enables us to take responsibility for our actions, learn from our interactions, and welcomes compromise. This quality paves the way for listening to learn and for fostering new habits of collaboration. Our nervous systems change structurally and functionally with every experience, so as we adopt those habits, new neural connections form in the frontal regions of the cerebral cortex. Those connections enable us to be more creative, better synthesize information, regulate emotions, and empathize with others as we cultivate change. Leaders' humility typically manifests as validating the feelings of the person who is speaking (Goleman, 1998; Hoban, 2004). That validation calms your staff's stress responses so they can relax, share concerns at a deeper level, and feel connected in the workplace. In addition, active listening leadership requires leaders to ask questions that help others feel heard and valued. Co-regulation, coupled with awareness, has never been more critical for education leaders. Meeting colleagues, staff, and students where they are while maintaining awareness of their own psychological state allows leaders to effectively address discord so

staff can tap into one another's suggestions or strengths and make their schools an even better place. Hudson (2016) supportively mentioned that listening skills can be effectively used in conflict situations between staff and students as well, because in the school environment, people want to be giving a chance to be heard and understood.

Mentoring: The appropriate way to improve mentoring is first by ending the pretence or claims of having guardian counsellors in schools for the students. The students are usually close to their guidance counsellor since they help in their achievement, therefore the students can easily trust them in opening up to and an analyst that notices the shortcoming of the students and goes to the roots of the problem in order to help the students. As supported by Burton (1990) in his theory of conflict resolution holds that, conflict management means resolving conflicts by methods that are analytical and that get to the root cause of the problem that sparks up conflict. Conflicts escalates in school because there is no guardian counsellor (Allen & Eby, 2007; Wilson and Elman, 1990). Almost all schools claim to have when they do not. A vice principal or teacher who already has five (5) to teaches almost all the classes will be considered a guardian counsellor for the sake of satisfying school invigilators. The leader has to attend to conflict by making sure that his subordinates attend to the needs of the students too. Focus should be place on the effectiveness of guardian counsellors in all schools both government and private institutions. It is confirmed by Titanji (2017) that, paying greater attention to the needs and concern of the other conflicting party and less interest on one's own needs. Also, a mentor should acquire counselling skills to better understand the psychology of both conflicting parties. That is why Ebot-Ashu (2018; 2021) suggest that Principal mentors should be selected from the nearby schools as much as possible to train principals who have no skills in conflict resolution, and it can be organize in the form of a school-conflict resolution workshop.

Ways to improve Management Roles in Conflict Management

The following shows how principals improve their management roles/functions in relation to managing conflict;

Planning: To improve planning in managing conflict, planning should be done first before any other thing; it should be pervasive and primary. In order to make more efficient, it has to be accompanied by other important elements just as Ebot-Ashu (2021) observed and explained that administrators or managers have to

add to Planning; Organising, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting (POSDCORB) which no principal can achieve quality result in assessment without the use of these, for administrative effectiveness of the school. A good leader is someone who sees ahead before planning, someone who has the future in mind and possible changes. In doing so, a leader can predict possible conflicts that can possibly occur in school and prepare measures to take to handle such scenarios. The principal is in fact that overall planner. This is justifiable by Hoban (2004) who describes the functions and roles of the school principal as 'head teacher, principal, leader of the school, school father, adviser, chief administrative executive, public relation officer, curriculum director, innovator, policy maker, organizer, communicator, school authority educator, perfectionist and philosopher. Thomas & Schmidt (2000). affirms that Planing is a list of actions so ordered as to attain over a particular time period, certain desired objectives derived from a careful analysis of the internal and external factors likely to affect the organisation, which will move the organisation from where it is now to where it wants to be.

Organising: In carrying out or implementing and improving the act of organising, the leadership or Principal has to involve a group of skilful people in order to ease the coordination of the organizational process. This is confirmed by (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018; Ezeuwa, 2005; Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu, 2023; Hersey & Blanchard, 1985) which say that, A leader encourages the team to perform to their optimum all the time and drives organisational success. Hoban (2004) argues that, there will be confusion, instability and disorganization because of stakeholders' lack of control over the outcome. Therefore, only a better way of organising by the principals will set a place that he control the people to be respectful and loyal to one another and to that school organization as a whole. In doing so, managing conflict will be less stressful.

Controlling: Improving such skill is by continue to do what works best for you as a leader. The key to take charge is to simply take charge, but not with force or physical violence as mentioned by Tigma (2019), rather supernatural means like prayer is helpful with no negative effects, but physical violence come with painful affliction. This relates to Hersey & Blanchard (1985), as he notes that although in some cases physical violence (coercion) might help to resolve conflicts, in most cases it only goes further to heighten the conflict by exposing the parties to physical confrontations like hitting, slapping and fisting that might end up in severe injuries on the parties, making it very ineffective (Thomas & Schmidt, 2000). Having

a supernatural control give an opportunity for the leader to take certain decision on what you want to happen while preventing himself from facing any physical confrontation or opposition, that how such control will be valuable for leaders who know their God.

Budgeting/Resource Allocation: This can be improved by the government/proprietor providing funds set aside for conflict resolution. This also relates to Bush (2007) where he says, management creates plans and consistency in the present and involves maintenance and administration such as budgeting, organising/staffing, and controlling problem-solving. It is so important for principals to use some of the budget to care for the state of the staff, because an atmosphere characterised by care and love is free of frequent conflicts (Ezeuwa, 2005; Ebot-Ashu, 2018; 2021; Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu, 2023). Principals who are caring can transform schools for the better. Van der Vyver et al. (2014) confirms that there is a close connection between care and effectiveness.

Training: A leader improves his skills by continuous researching of new developed leadership training on each area of problem. This is agreeable by Janeth (2014), who says that the government also should lay down a policy on managerial skills training for the head of schools as they do in other managerial levels in other organizations. Momodu (2013) also avers that conflicts remain one of the greatest challenges confronting effective teaching and learning in schools. That is why Olaleye & Arogundade (2017), revealed that principals should use stakeholder meetings and consultations at their schools on a regular basis to resolve issues and suggested that schools should provide training on conflict resolution tactics to aid in dispute resolution. In addition, the principals should also gain interest in reading leadership books of all works of life because the application of knowledge is limitless to a particular field of study.

Negotiation: Negotiation is used in conflict management because it is said to reduce, eliminate, or terminate conflicts. Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu (2023) and Ezeuwa (2005) refers to negotiation as a face-to-face discussion “for the purpose of reaching an agreement on a situation that is perceived as a problem or conflict.” Hoban (2004) adds that negotiators need to have an implicit understanding of cultural assumptions, which are likely to determine how negotiators from different places perceive the world. Negotiation is important because, it indirectly creates a long-term relationship, and a good relationship is one of the most valued things needed to operate well as an individual, and also as an organisation. Ndeh & Ebot-

Ashu (2023) agrees that both parties display cooperative behaviours, and there is sufficient time and energy to create an integrative solution that will satisfy both parties. This is related to Chinda (2015) where she said conflict management strategies require negotiations, bargaining, mediation and arbitration.

Mediation: The way to improve the mediation process is for the leader to respect individual differences and take time to get to know each personality in the organization. Thomas & Schmidt (2000) supports that in managing conflict, there has to be a relational approach to handling conflicts. A leader who does not detach from knowing the people he leads, gets more experience equipped to understand problems, and help those in conflict reach a satisfactory resolution. According to Ndeh & Ebot-Ashu (2023) mediation involves a little push towards the longed-for social cohesion. In a similar vein, Hoban (2004) sees mediation mainly as a truly educational process for all its participants, more than just an efficient conflict resolution technique. Principal should know that the reasons for conflicts are disagreements, differences, friction and discrepancies based on differences of opinion, views and interests as supported by Thomas & Schmidt (2000). These causes can be managed as Thomas & Schmidt (2000) involved means through which the principals can improve on the management of the school's using negotiation, mediation as well as collaboration roles. And Chinda (2015) also suggested that, conflict management requires negotiations, bargaining, mediation and arbitration to attain resolution.

Ways to Improve Administrative Roles in Conflict Management

The following shows how principals improve their administrative roles/functions in relation to managing conflict;

Administrative functions: The principal must develop an internal staff organization with clear lines of authority and responsibility in building a place with positive characteristics, and decent behaviour. In same light, Ebot-Ashu (2021) says leadership theories recognize that effective leadership depends on the interaction of three factors namely: the traits and behaviours of the followers, the characteristics of the followers and the nature of the situation in which leadership occurs. Olaleye & Arogundade, (2017) adds that, conflict management is mostly resolved by using staff meetings and consultations techniques while training stands as the major principal of imparting knowledge to the head of schools and

teacher about the best method of resolving conflict in different situations.

Social functions: The administrator should maintain regular contact with some outside institutions, industries and educational bodies. The above roles revealed that the educational administrator is involved with the totality of the enterprises of education because the community has a lot of influence in making the school it aspires to be, even the peace or the community influences no peace. This agrees with Hoy and Miskel (2013), who says that, the functions of the administrator (the principal) is maintaining school administrative friendship within both the school and the community. Open communication should especially be a priority when introducing any new initiatives, just like Kadioglu, & Yilmaz, (2017) confirms that, informed employees are happier employees; they function better, feel like part of the team, and as such, it creates little or no room for conflict to last in such an environment.

Pedagogic functions: The ultimate goal of educational administration is the improvement of learning and learning opportunities. The school principal work with the classroom teachers, students and supervisors in the selection of appropriate curricular or school activities, choice of subjects, textbooks, work scheduling, use of teaching aids and facilities teaching methods and methods of evaluating school and student progress. The principal should not forget to teach, counsel and warn the students to keep away from any idea or actions that will provoke conflict, in order to maintain positive results. In the same vein, Enaohwo & Eferakeya (1989) sees the functions of the principal as supervision of instructions, curriculum development, aid evaluation, school community relations, and management of school finance, staff and student personnel administration. Okumbe (2018) agrees that, students are not just raw materials in the education business but also valuable human resources and as a result, effective student management is required. Schools should use dispute resolution approaches and when it

came to resolving disagreements between principals and teachers, mediation was frequently used.

Financial functions: For this section of the principals' responsibility to be improved, the principals' have to be in charge in preparing the school budget, a record of projected revenue and expenditure. The budget is vital, because it helps to ensure that the school achieves its goals, establishes a control system and motivates employees to work harder. The principal can employ Fundraising method that communities use to support the growth of their schools. It is also his duty is to ensure that the school uses the funds for the right purpose. Before conducting a fundraising effort, a principal has to discuss the purpose with staff and students' parents. For example, in case of a financial limitation that could cause a conflict, this fund will be use to calm down the situation. This relates to Titanji (2017) who says that, paying greater attention to the needs and concern of the other conflicting party and less interest on one's own needs. Ebot-Ashu (2021) and McCorkle & Miller (2017) agrees that, principals can prevent conflicts in their schools if the community fully supports the educational programs. Conflict management support can also be communicated in the PTA meetings.

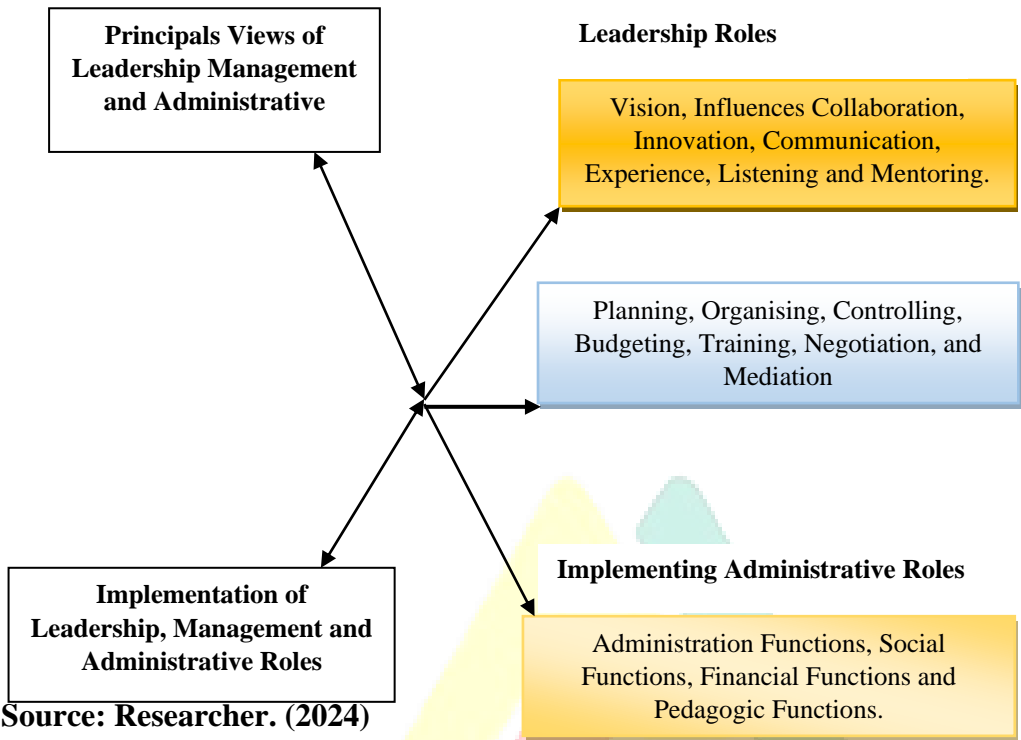
Conclusion

The leadership, management and administrative role of a principal are Arts, which needs to be learned. Without the knowledge, skills and attitudes of leadership, management

and administration the principal or school is nowhere, and ends the schools in a notorious scandalous place, which scares people away. School conflicts are often the result of lack of strong leadership, management and administration. In the absence of the school principal excercising his or her leadership, management and administrative skills, effectively the school suffers from occurrence conflict.

Contribution to knowledge

Figure 2: Contribution to Knowledge



Source: Researcher. (2024)

Table 2: Potential ways to improve Leadership, Management and Administrative Roles in conflict management

Leadership Roles	Vision	The gear that determines the direction & movement; the life that keeps the organization running even in the midst of conflict
	Influence	Leadership is influenced; and for you to influence people, they need to have confidence in you, believe in you, and trust you in resolving conflict
	Innovation	Learning new things is an essential part of a good leader especially when it will result to a peaceful running of the organization
Management Roles	Budgeting	Budget helps the principal plan the best way to easily resolve problems or conflict that arises due to insufficient finance.
	Mediation	Without mediation, the principal cannot successfully work with the conflicting parties in resolving conflict.
	Training	The principal as a manager should be that which have acquired training on how to respond to conflict in school
Administrative Roles	Administrative Functions	Combining the work that individuals or groups have to perform with facilities necessary to channel efficiency, even at the level of managing conflict.
	Pedagogic Functions	Rearrange Timetable as lesson schedule for teachers
	Social Functions	Extracurricular activities, helps to release pressure, stress, tension and opens up a jovial atmosphere void of violence

Recommendations

Principals, Teachers and the administrative staff should all learn conflict management skills and it should be made as a course for student to learn to become a much better future leader. The government and proprietor should think of security and safety before determining the location of a school, since the location of some of the school is what makes it prone to attacks and conflict. Leaders/Principals should have the spirit of innovation which comes not only from being inspired by great book, but also by admiring nature and being inspired by it because nature itself is a product of creativity. Leaders/Principals should try introducing variations to already existing models. Leaders cannot be a resistance innovation by being static in the way they run their organization. That is why it became difficult to find solutions when faced with different conflicting issues that rise up in the organization. Variation is said to be the brother of creativity. We cannot come out with a solution for every conflict because varied conflict warrant varied

solutions, which is where creativity/innovation is needed.

Limitation of the Study

Some principals could not give answers to most of the interview questions, which causes the interview process to take longer time than what was intended. Some principals will prefer their subordinate to answer the interview question in their place, which makes the answers questionable.

Suggestion for Further Study

Research could also be carried out to investigate principals' managerial skills and conflict resolution among staff members in Lay Private secondary schools in other Divisions of the country.

This study was inclusive of only secondary school principals. Expanding this study to include primary school Head Teachers or in comparison to primary Head Teachers may provide a new aspect.

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Authors Details

Paidia Aboh Nteh, Master of Educational Administration Researcher, Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon

Frederick Ebot-Ashu, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Foundations and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Buea, Cameroon.