



**Principals' Conflict Management Styles in Effective Schools in  
Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III Sub-Divisions of  
Meme Division Cameroon**

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**Abstract:** *The topic “Principals’ conflict management styles in effective schools in Kumba I, II and III Sub-divisions” was coined to determine effective schools (that is, schools that consistently attain equity in quality of students’ learning) in these sub-divisions, determine principals’ professional abilities to resolve conflicts in these schools, find out strategies used by principals in resolving conflicts in effective schools and to determine how principals’ personal characteristics influence conflict management in schools. This was done through both a literature study and an empirical investigation. The researcher used a survey research design with data gathering instruments being the questionnaires and interview guides. One hundred and twenty questionnaires were designed for teachers proportionately selected from seven schools in the three sub-divisions and seven interview guides for the seven principals of the proportionately selected schools. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher himself and were collected on the same days. On the other hand, interviews were conducted with principals of the selected schools. Descriptive statistics were compiled in the form of data analysis. Findings were analyzed to identify effective schools, strategies used by principals in resolving conflicts in these schools, principals’ ability to resolve conflicts in effective schools and principals’ personal characteristics in conflict management in schools. Conclusions drawn from the study showed that, there were no effective schools in Kumba I, II and III Sub-divisions, but the researcher identified some “leading schools” in these sub-divisions based on their nearness to the cut-off mean score. Data analysis under conflict management focused on how principals of these schools managed conflicts and it was found that the collaborative approach was most preferred. Findings also showed that principal’s personal characteristics like age, gender, marital status and qualification also counts in conflict management. Some recommendations were made for improvement of practice, for example the need to include a course on educational conflict management in university programmes designed for school administrators.*

**Definitions of key terms**

**Principal:** This is the person with the highest authority in an organization especially in schools or colleges’. Also, the “principal” is the head or chief executive of a secondary or high school (Mbua, 2003: 391).

**Effective schools:** Effective schools can be defined as schools that in performance or output terms ensure equity and quality learning by all students. Also the issues of effective schools highlight the human values that drive school decisions and actions (Glickman, 1982).

**Leading schools:** These are schools that in performance or output terms do not ensure equity and quality learning by all students, but ensure that at least 60-70% of the students succeed.

**Conflicts:** This refers to a serious disagreement and argument. Conflict may also be defined as a clash of needs within the individual or between two or more people where the needs, objectives, values, interests and perception of one individual or group do not agree with those of another individual or group (Erasmus, Swart and Morietta 2000: 367). Griffin (1990: 531) describes conflict as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups.

**Conflict resolution:** This refers to the mechanisms employed by the principal in solving conflicts in schools.

**Secondary school:** This is an institution for educating children coming after the sixth year of the primary school.

**Management:** This is the control and making of decisions in a business or similar organizations. Management is a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation so as to allow formative education in place (Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 55). It is also defined as a specific type of work, which is goal orientated and consists of a process involving people (McFarland, 1979: 6).

**Strategy/style:** A plan designed for a particular purpose in order to achieve organizational goals or a distinctive manner of doing, performing or presenting something.

**Skill:** this is the ability to do something well, for example a job.

## Introduction

Secondary schools play important roles in providing knowledge for further education as well as contributing to countries' workforce. How and to what extent this is done depends on the effectiveness of the school. Effective schools are those that in output or academic achievement terms consistently attain equity in quality of all students. Conflicts in educational administration faced by school administrators, particularly principals, have in some way affected the effectiveness of secondary schools in attaining educational objectives. According to Hencley S.P., (1961) interpersonal conflict occurs in working relationship of the school principal and his subordinates, and among subordinates and this seems to affect the effectiveness of the school in achieving its goals. The word "Conflict" is defined as a serious difference of opinion, interests and wishes and can develop on both the personal and organizational levels (Erasmus and Swart, 2000: 367). It connotes negative impact as is viewed in war, destruction, aggression, violence, and competition.

Conflict management refers to the internal mechanisms used by the various authorities in resolving conflict. It is also seen as the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting (Ra him, 2002, p. 208). In secondary schools, it is linked to the school principal because of his administrative role and position as well as his responsibility in providing effective leadership for the school. Conflicts occur whenever schools undergo transformation which inhabitants find difficult to understand and adapt (Steyn, de Klerk and du Plessis, 2003: 114). Other sources of conflict include communication barriers, role ambiguity, unclear expectations or rules, unresolved prior conflicts, conflicting interests, disagreement on task and Content, competition for scarce resources, differences in values and inconsistencies among educators and learners (Calitz, Fuglested and Lillejord, 2002: 225). Conflict unavoidably continues to be a factor in all scholarly settings but are managed differently in different schools; effective and ineffective. Generally, educational administrators are required to be

able to recognize and view constructive as well as destructive potential of conflicts, and to learn how to manage and apply management strategies in a practical way. How school principals resolve these conflicts largely depends on their management behaviours, professional experience, level of education and training and abilities to use conceptual, human and technical skills. This study is set to imperially investigate principals' conflict management styles in effective schools. The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one presents the introduction, background, statement of the problem, purpose or objective, research questions as well as the significance of the study. The chapter also delimits the study and ends with an operational definition of terms. Chapter two is devoted to the review of related literature; chapter three presents the research methodology. In chapter four, collected data are analyzed and findings presented while chapter five summarizes and discusses the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for practice and further research.

A study of conflict management styles in secondary schools is important because of the inevitability of conflicts in schools which takes different forms. It is how these conflicts are managed by educational administrators that determine the nature of relationships between principals and teachers, principals and students, teachers and students, and schools and communities, and consequently how each of these groups of persons performs their responsibilities that are aimed at achieving school goals and objectives. Properly managed conflict can therefore improve group outcomes (Alpert, Tjosvaldo, and Law, 2000; Bodtger and Jameson, 2001; Rahim and Bonoma, 1979; Kuhn and Poole, 2000; DeChurch and Marks, 2001).

According to Okorie (2002), leadership is getting the job done through people. Principals' ability to peacefully resolve individuals' conflicting interests in the school setting enforces a good sense of commitment to work and eases the leadership process.

Good and timely conflict management has prevented unwanted behaviours in school settings such as strikes and boycott from school activities by both teachers and students. In some cases, it has actually prevented loss of lives.

Most conflicts are unpredictable and require good technical skills to ensure effective resolution. The school administrator is therefore required to possess not only a good measure of such skills but also to be intuitive in problem solving. This study is aimed at investigating and coming out with such necessary skills.

### **Background to the study**

The background to this study is organized in four parts: historical, contextual, conceptual, and theoretical.

### **Historical background**

Conflict has been observed to be in existence in all human organizations including all educational systems. It could be described as all forms of opposition, disagreement, friction between two or more parties and it manifests in the form of arguments, protests, demonstration, aggression and other destructive behaviours. While conflict occurrence has been observed to be inevitable and ubiquitous in human organizations, the strategies for managing it have remained topical issues and matters of concern to individuals, groups and scholars (National Open University of Nigeria, 2009).

Prior to the introduction of western education in Cameroon in 1844 by the London Baptist Missionary Society, informal education was provided in the homes and was directed towards the learning of local skills such as farming, hunting, fishing among others, which were meant to provide an immediate source of livelihood to the indigenes. The coming of missionary societies in 1843 and subsequent introduction of western education led to value conflict between traditional education and western education. Most parents were not ready to give up immediate benefits gotten from traditional education to future long term benefits of formal education and so felt reluctant to have their children enrol in schools. The missionaries on their part needed to increase enrolment of pupil who would assist them in evangelical work (be fruitful in the vineyard of the church) (Le Vine, 1964) as well as

provide needed services. This culminated into value conflict between western and traditional education, with western education prevailing over traditional education. Mac Ojong (2008: 44) states that this dominance of Western education over traditional education was due to the absence of a written Cameroonian Language and writing. In order to resolve this conflict, the missionaries had to study the culture and language of the natives. That way familiarization was established wherein the natives saw the missionaries like one of them and so adjusted to the needs of the latter.

During the German colonial administration, such conflicts were resolved by using forceful methods to have children enrol in schools. For example, Mac Ojong (2008) states that during the German Educational Conference of 1907, school attendance was seriously considered and was to be secured through forceful methods; he discussed a testimony made by a Cameroonian native from Bali who was caught with other boys on the way to the farm with their parents and forcefully enrolled in schools (Mac Ojong, 2008: 90). The compulsory attendance policy was enforced in the First German Education Ordinance of 1910 – three years after the education conference. Failure to attend school regularly called for corporal punishment; parents or guardians whose children were truants were subjected to a fine of 50 German Mark. This illustrates the value the natives attached to traditional education, how it limited attendance to schools, away from desired attendance by interested parties and the methods used by Europeans to resolve these conflicts. Conflict resolution whatever style was used, was aimed towards the achievement of desired objectives.

### **Contextual Background**

Due to educational reforms, to lay down guidelines for education in Cameroon and the law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998, general provision section 2 states that “education shall be a top priority of the nation”, waves of change are hitting the secondary school educational sub system in Cameroon and the South West Region in particular bringing new challenges and problems that ultimately may lead to more discord (Harber, 2005). In secondary schools, principals, teachers and students may be in conflict on issues pertaining to the breakdown in school effectiveness. Principals often blame teachers for not doing their jobs while the teachers on their part complain that principals are incompetent and authoritarian in their leadership style. These instances result in conflicts situations (Peterson, 2004). Teachers also frequently face conflicting situations in the classroom with students and pupils. It is common place to find a teacher delivering a lesson while at the same time trying to hush students with disruptive behaviours; also, it is common to find teachers and students disagreeing on what methods are best for teaching or solving a particular problem especially in the mathematical sciences.

The method used in managing conflict may lead to either negative or positive impact in school. This may result in the destruction of self-esteem and damaged relationships amongst all the stakeholders. Furthermore, disputes in the school may also bring moments of fear and anxiety to both educators and students/learners. All this is compounded by bad management. On the other hand, with effective management, conflict may encourage growth and understanding in the school’s beliefs, values and culture. It may even open ways of viewing the schools as areas where empathy can be encouraged, opportunities found and healthy competition established. When conflict is functional, good results in the schools can be achieved and the entire schools framework will improve. In addition, schools will significantly benefit if principals effectively cultivate certain skills and attitudes towards effective conflict management through knowledge, self-control and consistent implementation.

### **Conceptual Background**

The concepts of conflict, management, conflict management and effective schools shall be examined under this section.

### **Conflict**

Conflict may be defined as a clash of needs within the individual or between two or more people where the needs, objectives, values, interests and perception of one individual or group do not agree with those of another individual or group (Erasmus, Swart and Morietta 2000: 367). Griffin (1990: 531) describes conflict as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups. Conflict exists

whenever it is impossible for others to carry out their desired action. Hence, Bens (1997) reported that conflict is the tension that is experienced when a group of people feels that their needs or desires are likely to be denied. His argument was in consonance with the contention made by Owens (1995) who postulated that conflict occurs whenever incompatible activities occur, while Abdu-Raheem (2004) argued that it could mean strife, controversy, discord of action and antagonism.

### **Causes of Conflicts in Educational Administration**

According to Toby (1999: 6), there are specific reasons why functional conflict occurs, and these need not necessarily be seen as bad or destructive.

Schools, like communities undergo transformations which are potential source of conflict. In some cases the reasons for such conflict is because educational officials, teachers and school principals do not understand the new paradigm underlying and driving transformation and cannot adapt their work style accordingly (Steyn, de Klerk and du Plessis, 2003: 114). For example, the introduction computerized report cards in some schools leads to conflict between some teachers who could not use computers and the school administration.

Communication barriers, role ambiguity, unclear expectations or rules, unresolved prior conflicts, conflicting interests, disagreement on task and content issues are some of the factors that can lead to conflict situations in schools. At the same time, competition for scarce resources, differences in values and inconsistencies among educators and learners may also bring about discord (Calitz, Fuglested and Lillejord, 2002: 225).

In addition, Van der Westhuizen (1991: 303) stipulates that conflict situations may develop in any organization such as schools where the management task of the principal is centred and directed.

In most instances conflict is perceived to have negative and unsolvable implications such as antagonism, poor relationships, loss of job, broken families, violence and war, and is therefore regarded as something unpleasant and disadvantageous to the parties involved.

Conflict can however be significant as well as beneficial. It is beneficial when it indicates that a problem exists and so acts as a warning sign of potential problems.

It is now becoming imperative for all school principals to familiarize themselves with the management of conflicts in their institutions. This means school principals should first of all recognize the conflict and response to the misunderstanding among subordinates. And at the final stage, the school administrator should be clear and very realistic about his merits and or demerits for managing conflict. In regard to this, Katz (1955) in Mbua identified three basic skills (enhancing conflict management) of a good leader which are technical skills, human skill and conceptual skill.

- **Technical skills:** this refers to the proficiency or ability to use the knowledge, tools, methods, processes, procedures and techniques of a specialized field such as education or for the performance of administrative or specific tasks. A surgeon, an engineer, and so on has technical skills in their respective fields. In this light, the school administrator needs enough technical skill to be able to accomplish his job and also solve conflict in school.
- **Human skills:** this refers to interpersonal skills. It is the school principal's ability to work effectively with, and through other people on a one-to-one basis and in a group setting. It requires an understanding of one's self and group dynamics, and the ability to motivate other people, either individuals or groups so as to achieve organizational goals.
- **Conceptual skills:** this is directly associated with knowledge because in order to conceptualize an individual must possess or have access to a wealth of cognitive and organized information. Basically, conceptual skill connotes the mental ability by which the principal co-ordinates and integrates the goals and objectives of the entire organization and those of the individual and his immediate group within the organization. Generally, this involves the school principal's ability to see the organization, for example, the school, the school community, and the educational programme as a whole. This will enable him to understand how the various parts of the

organization depend on one another, and how a change in any of them can affect the whole system.

Conflict is inevitable, because it develops as a result of dealing with people's lives, jobs, children or students, pride, self-concept, ego and sense of mission or purpose. A principal's ability to resolve these conflicts depends on how he possesses these skills, his professional experience as well as his age.

### **Management**

Management is a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation so as to allow formative education in place (Van der Westhuizen, 1991: 55). It is also defined as a specific type of work which is goal orientated and consists of a process involving people (McFarland, 1979: 6).

### **Conflict Management**

Robbins (1974) suggests that management of conflict is to plan and then evaluate different levels of conflict. Management of conflict is a social process used by people or groups to tackle different conflict types so as to understand each other's grievances about their behaviours. Conflict management is a diagnostic process between individuals negotiating strategies, for the timely handling of conflicts so as to reduce its negative effects. Through conflict management, principals determine best approaches for executing positive change in the organization as well as amicable change in the behaviours of the subordinates

Blake and Mouton (1961) listed eight activities that constitute conflict management:

- 1) Definition of the problem
- 2) Review of the problem
- 3) Development of the range of alternatives
- 4) Debate of alternatives
- 5) Reaching of solutions
- 6) Explanation and evaluation of solutions
- 7) Weighing alternative solutions
- 8) Selection of the appropriate solution.

There is potential for conflict in practically every decision which the administrator must make. Secondary school principals have to deal with these conflict situations on a daily basis in schools if they have to succeed in their mission. Coping efficiently and effectively with potential conflicts is possibly one of the most important aspects of the administrator's position (Nebgen, 1978). This study seeks to find out how principals of effective schools manage the conflicts they face in the school milieu.

### **Effective schools**

The issues of effective schools highlight the human values that drive school decisions and actions (Glickman, 1982). Many of the clarion calls today for effective schools reforms cite the findings from recent research on effective teaching and effective schools as examples of how schools and classrooms should change. The reforms tell us that the goal of schools should be effectiveness as measured by such factors as students' scores on tests, their attendance rate and their performance.

Effective schools can be defined as schools that in performance or output term ensure equity and quality learning by all students. Previous research has shown many factors that characterize effective schools. These characteristics include:

- ✓ A clear and shared focus

- ✓ High standards and expectations for all students
- ✓ Effective school leadership
- ✓ High levels of collaboration and communication
- ✓ Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards
- ✓ Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching
- ✓ Focused professional development
- ✓ A supportive learning environment
- ✓ High levels of family and community involvement

These characteristics must be blended together to lead to school effectiveness.

### **Theoretical Background**

The theoretical perspectives of conflict help us understand the concepts in much detail. Theories are guidelines which help us to organize our explanation, interpretation and prediction about a phenomenon under study (Papalia and Olds, 1992: 21). Therefore, this section briefly examines some of the theories explored in this work as they are related to the concept of principals' conflict management styles in effective schools. McGivney (1990) provides a useful summary of some of the better known theories of conflict resolution which she divides into single stand and composite. Some of the theories that would be used in this study as a guide on how educational conflicts can be resolved are: Abraham Maslow hierarchy of Need Theory (1954), Herzberg two factor theory (motivational theory) (1959), Chester I Barnard Behavioural Science Approach to Management (1886-1961) and Henri Fayol's theory of principles of management.

#### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Maslow (1954) developed a theory of motivation in organizations and considered human beings as having needs and wants. Maslow argues that there is a general pattern of needs recognition and satisfaction that people follow. To him, people do not randomly need or want things, but rather, their complex needs are ordered in a hierarchy of prepotency and include physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Lower –level of human needs must be reasonably well satisfied, in general, before higher – level human needs are activated sufficiently to drive behaviour.

Conflicts occur as a result of variation in peoples' interests and needs, that is, where one person's desires or opinions do not agree with another's or trespasses into another's. This theory suggests that principals should be able to identify the need level of individuals or groups in conflicting situations and so satisfy the needs accordingly. For example, a teacher may be in conflict with students but both are not in the same level of needs. The principal's ability to recognize this and so resolve the conflict as it satisfies the teacher and the students' needs according to their levels might play so much in getting the school effective.

#### **Herzberg's two factor theory**

Frederick Herzberg and his colleagues (Mausner and Snyderman, 1959) developed the motivation–hygiene theory (or motivation and job satisfaction) based on their findings from their famous study of engineers and accountants. The factors leading to positive job attitudes (motivators) do so because of their potentials to satisfy the individual's need for self –actualization, or in Herzberg's terms, promote psychological growth. Conversely, hygiene can be related to physiological, safety and social needs. The two factors are referred to by various names. These are dissatisfiers and satisfiers; the motivater-hygiene; or the extrinsic-intrinsic factor. The theory grew out of a research conducted by Herzberg and his colleagues on a group of 200 accountants and engineers who worked in different companies in the United States of America in which they sought to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and productivity.

Applied to this study, Herzberg and his colleagues suggest that one of the ways in which principals can resolve conflicts in schools is to look at the satisfiers and the dissatisfiers or the motivator–hygiene factors. If the principal is able to identify those factors that will lead to the dissatisfaction (dssatisfiers) of the workers and so deal away with them, potential conflicts in schools between teachers, students and the community at large will be prevented. Most educational conflicts occur because people are not satisfied with the existing situation. This implies that the best way to resolve conflict is to prevent the occurrence of conflicts as much as possible.

### **Chester 1 Barnard (1886 to 1961) Behavioural Science Approach to Management**

Barnard in his theory (1886) postulated that perspective administrators have long recognized that every administrator must deal with the organization, the individual and the environment. The organization and the environment must come to terms with each other. In this regard, the organization establishes an attaining purpose wanted by the environment and the environment supporting the organization in satisfying its wants. Similarly, the individual and the organization must come to terms with each other by the individual accepting and facilitating the attainment of the purpose of the organization, and the organization satisfying the wants of the individuals.

Applied to the study, the theory suggests that principals should be aware of the school obligations to the community/school environment and endeavour to meet up with such obligations. Similarly, principals should be able to recognize the individual or personal needs of teachers, students and other administrators that drive their behaviours in the school setting and so try to satisfy these needs. That is, while school goals are given priority, principals should also consider and satisfy individuals' and community needs. That way, conflict of values would be avoided and the school environment, teachers and students would in turn get committed to the satisfaction of school goals. This would go a long way to contribute to school effectiveness.

### **Henri Fayol's theory of principles of management**

Henri Fayol, the father of the school of Systematic Management, realized that organizations were becoming more complex and required their managers to work more professionally. His motivation was to create a theoretical foundation for an educational program for managers who lacked formal training in those days. Basing his work on his experience as a successful managing director of a mining company, he developed generic 'Principles of Management' to help organizations resolve conflict and achieve optimum performance working toward their goals. In this regard, Fayol came up with "14 principles" which were first published in 1914, but are still relevant to today's managers. Today's managers have access to an amazing array of resources which they can use to resolve conflict in their organizations and improve their skills.

Applied to the study, Fayol suggested that, if educational programs were created to enhance principals' conflict management styles and skills it will lead to the organization achieving optimum performance. In this respect, he came up with 14 principles of conflict resolution and effective management of an organization.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The “principal” is the head or chief executive of a secondary or high school (Mbua, 2003: 391). This definition implies the school principal can be likened to the ship captain who determines the direction of the ship. School success or failure depends on the administrative policies of the principal. As the school head, the principal is responsible to set goals for the school and ensure all stakeholders work in unison towards the accomplishment of stated goals. The principal, among other responsibilities, is charged with mediating between the school and the community including the ministry of education. Educational administration deals mainly with the coordination of human resources and humans have personal interest and needs that may conflict with school needs. Frequently, conflicting interests and needs abound among teachers, between teachers and students, teachers and administrators, and school personnel and community; this may be in economic or policy terms. The principal is charged with using appropriate methods to deal with these conflicts. Some schools are considered effective while others ineffective. Among other factors that make a school



effective is ability of the principal in resolving conflicts that are usually unavoidable. This study seeks to examine how principals in effective schools resolve the educational conflicts they face. Its purpose is to determine variation in terms of conflict resolution between principals in effective schools and their colleagues in ineffective schools. Pertaining strategies/styles used by effective school principals shall be recommended for use by principals in ineffective schools. The study shall be limited to government secondary schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub-divisions of Meme Division of the South West Region of Cameroon.

### **Objective / purpose of the study**

The focus of this study is to determine effective schools, principals' professional abilities to resolve conflicts in effective schools, strategies used by principals in resolving conflicts in effective schools and whether principal's personal characteristics influences conflict management.

### **General objective**

To determine principals conflict management styles in effective schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub-divisions of Meme Division

### **Specific objectives**

1. To determine effective schools;
2. To determine principals' professional abilities to resolve conflicts in effective schools;
3. To fine out strategies used by principals in resolving conflicts in effective schools.
4. To determine principal's personal characteristics in conflict management in school.

### **Research Questions**

#### **General research question**

What are the principals' conflict management styles in effective schools in Kumba I, II and III sub-divisions?

#### **The following specific research questions guided the study:**

1. Are there effective schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub- divisions?
2. What are the professional abilities of principals of effective schools in resolving conflict?
3. What strategies do principals in effective schools used in resolving conflict?
4. How do principal's personal characteristics influence conflict management in schools?

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study seeks to determine effective schools in three Sub Divisions of Meme Division (that is: Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub-divisions) of the South West Region of Cameroon, principals' professional ability to resolve conflicts in the effective schools, strategies used by principals in resolving conflicts in these schools, and to determine principals' personal characteristics in conflict management in these schools. The research methodology is examined under the following perspectives: the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrument used for data collection, validity and reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design**

There are many definitions of a research design. According to Fraenkle and Norman (2000), a research design represents the overall plan for collecting data in order to answer the research questions of a study. This study used the survey research design. Surveys are used extensively in educational research, and typically inquire about the feelings, preferences, motivations, attitudes, opinions and experiences of a group of people or individuals (Amin, 2005). The survey research design requires data to be collected from subjects using a questionnaire or an interview guide or a

combination of both. Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire for selected teachers and interview for all school principals because the study requires the respondents to express their feelings and opinions in different forms.

### Population of the Study

According to the 2021/2022 statistics from the Regional Delegation of Secondary Education for the South West, there are 14 government secondary schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub-divisions of the Meme Division of the South West Region of Cameroon, distributed as follows: 06 government schools in Kumba I, 02 in Kumba II and 06 in Kumba III. Also, according to the same source of information, there are 689 teachers for all the government secondary schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub- divisions. The distribution of schools, students and teachers is shown in table 3.1 below.

Only government secondary schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III sub-divisions were considered in a way to avoid other factors that may influence accuracy of the findings such as difference in administrative policies and source of educational resources between government, confessional and lay private educational institutions.

**Table 1: Distribution of Government Secondary Schools in Kumba I, Kumba II and Kumba III Sub-Divisions**

Sub Divisions	No.	Schools	No. of students	No. of teachers
Kumba I	1	Government Bilingual High school Kumba	2205	119
	2	Government Bilingual Teacher Training College	360	25
	3	Government High School Kumba Mbeng	714	27
	4	Government High School Kake	1062	41
	5	Government High School Nkamlikum	600	31
	6	Government Technical College Kake 1	99	5
Kumba II	7	Government Bilingual High School Kosala	2254	57
	8	Government Secondary School Fiango	505	13
Kumba III	9	Cameroon College of Arts and Science Kumba	4189	91
	10	Government Bilingual High School Mambanda	1003	59
	11	Government High School Malende-Kumba	266	20
	12	Government Secondary School Kang Barombi	210	13
	13	Government Technical High School Kumba	950	101
	14	Government Technical High School Kang Barombi	1219	87
<b>Total</b>			<b>15636</b>	<b>689</b>

**Source:** 2021/2022 Statistics from the Regional Delegation of Secondary Education for the South West Region.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample refers to the elements of the population that is actually studied. Amin (2005) defines a sample as a smaller group of elements drawn through a definite procedure from a specified population. Osuala (1977) defines a sample as any portion of a population which is representative of that population. The sample of this study includes 120 teachers drawn from selected secondary schools in the population as well as all the principals of selected institutions.

Sampling technique refers to a plan specifying how elements will be drawn from the population. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in drawing the sample. This sampling technique requires that the population is first stratified in terms of one or more variables of interest to the researcher after which elements are drawn randomly from each stratum in such a way that the relative proportion of the strata in the resultant sample are the same as in the parent population. The main advantage of this sampling technique is that it ensures greater representativeness of the sample

relative to the population and guarantees that minority constituents of the population are represented in the sample (Amin, 2005).

A two stage proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select the number of schools of interest and the teachers. In the first stage, the size of all the schools in the sub-divisions was determined by calculating the student teacher ratio per school. The average of all the ratios was determined to be (22.77) and schools with a student-teacher ratio closer to this average were selected. Selecting schools in terms of student-teacher ratio is important for two reasons; first, it provides an equal opportunity for all teachers to demonstrate their effectiveness, that is, with an equal student-teacher ratio in the selected schools, the success or failure of students in a class or a given institution cannot be attributed to lesser or greater number of students per teacher; Secondly, it provides relatively the same chance of occurrence of conflicts between students and school staff. Therefore, 03 schools were selected in Kumba I, 01 in Kumba II and 03 in Kumba III sub divisions giving a sample of 07 secondary schools. The number of schools selected per sub-division was proportionate to the number of schools in the area.

In the second stage, a sample size of 120 teachers was determined to be used in the study by the researcher. The number of teachers selected for each institution was proportionate to the total number of teachers for all selected secondary schools. In Kumba I sub division, 17 teachers were selected from Government High School Kake, 13 from Government High School Nkamlikum and 02 from Government Technical College Kake 1. In Kumba II sub division, 23 teachers were selected from Government Bilingual High School Kosala, and in Kumba III, 24 were selected from Government Bilingual High School Mambanda, 05 from Government Secondary School Kang Barombi, and 36 from Government Technical High School Kang Barombi. Table 3.2 below reveals the number of schools selected as well as the number of teachers from each of them.

**Table 2: Sub Divisions, Schools and Sample of teachers selected from each of the Schools**

Sub Divisions	Selected Government Secondary and High School	Sample of Teachers
Kumba I	Government High School Kake	17
	Government High School Nkamlikum	13
	Government Technical College Kake 1	2
Kumba II	Government Bilingual High School Kosala	23
Kumba III	Government Bilingual High School Mambanda	24
	Government Secondary School Kang Barombi	5
	Government Technical High School Kang Barombi	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>120</b>

**Source:** field work findings 2021/2022.

Besides the sample of 120 teachers selected to respond to the questionnaires, all the principals of the selected institutions were also selected to respond to the interview questions prepared for the purpose of data collection.

### Data Gathering Instrument

A questionnaire (appendix B) and interview (appendix C) were the instruments used in this study to collect data. The questionnaire for teachers was constructed to reflect three of the four research questions, that is, responses from the questionnaire were intended to answer three research questions – research question 1, 2 and 4. The questionnaire was divided into four sections, sections A, B, C and D. Section A was made up of 4 close-ended items and 3 open-ended items aimed at capturing the background variables of the subjects including: age, gender, marital status, academic qualification, job position and professional experience. Respondents were expected to tick the most appropriate option from the alternatives provided and to provide short responses where necessary. Section B was made up of 08 items related to the first research question. All but items 4 and 8 were divided into

sub-items. Items were made of both closed and open-ended questions, all intended to elicit responses for the first research question. Section C comprised 09 closed-ended research questions intended to elicit responses for research question 2. A four-option Likert response format with 4=Strongly Agree (SA), 3=Agree (A), 2=Disagree (D) and 1=Strongly Disagree (SD) was provided for respondents to tick the response that best reflected their answer. Like Section C, the last section, D, set to answer research question 4 comprised 05 closed-ended questions also set with four-option Likert response format –Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree provided under each item. For the last two sections, teachers were instructed to tick against the box of the most appropriate response option. Both positively and negatively worded items were used to avoid a response bias. All the questionnaire items were derived from the review of relevant literature.

The interview guide on the other hand was the instrument used to get responses from the principals. It was divided into two sections A and B. Section A comprised 06 questions set to determine background information of the interviewee. Questions were centred on age, gender, marital status, academic qualification and years of professional experience. Section B was made up of 12 items intended to elicit responses to answer the third research question. Interview questions like those of the questionnaire were inspired by review of relevant literature.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

After preparing the questionnaire, copies were given to some of the researcher's classmates for peer review. They were required to critically evaluate the questionnaire in terms of its appropriateness to the research questions and clarity of items and instructions. The supervisor of the study also checked the instrument to be sure that it could be used to collect relevant data. The same was done for the interview guide. Feedback obtained from peers and supervisor was used to revise some of the items as well as instructions. After the items were revised, they were later presented to the supervisor of the research who confirmed the instruments to be valid.

To ensure high reliability of the instruments, questionnaire samples and the interview guide were administered on 20 teachers and two principals respectively, all randomly selected from secondary schools in the researcher's neighbourhood, Sandpit in Buea. The results of the pilot test and interview sessions revealed that for the most part, the items were understood as intended by the researcher.

### **Data Collection**

After obtaining the consent of the supervisor to proceed with data collection, the researcher obtained a letter from the Head of department showing that he is a Master's Degree student of the Faculty of Education. With the introductory letter, the researcher visited the principals of the schools of interest and appealed that the instruments be administered. With the approval of the principals, the researcher first proceeded to administer the questionnaire with the help of research assistants who received instruction for a few hours on the administration of the questionnaire, then the interview conducted by the researcher. It took an average of one and a half hours to administer the instruments in each school while the whole exercise was done for three days. At the end of the exercise, all 120 copies of the distributed questionnaire were collected duly completed. This corresponds to a response rate of 100 percent. Similarly, interview sessions held with the principals were all successfully done.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, 2008) version 12.0 for windows was used for the purpose of data analysis. The results of the analysis were presented using descriptive statistics, more specifically frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations for the closed-ended questions. Also, a mean of 3.00 or above was considered high while a mean below 3 was considered low. Responses for the open-ended questions as well as those for the questionnaire were subjected to the technique of content analysis. The responses were critically examined and similar responses placed under the same themes for analysis. A sample of the responses, as presented by the subjects, was quoted to reinforce the results.

### Ethical Considerations

Research involving human subjects is receiving increasing concerns about ethics. As a consequence, researchers are advised to ensure informed consent and protect those from whom data is collected. The researcher took this advice seriously and did a couple of things to respect the ethics of research in the social sciences. Both questionnaire and interview guide were accompanied by a cover letter to the respondents/interviewee containing the name of the researcher, the topic under investigation, and the purpose of the investigation. It also contained an appeal to the respondents to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn without consequences. Furthermore, they were asked not to mention their names in order to guarantee the confidentiality of their responses.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

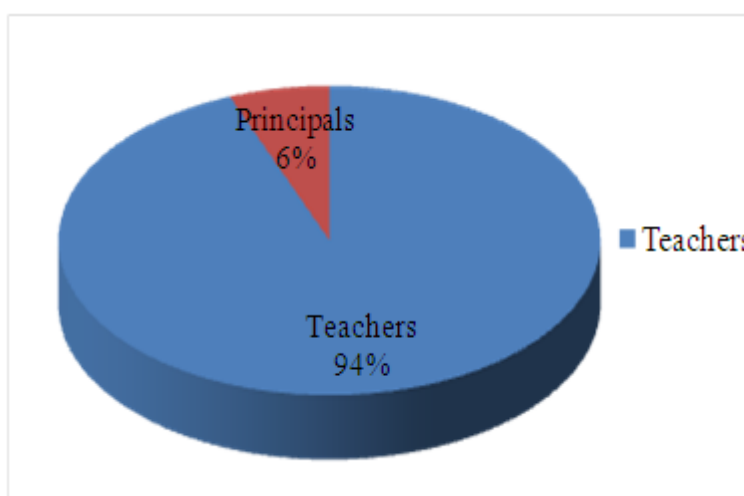
This chapter consists of the analysis of the data and the results obtained. The analysis of data was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.0 for windows to obtain descriptive statistics. Results were therefore presented in this chapter using descriptive statistics, more especially frequencies, percentages, means, variance and standard deviation. Bar charts were used to enhance data analysis. A total of 120 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and 7 interview guides prepared for the 7 principals of the 7 selected schools. Of this total, all the 120 copies were completed and returned to the investigator and the interview was conducted with all the 7 principals giving a return rate of 100%. The researcher therefore, based the analysis of the results on the 120 questionnaires and the 7 interview guides, Table 4.1 below presents number and category of respondents. To get the percentages below, the number of teachers (120) was used to divide the total number of respondents (127) x 100. That is  $120 \div 127 \times 100 = 94$  and for principals the number of principals (7) was used to divide the total number of respondents. That is,  $7 \div 127 \times 100 = 6$ . This applies to all the subsequence percentages.

**Table 3: Categories and Number of Respondents used**

Categories of Respondents	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Teachers	120	94
Principals	7	6
Total	127	100

**Source:** statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022

**Figure 1: Pie chart showing percentage of category of respondents**



### Demographic Data

This section presents information on the age, gender, marital status, teaching experience and educational qualification of the respondents. The percentages below were got by taking the frequency of each age range, divide by the total of frequency then multiply by 100.

### Age range of the respondents

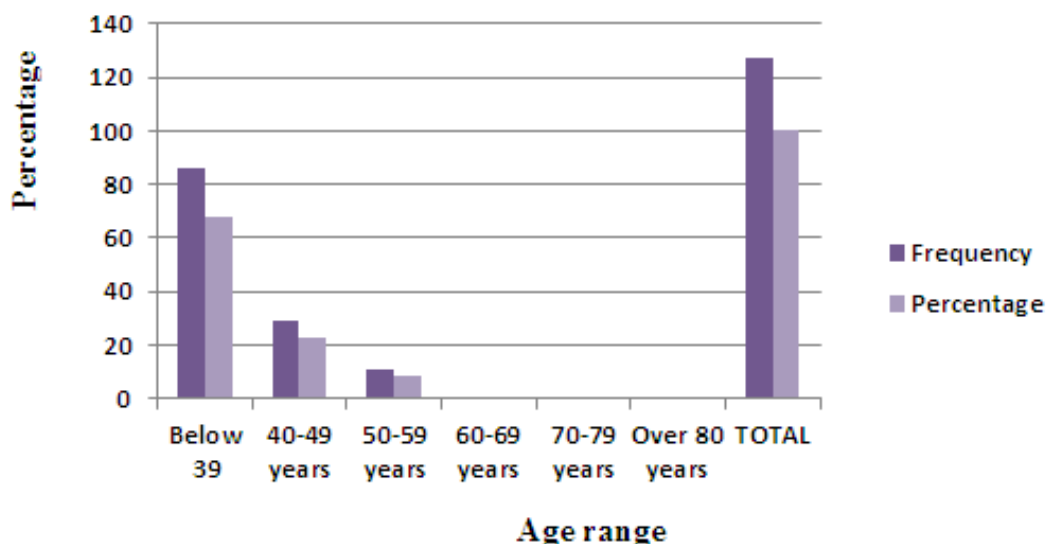
**Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to age range**

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
Below 39	86	67.7
40-49 years	29	22.8
50-59 years	11	8.7
60-69 years	1	0.8
70-79 years	0	0.0
Over 80 years	0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022.

From the table above, 67.7% of the respondents were below 39 years of age, 22.8% between 40 and 49 years, 8.7% between 50 and 59 years, and 0.8% between 60 and 69 years. This is presented diagrammatically below.

**Figure 2: Bar Chart of respondents according to age range**



### Gender of Respondents

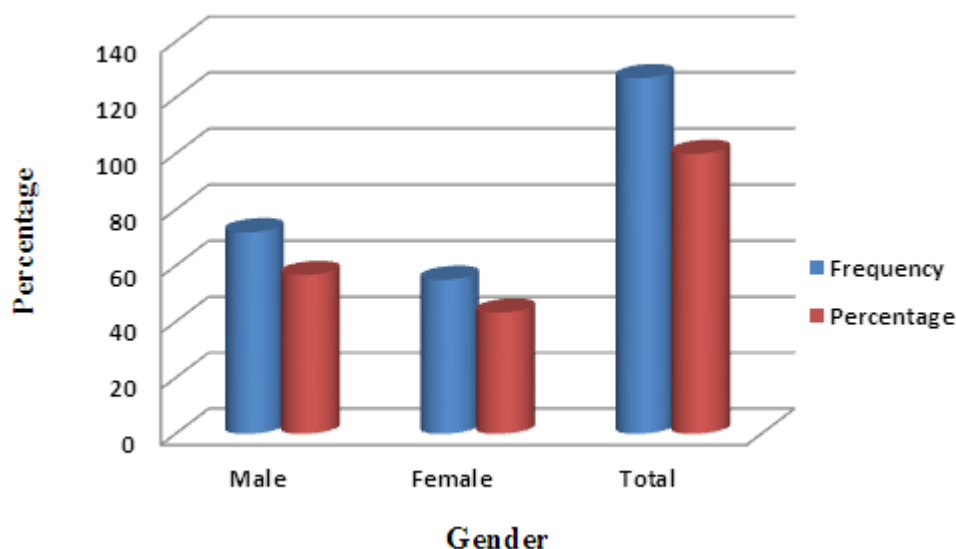
**Table 5: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	72	56.7
Female	55	43.3
Total	127	100

**Source:** Statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022.

Table 5 gives a clear picture of the percentages of respondents with respect to gender. It shows that 56.7% of the total respondents were male while 43.3% were female. Again, the bar chart below provides a diagrammatic view of the above analysis.

**Figure 3: Bar chart of respondents according to gender**



**Marital Status of Respondents**

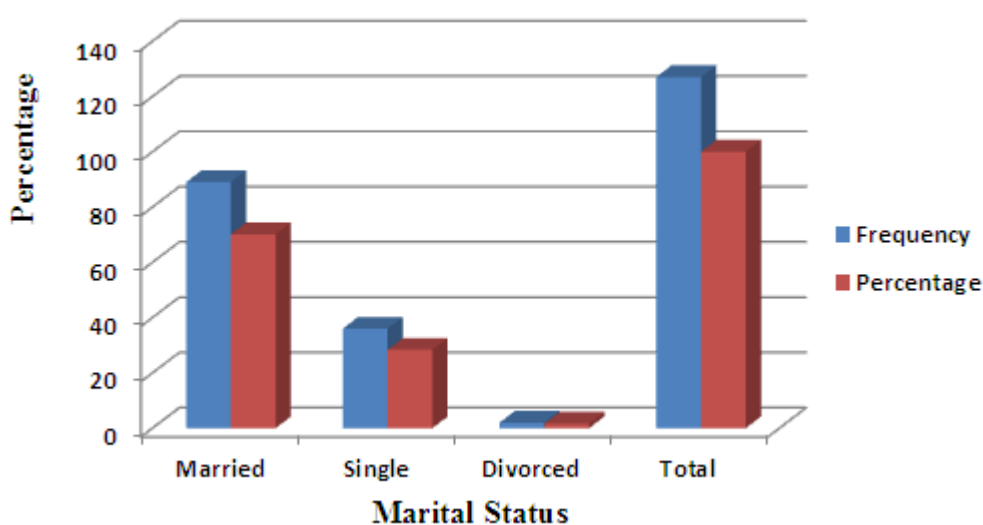
**Table 6: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to marital status**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Married	89	70.1
Single	36	28.3
Divorced	2	1.6
Total	127	100

**Source:** statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022.

Data analysis presented in Table 6 above shows that 70.1% of the respondents were married, 28.3% single and 1.6% divorced. This is also illustrated in the chart below.

**Figure 4: Bar chart of respondents according to marital status**



### Highest Teaching Qualification

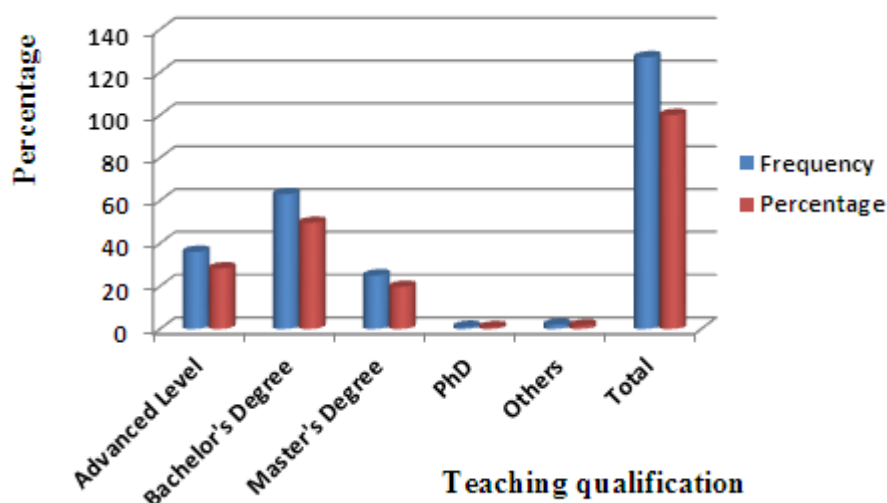
**Table 7: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to highest teaching qualification**

Highest Teaching Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Advanced Level	36	28.3
Bachelor Degree	63	49.6
Master Degree	25	19.7
PhD	1	0.8
Others	2	1.6
Total	127	100

**Source:** statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022

Table 7 gives an explicit description of the academic qualification of all respondents. From the analysis, 28.3% were holders of the Advanced Level General Certificate of Education, 49.6% held a Bachelor degree in different fields of studies, 19.7% were Master degree holders still from different fields, 0.8% were PhD holders and 1.6% held other certificates be it educational or professional.

**Figure 5: Bar chart of respondents according to highest teaching qualification**



### Current Position Held

**Table 8: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to current position held in schools**

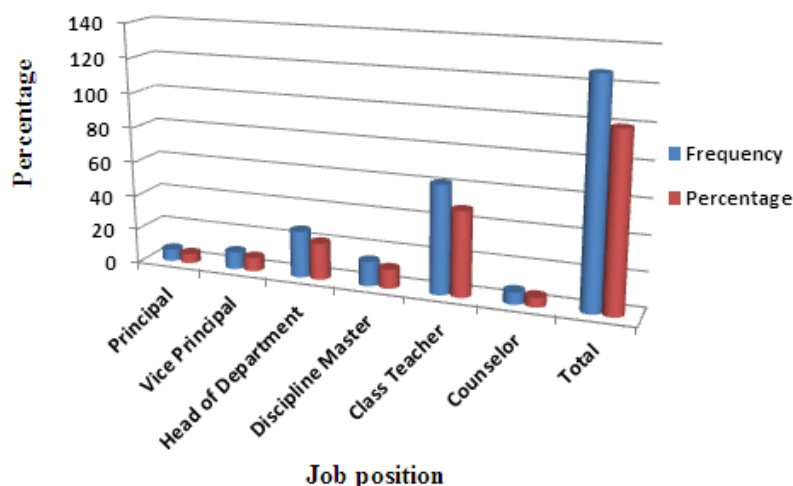
Current Position Held	Frequency	Percentage
Principal	7	5.5
Vice Principal	10	7.9
Head of Department	27	21.3
Discipline Master	14	11
Class Teacher	62	48.8
Counselor	7	5.5
Total	127	100

**Source:** statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022.

The position of responsibility held by respondents in their respective schools is presented in the table above. Frequency count shows that 7 respondents were principals, 10 vice principals, 27 head of departments, 14 discipline masters/mistresses, 62 classroom teachers and 7 counsellors.



**Figure 6: Bar chart illustrating respondents according to work position**



### Teaching Experience

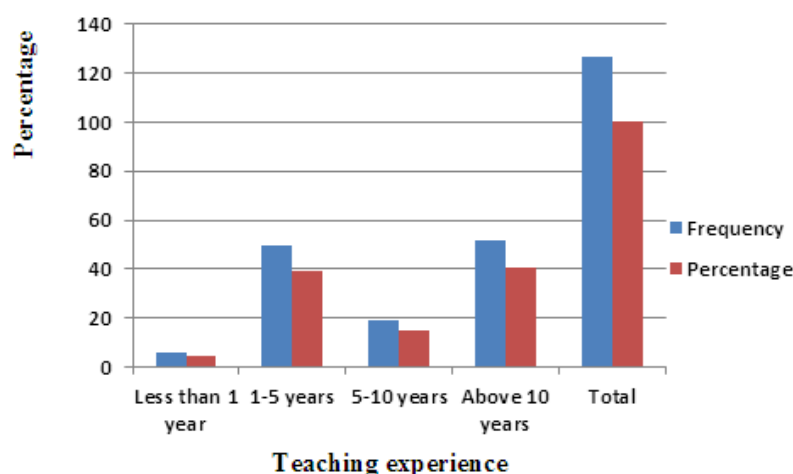
**Table 9: Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to teaching experience**

Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	6	4.7
1-5 years	50	39.4
5-10 years	19	15
Above 10 years	52	40.9
Total	127	100

**Source:** statistics obtained from field work 2021/2022.

Table 9 above presents teaching experience of all participants of the study. As seen above, 4.7% had less than a year experience, 39.4% between 1 to 5 years, 15% between 5 to 10 years while 40.9% above 10 years. This data is also presented in the bar chart below.

**Figure 7: Bar chart of respondents according to teaching experience**



### Analysis of Data for Each Research Question

#### Research Question 1: Are there effective schools in Kumba I, II, and III sub-divisions?

The purpose of this research question was to assess respondents' knowledge of what constitute effective schools and to determine if there are any effective schools among the sample schools studied. Item 1 to 8 of Section B of the questionnaire were designed to elicit responses for research questions one. Questions were posed around the most significant correlates of effectiveness schools such as clear and focused mission, cause beyond oneself, strong instructional leadership, opportunity

to learn and students time spent on task, school-home relation, calm and conducive learning environment, to name but a few. Both closed and open-ended question types were used and a response rate of about 90% was acquired for all questionnaire items in Section B. Findings of data analysis per item of research question 1 is presented below.

Item 1(a): Have you ever been opportune to have someone share with you or to share with your colleague(s) or school team the things your school looks forward to achieve this academic year?

Items 1 was set to determine whether respondents understand the mission of their respective schools and whether this mission is clearly shared by school teams. This item aligns with clear and focused mission as a correlate of effective schools. Data analysis from responses obtained for item 1(a) is presented in the table which follows.

**Table 10: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of responses for Item 1(a)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	19	82.6	20	83.3	15	88.2	12	92.3	4	80	2	100	24	63.89
No	4	17.4	4	16.7	2	11.8	1	7.7	1	20	0	0	12	36.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Data analysis presented above shows that most respondents (100% for GTC Kake I, 92.3% for GHS Nkamlikum, 88.2% for GHS Kake, 83.3% for GBHS Mambanda, 82.6% for GBHS Kosala and 80% for GSS Kang Barombi) understands the goal or mission of their respective schools for the 2014/2015 academic year while a few others demonstrated lack of knowledge of the mission of their school for the academic year.

Item 1(b): If ‘Yes,’ mention at least one of the things your school expects to achieve.

Item 1(b) was a follow up open-ended item set to determine whether respondents’ knowledge of school goal for the academic year was centered on high academic achievement for all students which is an important element of effective school. Themes developed from the responses and their frequencies are presented in the table below.

**Table 11: Themes and frequencies of responses for Item 1(b).**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Excellent academic achievement	12	63	14	70	13	86.67	9	75	2	50	1	50	20	83.33
Improvement of science and computer laboratories	2	10.53	3	15	0	0	0	0	1	25	0	0	1	4.17
Additional School building projects	3	15.79	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50	0	0
Others	1	5.26	1	5	2	13.3	3	25	1	25	0	0	3	12.5
No response	1	5.26	2	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Table 11b above shows that respondents from GHS Kake (86.67%), GTHS Barombi (83.33%), GHS Nkamlikum (75%), and GBHS Mambanda (70%) that answered 'Yes' to item 1(a) above demonstrated high student academic achievement as the main mission of their respective schools. Responses from some respondents are quoted thus: *"Excellent academic performance at end of the academic year," "brilliant performance in end of course exams,"* and *"A good performance at 'O' & 'A' Levels GCE Exams."* Other respondents centred their responses on objectives other than students' academic achievement such as improvement of science and computer laboratories, improvement of access road to school, improvement of canteens, while a few others did not respond at all.

Item 2(a): Do you think all students in your class can pass a test or exam?

Item 2(a) was a closed-ended item with 'Yes' or 'No' response options aimed at determining teacher level of self-efficacy – the belief by the teacher that he or she has all that it takes to have all students in his or her class demonstrate achievement of learning objectives. Data analysis is presented as follows.

**Table 12: Frequencies and percentages of response for item 2(a)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	8	34.78	5	20.83	11	64.71	5	38.46	1	20	1	50	15	41.67
No	15	65.22	19	79.17	6	35.29	8	61.54	4	80	1	50	21	58.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Except for GHS Kake (64.71%), data analysis presented above shows that generally, teachers in the schools under study have very low levels of self-efficacy. Very few teachers that thought all students can pass a test or exam in a follow-up question (Item 2b) said this is possible under good teaching and learning. Direct responses are stated thus *"Everything can be put together for their success (discipline and teaching)," "If there is good discipline and effective teaching and learning," "If the teacher teaches well," "If one student can pass then all can do same,"* etc. Most of the teachers were driven by the belief that not all students in their class can pass a test or exam. When asked in another follow-up item (Item 2c) why respondents think not all students in their class can pass a test or exam, responses were not equivocal. Some respondents wrote thus: *"Students don't have the same level of understanding in school," "Students don't have the same intellectual faculties," "Some students are truants and some are lazy," "Students lack interest and textbooks," "Some of them do not understand anything in class," "Some are slow learners & lack concentration in class,"* etc.

Item 2(d): What percentage overall do you expect your school to attain this year in terms of students' academic performance?

The purpose of item 2(d) was to determine whether or not any of the schools under study was characterized by a climate of high expectations for success. Data analysis is presented in table 4.10 below.

**Table 13: Average expectations in terms of students' academic performances per institution studied for the 2014/2015 academic year**

Schools	GBHS Kosala	GBHS Mambanda	GHS Kake	GHS Nkamlikum	GSS Kang Barombi	GTC Kake 1	GTHS Kang Barombi
<b>Expected Average (%)</b>	77.73	73.22	80.76	80	70.34	77.5	71.25

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Information presented in table 13 above shows that generally all the institutions studied possess a climate of high expectation for success, with GHS Kake having the highest percentage of expectation (80.76%). However, none of the schools demonstrated 100% expectation for success as is with effective schools where staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills.

Item 3(a): Have you ever been observed by your school principal or other colleagues during your lessons?

The purpose of item 3(a) was to determine whether or not teachers complement each other’s work through lesson observation. Teachers’ observation of each other’s work is vital for continuous improvement. Responses for the closed-ended questionnaire item are presented as follows.

**Table 14: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of response for item 3(a)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	18	78.26	20	83.33	12	70.59	13	100	5	100	2	100	27	75
No	5	21.74	4	16.67	5	29.41	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Results of data analysis presented above shows that in all schools studied, respondents accepted they have been observed by their colleagues during their lessons. Item 3(b) that follows sought to find out how often (for those that said they have been observed) respondents are being observed per school term.

Item 3(b): If ‘Yes’ to Item 3(a) above, how often is such observation done per school term?

**Table 15: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of responses for 3(b)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Less Often	12	66.67	18	90	9	75	10	76.9	4	80	1	50	18	66.7
More Often	2	11.11	0	0	3	25	2	15.4	1	20	0	0	7	25.9
Very Often	4	22.22	2	10	0	0	1	7.7	0	0	1	50	2	7.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

The table above shows that although teachers complements each other’s work in all the schools studied through observations, such observation are less often done per school term.

Item 4: Choose at most two things that suit your school principal during a typical school day

One of the correlates of effective school is strong instructional leadership from the principal or school head. The principal demonstrates a good example for all teachers to immitate as an instructional leader by being physically present in the classroom and constantly ensuring that teachers are teaching the right contents. Item 4 was a closed ended question that sought to find out whether or not the principals of the schools studied were strong instructional leaders. Analysis of responses is presented in the table that follows.

**Table 16: Frequencies and percentages of responses for item 4**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Difficult to see him/her on campus	0	0	6	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	8.6
Spends quite some time in his/her office	7	35	12	33.3	11	44	5	27.8	2	25	2	50	25	43.1
On campus but not really involved in classroom teaching/learning	1	5	14	38.9	0	0	2	11.1	1	12.5	1	25	17	29.3
Reasonably involved in classroom teaching/learning	12	60	4	11.1	14	56	11	61.1	5	62.5	1	25	11	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Analyses from table 16 above shows a general lack of strong instructional leadership from the principals for most of the schools studied. Only three schools including GBHS Kosala (60%), GHS Nkamlikum (61.1%) and GSS Kang Barombi (62.5%) acknowledged that their principals are reasonably involved in classroom teaching and learning, which a necessary requirement for strong instructional leadership.

Item 5(a): What percentage of working day do you use to check the way students learn?

Item 5(a) was designed to check how frequent teachers monitor the way students learn. In effective schools student academic progress is measured frequently, before, during and after lessons, through a variety of assessment procedures. The results of these assessments are used to improve individual student performance and also improve the instructional program. Data analysis of responses is presented in the table that follows.

**Table 17: Analysis of Frequencies and percentages of responses for Item 5(a)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Less than 10%	1	4.3	2	8.7	1	5.9	3	23.1	0	0	0	0	4	11.1
10-20%	5	21.7	3	13	2	11.8	2	15.3	1	20	1	50	5	13.9
20-30%	4	17.4	6	26.1	6	35.3	0	0	1	20	0	0	10	27.8
30-40%	4	17.4	5	21.7	1	5.9	4	30.8	1	20	0	0	8	22.2
40-50%	9	39.2	7	30.5	7	41.1	4	30.8	2	40	1	50	9	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Table 17 above show that apart from those of three (including GTC Kake I with a score of 50% for the option 40-50%, GHS Kake with a score of 41.1% and GSS Kang Barombi with 40%) out the seven schools studied, teachers of the other four schools allocated meagre percentage (less than 40%) of their working day to check the way students learn. Good practice is for a teacher to integrate teaching and checking of students' understanding during lessons which can take several forms.

Item 6(a): What percentage of your working day do you used to teach in the classroom?

One of the correlates of effective school is opportunity to learn and student time spent on task. The teacher remains the pilot of the classroom; he or she is required to allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills rather than engaging in other activities that do not impact teaching and learning. Item 6(a) was intended to determine the percentage of work time that teachers actually spend teaching. Findings are presented in the table below.

**Table 18: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of responses for item 6(a)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Less than 20%	1	4.3	2	8.7	1	5.9	1	7.7	0	0	1	50	3	8.3
20-40%	9	39.1	3	13	2	11.8	2	15.4	2	40	0	0	3	8.3
40-60%	6	26.1	6	26.1	6	35.3	5	38.5	1	20	0	0	10	27.8
Above 60%	7	30.5	12	52.2	8	47	5	38.4	2	40	1	50	20	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Data analysis presented above show that most teachers in the schools studied do not allocate up to 61% of their work period for classroom teaching and learning activities. Only half of the respondents from GTHS Kang Barombi (55.6%), GBHS Mambanda (52.2%) and GTC Kake I (50%) allocated 60% or more of their working day to teach in the classroom. From, it most likely to say some of these teachers are engaged in other activities other than teaching. Item 6(b): How do you prefer students to learn during a typical classroom period?

One aspect of effective school is that teachers do not only allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills but also do for a high percentage of this time engaged students in whole class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activities. Teacher-directed learning activity is important as it keeps students attention focused on the learning task. Item 6(b) was a closed-ended item set to find out whether teachers personally direct students' learning activities during lesson periods or prefers to allow students work on their own for most of the periods. Data analysis of the responses is presented in table 4.14b below.

**Table 19: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of responses for item 6(b)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
I personally direct students' work for most of the lesson period	13	59.09	12	52.17	10	58.82	6	46.15	2	40	0	0	19	52.78
I give the students opportunity to work on their own for most of the lesson period	9	40.91	11	47.83	7	41.18	7	53.85	3	60	2	100	17	47.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Data analysis presented above shows no significant difference between the numbers of respondents that prefer either of the two options presented. Although teachers in four – GBHS Kosala (59.09%), GHS Kake (58.86%), GTHS Kang Barombi (52.78%) and GBHS Mambanda (52.17%) out of the seven schools studied say they personally direct students' work for most of the lesson period, the number of respondents in this category in the four schools is only slightly more than average. Teacher directed, planned learning activity cannot therefore be said to be significantly present in the schools studied.

Item 7 (a): Do you think it is necessary to always have parents involved in school matter?

The relationship between parents and the school must be an authentic partnership between the school and home. On a larger scale, parental involvement in school is a very important component of effective schools due to the significant role that such involvement play in terms of school accountability, checks and balance, discipline, academic achievement, school financing, to name but a few. Item 7(a) was designed to check respondents' understanding of the importance of parents' involvement. Data analysis of responses is presented in the following table.

**Table 20: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of responses for item 7(a)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	18	78.26	19	79.17	14	87.5	11	84.62	4	80	1	50	32	88.89
No	5	21.74	5	20.83	2	12.5	2	15.38	1	20	1	50	4	11.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

The table 20 above shows that greater percentage of respondents in all the schools studied agreed that it is necessary to always have parents involved in school matters. Only respondents in GTC Kake had divided opinions. Asked in a follow-up item (Item 7b) to justify their choice of response in item 7(a), respondents with positive attitudes gave diverse answers all centred on the importance of parents' involvement in schools. One respondent acknowledged "Parents are the first educationists," others said "Parents are members of the school community," "To enable parents be aware of their children's performance and assist them," "To foster student discipline." Respondents that had contrary opinion said "The presence of parents in school scare the students," "They are not pedagogically trained," "They are expected to be concerned with the students at home," "School matters should be handle by school."

Item 7c: How often do you talk with parents about school issues in a school term?

Parents are often as perplexed as the teachers about the best way to inspire students to learn what the school teaches. The best hope for effectively confronting the problem and not each other in effective school is to build enough trust and enough communication to realize that both teachers and parents have the same goal. This sub item sought to find out how often teachers shared problems and communicated expectations with parents. The response options 'Not at all' and 'Less often' were combined while 'Often' and 'more often' were also combined. Table 4.15c below presents data analysis of responses.

**Table 21: Analysis of frequencies and percentages of responses for Item 7(c)**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Not at all/Less often	13	65	18	75	8	50.1	10	76.9	2	40	2	100	25	69.4

Often/more often	7	35	6	25	8	49.9	3	23.1	3	60	0	0	11	30.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Data analysis in table 21c above shows that apart from those of GSS Kang Barombi that responded with a percentage of 60 that they talk often or more often with parents, respondents in other six institutions studied either do not, or talk less often with parents in a school term. While greater percentages of respondents in all schools studied acknowledge that it is necessary to always have parents involved in school matters (as seen in data analysis for item 7a), the fact that more respondents do not, or talk less often with parents in a school term shows a lack of strong school-home relationship in the schools studied.

Item 8: Attempt a description of your school environment

One important correlate of effective school is the presence of an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning. Item 8 was a closed-ended item set to determine the presence of this attribute in the schools studied. Table 4.22 below shows data analysis of the responses obtained.

**Table 22: Analysis of Mean, Variance and Standard Deviation of Item 8**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Calm; very conducive for teaching and learning	22	95.6	17	70.8	16	94.1	7	53.8	4	80	1	50	31	86.1
Noisy; not permitting optimum teaching and learning	0	0	5	20.8	0	0	6	46.2	0	0	0	0	5	13.9
Unfriendly; posing much difficulties in teaching and learning	1	4.4	2	8.4	1	5.9	0		1	20	1	50	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Data analysis in table 22 above shows the presence of calm and conducive school environments in five out of the seven schools studied including GBHS Kosala (95.6%), GHS Kake (94.1%), GTHS Kang Barombi (86.1%), GSS Kang Barombi (80%) and GBHS Mambanda (70%).

Table 23 below is a summary table for all items set to answer research question 1. It presents mean scores and standard deviations.



**Table 23: Summary table with mean scores and standard deviations for items under research question**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi		GTC Kake 1		GTHS Kang Barombi	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Item 1(a): Have you ever been opportune to have someone share with you or to share with your colleague(s) or school team the things your school looks forward to achieve this academic year?	2.83	0.37	2.83	0.37	2.88	0.32	2.92	0.96	3	0	3	0	2.67	2.83
Item 2(a): Do you think all students in your class can pass a test or exam?	2.35	0	2.21	0.5	2.65	0.05	2.39	1.8	2.6	1.1	2.5	0.71	2.42	2.96
Item 3(a): Have you ever been observed by your school principal or other colleagues during your lessons?	2.8	0.5	2.83	0.03	2.71	0.46	3	0	2.4	1.2	3	0	2.75	2.59
Item 3b: If yes to Item 3a, how often per school term?	1.13	0.08	1	0.06	0.53	0.94	1.31	0.61	1.2	0.4	2	1	1.1	0.62
Item 4: Most two things that suit your school principal during a typical day?	3.2	0.89	2.4	1.1	3.1	1.2	4.6	1.8	1.2	2.2	3.7	1.43	4.2	2.3
Item 5: Percentage of working day used to check students' work?	3.6	1.3	3.52	1.28	3.65	1.28	3.31	1.59	3.8	1.17	2.33	1.9	3.36	1.29
Item 6a: What percentage of working is used in the classroom?	2.91	1.06	3.46	1.35	3.06	1.16	3.31	1.25	3.2	1.17	2.5	1.5	3.56	1.03
Item 6b: How should students learn during a typical classroom period?	2.48	0.49	2.42	0.54	2.59	0.49	2.46	0.5	2.2	0.04	2	0	2.53	0.5
Item 7a: Is it necessary for parents to always be involved in school matters?	2.78	0.5	2.79	0.5	2.71	0.36	2.85	0.36	2.8	0.04	2.5	0.5	2.89	0.31
Item 7c: How often do principals talk with parents about issues in a school term?	2.09	0.62	2.17	0.55	2.12	0.95	2.15	0.7	2.6	1.02	1.5	0.5	2.3	1
Item 8: Attempt a description of your school environment.	2.91	0.41	2.63	0.63	2.88	0.47	2.54	0.5	2.6	0.08	2	1	2.86	0.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>2.46</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>1.43</b>

While individual schools studied demonstrated the presence of one or other correlates of effective school as shown in frequency and percentage tables for each item, statistics presented in table 23 above shows that no school demonstrated significant presence of all correlates measured by the questionnaire items to be considered effective. However, some schools including GHS Nkamlikum with an average mean 2.80, GTHS Kang Barombi (2.79), GBHS Kosala (2.64) and GHS Kake (2.63) demonstrated the presence of some correlates of effective schools more than the others and obtained mean scores not very far below the cut-off mean of 3.00. These schools were therefore termed 'Leading schools' by the researcher. Therefore, leading schools are schools that demonstrated about 60-70% of the correlates used by the researcher in the study to test effective schools. High academic achievement of all students remains the singular factor that drives effective schools. This implies what matters is student academic achievement. Table 4.18 presents percentages of past GCE results of the schools studied for five consecutive years.

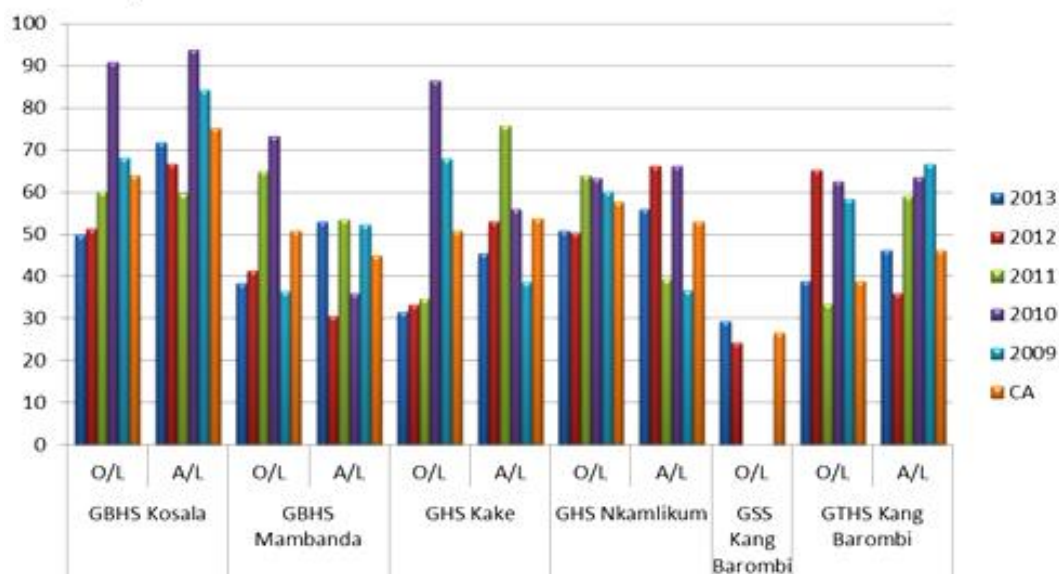
**Table 24: Analysis of Cumulative Average (CA) of Past GCE results for five consecutive years**

Schools	GBHS Kosala		GBHS Mambanda		GHS Kake		GHS Nkamlikum		GSS Kang Barombi	GTHS Kang Barombi	
	O/L	A/L	O/L	A/L	O/L	A/L	O/L	A/L	O/L	O/L	A/L
<b>2013</b>	49.87	71.84	38.33	52.94	31.66	45.37	50.94	56	29.36	39	46.3
<b>2012</b>	51.34	66.67	41.3	30.6	33.21	53.03	50.35	66.23	24.24	65.2	35.9
<b>2011</b>	60.2	59.6	64.89	53.42	34.69	75.82	64	39.4		33.65	59.2
<b>2010</b>	90.9	93.9	73.26	35.98	86.44	56	63.25	66.32		62.5	63.6
<b>2009</b>	68.24	84.3	36.5	52.3	67.89	38.6	60.2	36.8		58.3	66.8
<b>CA</b>	<b>64.11</b>	<b>75.26</b>	<b>50.86</b>	<b>45.05</b>	<b>50.78</b>	<b>53.76</b>	<b>57.75</b>	<b>52.95</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>46.3</b>

**Source:** Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board (GCE) Buea.

In terms of past GCE results from 2009 to 2013, only GBHS Kosala obtained cumulative average score above 60% for both Ordinary and Advance levels GCE examinations. The others schools have only been able to achieve slightly above average, average or below average scores at one point or the other and at both levels. This is not the case with effective schools were results would not be anything other than slightly below or 100%. Figure 4.7 below presents a graphic view of the results presented above.

**Figure 8: Bar chart of percentage scores in past GCE results for five consecutive years**



**Research Question 2: What are the professional abilities of principals in resolving conflict?**

The purpose of this research question was to find out whether principals demonstrate certain professional abilities in managing conflicts. Nine (9) questionnaire items, (Section C-item 1 to 9), all closed-ended were constructed to answer the second research question. A mix of positively and negatively worded items was made. Items were made up of statements with four response options ranging from Strongly Agree (scored 4), Agree (scored 3), Disagree (scored 2) and Strongly Disagree (scored 1). Negatively worded items were reverted during data analysis and responses treated similarly. Table 4.25 shows the results obtained for the items per school studied (and the corresponding statements) that were set to answer research question two.

**Table 25: Analysis of mean scores and standard deviations of items under research question 2**

Schools	GTHS Barombi Kang Kumba		GBHS Kosala		GHS Nkamlikum		GHS Kake		GBHS Mambanda		GTC Kake 1		GSS Kang Barombi	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Item 1: Principals try to reach a compromise through negotiation with parties involved.	3.28	0.45	3.35	0.65	3.31	0.85	3.29	0.77	2.75	0.79	2.5	0	3	0.48
Item 2: The principal attempts to meet the expectation of others.	2.8	1	3.17	0.65	3.46	0.68	3.35	0.49	3.04	0.75	3	0.71	2	1.22
Item 3: The principal investigates conflicting issues with others in order to find solutions that are mutually acceptable.	3.1	0.6	3.4	0.5	3.5	0.7	3.2	0.7	3	0.7	2	0.7	3	0
Item 4: Through consultation, he accepts the recommendations of colleagues, peers and co-workers.	3.03	0.77	2.96	0.82	3.31	0.48	2.88	0.86	2.96	0.55	3	0.71	3	0
Item 5: The principal shares information and encourages team resolution of problems.	3.2	0.52	3.6	0.58	3.5	0.66	3.1	0.86	3	1.2	2.5	0	2	0.71
Item 6: Seeks to bring everyone concerned on the table in order to resolve disputes in the best possible way.	3.1	0.64	3	0.85	3.4	0.65	3.1	0.83	2.6	0.97	3.5	0.71	3.5	0.3

Schools	GTHS Barombi Kang Kumba		GBHS Kosala		GHS Nkamlikum		GHS Kake		GBHS Mambanda		GTC Kake 1		GSS Kang Barombi	
Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Item 7: The principals' efforts have failed to reduce the occurrence of conflict to the barest minimum.	2.92	0.84	3.13	0.87	3.15	0.99	3.18	0.81	2.92	1.06	2.5	0	3	1.69
Item 8: Although conflicts occur, their effects are usually not felt.	3.2	0.86	3	0.53	3.3	0.83	2.88	0.86	2.5	1.02	2	0.71	3	1.29
Item 9: The principal tries as much as possible not to know or be involved in solving problems of students and teachers.	3.08	0.91	3.57	0.73	3	1.29	3.29	1.05	2	0.88	2.5	0.71	2	0.71
Cumulative Average	3.08		3.24		3.33		3.14		2.75		2.61		2.72	

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Like for research question 1, table 25 above shows that respondents in more of the schools studied either agreed or strongly agreed in most of the items that their principals demonstrated educational conflict management abilities measured. Cumulative mean scores above 3.00 in GHS Nkamlikum (3.33), GBHS Kosala (3.24), GHS Kake (3.14) and GTHS Kang Barombi (3.08), shows that principals in these schools generally possesses the abilities measured more than those of others.

**Research Question 3: How do principals in effective schools resolve conflict?**

The third research question was set to find out from the principals themselves through interview how they manage educational conflicts. The objective was to determine whether there were any effective schools after data analysis of research question 1, note how principals of such schools managed educational conflict and recommend the practice to other educational administrators. Given the absence of schools considered effective among the seven schools studied, responses of principals in the four ‘leading schools’ were considered. Data analysis is presented in table 4.20 below.

**Table 26: Analysis of interview responses of principals in ‘leading schools’**

Items	School Principals				Remarks
	GTHS Kang Barombi Kumba	GBHS Kosala	GHS Nkamlikum	GHS Kake	
Item 1: Have you ever experienced a conflicting situation in your school?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	All principals have experienced conflicts in their schools.
Item 2: Did you have an accurate understanding of the course of the conflict?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	All principals have an accurate understanding of the course of conflict.
Item 3: Did you handle or avoid the conflict?	Handled	Handled	Handled	Handled	All principals handled the conflicts.
Item 4: If you handled it, was it resolved?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	All principals resolved the conflict
Item 5: If yes, how was it resolved?	Through dialogue	Through dialogue	Booking the parties involved	Bringing together parties involved	Bringing parties involved together in dialogue

Item 7: If you did resolve the conflict, were those concerned in it satisfied?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Parties involved in the conflict were satisfied
Item 8: Do you resolve conflict alone or in consultation with stakeholders and those concerned?	With parties involved	With parties involved	With parties involved	With parties involved	Principals resolve conflict in consultation with those concerned
Item 9: What do you think are the best ways to resolve conflicts?	Advice	Dialogue	Advice	Dialogue	Advice and Dialogue
Item 10: Do you think there is a way to prevent conflict in your school milieu?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Conflict can be prevented to a greater extent
Item 11: If yes, explain how conflicts can be presented?	Shared decision making	Shared decision making	Meetings with Stakeholders	Meetings with staff	Through constant meetings, shared decision making with stakeholders.
Item 12a: Do you give your teachers and other stakeholders the opportunity to manage conflict in your school?	Yes	Yes	Yes	It depends on the conflict	All principals give their teachers the opportunities to manage conflict depending on the nature of the conflict
Item 12b: If yes, how are such opportunities given?	Through social gatherings	By not policing them	Staff meetings	Seminars	Such opportunities are given by being democratic, through staff socials and seminars

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

The table above shows that all principals in the ‘leading schools’ have experienced conflicts in their respective schools, had accurate understanding of the course of the conflicts, handled and successfully resolved the conflicts. The principals said conflicts were resolved by bringing together parties involved and having dialogues with them. At the end, all parties involved in conflicts were satisfied with the way the conflicts were resolved.

The fact that principals resolve conflict in consultation with stakeholders and those concerned is perhaps the main reason why they successfully resolved conflicts. The principals thought dialogue and advice are the best instruments for resolving educational conflict which can also be prevented through shared decision making and regular meetings with staff and other stakeholders. Greatly and depending on the situation, principals give their teachers and other stakeholders the opportunities to resolve educational conflicts by being democratic, through staff socials and seminars.

#### **Research Question 4: Do principals’ personal characteristics influence conflict management in schools?**

The purpose of this research question was to determine from the perceptions of teachers whether principals’ personal characteristics determines how well or not they manage conflicts in schools. Five (5) questionnaire items, (Section D-item 1 to 5), all closed-ended were constructed to answer the fourth research question. Like section C, items were made up of statements with four response

options ranging from Strongly Agree (scored 4), Agree (scored 3), Disagree (scored 2) and Strongly Disagree (scored 1). The mean scores of all participating schools were examined for each opinion statement and conclusions drawn following the results as to whether the opinion statement holds or not. Results of data analysis are presented in table 4.21 that follows.

**Table 27: Response on whether principals’ personal characteristics influence conflict management in schools**

Schools	GTHS Kang Barombi	GBHS Kosala	GHS Nkamlikum	GHS Kake	GBHS Mambanda	GTC Kaka 1	GSS Kang Barombi
Item	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Item 1: Principals' professional experience counts in managing conflicts.	3.4	3.45	3.85	3.35	4	2	4
Item 2: Good problem solving does not depend on the principals' educational qualification.	2.5	3	3	3	1.96	1.5	2
Item 3: Older principals can better solve problems than younger principals.	2.8	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.8	3	2.5
Item 4: The negative effects of conflicts occur more in schools that have women as principals than those that have men as principals.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	2.7	2	2.5
Item 5: Principals who are married know how to resolve conflicts than principals who are married.	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.5

**Source:** computed by the Author from SPSS version 12.0 2021/2022.

Table 27 above shows that 6 out of the 7 schools studied have mean scores above 3.00 in item 1 indicating that Principals' professional experience counts in managing conflicts. Also, 4 out of 7 schools either strongly disagreed or disagreed in item 2 that good problem solving does not depend on the principals' educational qualification. This indirectly meant good problem solving depends on principal’s educational qualification. In item 4, 4 out of 7 schools acknowledged negative effects of conflicts occur more in schools that have women as principals than those that have men as principals, while in item 5 there was a strong opinion that principals who are married know how to resolve conflicts than principals who are single. Respondents disagreed in item 3 that older principals can better solve problems than younger principals. Generally from the above analysis, respondents either agreed or strongly agreed in 4 out of the 5 items set for research question 4 that principals’ personal characteristics influence conflict management. It can be concluded therefore that the personal characteristics of principals influence conflict management.

## Conclusion

The study investigated the presence of the correlates of effective schools (for example, clear and focus mission, good instructional leadership, good school-home relationship, climate of high expectations for success among others) in the 7 schools studied and found out that most of the schools do not demonstrate significant presence of the correlates of effective schools correlates to be termed effective. However, principals in most of the schools studies demonstrated professional abilities measured by the researcher in managing conflict, with the more preferred approach being the collaborative as reported by principals of “leading schools.” Personal characteristics of the principal were also found to affect the way conflicts are managed in schools. In any case conflict cannot be regarded as a sign of incompetence; it is a legitimate aspect of human behaviour. It is not only unavoidable but also serves as a useful function for stimulating creative solutions to problems. Conflict can have a positive or negative outcome, depending on how it is managed. For a principal to be effective in a school situation he/she needs to learn from the outcomes of conflicts to better understand how to approach future conflicts.

## Recommendations

With regard to the findings of this study and from literature review, the following recommendations were made:

- 1) Principals should learn to share with stakeholders (that is) teachers, students, parents and the community as a whole what the school looks forward to achieve each academic year (Clear and Focused Mission). This will go a long way to ensure effectiveness of the school, since in an effective school there is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff, students, and the parents share an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability. Staff accepts responsibility for students' learning of the school's essential curricular goals.
- 2) The principals should be reasonably involved in classroom teaching and learning or should delegate authority and responsibility in that domain (Instructional Leadership). That is, the principal should be concerned with what percentage of the teacher's teaching hour he/she spends in class, what he/she teaches in class. This is because in the effective school the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to the staff, parents, and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.
- 3) Principals should always involve or talk to parents on school matters through Parents' Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. This will help the parents to know the progress of their children in school and be able to follow them up back at home. In the effective school parents understand and support the school's basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve this mission.
- 4) Teachers should perceive all the students as those who can pass an examination or a test and give them equal opportunities to learn. That is, Climate of High Expectations for Success. This will burst up the students' morale to learn and succeed. This is because in the effective school there is a climate of expectation in which the staff believes and demonstrates that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills, and the staff also believes that they have the capability to help all students achieve that mastery.
- 5) Teachers should personally direct students' work for most of the period. This will help the students focus in their task. In the effective school teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills. For a high percentage of this time students are engaged in whole class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activities.
- 6) Teachers should do a frequent monitoring of students progress through any means of assessment. This will help the students to always sit-up. In the effective school student academic progress is measured frequently through a variety of assessment procedures. The results of these assessments

are used to improve individual student performance and also to improve the instructional program.

- 7) The policy makers should ensure that the curriculum of teacher training colleges has a section aimed at ensuring that teachers acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes that should enable them handle conflicts in schools.
- 8) Principals should learn to manage their schools by example and not have favourites within the school; for principals to be good managers they should use the following management styles namely: collaborative style, avoidance style, accommodation style, compromise style and dominating style.
- 9) Conflict needs to be managed rather than to be avoided. It is imperative that principals note that conflict management requires particular management skills like: listening, advising, supporting, challenging, information gathering. Therefore, principals should design proper plans and follow correct procedures in managing conflict in their schools. The collaborative approach is highly recommended.
- 10) Principals should be aware that they play a significant role in the management of their schools; therefore they should always be in alert if something goes wrong in the school and thus act as mediators in conflict situations and all interested parties should be involved.

A course on conflict management should be instituted in higher educational institutions that give formal trainings to educational administrators such as the Faculty of Education of the University of Buea

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