

The Level of Mutual Trust Between Principals and Educational Stakeholders and its Implication for School Improvement: The Case of Public Secondary Grammar Schools in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

Good and cordial interpersonal relations among education stakeholders are fundamental to school success and principal leadership is crucial in fostering healthy interpersonal relations amongst these stakeholders. Principals, teachers, parents-teachers associations (PTAs) and school management boards (SMBs) are the main stakeholders of public secondary schools in Cameroon. Decree No 2001/041 of 19th February 2001 is one of the main instruments, regulating interpersonal relations among secondary stakeholders in Cameroon. This study intends to investigate the level of mutual trust between principal and stakeholders (teachers, PTAs and SMBs). Three specific research objectives and questions were formulated to guide this study. The study uses a descriptive survey design wherein data was collected with the use of questionnaire and interview guide. One hundred and eighty two teachers comprising of vice principals, senior discipline masters, head of departments and teachers' delegates, and 18 principals returned completed copies of the questionnaire. Thirty two executive members of PTAs and 16 members of SMBs were interviewed. An analysis of both qualitative and quantity data resulted in the following findings: there is a high degree of mutual trust between principals and stakeholders. The degree of mutual trust between principals and other stakeholders is low when it comes to financial issues. Based on these findings, recommendations were made to policy makers, practitioners and education stakeholders.

KEYWORDS: *Mutual trust, Interpersonal relations, Stakeholders, and Principal ship*

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INTRODUCTION

This study is contextualised within school leadership and interpersonal relations among education stakeholders in public secondary grammar schools of the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. For schools to be effective, education stakeholders need to improve on the quality of their interpersonal relations by building mutual trust among them (Titanji, 2017; Maxwell, 2005). Mutual trust is a core criterion to successful school leadership and improvement. This is because trust is the cord that binds any relationship (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). Generally, trust relationships involve risk taking, reliability, vulnerability, and expectations (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Young, 1998). In school settings, risks and expectations are bound to exist. Principals are expected to perform certain duties by stakeholders (teachers, parents-teachers association (PTA) and school management board (SMB)). On the other hand, principals expect stakeholders to fulfil certain obligations as well. Principals, teachers, PTAs and SMBs are among the main stakeholders of secondary schools in Cameroon. The school

principal occupies a cardinal position in the school system and has administrative, pedagogic, financial and social functions as per Decree No 2001/041 of 19th February 2001. The principal has as duty to ensure the growth of the education community through the involvement of the various stakeholders for a harmonious functioning of the school. He/she is obligated to keep a record of his/her relationship with the external community (Fonkeng & Tamjong, 2009; Mbua, 2003). On the other hand the school management board (SMB) is the supervisory organ of the school, it oversees all activities of the school, PTA and also approve all school projects (Decree No 2001/041 of 19th February 2001). The SMB is consider as the body vested with the highest power within a school, compared to the board of directors in a corporation (Guide for Secondary School Administrative personnel in Cameroon, 2015; Mbua, 2002). The parents- teachers association (PTA) on its part is a major partner in the provision of educational services in Cameroon, and contribute financially, materially and morally

to the wellbeing of the school (PTA law, 1979; Education Law, 1998). The primary aim of the PTA in Cameroon is to bring together parents who are interested in the wellbeing of students of a given school establishment, who will work together with teachers and school authority for the advancement and progress of the institution. The PTA law of 1979 recognizes the importance of good relation build on mutual trust to the wellbeing of schools by stating in its article (2) that, one of its main objectives is to promote co-operation (friendship) between staff, parents and others who are closely connected to the school. This implies that, for schools to be effective, it is important for principals to maintain a healthy interpersonal relation build on trust with these major stakeholders (teachers, PTAs, and SMBs).

Cognizance of the fact that scarce educational resources put at the disposal of schools can only be effectively managed by collaborative efforts build on mutual trust by these stakeholders, the government of Cameroon has initiated a number policies, legislatures and other regulating instruments to guide interpersonal relations between principals and other stakeholders (SWAPE, 2006; Decree No 2001/041 of 19th February 2001; Education law, 1998; Cameroon PTA law, 1979; Cameroon constitution, 1996). Lack of mutual trust between principals and other stakeholders may likely leads to conflicting interest, poor execution of projects, mismanagement, embezzlement and lack of accountability. This study is concerned with the extent to which interpersonal relations between principals and stakeholders (teachers, PTAs and SMB) are built on mutual trust.

The problem and objective of the study

The fundamental problem of this study is to investigate if interpersonal relations between principals and stakeholders (teachers, PTAs and SMBs) are built on mutual trust. Healthy interpersonal relations are characterized by norms of openness to diversity, mistakes, risks, experimentation, and participatory decision making. In addition, they are characterized by trust, and effective communication which are norms of effective schools. Principals need to trust teachers' competence, respects stakeholders' opinions, accountable in financial dealing, be honest, etc. The problem is that little or nothing is known about the extent to which mutual trust exists between principals and educational stakeholders in Cameroon. Mutual trust is an indicator of healthy interpersonal relationship which is a determinant of school effectiveness. It is not enough to document norms that are critical to principal and school effectiveness. It is also important to determine whether in practice, these norms such as mutual trust characterize relations between the various actors. This study intends to shed light on the extent to which various actors (teachers, PTA executives and school management board members) think how their relations with principals are characterized by mutual trust. This is an important omission in studies of school administration and leadership in the Republic of Cameroon.

There is evidence that Government efforts in ensuring healthy interpersonal relations among education stakeholders for school effectiveness has not been very successful as, it has been observed that there is poor execution of projects in some schools, incomplete projects, and misplaced priorities in the execution of projects in schools. It has also been observed that there is gross

mismanagement of school funds by some school officials, irrational distribution of incentives to teachers, and irregular assignment of teachers and students to classes. In fact Cameroon Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC) reports of 2015, 2017 and 2018 have consistently indicated that some school officials have either mismanaged or embezzled school funds. Consequently government *prima facie* purpose of achieving quality and improving access of secondary education may not be realized due to inefficiency and ineffectiveness. This is not good for the education of a country aspiring to be one of the emerging nations by 2035. This is because the development of every nation is a product of the quality of its education. The main objective of this study is to investigate the level mutual trust between principals and education stakeholders. Three specific objectives guided the study:

- To investigate the level of mutual trust between principals and teachers.
- To investigate the level of mutual trust between principals and PTA executive members
- To investigate the level of mutual trust between principals and members of school management board.

Theoretical Background

This study is guided by three group of theories: theories and models of educational organisations (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Bush and Glover, 2002), theories of leadership (Stogdil, 1974) and theories of social interactions and relationships (social exchange (Homans 1958; Emerson, 1972) and social capital (Coleman, 1986; Bourdieu, 1988). Bolman and Deal (1992, 1991) organisational four-frame model considers both organisational culture and context (Titanji, 2017). The underlying assumption behind this four-frame model is that effective school principals should be able to apply multiple perspectives such as rationality (structural frame), satisfaction (human resource frame), power and conflict (political frame), and culture (symbolic frame) in school administration and leadership (Titanji, 2017; Bolman & Deal, 2008, 2013). Stogdil (1974), analysis of leadership theories highlight the various leadership practices that can encourage interpersonal relations through mutual trust among education stakeholders (Titanji, 2017; Mbua, 2003). Lastly the social exchange theory of Homans (1958) and Emerson (1972) has implication on this study as it postulate that relations are bound to be healthy and stronger if there are mutual benefits by the parties. Social capital theory of Coleman (1988) and Bourdieu (1986) holds strongly that there are benefits associated with healthy interpersonal relations. This implies that, the more the bonds build on mutual trust are stronger, the parties involved in the relationship gain more.

Methodology

The study is descriptive and is based on a cross-sectional survey design that adopts triangulation, as it relied on collecting and analysing data using quantitative and qualitative techniques. Eighteen (18) out of 20 principals and 182 out of 224 teachers comprising of vice principals, senior discipline masters, head of departments and teachers' delegates returned completed copies of the questionnaire. Thirty two (32) executive members of PTA and 16 executive members of SMB were interviewed. The study employed the probability and non-probability sampling approaches in multiple stages to come out with the sample as indicated in table 1.

Table 1: Sample grid showing the demographic variables and data-collection methods

Category	Sample size	Sampling Technique	Data collection method
secondary and principals	20	Purposive/stratified proportionate	Open ended /close-ended questionnaire,
Secondary school teachers (VPs, HODs SDMs and teachers delegates)	224	Purposive/random	Open ended /close-ended questionnaire
Parents(PTA Executives)	32	Purposive/snow ball	Semi-structured interviews
SMB Executives	16	Purposive/snow ball	Semi-structured interviews
Total	292		

Two data analysis approaches were used for the study. There were the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative data from executive members of PTA and SMB, principals and teachers were analysed thematically (qualitative approach) using key themes, groundings/frequency and quotations. As for the quantitative data, a pre-designed EpiData Version 3.1 (EpiData Association, Odense Denmark, 2008) database which has an in-built consistency and validation checks was used to enter.

Findings

Research question one: To investigate the level of mutual trust between principals and teachers.

Ten (10) structured test items were used to find out if teachers have trust for their principal as presented on the table 2.

Table 2: Evidence by teachers that they trust their principals (N=182)

Questionnaire items	Stretched				Collapsed		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD		
Teachers believe that the principal is committed to his/her work	53 (29.8%)	110 (61.8%)	15 (8.4%)	0 (0.0%)	163 (91.6%)	15 (8.4%)	3.21	.582
Teachers believe the principal can rely on their expertise	45 (25.0%)	117 (64.3%)	11 (6.3%)	4 (2.3%)	161 (91.5%)	15 (8.5%)	3.14	.621
Teachers believe the principal cares about the school	45 (25.0%)	113 (62.8%)	20 (11.1%)	2 (1.1%)	158 (87.8%)	22 (12.2%)	3.12	.628
Teachers believe in principal's ability to do his/her work well	48 (27.6%)	95 (54.6%)	29 (16.7%)	2 (1.1%)	143 (82.2%)	31 (17.8%)	3.09	.696
The principal is considered as a person who keeps to time by teachers	39 (22.8%)	87 (50.9%)	39 (22.8%)	6 (3.5%)	126 (73.7%)	45 (26.3%)	2.93	.771
Teachers believe that the principal cares about them	31 (17.6%)	108 (61.4%)	31 (17.6%)	6 (3.5%)	139 (79.0%)	37 (21.0%)	2.93	.698
The principal is regarded by teachers as an honest person	33 (19.2%)	101 (58.7%)	30 (17.4%)	8 (4.7%)	134 (77.9%)	38 (22.1%)	2.92	.741
The principal is regarded by teachers as a person of his/her words	32 (18.2%)	94 (53.4%)	46 (26.1%)	4 (2.3%)	126 (71.6%)	50 (27.5%)	2.88	.722
Teachers consider the principal as a person who is faithful with money	20 (11.9%)	74 (44.0%)	58 (34.5%)	16 (9.5%)	94 (56.0%)	74 (44.0%)	2.58	.822
The principal delegates some of his/her functions to teachers	25 (14.1%)	73 (41.2%)	53 (29.9%)	26 (14.7%)	98 (55.4%)	79 (44.6%)	2.55	.910
Multiple response set and overall mean	370 (21.2%)	972 (55.6%)	332 (19.0%)	74 (4.2%)	1342 (76.8%)	406 (23.2%)	2.93	0.719

All ten items tested, had a mean value of above 2.5 which is the cut-off point. A majority of the teachers (76.8%) agreed that they trusted their principal meanwhile only (23.2%) of the teachers do not trust their principals. However a significant number of teachers do not trust principals when it comes to management of finances 74 (44.0%) and delegation of power 79(44.6%) respectively. It is also noted that, no item tested had 100%, indicating that the exhibition of mutual trust still need to be encouraged.

Table 3 presents how teachers' perceptions of trust for their principal in their own words. One unstructured question was used for that purpose.

Table 3: Teachers in their own words how they trust their principals

Themes	Frequency	Sampled quotations
Keep to his words	34	"Because the principals keep to his words". "The principal always stands by his words". "Yes, the principals keep to his promise" "The principal always keep to her words"
Open to teachers	28	"He is straight foreword". "He is not open to discussion". "The principal treats teachers as individual in all spheres". "Teachers call him daddy and openly share with him"
Shares information with teachers	16	"Because he always gives teachers information as concern the growth of the school on time". "The principal make sure that teachers get all information they need".
Knows the job description	16	"She knows her job and does it well". "This is because the teachers know that she is qualified and able to do job with confident and so they trust their principal for her faith in them". "Yes because he is experience".
Duty conscious	16	"Matches words with action" "The teachers trust the principal because she is there to do her work". "His hardworking nature makes teacher believe in him and also work hard" "Because he is hard working".
No misuse of funds	10	"No case of misappropriation has been notice". "principal does not take school money for personal use"
Work with teachers	6	"Because she works with teachers when need be".
Teachers readily accept decisions	6	"Whenever there is a new innovation from the hierarchy, teachers willingly accept it".
Teachers often attend meeting	4	"Teachers readily attend urgent staff meeting that the principal calls".

Among the teachers that trusted their principals, their reasons for doing so, were grouped into nine (09) categories. The frequently mentioned reasons were because their principals keep to his/her words, open to teachers, share information with teachers, duty conscious and know his/her job description. The least mentioned reasons were because principals work with teachers, teachers readily accept decisions and teachers attend meetings.

However, principals were also asked if they are trusted by their teachers and ten (10) structured test items were used as presented on the table 4.

Table 4: Evidence by principals that they are trusted by their teachers (N=18)

Questionnaire items	Stretched				Collapsed		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD		
I am consider as a person who keeps to time by my teachers	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.89	.323
Teachers believe I care about the school	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.89	.323
My teachers believe that I care about them	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.67	.485
Teachers believe that I am committed to my work	10 (55.6%)	8 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.56	.511
I am regarded as a person of my words by teachers	10 (55.6%)	8 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.56	.511
Teachers believe in my ability to do my work well	6 (33.3%)	12 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.33	.485
I am regarded as an honest person by my teachers	8 (44.4%)	8 (44.4%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.33	.686
Teachers believe I can rely on their expertise	8 (44.4%)	8 (44.4%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.33	.686
I delegate some of my functions to teachers	6 (33.3%)	8 (44.4%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	14 (77.8%)	4 (22.2%)	3.00	.970
Teachers consider me as a person who is faithful with money	6 (33.3%)	6 (33.3%)	2 (11.1%)	4 (22.2%)	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	2.78	1.166
Multiple response set and overall mean	98 (54.4%)	68 (37.8%)	8 (4.4%)	6 (3.3%)	166 (92.2%)	14 (7.8%)	3.43	0.614

In all ten items tested, had a mean value of above 2.5 which is the cut-off point. A majority of principals (92.2%) agreed that they are trusted by their teachers meanwhile only (7.8%) of the principals disagree that they are trusted by their teachers. However a significant number of principals opined that they are not trusted by their teachers when it comes to management of finances 6(33.3.0%) and in delegation of power 4(22.2%) respectively.

Research question two: To investigate the level of mutual trust between principals and PTA executive members

Principals were asked the extent to which they are trusted by the executive members of the PTA. Seven (08) structured test items were used as presented on the table 5.

Table 5: Principals' perception on the extent to which they are trusted by PTA EXCO

Questionnaire items	Stretched				Collapsed		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD		
I am consider as a person who keeps to time by PTA Exco	14 (77.8%)	4 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.78	1.451
PTA Exco believe that I care about their children	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.78	.686
PTA Exco believe in my ability to do my work well	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.67	.424
I am regarded as a person of my words byPTAExco	14 (77.8%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.67	.541
PTA Exco believe I care about the school	14 (77.8%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.67	.561
PTA Exco believe that are committed to my work	12 (66.7%)	4 (22.2%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.56	.324
I am regarded as an honest person by PTA Exco	12 (66.7%)	2 (11.1%)	4 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (77.8%)	4 (22.2%)	3.44	.456
PTA Exco consider me as a person who is faithful with money	12 (66.7%)	2 (11.1%)	4 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (77.8%)	4 (22.2%)	3.44	.445
PTA Exco believe I can rely on their expertise	8 (44.4%)	8 (44.4%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.33	.452
Multiple response set and overall mean	114 (70.4%)	30 (18.5%)	18 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	144 (88.9%)	18 (11.1%)	3.59	0.593

A majority of the principals (88.9%) believe that they are trusted by the executive members of PTA meanwhile, only (11.1%) of the principals disagree. This is also supported by a mean of 3.59 far above 2.5. For instance, all the 18 (100.0%) principals believe that the PTA members see them as persons who care about children, keep to time and has the ability to do their work well. However, when it comes to money, it was 14(77.8%) of the principals who believe that executive members of PTA trust them.

PTA executive members were also asked to say whether or not they trust their principals by rating their principal on a scale of maximum 5. The finding is presented on the table 6.

Table 6: PTA member's demonstration of trust for principals

Do you trust your principal as PTA member?	Areas that PTA members trust their principal most	Rating scale					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
Yes 28 (87.5%)	Keeping his word	-	2 (6.3%)	2 (6.3%)	13 (40.6%)	15 (46.9%)	32
	Does his/her work well	-	-	2 (6.3%)	17 (53.1%)	13 (40.6%)	32
	Faithful in handling money	2 (6.3%)	-	4 (12.5%)	9 (28.1%)	17 (53.1%)	32
	Keeping to time	-	-	2 (6.3%)	12 (37.5%)	18 (56.3%)	32
No 4 (12.5%)							

From the perspective of the executive members of PTA, findings showed that majority of them 28(87.5%) trusted their principals meanwhile only 4(12.5%) of them do not trust their principals. For those who have trusted their principals many of them see their principal as someone who keep to his words, does his/her work well, faithful with money and keeping to time.

Not all the reasons why PTA executive members trusted their principals was captured on the table 6. Other reasons can be seen on the table 7.

Table 7: Other reasons why executive members of PTA trusted their principals

Themes	Frequency	Sampled quotations
Honest	10	"The principal is honest and secure". "Yes, the principal is honest". "The principal is honest with money"
Collaborate with PTA exco	8	"To an extent because the principal is collaborative with PTA". "The principal collaborate well"
Open	6	"The principal is very open". "The principal is open" "The principal is open to dialogue"
Principal is objective	4	"Yes, the principal is objective and he is a man of his words".
Transparent	4	"The principal is transparent and frank on issues". The principal is transparent'
Respectful	4	"The principal is respectful". "The principal is respectful"
Offer assistance to PTA members	2	"The principal assist the PTA in handling their issues".
School functioning effectively	2	"Because the school has been functioning in an acceptable extent".

Other reasons why the PTA executive members trusted their principals were because they are honest, collaborate with PTA executive, objective, transparent, respectful, offer assistance to PTA executive members and because the school is functioning effectively.

Research question three: To investigate the level of mutual trust between principals and members of school management board.

Principals were asked if they are trusted by executive members of SMB and seven (07) structured test items were used as presented on the table 8.

Table 8: Principals' perception on the extent to which they are trusted by SMB

Questionnaire items	Stretched				Collapsed		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD		
Members of SMB believe in my ability to do my work well	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	3.67	.456
Members of SMB believe I care about the school	14 (77.8%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.67	.541
Members of SMB believe that I am committed to my work	10 (55.6%)	6 (33.3%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.53	.521
I am regarded as an honest person by Members of SMB	10 (55.6%)	6 (33.3%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.53	.522
I am consider as a person who keeps to time by Members of SMB	10 (55.6%)	6 (33.3%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (88.9%)	2 (11.1%)	3.44	.643
I am regarded as a person of my words by Members of SMB	10 (55.6%)	4 (22.2%)	4 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	14 (77.8%)	4 (22.2%)	3.33	.651
Members of SMB consider me as a person who is faithful with money	10 (55.6%)	2 (11.1%)	2 (11.1%)	4 (22.2%)	12 (66.7%)	6 (33.3%)	3.00	.851
Multiple response set and overall mean	76 (61.3%)	32 (25.8%)	12 (9.7%)	4 (3.2%)	108 (87.1%)	16 (12.9%)	3.45	0.597

Majority of the principals (87.1%) believe that they are trusted by the executive members of SMB meanwhile only (12.9%) of the principals do not believe. This finding is supported with an overall mean of 3.45 far above 2.5. For instance, all the 18(100.0%) principals believe that executive members of SMB see them as people who have the ability to do their work well. only one item tested had a 100%. Meanwhile, when it comes to money, it was 12(66.7%) of the principals who believe that executive members of SMB sees them as persons who are faithful with money.

SMB members were also asked to say whether or not they trust their principal by rating them on 5 scale. Findings are presented on the table 9.

Table 9: SMB executive members' demonstration of trust for their principal

Have trust for the principal	Reasons		
	Themes	Frequency	Sampled quotations
Yes 16(100.0%)	Principal is open to suggestion from SMB	6	"The principal is opened to ideas from other SMB members". "Yes, because she is open".
	Transparent in financial management	9	"No problem concerning financial management". "The principal is straightforward and transparent".
	Principal is objective	9	"The principal is objective". "The principal is very objective in what he does".
	Principal is respectful	3	"The principal respect others".
	Expertise power	3	"The principal knows his work".
	Honest	3	"The principal is honest".

Finally, from the perspective of the executive members of SMB, finding showed that all of them 16(100.0%) trusted their principals with reasons being that the principal is objective, and transparent with financial management, open to suggestions from SMB members, is respectful, honest and has expertise power.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the level of mutual between principals and stakeholders are built on mutual trust,

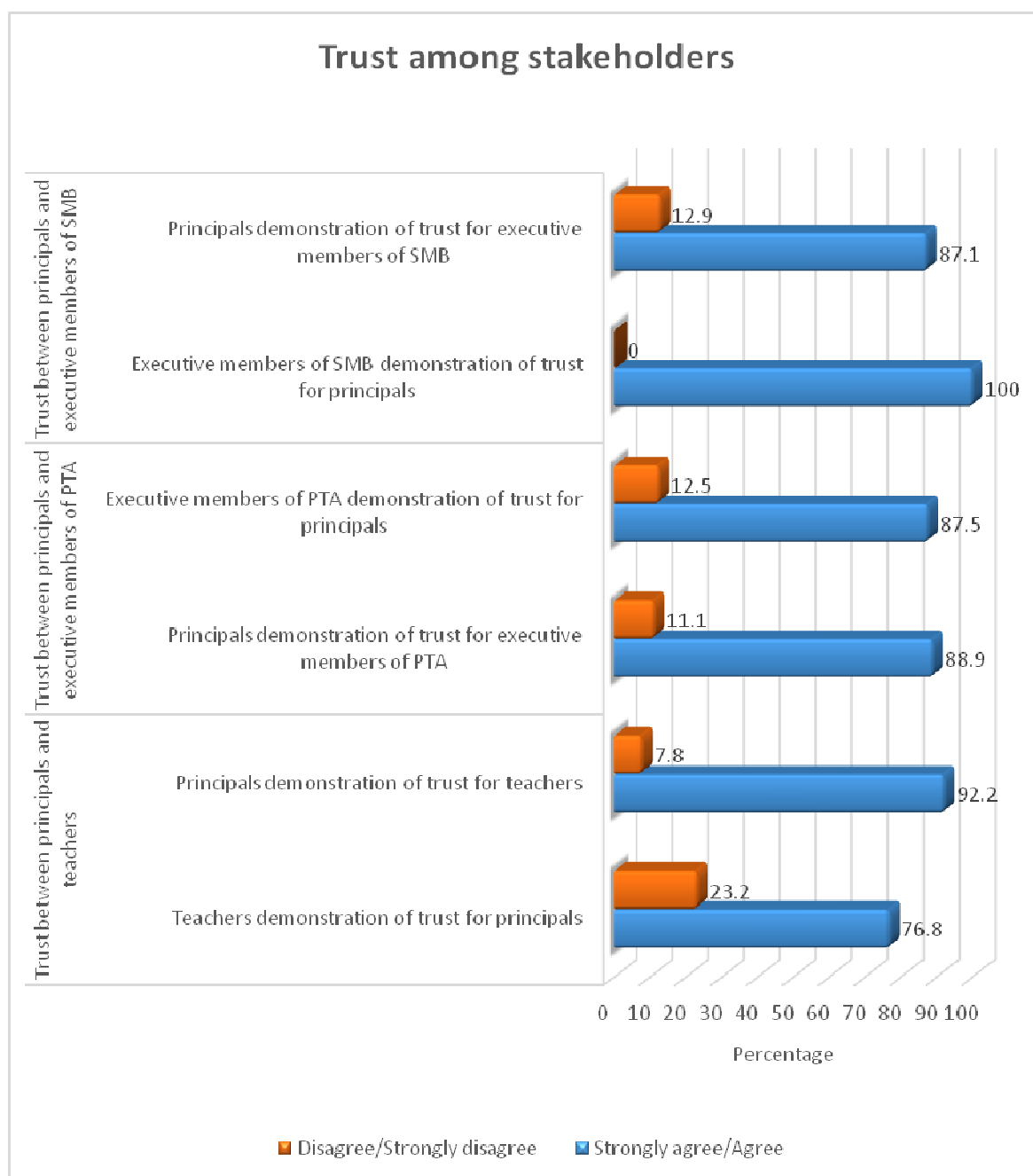


Figure 1: Summary of the extent to which interpersonal relations between principals and stakeholders are built on mutual trust.

Standard deviation value=0.184

In conclusion, findings showed that there is high degree of trust between principals and teachers, principals and executive members of PTA and principals and executive members of SMB. The standard deviation value was 0.184 which was very small meaning that teachers, principals, executive members of SMB and PTA do not significantly differ in their responses. The table 10 presents findings on why teachers, and a very few percentage of executive members of PTA and principals do not trust one another.

Teachers, executive members of PTA and SMB were asked to give reasons why sometimes they do not trust principals and one unstructured question was used for this purpose with findings presented on the table below.

Table10: Reasons executive members of PTA, SMB and teachers sometimes do not trust principals

Category of persons	Themes	Frequency	Sampled quotations
Executive members of PTA	Management of finance	10	"Misuse of money" "Sometimes, the principal wants to control PTA money or trying to impose decisions on the PTA". "If the money given to him by the PTA is not well used for the purpose assigned".
	Imposing of project	2	"When the principal is always trying to impose projects to the PTA"
	Not open	2	"The principal is not open"
	Not honest	2	"The principal is not honest"
Executive members of SMB	Financial management	10	"In matters of finance". "Handling of money" "Accountability in money matters". "Management of school funds". "I do not trust the principal when it comes to money".
	Non respect for text	2	"Yes, if the principal does not respect the terms put in place".
Teachers	Not straight forward on monetary issues	16	"Very cunning with money" "The principal is not straight in his decisions and actions"
	Issues quarrel letters to teachers anyhow	4	"Very assiduous teachers and his subordinates receive queries letter without verbal advice or observation".
	Does not respect his decisions/promises	2	"Because his decisions fluctuates a lot and makes promises he does not fulfil".
	No motivation of teachers	2	"No motivation for teachers who teach examination classes sacrificing extra hours"..
	Corrupt	2	"The principal is not trusted because he is corrupt"

Looking at the reasons why teachers, executive members of PTA and SMB do not sometimes trust principals, finding showed that it was mostly in the areas of management of finance. The least mentioned reasons were because principals issue quarrel letters to teachers anyhow, do not respect his/her promises /decisions, do not motivate teachers, not open to teachers and because the principals is corrupt.

Not only teachers were asked to give reasons why they do not trust principals but they were equally asked to give reasons why principals sometimes do not trust teachers with finding presented on the table 11.

Table 11: Teachers' opinions on the reasons principals sometimes do not trust teachers

Themes	Frequency	Sampled quotations
Ineffectiveness at work by some teachers	32	"Ineffectiveness at work" "Some teachers are inefficient". "They may not be serious with their work". "Some teachers are not serious with their work".
Laziness by some teachers	30	"Some teachers are lazy so, they will always need a push to function effectively". "Because some of them do not do their work affectively. Not assiduous". "Some teachers are born generally lazy and should not be trusted".
Some teachers can't keep professional secrete	30	"Because some don't keep professional secrete". "Teachers talk too much and will want to know everything". "Some teachers are very flippant" "Decisions might be made public by some out spoken teachers"
Teachers' absenteeism	18	"When teachers are not regular in school". "Teachers use to disturb al a lot by not coming to school because of business". "Absenteeism"

Dishonesty in filling the logbook by some teachers	14	"Teachers sometimes fill logbook without having taught" "Dishonesty with some teacher in filling log book"
Teachers stubbornness	12	"Some teachers are recalcitrant". "Some teachers hardly respect administrative deadline"
Misuse of fund	10	"Some teachers misappropriate fund". "He thinks he alone can manage money".
Religious background	6	"Some may be of different religion and pose a barrier" "Religious barrier"
Careless attitude of some teachers	6	"Some teachers are very careless and if the principal rely on such teachers, he will fail". "Some teachers are irresponsible".
Late coming to school	4	"Some teachers always come late to school".
Lack of faithfulness and honesty	4	"May be because they are not honest and faithful" "Lies telling on the part of teachers"

The reasons why teachers think principals do not trust them were group into eleven categories (11). The frequently mentioned reasons were because some teachers are not effective at work, some teachers are lazy and cannot keep professional secrets. Other reasons were because some teachers absent from school a lot, do not fill the log book correctly, misuse funds given to them and are stubborn. The least mentioned reasons were that some teachers are not honest, have careless attitude and because of their religious background.

Not only teachers, executive members of PTA and SMB were asked to give reasons why sometimes they do not trust principals. However, principals were also asked to give reason why they sometimes do not trust teachers, executive members of PTA and SMB with findings presented on the table 12.

Table 12: Principal's opinions on why they do not trust teachers sometimes

Category of persons	Themes	Frequency	Sampled quotations
Teachers	Teachers perceived as can't keep administrative secret	8	"Some are flippant and cannot keep administrative secret" "Some teachers gossip a lot"
	Teacher infighting	4	"This is due to a lot of infighting among teachers"
	Cunning attitude	4	"Some teachers are very cunning trickish and viscous".
	Dishonesty	2	"Some teachers are dishonest".
	Pay more attention to part time school	2	"Some teachers pay more attention to their part time schools than regular school?"
Executive members of SMB and PTA	Pay less attention to school functions	2	"When they don't pass round to see how the school is functioning".
	Irresponsible actions	2	"If they act irresponsibly".

Among the few principals that were found not to sometimes trust their teachers, their reasons were grouped into 5 categories with the frequently mentioned reason being that teachers cannot keep administrative secret. Other reasons were because of lot of infighting among teachers, cunning attitude, dishonesty and some teachers paying more attention to their part schools than main school. And for executive members of SMB and PTA, only two reason were found why principals do not sometimes trust executive members of PTA and SMB and they were when they pay less attention to school functions and when they are irresponsible for their actions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is a significant degree of mutual trust between principals and stakeholders (teachers, executive members of PTA, and members of SMB). The level of mutual trust between principals and teachers from both perceptions (principals 92.2 %, teachers 76.8%) given and average of 84.5% indicates principals and teachers trust each other thus healthy interpersonal relations and consequently school effectiveness. Similarly that between principals and PTA executives (principals 88.9 %, PTA Exco 87.5 %) with an average of 88.2% and between principals and members of SMB (principals 87.1%, SMB members 100%) with an average of 93.6% is an indication of healthy interpersonal relations between principals and these stakeholders thus good for school success. Trust is a very important component on which good interpersonal relations in

organizations including schools is built on. Trust thus strengthens the bonds between secondary school stakeholders (Brewster & Railback, 2003).

Mutual trust between principals and stakeholders (teachers, executive members of PTAs, and members of SMB), was manifested through delegation of power by principals to teachers, honesty, care, respect, integrity, competence, keeping to time and faithfulness in financial management (Barlow, 2001; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Sebring & Bryk, 2000). However a good number of teachers (44%) did not trust principals in management of finances. Some principals (33.3%), also believed that teachers do not trust them as financial management is concerned. For school to be successful in the achievement of school goals there is need

for mutual trust amongst all stakeholders in most matters including finances. Studies on components of school improvement by Blake and MacNeil (1998); (Kratzer, (1997); and Lein, Johnson & Ragland, (1997) revealed that trust and collaboration were some of the most important components of healthy interpersonal relations in schools and consequently school improvement.

Trust is reciprocal, and builds over a period of time, through honesty, faithfulness, truth and integrity (Lambert, 1998; Black, 1997) in a conducive school climate. In this regard, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (1998), agree with this study as their investigation on the relationship between faculty trust, and school principals' and teachers' behaviour concluded that aspects of school climate and authenticity are related to faculty trust. They also added that, trust in principals and teachers is determined by the behaviour of principals and teachers themselves.

Trust is a bridge on which other aspects of interpersonal relations are built. High degree of mutual trust between principals and stakeholders implies that, there is likely to be more collaborative efforts between principals and these stakeholders. When stakeholders trust each other, they will be more collaborative. Effective collaboration is the manifestation of trust thus an indication of healthy interpersonal relations within schools and consequently school effectiveness. This is supported by another study by Tschannen-Moran (2001) that concluded that, there is a relationship between teachers' collaboration with principals and their trust in the principals. Trust is manifested through collaboration for school improvement (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). In other words collaboration among education stakeholders is the evidence of trust.

Conclusion

There is a significant high degree of mutual trust between principals and teachers, principals and executive members of PTAs, and principals and executive members of SMBs in public secondary grammar schools in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. However most teachers do not trust principals when it comes to the management of school funds. This mutual trust between principals and these stakeholders might have likely contributed to the successful functioning of some schools during the time of socio-political and economic crises in the North West and south west regions of Cameroon. Mutual is the foundation on which healthy interpersonal relations are built. In this wise, practicing school principals are advised to spend more time building trust among school stakeholders in order to ensure collaboration and thus healthy interpersonal relations for the harmonious functioning of schools.

Recommendations

Based on these findings it is suggested that the ministry of secondary education (MINESEC) ensures that this significant level of mutual trust that prevail between principals and educational stakeholders is maintained and improved upon. Secondly it is recommended that the ministry of secondary education ensures through its devolved service the effective implementation of the principals' financial management functions as stated in the hand of school heads and by law No 2001/041 of 2001.

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