

Moderation of Principals Performance in Educational Leadership in Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon. It examines the challenges facing moderators in evaluating and validating the performance of principals in Cameroon; and the moderation process on principal performance in Cameroon. The study is qualitative in nature where the researchers collected data through literature review and observation of principals in twenty secondary schools in Southwest Region of Cameroon. The finding suggested that moderation of principals performance is a complex and multifaceted concept, influenced by various factors, including policy, culture, and leadership. The study identified several challenges facing the moderation of principals, including lack of clear policies and guidelines, inadequate training and support for moderators, and limited resources. The findings equally suggested that effective moderation can improve principal performance, but that the quality of moderation is critical. The study contributes to the existing literature on the current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon; and how principals in Cameroon perceive the moderation of their performance, and what are their suggestions for improving the process. Despite the limitations of the study, the findings recommends that educational authorities should develop clear policies and guidelines for the moderation of principals, provide training and support for moderators, and allocate sufficient resources to support the moderation process.

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INTRODUCTION

The role of principals in schools is crucial in ensuring that educational institutions achieve their goals and objectives. Principals are responsible for leading and managing schools, making key decisions, and ensuring that students receive quality education (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu, 2018). However, the performance of principals can vary greatly, and it is essential to have a system in place to evaluate and improve their performance. This is where moderation of principals comes in. Moderation of principals refers to the process of evaluating and validating the performance of principals to ensure that they are meeting the expected standards (Earl & Katz, 2006; Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe, & Fuaty, 2021). Moderation involves the collection of evidence, observation of principal practice, and feedback and coaching to support principal development

(Leithwood et al., 2004; Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021). The goal of moderation is to improve the performance of principals, which in turn, can lead to improved student outcomes, better school management, and enhanced educational quality (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021). Effective moderation of principals requires a clear understanding of the principal's role and responsibilities, as well as the skills and competencies required for effective principal practice (Earl & Katz, 2006). It also requires a fair and transparent evaluation process, which takes into account the unique context and challenges of each school (Leithwood et al., 2004; Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021). By moderating the performance of principals, schools can ensure that their leaders have the skills, knowledge, and support they need to succeed, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for

students (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021).

Background of the study

Historically, the concept of moderation of principals in Cameroon has its roots in the country's colonial past. During the colonial era, the French and German colonial powers introduced a system of education that was modeled after their own systems (Ebot-Ashu, 2020). This system included a hierarchical structure of school administration, with principals at the helm of schools. However, the colonial powers did not establish a formal system of moderation for principals, and as a result, the performance of principals was not regularly evaluated or validated (Minea, 2013). After Cameroon gained independence in 1960, the government inherited the colonial system of education, including the hierarchical structure of school administration. However, the government soon realized that the system of education needed to be reformed to meet the needs of the newly independent country. In the 1970s, the government introduced a new system of education that emphasized the importance of education for national development. As part of this reform, the government introduced a system of moderation for principals, which involved the evaluation and validation of principal performance by a panel of experts (Neba, 2013). In the 1980s, the government of Cameroon introduced a new policy of decentralization, which aimed to give more autonomy to local communities to manage their own affairs, including education. As part of this policy, the government introduced a system of school management committees, which were responsible for overseeing the management of schools, including the performance of principals. However, this system of decentralization also created challenges for the moderation of principals, as the lack of clear guidelines and standards made it difficult to evaluate and validate principal performance (Tanga, 2015). In the 1990s, the government of Cameroon introduced a new system of education reform, which aimed to improve the quality of education and increase access to education for all. As part of this reform, the government introduced a new system of moderation for principals, which involved the use of standardized evaluation tools and criteria to evaluate principal performance. This system of moderation was designed to promote accountability and transparency in the evaluation of principal performance, and to provide a framework for identifying areas of strength and weakness in principal performance (MINEDUB, 2013). In 2001, the government of Cameroon introduced a new policy of teacher training and development, which aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. As part of this

policy, the government introduced a system of moderation for principals, which involved the evaluation and validation of principal performance in areas such as instructional leadership, school management, and community engagement. This system of moderation was designed to promote the development of principals as instructional leaders, and to provide a framework for evaluating and improving principal performance (MINESEC, 2011). In 2015, the government of Cameroon introduced a new policy of education reform, which aimed to promote the development of education in the country. As part of this policy, the government introduced a new system of moderation for principals, which involved the use of technology to evaluate and validate principal performance. This system of moderation was designed to promote accountability and transparency in the evaluation of principal performance, and to provide a framework for identifying areas of strength and weakness in principal performance (MINEDUB, 2015).

Conceptually, moderation of principal's performances is rooted in the broader context of educational leadership and school improvement. Moderation is a process of evaluating and validating the judgments made by educators, including principals, to ensure consistency and fairness (Maxwell, 2012). This process is critical in ensuring that principals are held accountable for their performance and that they are provided with opportunities for professional growth and development. Educational leadership is a critical factor in determining the success of schools. Principals play a vital role in shaping the culture, climate, and academic outcomes of their schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Effective principals are able to create a positive school culture, build strong relationships with teachers and students, and make informed decisions about instructional programs and policies (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Instructional leadership is central to the role of principals in schools. Instructional leadership refers to the principal's role in leading instructional programs and policies, including curriculum development, teacher evaluation, and student assessment (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Principals who are effective instructional leaders are able to improve student outcomes and promote teacher professional development. Moderation of principals is an important aspect of school improvement, as it provides a framework for evaluating and improving principal performance (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). By moderating principal performance, schools can ensure that their leaders are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to drive school improvement. In conclusion, the moderation of principals is a critical

process that is rooted in the broader context of educational leadership and school improvement. By understanding the conceptual background of moderation, including the concepts of instructional leadership, school improvement, and transformational leadership, we can better appreciate the importance of moderating principal performance and the role that it plays in promoting school effectiveness.

Contextually, the education sector in Cameroon has undergone significant reforms in recent years, aimed at improving the quality of education and increasing access to education for all. Despite these efforts, the country still faces significant challenges in the education sector, including inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, and poor academic performance (MINEDUB, 2013). In Cameroon, the principal is the head of the school and is responsible for the overall management and administration of the school. The principal is also responsible for ensuring that the school provides quality education to its students and that the school is well-managed and accountable to the community (MINESEC, 2011). However, the performance of principals in Cameroon has been a subject of concern in recent years. Studies have shown that many principals in Cameroon lack the necessary skills and competencies to effectively manage and lead their schools (Neba, 2013). This has resulted in poor academic performance, low morale among teachers, and inadequate management of school resources.

To address these challenges, the government of Cameroon has introduced various initiatives aimed at improving the performance of principals. One of these initiatives is the moderation of principals, which involves the evaluation and validation of principal performance by a panel of experts (MINEDUB, 2015).

Despite the importance of moderation of principals in Cameroon, there is limited research on the topic. Most of the existing research has focused on the challenges facing principals in Cameroon, without exploring the role of moderation in improving principal performance.

This section of the study introduced the topic of moderation of principals, highlighting the importance of effective leadership in schools and the role of moderation in supporting principal development. This section provided an overview of the research problem, objectives, research questions, justification and significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

The moderation of principals is a critical process that aims to evaluate and validate the performance of

school principals in Cameroon. However, despite its importance, the moderation process has been plagued by several challenges, including lack of clear guidelines and standards, inadequate training and capacity building for moderators, and limited involvement of stakeholders in the moderation process (Ebot-Ashu, Etongwe & Fuaty et al; 2021). As a result, the moderation process has been criticized for being subjective, inconsistent, and ineffective in promoting school improvement and accountability (Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). The ineffective moderation of principals has serious implications for the quality of education in Cameroon. Principals who are not held accountable for their performance may not be motivated to improve their leadership and management practices, which can lead to poor academic outcomes, low teacher morale, and inadequate school resources Management. Furthermore, the lack of transparency and accountability in the moderation process can erode trust and confidence in the education system, making it difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers and principals. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the moderation of principals in Cameroon and to identify strategies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the moderation process.

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to investigate the moderation of principals in Cameroon and identify strategies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the moderation process.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon.
2. To identify the challenges facing the moderation of principals in Cameroon.
3. To assess the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon.

General Research Question

How can the moderation processes of Cameroon be improved to promote effective school leadership and management practices?

Specific Research Questions

1. What is the current state of the moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon?
2. What are the challenges facing moderators in evaluating and validating the performance of principals in Cameroon?
3. How do principals in Cameroon perceive the moderation of their performance, and what are their suggestions for improving the process?

Justification for the study

Firstly, the role of principals in schools is critical to the success of students, teachers, and the school as a whole. Effective moderation of principals' performance is essential to ensure that they are equipped to provide the leadership and support needed to achieve educational goals. Secondly, there is a lack of research on the moderation of principals in many educational contexts, including specific context or region. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap and provide insights into the current state of moderation of principals in Cameroon. Thirdly, the findings of this study will have practical implications for policymakers, school administrators, and principals themselves. The study will provide recommendations for improving the moderation process, which can be used to inform policy and practice. Finally, the study will contribute to the broader literature on educational leadership and management, and will provide a framework for understanding the complexities of moderation of principals' performance in Cameroon.

Significance of the Study

The study on the moderation of principals in Cameroon is significant because it will provide insights into the current state of the moderation process in Cameroon; and identify strategies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the moderation process. This will ultimately lead to improve school leadership and management practices, which are critical to improving academic outcomes and promoting educational excellence. The study is also significant because it will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the moderation of principals, providing new insights and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing the moderation process in Cameroon. The findings of the study will be useful for policymakers, educational stakeholders, and researchers who are interested in promoting educational excellence and improving school leadership and management practices.

Furthermore, the study is significant because it will have practical implications for principals, teachers, and educational stakeholders in Cameroon. The findings of the study will provide them with a better understanding of the moderation process and the strategies for improving it. This will enable them to take informed decisions and actions that will promote educational excellence and improve school leadership and management practices. Finally, the study is significant because it will provide empirical evidence on the moderation of principals in Cameroon, which can be used to inform policy decisions and educational reforms. The findings of the study will be

useful for policymakers who are interested in promoting educational excellence and improving school leadership and management practices. By providing empirical evidence on the moderation of principals, the study will contribute to the development of evidence-based policies and practices that will promote educational excellence and improve school leadership and management practices.

The subsequent sections will delve deeper into the topic of moderation of principals in Cameroon. The theoretical framework, which includes the Transformational Leadership Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Adult Learning Theory. The conceptual framework reviewed the current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon. The study examines the challenges facing the moderation of principals in Cameroon. This study assesses the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon.

The research methodology will describe the scientific procedure used in carrying out the work is described in detail, while the last section will present the findings and discussion of the study including the conclusion of the study with recommendations for future research and implications for practice and policy.

Theoretical review

Transformational leadership theory, introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and later developed by Bernard Bass (1985), emphasizes the importance of leaders inspiring and empowering their followers to achieve a shared vision. In the context of moderation of principals, transformational leadership theory is particularly relevant. Moderation of principals involves evaluating and supporting principals in their leadership roles, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. Transformational leaders, with their focus on inspiring and empowering others, are well-suited to this role. According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders possess four key characteristics: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the context of moderation of principals, these characteristics can be applied in several ways. For example, moderators can use idealized influence to inspire principals to strive for excellence, and inspirational motivation to encourage principals to develop a shared vision for their schools (Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). Intellectual stimulation can be used to encourage principals to think critically and develop innovative solutions to problems, while individualized consideration can be used to provide personalized support and feedback to principals. The

relationship between transformational leadership theory and moderation of principals is clear. Effective moderators must be able to inspire and empower principals to achieve their full potential, and transformational leadership theory provides a framework for doing so. By applying the principles of transformational leadership, moderators can create a positive and supportive environment that fosters growth and development in principals (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018). This, in turn, can lead to improved student outcomes and more effective schools. Furthermore, transformational leadership theory can also inform the development of moderation policies and practices. For example, moderation policies can be designed to encourage principals to take risks and innovate, rather than simply following established protocols. Moderation practices can also be designed to provide personalized support and feedback to principals, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all approaches (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018). In conclusion, transformational leadership theory has important implications for the moderation of principals. By applying the principles of transformational leadership, moderators can create a positive and supportive environment that fosters growth and development in principals. This, in turn, can lead to improved student outcomes and more effective schools. As such, transformational leadership theory should be considered a key component of any moderation policy or practice.

The social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura (1986)

Social cognitive theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura (1986), emphasizes the importance of observing and imitating others in learning new behaviors. In the context of moderation of principals, SCT is particularly relevant. Moderation of principals involves evaluating and supporting principals in their leadership roles, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. SCT suggests that principals can learn new leadership behaviors by observing and imitating effective moderators. According to Bandura (1986), SCT consists of three main components: observation, imitation, and reinforcement. In the context of moderation of principals, these components can be applied in several ways. For example, moderators can model effective leadership behaviors, such as communication and problem-solving skills, for principals to observe and imitate. Moderators can also provide reinforcement, such as feedback and coaching, to encourage principals to continue using new leadership behaviors. The relationship between SCT and moderation of principals is clear. Effective moderators can use SCT to teach principals new leadership behaviors, which

can lead to improved student outcomes. By observing and imitating effective moderators, principals can learn how to create a positive and supportive school culture, which is essential for student success. Furthermore, SCT suggests that moderators should provide ongoing support and feedback to principals, rather than simply evaluating them once a year. SCT also highlights the importance of self-efficacy in learning new behaviors. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to perform a task (Bandura, 1986). In the context of moderation of principals, self-efficacy is critical. Principals who have high self-efficacy are more likely to take risks and try new leadership behaviors, which can lead to improved student outcomes. Moderators can use SCT to enhance principals' self-efficacy by providing positive feedback and coaching. In conclusion, SCT has important implications for the moderation of principals. By using SCT, moderators can teach principals new leadership behaviors, enhance their self-efficacy, and create a positive and supportive school culture. As such, SCT should be considered a key component of any moderation policy or practice. By applying the principles of SCT, moderators can help principals become more effective leaders, which can lead to improved student outcomes and more effective schools.

The Adult Learning Theory by Malcolm Knowles (1984)

Adult learning theory, also known as andragogy, was introduced by Malcolm Knowles (1984) to describe how adults learn. In the context of moderation of principals, adult learning theory is particularly relevant. Moderation of principals involves evaluating and supporting principals in their leadership roles, with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. Adult learning theory suggests that principals, as adult learners, have unique needs and characteristics that must be taken into account when designing moderation processes. According to Knowles (1984), adult learners are self-directed, experienced, and motivated by internal factors. In the context of moderation of principals, this means that moderators should involve principals in the moderation process, take into account their prior experiences and knowledge, and provide opportunities for self-reflection and self-directed learning. Moderators should also focus on helping principals develop skills and knowledge that are relevant to their current roles and responsibilities.

The relationship between adult learning theory and moderation of principals is clear. Effective moderators can use adult learning theory to design moderation processes that are tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of principals. By taking into

account the self-directed nature of adult learners, moderators can create moderation processes that are collaborative and empowering, rather than prescriptive and controlling. This can lead to more effective moderation and improved student outcomes. Adult learning theory also highlights the importance of feedback and reflection in the learning process. In the context of moderation of principals, this means that moderators should provide regular feedback and opportunities for reflection to help principals develop their skills and knowledge. This feedback and reflection should be focused on specific goals and objectives, and should be tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of each principal. In conclusion, adult learning theory has important implications for the moderation of principals. By using adult learning theory, moderators can design moderation processes that are tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of principals, leading to more effective moderation and improved student outcomes. As such, adult learning theory should be considered a key component of any moderation policy or practice.

Conceptual Review

This literature review focuses on the review of related literature based on what other scholars have written regarding the subject under consideration:

To examine the current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon.

This question aims to investigate the existing moderation processes, policies, and practices in Cameroon. Ebot-Ashu et al. (2021) ongoing work to update the Cameroon Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSELs) has been subject to a number of powerful forces and dynamics. One of the most important was the review of relevant literature and initial revision of Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998: To Lay down Guidelines on Education in Cameroon and Law No. 005 of April 2001 (LOHE) on the orientation of higher education in Cameroon of the creation of the Standards. In Cameroon, organizational leadership, management and administrative competence and skills had built up over 61 years since independent of Cameroon (Ebot-Ashu, 2020). Second, the reality that the Standards had become a high impact platform was inescapable. They had and most likely would continue to cascade over professional organizations, like the Ministries of Educational establishments, and schools in highly influential ways. They had signaled those important changes in the work of academics, practitioners, policy makers, and program developers were unavoidable. Most significantly, the knowledge base on which the standards were scaffold, academic institutions and caring support, demanded an enlarged

treatment of what leaders should be doing to create educational leaders, schools and educational system where inside an environment of equity, diversity care for all youngsters reach ambitious targets of academic learning (Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021).

A study by Tamanji (2017) examined the current state of moderation of principals in Cameroon. The study used a survey design and collected data from 150 principals and 50 moderators. The results showed that the moderation process in Cameroon is often inadequate, with limited stakeholder involvement and inadequate feedback and coaching. The study also found that the lack of clear guidelines and standards for moderation is a major challenge facing the moderation process in Cameroon.

To identify the challenges facing the moderation of principals in Cameroon.

This objective aims to explore the difficulties and obstacles that hinder the effective moderation of principals in Cameroon. The work of Ebot-Ashu et al. (2021) highlighted effective leadership is about executing the organisation's vision (or redefining and improving it, in some cases), setting direction and the culture for that particular organization, developing people, engaging communities, and creating conditions for successful teaching and learning which are scarce in some locality and regions in Cameroon schools and educational system (Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018). The recently updated Cameroon Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (CPSEL) identify that educational leader must develop the ability to influence others, transparent to an extent, encourage risk-taking and innovation, value ethics and integrity, balance hard truths with optimism and do their job effectively in order to demonstrate and sustain effective leadership in today global society.

A study by Ngole (2019) identified the challenges facing the moderation of principals in Cameroon. The study used a qualitative design and collected data from 20 moderators and 10 principals. The results showed that the main challenges facing the moderation process in Cameroon include inadequate training and capacity building for moderators, limited resources and infrastructure, and lack of stakeholder involvement. The study also found that bureaucratic and administrative challenges are major obstacles to effective moderation in Cameroon.

To assess the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon

This objective aims to investigate the effect of moderation on principal performance, including their leadership and management practices. A study by Ebot-Ashu et al. (2021) documental analysis to identify that the CPSEL maintain the same basic

footprint of the original standards, emphasizing: Development and Implementation of a Shared Vision and core values of sustainable leadership, Mission, vision and core values of sustainable leadership, Good Governance, Ethics and Professional knowledge and interpersonal skills, Equity and Cultural Responsiveness, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Community Engagement, Recruitment and Selection, School Leaders, Teachers, Students and Community Development, Professional Learning Community for School Leaders and Teachers, Financial Management, Succession Planning, School Improvement for the Future. Elements and indicator examples for each of these standards are included to further define leadership.

Fombe (2020) assessed the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon. The study used a quasi-experimental design and collected data from 50 principals who received moderation and 50 principals who did not receive moderation. The results showed that moderation had a significant positive impact on principal performance, including leadership and management practices. The study also found that the impact of moderation on principal performance was moderated by the quality of the moderation process and the capacity of moderators.

The literature review on moderation of principals revealed that effective moderation is crucial for principal development, school leadership, and student outcomes. The review highlighted the importance of moderators possessing emotional intelligence, communication skills, and the ability to provide constructive feedback (Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021). However, gaps in the literature were identified, including a lack of research on the specific skills and qualities required of moderators, the impact of moderation on principal development and school leadership, and the effectiveness of different moderation models and approaches. Overall, the review emphasized the need for further research on moderation of principals to inform best practices and improve school leadership.

Research Methodology

The aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself (Cohen et al, 2000). This study was qualitative in nature where the researchers depict the relevant moderation experience of principals in Cameroon and identify strategies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the moderation process “in a way that is faithful to the original as possible” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 101). Institutions may, or may not, have policies and procedures for moderating principals in schools or the

educational system, but it is the interpretation of my observation that will constitute the data and from which the conclusions will be formulated. The conclusions reached in the absence of quantifiable data, although subjective in nature, will be based on clear evidence emerging from literature and participants observation.

Sampling technique in this study is none probability sampling (Denscombe, 2003). The form of none probability sampling used by the researcher in this study is purposive sampling starts with a purpose in mind and allowed principals and schools to be “handpicked” (p. 15) for the suitability in matching the relevance of this study. Denscombe (2003) who explains; “the advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to home in on people or events which there are good grounds for believing will be critical for the research” (p. 16). Cohen *et al* (2000) describe research methods as the techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering. That is, the tools used by the researchers as a participant, the collection and storage of field notes, and the analysis of field data.

This study enables the researchers to learn and contribute towards existing knowledge on understanding about how the moderation processes in Cameroon can be improved to promote effective school leadership and management practices? The first stage of the research was an extensive review on the subject from selected published literature, which was then substituted after on electronic library search. In addition, several discussions with principals were also conducted to extract valuable information in order to construct a framework for this research.

This study employs an overt participant observation is a naturalistic method for qualitative data collection. It requires that the researchers become a participant in the culture or context being observed—documenting and interpreting the generic tasks for moderation processes of principal’s leadership practices in Cameroon be improved. This method involves the researcher getting to know the principals by entering his world and participating openly- in that world. The observation schedule whilst aiming at recording reviewed materials concerning: the current state of the moderation of principals in Cameroon (Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021; Tamanji, 2017); challenges facing moderators in evaluating and validating the performance of principals in Cameroon (Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021; Ngole, 2019); How do principals in Cameroon perceive the moderation processes in Cameroon can be improved (Ebot-Ashu et al., 2021; Fombe, 2020).

The interpretive or qualitative approach is normally associated with small-scale research. It tends to be non-statistical and subjective in nature and seeks to understand principals' actions, personal constructs, negotiated meanings and understanding of situations and events (Cohen et al., 2000). Qualitative (or subjective) approaches, therefore, typically use methods such as review of literature and participant observation or which, it is argued, give a more realistic and rounded view of the areas investigated; making it less likely that inappropriate conceptual frameworks and prior assumptions will be imposed on the study by the researcher. As Denscombe (2003) points out, rather than using predefined categories, frameworks and hypothesis, the qualitative researcher looks through a wide lens, searching for patterns and interrelationships between a previously unspecified set of concepts.

To develop internal validity and external validity, the researchers followed the specific analytical technique of pattern coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994). When all collected data is available in textual format, data can be methodologically analyzed (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In pattern coding, the principal's interactions are compared with the researchers' interpretation within theoretical conceptual frameworks. Pattern coding has four important functions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). First, it reduces large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytical units. Second, the researcher becomes involved with analysis during data collection, so that later fieldwork can be more focused. Third, it helps the researcher elaborate a cognitive map for understanding interactions. Fourth, it lays the groundwork for cross-case analysis by surfacing common themes as identified in the findings below.

Ethical considerations were given the highest importance in that informed consent was sought from the person to be observed and her 'gatekeeper', in the case study schools in the Southwest Region of Cameroon. The University of Buea research guidelines were adhered to in order to ensure respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom. All data recordings (text) were stored without names, using unique numbers as identifiers for analysis purposes. As no personal data were to be retained on an electronic data base, or in hard copy, there were no implications under the Cameroon Data Protection Act for the data collection, analysis or study preparation.

Presentations of Findings and Discussions

This section presents the findings on moderation of principals in Cameroon. The finding is presented

according to research questions: What is the current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon? What are the challenges facing moderators in evaluating and validating the performance of principals in Cameroon? How do principals in Cameroon perceive the moderation process, and what are their suggestions for improving the process?

The current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon?

The study finds out that moderation of principals is a critical process that aims to evaluate and validate the performance of school principals (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018).

Principals should develop a mission, vision to promote school success and student well-being. Relevant data can be used to promote school vision and promote school success, develop strategies to implement and evaluate action to achieve school vision (SAP1UTT-UTT3)

Effective leaders put in place method to continuously improve the achievement of the vision, fulfill the mission and promote care value of the school. Leaders review and evaluate their own capabilities as they use information for their own development. Learn from other leadership management experts to develop and shape the future (SAP1UTT29-UTT31).

Effective moderation of principals is essential for promoting school improvement and accountability (Leithwood et al., 2004; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). This is with reference to financial management the following responses were made by a principal is require to:

Provide a transparent, ethical and accountable steward of the school monetary and nonmonetary resources. Provide example on appropriate use of finance and management practice and decision making (SAP1UTT25-UTT26)

Moderation of principals involves the evaluation of principal performance against established standards and criteria (Marzano et al., 2005; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). The moderation process typically involves the collection of evidence, observation of principal practice, and feedback and coaching (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Effective moderation of principals requires a clear understanding of the principal's role and responsibilities, as well as the skills and competencies required for effective principal practice (Leithwood et al., 2004; Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018). Research has shown that effective moderation of principals requires a collaborative approach that

involves multiple stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021).

It is important that the school principals develop a plan as per community engagement and build a strong relationship with colleagues, learners, parents and other stakeholders to meet the identified needs of learners. Create a conducive school climate with inclusiveness and support that promote success and well-beings (SAP1UTT15-UTT16).

Principal should have a clear define work role for teachers and staffs that promote effective development practices and student learning. Provide opportunity for collaboration practices, collegial feedback and collective learning. Develop a coherence approach to build and sustain teachers (SAP1UTT22-UTT24)

The following experience were drawn that principals make available resources, plan to develop teacher's leadership and leadership of other members in the school community. Ensure transparency by describing the overall investment made by organization. Plan for staff tomorrow and success by providing opportunities for effective induction and monitoring (SAP1UTT19-UTT21)

The challenges facing the moderation of principals in Cameroon

Research has highlighted several challenges facing the moderation of principals in Cameroon, including inadequate training and capacity building for moderators, limited resources and infrastructure, and lack of stakeholder involvement (Tamanji, 2017).

It's important for the school or educational system to provide professional development assistance among individual from cultural and linguistic diverse background, reduce inappropriate referral to special education. Provide discipline to address tribal and linguistically disparities among staffs and student simply to attain equity and cultural responsiveness. (SAP1UTT10-UTT12).

Additionally, the moderation process in Cameroon is often hindered by bureaucratic and administrative challenges, which can limit the effectiveness of the moderation process (Ministry of Education, 2013). The lack of clear guidelines and standards for moderation can also create challenges for moderators and principals (Earl & Katz, 2006; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). In Cameroon, the Ministry of Education has established guidelines and standards for principal

evaluation and moderation (Ministry of Education, 2013).

Principals should be train to have the professional knowledge and interpersonal skills concerning principalship. Leaders need to have knowledge and research aspects in educational policy to support school development. Measure progress to improve performance in the organization through team work and individual initiatives (SAP1UTT7-UTT9).

However, research has shown that these guidelines and standards are not always followed, which can limit the effectiveness of the moderation process.

The school principals must understand the meaning of good governance in schools and how it impacts leadership roles. Leaders and managers should show how good governance relate with leadership and management in schools. Place leadership roles in line with good governance in school (SAP1UTT4-UTT6)

Furthermore, the moderation process in Cameroon is often limited by the lack of resources and infrastructure (Tamanji, 2017). This can include limited access to technology, inadequate funding, and insufficient human resources. These challenges can limit the effectiveness of the moderation process and hinder school improvement.

As concern curriculum instructions and assessment, the school or educational system should provide instructional practices that effectively develop and address the needs of each student. Ensure instructional practices that is intellectually challenging but also authentic to student's experience, strength and personalized differences (SAP1UTT13-UTT14)

To address these challenges, it is essential to identify strategies for improving the moderation process in Cameroon (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). This may include providing training and capacity building for moderators, increasing resources and infrastructure, and promoting stakeholder involvement.

Leaders and managers reflect on hiring practices, invest planning and put in place recruitment and selection policies. Describe recruitment and selection approach and process to meet the organization aspiration and needs (SAP1UTT17-UTT18)

By addressing these challenges, it may be possible to improve the effectiveness of the moderation process and promote school improvement.

Moderation process on principal performance in Cameroon

Research has shown that effective moderation can improve principal performance by providing feedback and coaching, promoting accountability, and enhancing leadership and management practices (Ebot-Ashu, 20214; 2018; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021).

It's the responsibility of the principal to make available clear succession planning approach and discuss with the people involve. Provide individual with information advice and guidance that support them to plan and develop their carriers (SAP1UTT27-UTT28).

Moderation can also help principals to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies for addressing these areas (Earl & Katz, 2006; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). In Cameroon, the moderation process is designed to promote school improvement and accountability (Ministry of Education, 2013; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). The impact of moderation on principal performance can be significant, particularly when moderation is conducted regularly and provides actionable feedback (Leithwood et al., 2004). Research has shown that principals who receive regular feedback and coaching through moderation are more likely to improve their leadership and management practices (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). This, in turn, can lead to improved student outcomes and school performance. However, the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon is not well understood and requires further research (Tamanji, 2017; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). Studies have shown that moderation can have a positive impact on principal performance, but the effectiveness of moderation depends on various factors, including the quality of the moderation process, the capacity of moderators, and the level of stakeholder involvement (Earl & Katz, 2006; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). To assess the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon, it is essential to investigate the relationship between moderation and principal performance (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Ebot-Ashu et al.; 2021). This may involve analyzing data on principal performance, including leadership and management practices, and examining the impact of moderation on these practices. It may also involve conducting surveys and interviews with principals and moderators to gather more information about the moderation process and its impact on principal performance. Overall, assessing the impact of moderation on principal performance in Cameroon is critical for promoting

school improvement and accountability (Ministry of Education, 2013; Ebot-Ashu, 2014; 2018). By understanding the impact of moderation on principal performance, policymakers and educators can develop strategies for improving the moderation process and promoting principal development.

Conclusion

The study has shown that moderation of principals is critical in evaluating and validating their performance. The moderation processes in Cameroon involves the collection of evidence, observation of principal practice, and feedback and coaching. In Cameroon, the moderation of principals is guided by the Ministry of Education's policy framework, which emphasizes the importance of principal evaluation and accountability. The moderation process in Cameroon is designed to promote school improvement and accountability. However, research has shown that the moderation process in Cameroon is often inadequate, with limited stakeholder involvement and inadequate feedback and coaching. This can limit the effectiveness of the moderation process and hinder school improvement. Effective moderation of principals requires a clear understanding of the principal's role and responsibilities, as well as the skills and competencies required for effective principal practice. In Cameroon, the Ministry of Education has established guidelines and standards for principal evaluation and moderation. However, research has shown that these guidelines and standards are not always followed, which can limit the effectiveness of the moderation process.

Contributions to Knowledge

This paper is based on the results from review of literature and overt participant observations of principals and documenting and interpreting the generic tasks for moderation processes of principal's leadership practices in Cameroon be improved. In educational leadership in Cameroon, the effectiveness of principals is moderated by several factors, including leadership styles, supervision skills, and the school's environment. Strong leadership, particularly participatory decision-making and coaching styles, has a positive impact on student achievement and teacher effectiveness. Effective supervision practices, like providing consistent feedback and supporting professional growth, are also crucial for enhancing teacher effectiveness. The school's environment, including its culture of collaboration and open communication, can significantly impact the effectiveness of the principal's leadership.

Current state of moderation of principal's performance in educational leadership in Cameroon?

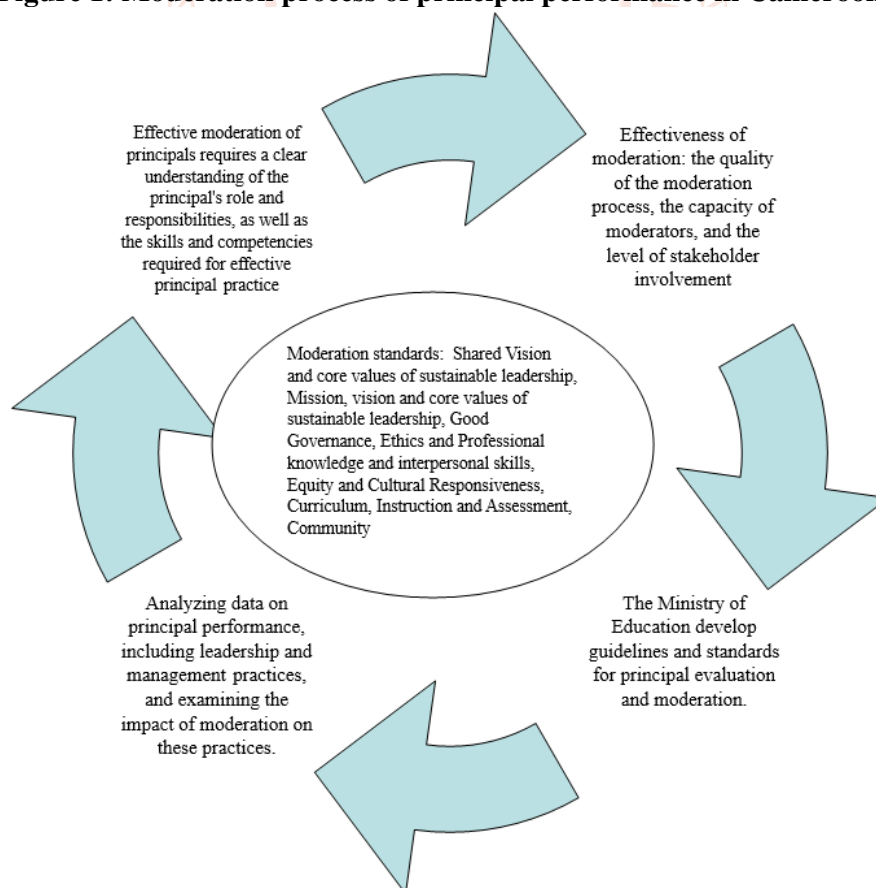
Evaluation of principal performance against established standards and criteria	The effectiveness and efficiency of the moderation
Principals should develop a mission, vision to promote school success and student well-being.	Every successful school is built on a strong mission and vision. These foundational statements guide educational institutions in shaping curriculum for professional development. Vision and mission serve as vital goals guiding the activities of educational institutions and ensuring the delivery of quality services to learners. One of the key steps for creating a positive school culture is having a vision that puts staff health and wellbeing front and centre
Moderation involve collection of evidence, observation of principal practice, and feedback and coaching to improve their own performance	The process of collecting evidence about principal practice involves observing, gathering data, and providing feedback and coaching to improve effectiveness. This includes observing teaching practices, collecting student work samples, and using data to inform coaching conversation. Principals are encouraged to evaluate their own capabilities as they use information for their own professional development.
Clear understanding of the principal's role and responsibilities in the moderation processes	A school principal's role encompasses various responsibilities, including leadership, instructional support, resource management, and ensuring a safe and effective learning environment. Principals act as leaders, guiding staff, students, and parents, while also managing the school's day-to-day operations and fostering a positive school culture. Principals are encourage to learn from other leaders and managers to develop and shape the future.
Skills and competencies required for effective principal practice	Effective school principals require a diverse set of skills and competencies, including strong leadership, communication, and instructional leadership capabilities, as well as the ability to manage resources, build relationships, and adapt to changing educational landscapes. They must also be skilled in problem-solving, decision-making, and fostering a positive school culture. Good principals have appropriate knowledge of content area, assessment practices, and demonstrate good understanding about policies and procedures.
Provide a transparent, ethical and accountable steward of the school monetary and nonmonetary resources	Effective principals are transparent, responsible, ethical, and stewards accountable of the school's monetary and non-monetary resources. They engage in effective budgeting and accounting. Moderation of principal is conducted in a spirit of professional learning and quality improvement. Participants should expect some dissonance.
Establish collaborative approach to moderation of principal that involves multiple stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members	A collaborative approach to principal moderation involves multiple stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community members, working together to ensure the principal is supported in their leadership role and that the school is meeting the needs of all its constituents. This can be achieved through various methods, such as regular meetings, feedback mechanisms, and shared decision-making processes. Moderators outside of the school (e.g. facilitators, invited teachers from other schools, parents and community members) may be periodically involved to give independent feedback.
Moderation should help create a conducive school climate with inclusiveness and support that promote success and well-beings of educational stakeholders.	An inclusive and welcoming school climate serves as an 'invisible hand', providing teachers with comfort and assistance in making decisions about inclusive
Moderation of principals should involve clear define work role for	Principals play a critical role in setting the direction for a school and should ensure clear roles for teachers and staff that promote effective

teachers and staffs that promote effective development practices and student learning	development practices and student learning. This includes providing opportunities for collaboration, supporting professional development, and creating a culture of continuous learning. Moderation should involve many teachers across the different levels gain an understanding of the progressions of learning within the subject.
Make available resources for moderation of principals. Plan to develop teacher's leadership and leadership of other members in the school community.	To make resources available for the moderation of principals, a structured process should be established, incorporating feedback mechanisms, clear guidelines, and professional development opportunities. This will ensure that principals are held accountable for their performance while also supporting their growth and development of teachers and other members of the school community.
Moderation of principal ensure transparency by describing the overall investment made by organization.	The idea that "moderation of principal" ensures transparency by describing the overall investment made by an organization is incorrect. Transparency in investments means providing clear and readily available information about an organization's investment strategies, performance, and risk profiles to stakeholders. It involves disclosing details such as investment allocations, asset classes, and the reasoning behind investment decisions.
Plan for staff tomorrow and success by providing opportunities for effective induction and monitoring	Moderation processes lead to improved learning and assessment when carried out regularly; Appropriate assessment tasks are decided on or designed aligned to actual learning; equivalent assessments are agreed, when desired, for cross-class or cross-school comparisons for professional development purpose.

Source: Researchers

How principals in Cameroon perceive the moderation of their performance, and what are their suggestions for improving the process?

Figure 1: Moderation process of principal performance in Cameroon?



Source: Researchers

Moderation of principals in Cameroon has for a long time been identified as one way to address quality and consistency. Moderation of principals can be improved through:

- Collaboration between the Ministry of Education, schools and school leaders
- Understanding the quality of the moderation process, the capacity of moderators, and the level of school principals' involvement
- The Ministry of Education develop guidelines and standards for principal evaluation and moderation.
- Analyzing data on principal performance, including leadership, management and administration practices, and examining the impact of moderation on these practices.
- Effective moderation of principals requires a clear understanding of the principal's role and responsibilities, as well as the skills and competencies required for effective principal practice.
- purposeful, engaging, relevant, teaching and learning opportunities for school leaders, teachers and students to reach their potential
- coming together with other school leaders and teachers to ensure consistent, equivalent and equitable professional judgement against success criteria and achievement standards occurs

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research is needed to examine the current state of moderation of principals in Cameroon and identify areas for improvement. To address these challenges, it is essential to investigate the moderation of principals in Cameroon and identify strategies for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the moderation process. This study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the moderation of principals and provide recommendations for improving the moderation process in Cameroon.

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