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Understanding the Intended Image of Public Secondary Grammar Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

School administrators are the backbone of a successful school culture. Successful schools are a reflection of the leadership in place which is an indication of the vision, mission, values and core competencies thereof. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the intended image of public secondary grammar schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. 20 school administrators are purposively and conveniently sampled with an open ended questionnaire from the six divisions of the region. The data collected are analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis. According to the results of this study, school administrators cite morality and poor results as crucial factors that degrade the image of public secondary grammar schools. Results further explain that the school administrators of these schools are striving for excellence as they cite morality which is the backbone for personal growth and human relations as the key vision, mission, value and core competencies of their schools followed by academic excellence. Other areas school administrators mention include: competence, talent creation, coercive workforce and building citizenship.

Keywords: Cameroon, Education, Intended Image, Public Secondary Schools, School Administrators.

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1. Introduction

Every educational institution is governed by administrators who need to perpetuate a culture that is reflexive of the educational system in place. Previous findings from effective school research (Brookover and Lezotte, 1997; Edmonds, 1979; Sergiovanni, 2001) indicate that the educational leader possesses a greater influence on education than any other factor (Egley & Jones, 2005). Lezotte and Mckee (2006) state that there are few documented circumstances of schools being turned around without intervention by a leader, and that successful leadership is more prevalent in schools that display challenging circumstances. School administrators need some form of training in order to strengthen their capacity to promote a vision aiming for a conducive learning environment. Mbu (2003) identifies three means by which school administrations could be trained to enhance their capacity. Formal education by taking undergraduate and/or graduate studies in educational administration and planning as well as attending short in service courses and workshops or seminars

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as well as internships. Experience which involves exposure to a variety of situations, problems and demands help in improving administrative competence and skills. These actually differs from formal education as it requires time and maturity on the job which demands some form of maturity, duty consciousness and creativity on the side of the administrator. The last method by which one can acquire administrative competence and skills is through mentor-mentee relationship (Mbua, 2003).

Wirba (2015) acknowledges that principals in both public and non-public schools in Cameroon had no formal training in leadership prior to their appointment as principal as they were either trained as teachers in their various field of studies or served as vice principals, discipline masters as well as head of various departments. Wirba (2015) further reveals that principals described themselves as good leaders which are rooted in the great man theory as being born to lead. The other aspect which came into light when interviewing principals with regard to good leadership is that a good leader is rooted in his/her ability to work in harmony with a disciplined labour force, respect, honesty, bravery, and the propensity to stick to the core values and beliefs to produce responsible moral individuals for society. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) find that leaders who set a clear sense of direction have a significant impact on student achievement which may project to school popularity. Effective leaders know that a significant investment of time will be required to develop a shared understanding of what the school should look like and what will need to be done to get there. To them developing a collective understanding of the organisation and its goals and activities will give the school community a sense of purpose (Leithwood et al., 2004), usually referred to as the vision.

Principals of public secondary schools in Cameroon find their purpose of administration from the objectives of the Cameroon education as stipulated under Law n° 98/004 of 14th April 1998, to lay down guidelines for education in Cameroon. However, different principals base on their training demonstrate different views on the vision of their schools and this poses confusion and at times discontentment to principals as they carry out their duty. Also, very few studies have been carried out to understand the intended image of public secondary schools in Cameroon in order to identify the core vision, mission, core competences and values as perpetuated by school administrators. This study therefore seeks to unravel the intended image of public secondary schools in the South West region of Cameroon.

According to Brown, Dacin, Pratt and Whetten (2006) the intended image is what the organisation tries to carry out, how they want to represent themselves to their stakeholders. The intended image is also known as the desired corporate identity or the ideal identity. The desired identity has everything to do with a corporation's (school) vision, mission, values, and core competences (Balmer & Soenen, 1999; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). This identity is a concept that the organisation can build and try to manage in a certain way. The desired identity is for the most part determined by and in the hands of the leaders of an organisation. It is in the heads and fantasies of the organisational leaders (Balmer & Soenen, 1999; Van der Grinten, 2010). Thus the desired identity of an organisation does not necessarily match with the actual identity; it is a matter that is aimed for. Leaders can make a choice of which factors to communicate to the outside world, and may even choose not to communicate certain identity-determined factors to particular groups (Brown et al., 2006). In the case of public secondary schools in the South West region of Cameroon with an Anglo-Saxon heritage, the intended image is revealed by the school administrators through interviews about the vision, mission, values and core competences of their schools.

Powell (2004) defines a school's vision as being the dream of the principal. A vision paints a picture of what a school can become (Powell, 2004). Successful principals not only have a vision but effectively articulate that vision to staff, parents and students. A clearly defined vision provides a destination for future and leaves no doubt as to the school priorities (Powell, 2004). St Germain and Quinn (2005) reveal that the establishment of an all-encompassing, well-articulated vision has been determined to be a key factor in the implementation of the change process.

According to Barth (1990) the vision of a school should be rooted in research of best practices and should reflect the school's history and existing culture. He adds that members of the school community should collectively create a vision that provides a profound sense of purpose for each of its members. In other words, the collective vision emerges from the personal visions of each member or stakeholder (Barth, 1990). Without a common vision, decisions are made randomly. At best, policies, procedures and programmes will lack unity and fail to support one another. At worst, they may

actually work against one another (Barth, 1990), thereby creating conflict and a chaotic perception of the school in the minds of stakeholders.

The objectives of the study therefore are to:

1. Determine the desired image of public secondary schools based on school administrator's perception.
2. Determine the factors which can enhance the image of public secondary schools in the South West Region from the perspectives of school administrators.

This paper is divided into five sections. The first section focuses on the problem whereas the second gives an insight into the problem based on an account of what has been written by accredited scholars and researchers. The third section focuses on the method used in attaining the research objectives while the fourth section presents the findings and discussions of the objectives. The last section provides conclusions as well as policy.

2. Literature review

2.1 Intended image and impact on school success

The identity of the educational system of Cameroon is rooted before colonialism. The indigenous acts of symbolism, communication and behaviour which portrayed the image of Cameroon's education account for the unique identity of this system of education. Birkigt and Stadler (1986) suggest that corporate identity as the outward presentation of the organisation through symbolism; communication and behaviour should emerge from an understanding of the organisation's core mission, strategic vision and the more general corporate culture of an organisation. Mac Ojong (2008) asserts that Cameroon indigenous education is equated to secondary education in the modern era. The education of the young of each generation on the values and techniques of the society in order to perpetuate continuity and survival of the society was the mission by which the indigenous Cameroon society's image could be sustain (Mac Ojong, 2008). Hardly was there specialisation in a particular trade, and socialisation was preferred to individualisation, and corporation was preferred to competition (Mac Ojong, 2008). Furthermore, the building, music, dressing, carving, and paintings produced by the different schools within the indigenous systems of Cameroon education conveyed the image of the society in question (Mac Ojong, 2008).

In order to create an effective school culture that promotes and improved learning for all students, schools must first identify a set of core values and beliefs about learning that will function as explicit foundational commitment for students and the community. Once identified, these core values and beliefs about learning will manifest themselves in a set of research-based, school-wide 21st century learning expectations which the school must also identify through engagement in a dynamic, collaborative, and inclusive process informed by current research-based best practices. Once the school has established its core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, it needs to ensure they are actively reflected in the culture of the school and drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices in every classroom. The school can also use the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations to guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations. In time, the school can regularly review and revise its core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations based on research, multiple data sources and school priorities (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., 2009).

A school's core values and beliefs about learning can be embedded in a "mission statement," but schools have realised that mission statements which are empty, devoid of those core values and beliefs about learning about which stakeholders feel passionate, do not provide any foundational commitments upon which the school can make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. Therefore, the important part of this narrative statement, which schools may still choose to call a "mission statement", must have core values and beliefs about learning if it is to be an effective basis for decision-making in the school. Following this narrative statement of core values and beliefs about learning must be a set of challenging and measurable 21st century learning expectations which address academic, social, and civic competencies (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., 2009).

As mentioned above, the school's mission or narrative statement must include the school's shared belief and core values about learning, and it should spell out the beliefs about which the school is passionate. It is essential that the beliefs reflect the beliefs of the larger community; it should be

developed in a collaborative, dynamic, and inclusive process of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members who review research, multiple data sources, as well as regional, school priorities that are pertinent in determining the school's future direction (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., 2009)

The 21st century learning expectations identify the school-wide essential learning's that the community has identified for all students. These expectations must address competencies in the academic area (effectively analyse and evaluate information and evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs); social (act responsibly with the interests of the larger community in mind) and civic (participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes). Upon the approval of the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations, all subsequent school decisions on policy, practice, and programs should be judged on the basis of how well they conform to and advance these concepts (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., 2009).

A school culture has been referred to as how the school acts and feels in accomplishing the mission to fulfil the vision of the school (Powell, 2004). The culture of the school reflects the vision of the principal and is the way of life in terms of how things are done in the school. Schien (1985) states that culture is taught and learned and that the key element of culture is brought about by the structure of the organisation. Powell (2004) defines organisational structure as the process of management utilised by the principal in obtaining resources for teaching and learning, hiring the most qualified staff, optimising time on task and creating a climate in which students are disciplined and safe. Building trust and re-stabilising relationships are the glue that holds school communities together.

The norms, values and beliefs held by administrators and teachers are critical components of effective schools (Binkowski, Cordeiro and Iwanicki, 1995) and they determine the schools' identity with due impact on its image. Binkowski et al., (1995) found that there must be a commitment to building a shared sense of mission or culture in a school. A principal's expression of high expectations is part of the vision that guides high achieving schools. There is widespread agreement in the research that having genuinely high expectations is a vital component of school success (Binkowski et al., 1995; Larsen, 1987). Research has consistently found that high achieving schools reflect clear and consistent communication of the leader's expectations of high performance from both students and staff (Edmond, 1979). High achievement then becomes a shared expectation of the entire school community (Leithwood et al., 2004) of which the different stakeholders build their perceptions. Leithwood et al., (2004) further acknowledge that effective principals in the case provide resources and often times pressure to keep the momentum going and everyone similarly focused.

While a school's vision and mission are primarily designed for long-range planning, short-term successes are also necessary to assist schools in staying focused and motivated. St Germain and Quinn (2005) refer to the principals' effective use of the schools' mission as a guide when confronting obstacles. The mission statement should serve as the vital life blood of the school's daily activities and policies and should be fundamental to every decision at every level (St Germain & Quinn, 2005). Blankstein (2004) further stipulates that the school mission serves as a polestar or guiding principle for the school to follow (Blankstein, 2004) in order to project its identity. The short-term successes can be achieved through the development and implementation of a limited number of well written, clearly focused, specific and measurable goals. Goals can be defined as short-termed mini-targets that schools aim for as they move toward their ultimate destination: their vision (Harris et al., 2006). Goals assist in the identification of priorities and establish a timeline for the process of change.

According to the Draft document of the Sector Wide Approach (2006), the laws of 1998 and 2001 convey a clear orientation of the Cameroon educational system. Cornelissen (2004) defines a mission as a general expression of the overriding purpose of the organisation which, ideally, is in line with the values and expectations of major stakeholders and concerned with the scope and boundaries of the organisation. According to section 4 of the 1998 law, the general purpose (mission) of the education is "to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic and moral development and their smooth integration into society bearing in mind prevailing economic, socio-cultural, political and moral factors" (p.3). The objectives are defined by section 5 of that document and shall be to: 1) train citizens who are firmly rooted in their cultures, but open to the world and respectful of the general interest and the common weal; 2) inculcate the major universal ethical values (dignity and honour, honesty and integrity) as well as a sense of discipline into pupils and students; 3) promote family life; 4) promote national languages; 5) provide an introduction to the democratic culture and practice,

respect for human rights and freedoms, justice and tolerance, the fight against all forms of discrimination, love of peace and dialogue, civic responsibility and the promotion of regional and sub-regional integration; 6) cultivate the love of effort and work well done, the quest for excellence and team spirit; 7) develop creativity, a sense of initiative and the spirit of enterprise; 8) provide physical, sports, artistic and cultural training for the child; and 9) promote hygiene and health education.

Relating to Cornelissen (2004) definition of the vision of an organisation which is an aspirational view of the general direction that the organisation wants to go in, as formulated by senior management and that requires the energies and commitment of members of the organisation (Cornelissen, 2004), the vision of public secondary schools in Cameroon is thereby determined by different school administrators during their reign and is guided by the objectives of section 5 of the 1998 law; hence school administrators need to derive efficient strategies to meet their goals and objectives as they serve a foundation in determining the identity of the school which can be communicated to form its image.

The comprehensive vision of a school must guide the school's improvement priorities and choices. When this occurs, all tasks assume equal importance and it becomes easy to develop focused work plans (Cotton, 2003). Principals in high-performing schools express different priorities than principals in lower-performing schools (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Chubb and Moe's research indicate that the principals of lower-performing schools emphasize students' basic literacy skills, good work habits, citizenship and occupational skills. Leaders of higher-performing schools focus on academic excellence, personal growth and human relations skills of students.

The notion of quality and excellence has been related to high standards (Mosha, 2000) and high competitiveness (Manyanga, 2007). From these definitions the notion has proved to be relative, as standards are dynamic and vary from one society to another (Sallis, 2002). Excellence has also been equated with high achievements in examinations (Malekela, 2000). According to Shahzad (2007), the quality of education is measured by using different performance indicators. Competence and achievement are examples of the performance indicators. The emphasis of measuring quality of education therefore has been associated with improving the performance of teachers, competences and achievements of the students (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002). Vedder (1994) contends that measuring the quality of education is related to raising students' achievements. This means that measurement shows whether there is satisfaction in the results, and thus serves as a function in determining challenges that need special attention towards improving quality of education (Galukanda, Van Berkel & Wolfhage, 2009).

Effective management of school activities is relevant for the success of a school. Results of a study carried out by Ehiane (2014) deduce that management of school discipline (73.7%), punishment (93.2%) time management (100%), respect of rules and regulations (98.4%) of the school have a significant impact on students' academic performance. Notwithstanding, the demonstration of appropriate morality by school stakeholders' is relevant to achieve the goal and objectives of the school. Osighembe (1974) shares this view when he points out that discipline has a direct relation to academic standards with both moving in sympathy, discipline taking the lead. Wilson (1971) states that as an active processing agency, the school takes the parental role of enabling the students to gain self-discipline based on generally acceptable forms of behaviour to which they are expected to conform. According to The Ministry of Education in Kenya (1979), in a secondary school context, the principal has an ultimate responsibility of ensuring discipline is maintained in school. The principal is directly involved in establishing the rules of behaviour, the penalties to be applied, and the approaches to be used in enforcing discipline among the students and other school members. However, Bell (1988) recommends that principals should work in liaison with other teachers in enforcing student discipline in schools. How teachers in schools tackle discipline problems among the students is mainly a matter of judgment and experience.

Students-based causes of indiscipline in Cameroonian schools are low self-concept, abuse of seniority, poor study habits and restlessness and inattention by some students. School-based causes of students' indiscipline include teachers' lateness and absenteeism, overcrowded classrooms, unconducive school environment, harsh school rules and regulations, poor teaching by some teachers and poor leadership of some school administrators (Ngwokabuenui, 2015). The identified society-based causes of indiscipline in Cameroon secondary schools are parental over protection of children, poor value system, injustice in the society revealed by the practice of favouritism, nepotism and corruption, unwholesome mass media and unsatisfactory home conditions in some homes. The

possible solutions to the problem of indiscipline in Cameroon secondary schools are the intensification of moral leadership and moral education in the schools, value re-orientation in the society, provision of adequate facilities for teaching, games and sports, reduction of class size, establishment of functional and effective parents-teachers association in schools, emphasis on extracurricular activities, positive teacher-student relationship, provision of information communication technologies and internet facilities, high parental and school supervision, counselling and enforceable school rules and regulations, and involvement of students in decision-making and in formulating school rules and regulations (Ngwokabuenui, 2015). However, the neglect of moral education as a valid academic subject has also been raised as a problem by Anglophone teachers (Press Statement: All Anglophone Teachers Trade Unions, 2017). These observations unsettle the mind of patriotic Cameroonians since children are considered the future leaders of the country (Ngwokabuenui, 2015).

Effective training of school administrators is important for the development of their management capacity. According to Wirba (2015), trained teachers in schools in Cameroon can become principals at any given time without any leadership skills. In other words, when teachers graduate from their training schools to become teachers of various fields, they are equally sent to various schools to become principals (Wirba, 2015). This affects their potential in decision-making and result in situations where “a bad administrative leader may render ineffective even the best school programme, the most adequate resources and the most motivated staff and students (Nwankwo, 1982).

Wirba (2015) further acknowledges that principals in Cameroon view their duties differently and all of them interviewed mentioned coordination as an important duty. Some see their duties as acting as a link between the school and the outside world. Having said the above, it is possible that the lack of formal training might have contributed to their different opinions about priorities. Thus, the lack of leadership development of principals may mean some are insufficiently clear about their roles and duties. Their difference in understanding of job functions is clear and necessitates professional training in order for all principals to uniformly understand roles and responsibilities (Wirba, 2015).

A core competence is a collection of various organisational skills and technologies (Hamel and Prahalad, 1996) representing the integration of various skills which differentiate organisations from competition (Otubanjo, 2013). Hamel and Prahalad gave a summary of the meaning of core competence in their 1996 classic and bestseller text: “A core competence is a bundle of skills and technologies that enables an organisation to provide a particular benefit to customers.” Core competencies provide educators with a framework for professional development -- a road map -- leading them to new credentials, or guiding ongoing professional development at various career stages. Educators must be able to “recognise themselves” as professionals based on the knowledge and competencies they have gained through education and practical applications rather than being defined solely by the setting in which they work or by their degree attainment. A competency-based system must be designed to be flexible, with a variety of pathways for educators to achieve the required competencies. (Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Core Competencies for Early Education and Care and Out of School Time Educators, 2010).

3. Data and methodology

Data are gathered qualitatively in the form of an open-ended questionnaire. Qualitative research is suitable for this study as open-ended questions help participants to express their views since meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community (Creswell, 1998). Open ended interviews are conducted because they allow the maximum use of ideas, thoughts, and memories in the participants' own words rather than words of the researcher (Reinharz, 1992)

Public secondary schools under the general section in the South West Region are stratified into groups according to divisions including Fako, Lebialem, Manyu, Meme, Ndian and Kupe Manengouba (6 groups). Each group is then divided into two according to rural and urban settings (12 groups). Urban and rural schools are recognised in terms of their development and age. A simple random sampling method is then used in selecting 12 schools using the lottery method from the 12 groups; 6 rural and 6 urban schools, one per category from each division. Base on the lottery method, the names of rural and urban schools from each division are written on paper and folded. The folded papers are

then put in 12 boxes representing the 12 groups and well stirred. A tag is then drawn from each box until we arrive at 6 rural and 6 urban schools according to division.

The estimated sample for school administrators was 24 (2 administrators from 12 schools). However, 20 school administrators are purposively and conveniently sampled for the study. The collected data is analysed qualitatively using thematic analysis.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 Examine desired image of public secondary schools based on school administrator's perception

4.1.1 Principals' perception of the vision of PSS in the SW region

Morality, high academic performance, building citizenship, knowledge transfer/competence and talent creation are listed by public school administrators as values which they intend to perpetuate in their schools. A majority of the school administrators consider morality as the main vision for their schools (*"to raise students who are morally upright"*) and (*"Mould well-behaved Cameroonians who are law-abiding and morally upright."*) High academic performance is also mentioned as a key vision by school administrators (*"To raise students with excellent results."*)

Table 1: Thematic analysis of the vision of schools as perceived by the principals

Code	Code description	Grounding	Quotation
Knowledge transfer/competence	Educate students with quality material from one generation to the next/ Quality training of students by well trained and proficient teachers	3	"to have teaching personnel in all subjects who are professionally conscious"
Building citizenship	Producing responsible and patriotic Cameroonians through education	3	"Train knowledgeable and responsible citizens that will contribute to the building of themselves and the society" "Educate students on hygiene and sanitation and protection of their environment"
High performance	Schools should produce students with excellent results	11	"To raise students with excellent results"
Morality	Train students with moral values for the honour of the nation	12	"to raise students who are morally upright" "Mould well-behaved Cameroonians who are law-abiding and morally upright" "Bring up disciplined students"
Talent creation	Induce the talent of students for socio-economic development	1	"improve talent of students through extracurricular activities"

4.1.2 Principals' perception of the mission of PSS in the SW region

Similar to the vision, school administrators mostly emphasise morality (*"be one of the best in the Division and why not in the region in terms of the behaviour of the students"*) and high performance (*"by the end of the academic year, the students should be well equipped to be successful in their end of term or end of course exam"*) as the main factors in the improvement of the image of public secondary schools. However, other aspects like competence, knowledge transfer as well as conducive learning environments are mentioned as factors which could contribute to the enhancement of the image of schools.

Table 2: Thematic analysis of the mission of schools as perceived by the principals

Code	Code description	Grounding	Quotation
What do you want to accomplish now and a certain time for your school?			
High performance	School should produce students with excellent results	8	"by the end of the academic year, the students should be well equipped to be successful in their end of term or end of course exam"
Competence	Quality training of students by well-trained and proficient teachers	4	"to put up an enabling environment that will provide enough teaching staff, accommodation and didactic materials to ease the teaching/learning process" "The creation of a reading habit/culture in the students" "Continue to do my best as a teacher and administrator. Make students understand that they also can succeed like me and even do more"
Morality	Train students with moral values for the honour of the nation	8	"be one of the best in the Division and why not in the region in student behaviour"
Knowledge transfer	Educate students with quality material from one generation to the next	3	"to have enough teachers, especially in the sciences, even by PTA, so that the students will stay in class" "inculcate in students the love of agriculture"
Conducive learning environment	An environment which is comfortable for teaching/learning	3	"keep the campus as beautiful and flowery as possible" "renovate infrastructure" "make the school environment neat and conducive for school activities"
Education for continuity	Education which caters for future generations	1	"encourage education for sustainable development"

4.1.3 Principals' perception of the core competencies of PSS in the SW region

School administrators cite morality, high performance and talent creation as the core competencies of their schools. Other core competencies highlighted include competences which involve quality training of students by well-trained and proficient teachers, environmental education conceptualised as the training of Cameroonians who are environmental conscious in order to maintain sanity, good health, life sustainability and education for continuity. Similarly, majority of school administrators believe that morality (*"the maintenance of high levels of discipline"* and *"hard work at all levels"*) is a critical factor which makes them successful. This is followed by academic performance (*encouraging results at ordinary and advanced level in the division*) as well as competence visualised in terms of quality (*"the quality of teachers and their good work,"* as well as *"the collaborated efforts of the devoted part-time teachers and the permanent staff"*).

Table 3: Thematic analysis of the core competencies of schools as perceived by the principals

Code	Code Description	Grounding	Quotation
What are you, as a school, really good at?			
Morality	Train students with moral values for the honour of the nation	5	"instilling moral values in children"
Education for continuity	Education which caters for future generations	2	"moulding the young generation"
High performance	School should produce students with excellent results	4	"improvement on the level of performance at the end of course examination"

Talent creation	Induce the talent of students for socio-economic development	4	“sports and socio-cultural activities”
Competence	Quality training of students from well trained and proficient teachers	3	“in academics especially with practicals and demonstrations”
Environmental education	Train Cameroonians who are environmental conscious in order to maintain sanity, good health and for life sustainability	3	“co-curricular activities like farming”
What makes you a successful school?			
Goal-orientated	The school sets its goals to achieve within a period of time	2	“commitment to our set goals”
Academic	School strives for academic excellence	3	“encouraging results at ordinary and advanced level in the division”
Morality	Train students with moral values for the honour of the nation	5	“the maintenance of high level of discipline” “Hard work at all levels ‘administrators, teachers and students’ ”
Competence	Quality training of students by well trained and proficient teachers	3	“the collaborated efforts of the devoted part-time teachers (in majority), the permanent staff” “the quality of teachers and their good work”
Accessibility	Nearness of school to the road, good road	1	“accessibility of the school, good roads”

4.1.4 Principals’ perception of the values of PSS in the SW region

Morality is a critical value identified by school administrators (“*discipline*” and “*hard work*”) to promote the image of PSS in the SW Region of Cameroon. This is followed by academic excellence and coercive working spirit (“*professional relation between students and teachers is very good*”). School administrators mostly promise their stakeholders’ academic excellence (“*students’ success at education*”), morality (“*continuous improvement on the level of discipline*” and “*hard work*”) as well as cooperation (“*cooperation for great achievement*”) in order to better the image of their schools. School administrators further emphasise that the image of their schools is simply good (“*good image in sports and morals*”).

Table 4: Thematic analysis of the values of schools as perceived by the principals

Code	Code description	Grounding	Quotation
What are the most important values of the school?			
Building citizenship	Producing responsible and patriotic Cameroonians through education	1	“good citizenship values through holistic education”
Academic excellence	School strives for academic excellence	4	“Discipline and academic excellence”
Morality	Discipline and morality	7	“discipline” “hard work”
Coercive work	Work together to achieve schools goals	3	“Collaboration and diligence” “professional relation between students and teachers are very good”
Talent creation	Artistic creation	1	“music, arts and culture”
Conducive learning environment	An environment favourable for teaching/learning	1	“an enabling environment for learning e.g. provision of shelters and recreation”

What does your school promise stakeholders (parents, students and community members)?			
Cooperation	Schools working together with parents for the achievement of schools' and children's goal	4	"cooperation for great achievement"
Academic	Excellent results in examination	14	"students' success at education"
Morality	Moral upbringing of students to be responsible and respectful citizens and children	9	"continuous improvement on the level of discipline" "hard work"
What image does your school have?			
Very Good	the perception about the school is very positive	2	"For now it has a very good image since discipline is taken seriously"
Good	The perception about the school is positive	10	"good image in sports and morals"
Fair	The perception about the school is average	2	

4.1.5 Discussion of objective one: Examine desired image of public secondary schools based on school administrator's perception

When done right, the vision, mission, core competencies and value statements and goals should tie into each other (Cornelissen, 2004). This statement thereby facilitates a common discussion for research objective one. Majority of school administrators believe that their schools have a good image. Chubb and Moe (1990) emphasise that principals of higher-performing schools focus on academic excellence, personal growth and human relations skills of students. Results of this study therefore reveal that school administrators of public secondary grammar schools are striving for excellence as they cite morality which is the backbone for personal growth and human relations as the key vision, mission, value and core competencies of their schools followed by academic excellence. Another key factor that is necessary to enhance the academic perspective of schools with daring impact on image is competence. As it entails, school administrators reveal a weak teaching force that needs to be upgraded for better imagery of schools. Other areas school administrators also focus on include: talent creation, coercive workforce and building citizenship.

4.2 Determine the factors which can enhance the image of public secondary schools in the South West Region from the perspective of stakeholders

4.2.1 School administrators' perception of factors that degrade the image of PSS

School administrators mostly emphasise morality (*"indiscipline of some students in the examination classes, vandalism on buildings and other school property"*) and poor results (*"poor results in extended exams"*) in GCE Ordinary and Advanced Levels as the critical factors that bring down the image of public secondary schools in the South West Region. *"Poor behaviour from students, staff and teachers alike"* is also highlighted by school administrators as the fundamental cause of the image experienced by schools.

Table 5: School administrators' perception of factors that degrade the image of PSS

What do you think brings down the image of your school?			
Code	Code Description	Grounding	Quotation
Poor results	Poor results	8	"poor results in extended exams"
Morality	Lack of discipline and bad behaviour	10	"indiscipline of some students in the examination classes, vandalism on buildings and other school property"

Accessibility to school	The school is far from town and other neighbouring villages and the roads are poor	1	“poor behaviour from students, staff and teachers alike” “distance from town and other neighbouring villages”
Competence	Lack of teachers and didactic material for teaching/learning	2	“absence of teachers”

4.2.2 School administrators’ perception of factors necessary to enhance the image of PSS

The need for more competent teachers and a reduction in the number of transfers of teachers by the government are mention as the most critical factors to enhance the image of public secondary schools (*“More competent teachers should be transferred to the school. As at now, we have many PTA employed teachers and the administrators too are fully involved in teaching. At times these administrators miss their classes because of administrative exigencies”*). This factor affects academics and is highlighted by school administrators as one of the major factors that degrade the image of public secondary schools in the South West Region. Morality is the second factor that needs to be enhanced in order to better the image of public secondary schools (*“students, teachers and other internal stakeholders should be disciplined in and out of the school, and the fight against vandalism should be strengthened”*). School administrators recommend that counselling services be improved for students with poor behaviour and teachers should be encouraged to be devoted and passionate in their teaching (*“counsel the students with poor behaviour and teach with all the diligence and devotedness”*). Other factors highlighted in chronological order include cooperation, academic and infrastructural development, as well as parental support.

Table 6: Factors necessary to enhance the image of public secondary schools as perceived by the school administrators

What do you think can be done to improve the image of your school?			
Competence	Provide more competent teachers and reduce the number of transfers	9	“More competent teachers should be transferred to the school. As at now, we have many PTA employed teachers and the administrators too are fully involved in teaching. At times these administrators miss their classes because of administrative exigencies”
Academic	Improve on the results of examinations, especially extended examinations like GCE	2	“good results”
Infrastructural development	Enhancement of infrastructure in schools	2	“development of infrastructure” “the school needs more classrooms, more teachers and an enclosure”
Morality	Improve the state of discipline and behaviour of students, staff and teachers	4	“counsel poorly-behaved students and teach with all the diligence and devotedness” “students, teachers and others from the school should be disciplined in and out of the school, fight against vandalism”
Parental Support	Parents’ support in their children’s needs and in other academic concerns	1	“the image can be improved if parents dedicate themselves too in the welfare of their children by providing their school needs, sending them early to school and checking their work at home”

Cooperation	School working together with the different stakeholders to meet the needs of the school	3	“collaboration among stakeholders (parents, students, teachers and the community as a whole)” “government supervision/assistance in teachers’ needs”
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4.2.3 Discussions of objective two: Determine the factors which can enhance the image of public secondary schools in the south west region from the perspective of stakeholders

School administrators cite morality and poor results as crucial factors that degrade the image of public secondary grammar schools in the South West region of Cameroon and competence and morality as key factors necessary to enhance this image. This is supported by Ngwokabuenui (2015) who acknowledge high rate of poor moral values (indiscipline) in Cameroon schools demonstrated by poor teaching and leadership by some teachers and school administrators among others. This has a drastic impact on academics in school. Osighembe (1974) shares this view when he points out that discipline has a direct relation to academic standards with both moving in sympathy, discipline taking the lead. School administrators interviewed highlight some key moral issues in schools such as, “*indiscipline of some students in the examination classes, vandalism on buildings and other school property;*” and “*poor behaviour from students, staff and teachers alike,*” and opt as vision to “*mould well-behaved Cameroonians who are law-abiding and morally upright;*” and as core value “*discipline, academic excellence and hard work.*” The poor value system in Cameroon society which no longer honour hard work and meritorious services are responsible for the breakdown of law and order in schools (Ngwokabuenui, 2015). Excellence has been downplayed for mediocrity and this has affected every sector (educational, business, health and so on) as education forms the base for every profession.

5. Conclusion and policy implication

This study reveals that the intended image of PSS in the South West region of Cameroon should be primarily base on morality, academic excellence, and competency of school administrators and teachers. The success of every society is dependent on the moral values transmitted upon generations. The values of the Cameroon society before colonisation were characterised by socialisation and corporation (Mac Ojong, 2006); values endowed with virtues such as humanity and love. These moral values have been watered-down today thereby invoking the minds of school administrators on how to rebuild a society with good moral values evident in their vision, mission, value and core competencies highlighted in this study. A high performance school focuses on building moral values for children personal growth and their relationship with others determine not only their success in life but academic excellence which is a prime characteristic of successful schools. Morality breeds hard work, competence, corporation, excellence and all virtues which build the personality of an individual and/or institution. Cameroon Law N° 98/004 of 14 April 1998 guarantees these virtues but its application in school is of concern. Inculcating good moral values in children will therefore serve as panacea in solving problems such as corruption, tribalism, favouritism, nepotism which has destroyed the Cameroon system. As policy, workshops should be organised to orientate and consensually frame a uniform vision, mission, values and core competencies as well as train school administrators on how to apply them. This is essential as majority of public secondary school administrators are appointed without leadership skills (Wirba, 2015). The study is limited to public grammar secondary schools in the South West region of Cameroon hence further studies could be done nationally to enhance policy.

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