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THE EXAMINATION

OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN THE DOMAINS OF CURRICULUM AND MANAGEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

EL EXAMEN DE LA GESTIÓN ESCOLAR EN LOS ÁMBITOS DEL CURRÍCULO Y LA GESTIÓN EN LA REPÚBLICA DE CAMERÚN

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ABSTRACT

In 1979, the government of the Republic of Cameroon started signing degrees and propagating laws related to School-Based Management. This released some powers of decision making in some domains of school management from the Ministry of Secondary Education to the individual schools and some cases to the communities. The purpose of this study is to examine the participation of SBM actors (school administrators, teachers, and parents) in decision making and the implementation of school-based management (SBM) in the two studied domains in Lay Private Secondary Schools with English Sub-System of Education in the Republic of Cameroon. For this study to be realized, a qualitative method of research was used; using interviews as tools for data collection. The framework presents two examined areas; the participation of school-based management actors and the implementation of SBM in the two studied domains, curriculum and management/leadership. Five Lay Private Secondary Schools with English Sub-System of Education were randomly selected in the Centre Region of Cameroon for this study. The results showed that; SBM was implemented in the domain of management/leadership, while in the curriculum domain, it wasn't implemented.

Keywords: School-based management, implementation, decision-making, curriculum, management/leadership.

RESUMEN

En 1979, el gobierno de la República de Camerún comenzó a firmar títulos y a difundir leyes relacionadas con la gestión escolar. Esto liberó algunos poderes de toma de decisiones en algunos dominios de la gestión escolar del Ministerio de Educación Secundaria a las escuelas individuales y en algunos casos también a las comunidades. El propósito de este estudio es examinar la participación de los actores de AED (administradores escolares, maestros y padres) en la toma de decisiones y la implementación de la gestión basada en la escuela (AED) en los dos dominios estudiados en Escuelas Secundarias Privadas Laicas con Sub-Inglés. Sistema de educación en la República de Camerún. Para la realización de este estudio se utilizó un método de investigación cualitativo; utilizando entrevistas como herramientas para la recopilación de datos. El marco presenta dos áreas examinadas; la participación de los actores de la gestión escolar y la implementación de la AED en los dos dominios estudiados; plan de estudios y gestión / liderazgo. Para este estudio, se seleccionaron al azar cinco escuelas secundarias privadas laicas con subsistema de educación en inglés en la región central de la República de Camerún. Los resultados mostraron que; SBM se implementó en el dominio de gestión / liderazgo, mientras que, en el dominio del plan de estudios, no se implementó.

Palabras clave: Gestión, implementación, toma de decisiones, plan de estudios, gestión / liderazgo basados en la escuela.

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INTRODUCTION

A current of change is sweeping the entire world today in various domains, namely, political, economic, social, and the educational sector. This current change is the distribution and devolution of powers to smaller units for better management and improvement on output. The various efforts of improving the quality of students' education have been a prime factor in the educational field. Results from the inefficient centralized method of educational management which had been unable to identify pertinent problems facing particular schools and responding to them on time have led to the decentralized method of educational management that can easily identify problems at various levels and react promptly. It has been proven by the works of many researchers that the delegation of some powers to schools to make certain decisions regarding certain domains has been a very significant step to School-Based Management (Malen, et al., 1990; Cheng, 2004; Caldwell, 2005; Zajda & Gamage, 2009).

School-Based Management (SBM) is a method of educational management that has created direct contact with students and parents for problems to be quickly identified and remedies provided promptly to improve on the standard of education of the students. Unlike the centralized system of educational management where the central administration could not have direct contact with all the students and parents to identify problems and provide solutions on time, school-based management allows parents, teachers, and school administrators to make decisions regarding the school in certain domains. This increases their level of participation in school resulting in identifying and solving problems that manifest on time. School-Based management is *"the decentralization of levels of authority to the school level".* (Barrera-Osorio, et al., 2009, p. 15)

In the year 1979, the Inter-Ministerial circular No.242/L/729/MINEDUC/JMS of 25 October 1979 created the Parents' Teachers' Associations known by its abbreviation, PTAs in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Cameroon. The decentralization of powers to the schools or communities was propagated by the law signed in the year 1998 on the educational orientation that gave some powers of decision making on certain domains to local levels in the community of education, councils levels, divisional levels, and regional levels. The community of education is presented in Section 32 as ` all individuals and corporate bodies that contribute towards the functioning, managing, and prestige of a school.

This section states that the community of education includes, among others, the people in the circle of social professionals, supporting staff, administrative staff, students,

teachers, and parents as well. This highlighted that the members of this community of education are expected to contribute in various capacities in the functioning and proper management of the school, (in kind, in cash, etc.) by any other means to involve in education at the various levels of decentralization. Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 of the amended Constitution of 1972 that decentralized some powers of the central administration on education to lower levels, also created some awareness of decentralization and devolution of powers.

The confusion herein created which constitutes the problem under investigation is that the domains in which decisions are to be made are not clearly defined and stated, those who are to participate in the decision making in the various domains are not known, and lastly, the actors may not be aware of their individual and collective responsibility. Hence, the lack of clearly defined domains, clearly defined actors in the various domains and description of their functions, has created some crisis in the implementation of SBM in some domains. This paper therefore attempts to evaluate the implementation of SBM in the domains of curriculum and Management/Leadership in Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English Subsystem of Education in the Republic of Cameroon.

The purpose of this study is to examine the participation and the implementation SBM in the domains of Curriculum and Management/Leadership by evaluating the participation of actors (the school administrators, the teachers, and the parents) in decisions making in Lay Private Secondary Schools with English sub System of Education in the Republic of Cameroon.

After the establishment of PTAs in primary and secondary schools in 1979, the Inter-Ministerial Circular No.242/L/729/MINEDUC/JMS of 25 October 1979 and the Ministerial Order No.G.370/477/MINEDUC/SAAF/BEP of 17 November 1987 set out its structure, organisation, membership, structure and organization.functioning, and its activities; the Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English subsystem of Education in the Republic of Cameroon have been going through some changes in their manner of administration. These changes have been bringing a different level of participation of school administrators, teachers, and parents, in decision making and accountability in these Lay Private Secondary Schools. At times it brought about a misunderstanding between teachers, school administrators, and parents with many changes in the administration of the school. School administrators, parents, and teachers could only be implementers of orders given from above, but also became decision-makers. This brought about the awareness and the implementation of SBM in these Lay Private Schools.

Thus, the examination of the implementation of SBM in the studied domains, with respect to the participation of teachers, school administrators, the parents in decision making in the studied domains in Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English System of Education in the Republic of Cameroon, gives the importance, or the significance of this paper. The results from this research will show how SBM actors in Lay Private schools participate in decision-making and their level of school-based management in the two studied domains. This implies that the findings can be used to study the influence of school-based management (SBM) on the management of the Lay Private Secondary schools with the English system of Education as well as its effects on the academic performance of the students.

Even though some authors have different properties of SBM, they all advance that the structure, roles, processes, and purposes of school-based management should be improved. In this research, four domains of SBM will be reviewed looking at publications that are linked to SBM. This shall be done concerning the awareness of SBM, the participation of SBM actors, and the implementation of SBM in the studied domains. These studied domains are; (1) Curriculum, (2) Budgeting, (3) Personnel, and (4) Leadership/management.

The selection of textbooks, materials, revision of the curriculum, development of the curriculum, instructions were all done by the central administration in the centralized system of educational management. According to Wholstetter, et al. (1997), in SBM, the participants are the schools and the districts. They generate, develop, implement and improve at practicing processes to instruction and curriculum.

The teachers and school administrators are in charge of determining the modifications that will bring about a good curriculum when they have been given the powers to make decisions in this domain. To ease teachers' performance, the school administrators and teachers have to take into consideration the competence of the teachers to design and put in place an effective curriculum. This curriculum should be able to assist students to develop learning experiences that match their demands and bring out expected results. This implies that to improve on the activities of learning and teaching in a school, the development of teachers' competence and a good designing of the curriculum is of great importance.

The main fundamental SBM transition is to change people's mentality on their responsibilities and roles in school leadership and management as well as the structure of a school. Under the centralized system of school management, the central administration covered the evaluation, coordination, planning, implementation, supervision of personnel, and monitoring of schools. Now, under the system of decentralization of powers of decision-making such as SBM in certain domains, the central administration role has changed to a technical consultant from the role of the officials executing and implementing the various plan of actions. Schools mostly supervised themselves and the central administration acting more as a consultant.

The central administration has the responsibility to improve schools and is done under its capacity of supervision by delegating powers on decision making to schools to make decisions regarding the various school interests. Looking at the change of the central administration, the approaches of schools have been changed by the implementation of SBM.

SBM is concerned about the participation in decision-making by its actors (the parents, school administrators, teachers, and sometimes students). Therefore, great attention needs to be focused on their responsibilities and roles in decision-making.

White (1989) elaborated that the responsibility and authority of SBM are in three main areas: "school programs, shared governance, and district decision-making". Stating that the modern roles of principals or heads of schools should adopt is to ease communication amongst staff, parents, and students and encourage staff to successfully contribute in attaining the goals of the school. In the same line, the role of teachers should also change to something more than a classroom in participating in allocation of resources, in-class councils, problem-solving, and also shaping the academic environment. While the parents become active in decision making concerning the school, thus, moving away from their role of being just a supporter and partner of the school.

It is clear that in SBM the strategy of management and leadership have distributed the responsibility and authority over schools between the schools and the central administration. This has changed the responsibilities and roles of members of the school. SBM has shared powers in decision-making amongst the school members, committing everyone in managing and leading some activities of the school in one way or the other. It has put in place an effective communication network between the central administration, the staff, the community, and the students. This has improved the academic performance of the students and the school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A qualitative method of research was carried out on five randomly selected lay Private Secondary Secondary Schools in the Center Region of the Republic of Cameroon as case study. A qualitative approach was regarded to be more suitable to undertake this study as it allowed the participants to express their experiences in their own words. The Research Model is designed from the participation or the various SBM actors and implementation of SBM in the two studied domains.

This study was conducted in five lay Private Secondary schools with the English Sub-system of education in the Center Region of the Republic of Cameroon. These lay Private schools were randomly selected to portray school-based management in Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English Sub-system of education in the Republic of Cameroon. Permission was then obtained from the schools principals for this exercise. Each school had to provide two administrators, two teachers, and two parents. Six reflection forms were administered to each school making a total of thirty reflection forms to be analyzed in this study. The interview questions were derived from the aim of the study. The interview questions were posed to get the notion of SBM actors with respect to the two studied domains of SBM.

They were administered through the principals of the selected schools. These principals together with the researcher`s representative selected the two teachers, two administrators and two parents randomly to respond to the reflection form. While this exercise was going on the researcher`s representative continued with the other instrument.

with the same characteristics as presented. This implies the research is reliable and valid.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings and the results are going to be presented in two categories; Category 1 on participation of SBM actors in the two domains, category 2 on the implementation of SBM the two domains and discussions.

Category 1

The results and discussion of the participation of the SBM actors in decision making in the two studied domains; curriculum and management/leadership. This was done by analyzing the interview questions that were posed to the actors.

Curriculum

Interviewed question: How do you participate in meetings concerning decisions taken on the type of textbooks to be used by the students of your school?

Administrators Responses

School administrator A: We relate with the Ministerial norms to be sure the textbooks that have been given by the state Ministry for the academic year are harmonized to suit that syllabus. Again, we go in for textbooks that are of standard.

School administrator B: We usually call all the heads of departments in all the various disciplines concerned to bring their contribution and remarks on the textbooks they will like to work with.

School administrator C: The textbook choice is the sole decision of the state. So I don't have a say so far.

School administrator D: Decisions are made based on the state rules and regulations. Also, on the type of textbooks to be used authorized by the state.

School administrator E: We only follow the ministerial text on the type of textbooks to be used and we bring out the textbooks list for each class and share it with the parents during the PTA meetings.

Teachers Responses

Teacher A: I give my proposal concerning the textbook that is to be used for my subject from the list of textbooks presented by the ministry.

Teacher B: I simply encourage the school not to only based their ideas on the textbooks the government has given but to add especially workbooks provided by the teachers of the school because they best understand the environment of learning of their students. They know how their students can learn effectively.

Teacher C: We give positive contributions concerning important textbooks that are in the market which the school can choose from the list of textbooks provided by the ministry.

Teacher D: Yes. This can be seen in the fact that if the textbooks are not sufficient, or meet up with the standard of my students (I meant those on the official booklist provided by the ministry), I encourage the school to add certain workbooks that will ease the understanding of my students.

Teacher E: The list of textbooks that are used has been provided by the ministry.

Parents Responses

Parent A: Yes textbooks are the most needed materials needed by our children to facilitate their studies.

Parent B: We equally visit the schools during the start of the year, collect book lists, and buy the books.

Parent C: No involvement since the government does the work and just sent us the list through the schools and media to buy.

Parent D: Not involved.

Parent E: We only pass by the school and take the necessary information concerning the type of textbooks to be used.

From the responses of the various actors of school-based management, the researcher noticed that all of the actors do not take part in selecting the type of textbooks published by the Ministry of education for the secondary schools in the Republic of Cameroon Indicating no participation in the domain of curriculum.

Interview question: How do you participate in drawing the program of various subjects of your school?

School Administrators Responses

School administrator A: At the start of the academic year, we always sit as a panel with other administrators and work on the timetable after having collected all the availability of our teachers. We take their availability depending on the number of hours and days they have to offer.

School administrator B: Teachers are often asked to send in their program, numbers of days, and hours available for the school. From here, we come up with a timetable.

School administrator C: The subject program is generally provided by the state in the syllabuses. What I do is that I use the syllabus with my teaching staff to draw up a scheme of work and progression sheets annually.

School administrator D: At school resumption, we (administrators) will organize a meeting with the head of departments for the various subjects and bring out the school timetable and the school calendar on how activities are going to be organized in the year.

School administrator E: It is done by the head of departments and the teachers.

Teachers Responses

Teacher A: During departmental meetings. I give my suggestions regarding my class.

Teacher B: I only take part in giving the hours and days that I will be available.

Teacher C: We produce a progression sheet and scheme of work concerning the various subjects we are teaching.

Teacher D: By simply using the progression sheet and annual progression sheet.

Teacher E: drawing of the scheme of work of my subject.

Parents Responses

Parent A: This is the work of the teachers.

Parent B: None

Parent C: The school administrators draw the time table for our children to copy,

Parent D: Not involved.

Parent E: No.

The actors of school-based management here simply try to come out with the scheme of work and timetable to match with the syllabus that has been published by the ministry of education. They do not have the right to add or subtract anything on the syllabus.

Management/Leadership

Interview question: How are you involved in making decisions when teaching assignments or administrative tasks are given to teachers?

School Administrators Responses

School administrator A: We do a constant follow-up on teachers. We check their tests or exams they give to students, their working material (didactic materials) and equally carry out constant control on the logbooks to see to what extent they have gone with their work.

School administrator B: It works on the weekly report submitted by the teachers. We then evaluate its strengths and weaknesses.

School administrator C: I control the level of work coverage using agreed progression sheets for each subject.

School administrator D: We assigned the head of departments to present updates on their programs which will enable us to follow the rest of the teachers up.

School administrator E: Every leader should establish his duties for one another.

Teachers Responses

Teacher A: I give monthly and weekly reports to my head of the department which are then approved and sent to the principal.

Teacher B: Just to do what the school has agreed on.

Teacher C: I give weekly and monthly reports on my subject and also recommend the school to give us some didactic materials needed.

Teacher D: Not concerned.

Teacher E: Not involved.

Parents Responses

Parent A: In the domain of spy and informant. Then relate to the school to tell about the performance of the teachers and students.

Parent B: We contribute during PTA meetings.

Parent C: In PTA meetings we talk about it at times.

Parent D: Just through the PTA meeting by supporting a proposed teacher for a particular task or not supporting the idea.

Parent E: In PTA meetings.

Participation in management is moderate. The parents and school administrators contribute to managing some activities of the school but it is mostly on the school administrators who are mostly on sit. The school administrators also act as leaders to implement the decision taken by the PTA.

Interview question: What are your thoughts about laying down rules concerning the leadership of your school?

School Administrators Responses

School administrator A: It is paramount important to down the rules of every establishment. We draft annual rules and regulations governing the school each year.

School administrator B: We come out with strong laws to bid the smooth functioning of the school yearly.

School administrator C: I implement the rules which we agreed on during the interview session. I follow them to the latter.

School administrator D Is very vital to lay down rules concerning the leadership of a school which enable all the staff to be conscious of their workload.

School administrator E: Leaders should apply the rules with love and respect for each other.

Teachers Responses

Teacher A: I contribute during the G.A General Assembly Meeting organized by the school, I do give my contributions.

Teacher B: The authorities should be lovely and not harsh to enable good working conditions.

Teacher C: We always give our point of view concerning the things that are not moving right for the administrators to bring out rulers to guide the leaders.

Teacher D: Not inspired.

Teacher E: The rules should be administered with love.

Parents Responses

Parent A: if teachers are strict with students, the rules passed by the school authority will be effective and education will be improved especially the English sub-system.

Parent B: None.

Parent C: Let the rules be followed.

Parent D: Let everyone carry out his duty well.

Parent E: None.

The school administrators and the teachers are the leaders. Meaning they contribute to managing the schools.

Category 2

Interpretation of the implementation of SBM in the two studied domains of SBM. The level of implementation depends on the level of participation of the various actors of school-based management in the two domains analyzed.

School administrators are not fully concerned. They receive the syllabus from the ministry of education and just simply implement it.

Teachers are not convened as well. They do not participate in establishing the syllabus.

Parents just implement by getting the textbooks authorized by the government, and this indicates and implies that there is no implementation of school-based management in the domain of curriculum.

School administrators are very active in this domain. Teachers are moderately active while parents seem to be more active than teachers. SBM is implemented.

School administrators are highly involved. The teachers and the parents were moderately involved. School administrators, the teachers and Parents are partially involved. There is the implementation of school-based management.

The second Research Question examined the participation of the school-based management actors in the two domains of school-based management that were investigated in this study (curriculum, and management/leadership). The discussion was presented respecting the various actors of school-based management and two studied domains of school-based management in this study.

The school administrators did not influence in deciding what type of syllabus to be used in their schools. The syllabus had been prepared by the Ministry of Secondary Education and handed down for execution. All they could do to facilitate teaching and learning of their various schools was to produce a scheme of work that will help teachers to teach and provide a timetable that will permit the syllabus which was handed to them from the Ministry of Education to be treated by the end of the academic year. The textbooks to be used for the various subjects and the type of subjects to be taught were the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Secondary Education. The school administrators could only select from the list of textbooks provided by the Ministry of Secondary Education with the advice of the teachers on the textbooks that are suitable for their students. This was done with regard to the means of getting those selected textbooks and the quality of the textbooks. From the presentations of most administrators, this activity was supposed to be done in collaboration with school representatives from the various zones as the environment where the schools are located are not the same throughout the national territory. Some are in urban areas while others are in rural areas. Most at times, textbooks could only ease the understanding of children in urban areas. Notwithstanding, some textbooks are in line with the culture and practices of their people which makes it difficult for students to assimilate the knowledge from those textbooks. In a nutshell, school-based management is not practiced in this domain.

The school administrators and leaders are considered as the managers and leaders of their various schools. These school administrators are mostly recommended by the parents or by the teachers mostly among the oldest, more experienced, or more committed staff members to the school foundation board for an appointment. They act according to the rules and regulations of the school. Many times, committees are created with regard to certain issues. This implies powers are shared among the teachers and the parents as well. Since the management of the various schools is not done by the Ministry of Secondary Education, it implies there is the practice of school-based management in the domain of management and leadership. Here, the school administrators are actively present since it involves them directly.

Teachers do not take part in preparing the syllabus of their schools. The syllabus is handed down to them from the Ministry of Secondary Education together with the list of textbooks to be used. They simply work out a scheme of work that will facilitate their teaching and the understanding of their students. Many times, some teachers could come up with a set of exercises as a workbook book to supplement their teaching in situations where the various textbooks do not meet with the environment where they are to carry out their teaching activities. Even though it is forbidden to put in place an official workbook by those teachers, some produce it in the form of exercises in collaboration with the parents and the school authorities. Most times, the lists of textbooks published by the Ministry of Education do not take into consideration the environment of the various schools. Generally, most of the books are suitable for teaching in urban areas. In this situation teaching in rural areas becomes difficult. Some textbooks do not regard the various cultures and religions. This makes it difficult for students to understand their lessons. Teachers do not participate in producing the syllabus of their schools. It is the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Secondary Education in the Republic of Cameroon.

Teachers participate in the management and leadership of their schools. The management of the various classrooms is done by teachers. This, put together, gives reasonable management of the school as a whole. So the management of the school is part of the teachers' duties. This can be seen clearly that teachers do participate in the management of their schools directly. At times, teachers are being integrated into committees as well where they manage what is being put in place. This simply shows that teachers of Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English Sub-System of Education participate in the management and leadership of their various schools.

Parents do not take part in establishing the curriculum of their schools. This is the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Secondary Education. Perhaps they could have been given the chance to decide on what they will want their children to study, but this is not the case with Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English Sub-System of education in Cameroon. The parents simply get the list of textbooks presented to them by the school administrators and provide buy the books for their children. This shows that parents do not participate in establishing the curriculum of their schools.

Parents participate in the management of their schools as well. Decisions taken by the PTA of these schools are being implemented by the school administrators. Implying, that the parents participate in the management of the schools. At times, the financing of Lay Private schools in the Republic of Cameroon is mostly done by the parents. Some of the parents are members of disciplinary committees that help to maintain discipline in the school. Some parents are elected into committees like the graduation committees that manage the budget of the graduation ceremony of the schools. This is proof that parents are part of the management of Lay Private Secondary Schools with

the English Sub-System of Education in the Republic of Cameroon.

The implementation of school-based management in Lay Private Secondary Schools with the English sub-System of Education in the Republic of Cameroon was done by evaluating the participation of SBM actors in the two studied domains.

The curriculum is the first domain that was examined in this research. It was noticed that the participation of school administrators, teachers, and parents in establishing the syllabus of their schools was not practical. The syllabus of the schools was provided by the Ministry of Secondary Education od Cameroon. This was also the same as the publication of the authorized textbooks to be used by the individual books. The Ministry of Secondary has the powers to authorize the textbooks that are to be used nationwide. Since there is no participation of the school administrators, teachers, and parents of the various schools with regard to their school's syllabus and list of textbooks, it implies there is no implementation of school-based management in this domain of school-based management. The level of implementation of school-based management in this domain does not exist. Meaning the level of school-based management is at zero. Similar to the case of cameroon, Ocak & Gokteke (2020), criticized Turkey`s Fifth grade curriculum for the cases such as being inadequate to use teaching-learning process variables such as (reinforcement, clue and feedback) and establishing insufficient relationship between the methods proposed by the curriculum and learning styles.

The *Management/Leadership* is the last domain of school-based management that was examined in this study. The management/leadership of schools is a domain where all the actors are also participating in decision-making. The school administrators are like the executors of the decisions taken by all the other actors. This decision is usually debated upon in PTA meetings and the decisions executed by the school administrators as managers of leaders in schools. The ministry of Secondary education does not intervene in the management or leadership of the various schools. It is the responsibility of the schools. This implies that there is the implementation of school-based management in the domain of management and leadership. According to the researcher, the level of implementation is high as well.

According to the evaluation of the researcher, out of the two domains of school-based management that were examined in this study, only one domain does not implement the practice of school-based management. This is the domain of curriculum. Here, the Ministry of Secondary

Education is still maintaining a centralized power. As for the domain of management/leadership the Ministry of Secondary Education has decentralized the powers to the various schools.

CONCLUSIONS

From the data collected, it was noticed that SBM is implemented in Management/Leadership domains. While in the SBM domain of curriculum, SBM it is not implemented. Decision on this domain is still at the level of the ministry. Many aspects influence the relationship with SBM and school change, according to Delaney (1995).

None, and per the participants in this research, was more important to that partnership than the school administrator's leadership style. Some participants look at leadership to be important in SBM. In this light, the researcher has laid a groundwork on the domains of curriculum and management/leadership. He recommends that further research be done on the other domains of SBM so that a general statement can be made on SBM in Lay Private Secondary School with the English system of Education in the Republic of Cameroon.

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