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Regards croisés Afrique-Europe  
Cahiers supplémentaires

Frederick Fondzenyuy Njobati

## Protestant School Leaders

A Qualitative Research about their Self-understanding:  
Case of Protestant Secondary School Principals in Cameroon

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# Protestant School Leaders

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Frederick Fondzenyuy Njobati

## Abstract

The study is concerned with the self-understanding of Protestant secondary school leaders about their school leadership in the context of Cameroon where education is rooted in missionary and colonial times. The attainment of the fourth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4), which focuses on inclusive, equitable and quality education for all children, is far from being reached in poor and low-income countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Wagner, Castillo & Lewis, 2022, p. v; UNESCO, 2015, p. 1). As faith-based schools shape the educational landscape in SSA amidst poor financing (UNESCO, 2021, p. v & 1; Backiny-Yetna & Wodon, 2009, p. 165), the role of principals in Protestant schools and how they perceive their school profile in their leadership matter. In particular, the debate at international level on whether or not non-state schools are widening inequality gaps (UNESCO, 2015, p.12; Dronkers & Avram, 2009, p. 895-896, Dronkers & Hemsing, 2005, p. 73-75) and whether school leadership is contributing to enlightenment or to fundamentalism (Acton, 2021, p. 43; Waite & Robbins, 2017, p. 29-41; Buchanan, 2013, p. 1) matter in researching about the Protestant school profile and leadership.

Although current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in countries of the Global North (Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 13; de Wall, 2012, p. 173, Becker & Wößmann, 2010, 224-228), little is known about the research context in SSA. Furthermore, the discourse on faith-based schooling emphasizes on differentiating the character of inclusivity and exclusivity (Bertram-Troost et al, 2015, p. 204). All of these highlight the argument to research on school profiles and leadership of non-state faith-based schools (Scheunpflug, 2015; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015).

The study therefore articulates on the research question: What are the perceptions of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their school leadership? This is operationalized under three sub questions: How do Protestant school principals describe their school leadership? What is the understanding of the Protestant school principals about the Protestant school profile? What are the challenges principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon perceive in their leadership?

As the topic is new in the research context of the Global South, it was conceptualized as exploratory and hypothesis-generating within the qualitative research framework. It used semi-structured interviews to collect data from 26 theoretically sampled school principals. Interviews were conducted in either French or English and transcribed, analysed by content analysis through coding and inter-coding in a spiral and iterative deductive-inductive process using MAXQDA. Through the generalisation process of abduction, results emerged at three iterative levels comprising first, the realization interview portraits. In the second step, seven categories of the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders emerged as criteria. They include the main activities of the school leader, understanding of teaching, relationship and communication by school leader, self-understanding of faith, role of the church, role of the society and challenges. Through the seven identified criteria, six ideal types of self-understanding of Protestant school leadership emerged. All these steps were conducted under quality control by an interpretation group to ensure inter-subjectivity.

The six ideal types generated from the abduction process consist of (1) call for superiority leadership, (2) state-conformational leadership, (3) ecclesiastical leadership, (4) community-participatory leadership, (5) vocation to serve leadership and (6) diaconal leadership. The call for superiority leadership (type 1) emphasizes on the superiority and moral pressure on the beliefs and linked to the immediacy of divine, while the state-conformational leadership (type 2) ensures controlling, punishment and obedience with the strict respect to the state and focusing on the sublimation of society by the state. Ecclesiastical leadership (type 3) emphasizes on obedience to the church as an institution and ensuring formation of belief. For community-participatory leadership (type 4), social living and cohesion are highlighted. Vocation to serve leadership (type 5) is linked to enhancing teaching quality with focus on learners' success while diaconal leadership (type 6) is inclined towards, care, acceptance and autonomy of learners.

The main findings from the study revealed among other aspects that the principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon have individual ideas of school leading based on experience and that not all the six ideal leadership types are contributing to quality education. Also, there are fundamentalist leaders who have an influence in the school, focusing on normative aspects of discipline while others are related to democratic values, promoting democracy in a non-democratic environment. Furthermore, there are school leaders working in a diaconal way, promoting social justice and contributing to education as public good. The action of school principals is limited by national frames with little awareness of belonging to the church as a global institution. Subsequently, difficulties of financing education in Protestant schools affect school leadership.

By reflecting the empirical findings in the light of discourse, the study adds value to science in different ways. This includes, first a multi-dimensional self-understanding by principals on the Protestant ethos of schools and their leadership function. The wide field of the relationship between school leaders' theological and religious perceptions (Swain, 2020, p. 1-2; EKD; 2017, p. 10-13) insert narratives that connect the limited understanding of the church as a global institution to decolonization processes (Freire, 2020, p. 14-15; Wulf; 2003, p. 108-110; Andreotti, 2011, p. 1-6) in a context rooted in colonial and missionary times. Further argumentations from the findings add new narratives to the discourse from the Global South showing the possible responsibility of the state for educational injustice, widening inequality gaps by their non-financing of faith-based schools (Barber et al., 2020, p. 7, Dupraz, 2019, p. 634). This further underlines the importance of professionalization in school leadership and a shared understanding of faith-based school profiles. The perceptions of quality driven ideal leadership types show that change towards quality school development (Barber et al, 2020, p. 3; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Buchanan, 2013, p. 1) and the development of society can be possible through Protestant school leadership resilience even in fragile state context (Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187). Consequently, the visibility and understanding of the role of the church in the Global South has the potential to shape global social justice (Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 1; Szczerba, 2020, p.

13) even in the context of Cameroon with perceived sublimation of society by the state (Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p. 2; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 133)

The study suggests, on the one hand, quantitative research in the distribution of school leadership types in Protestant schools in Cameroon and another on school leadership actions and implications for teaching in Protestant schools in Cameroon. On the other hand, it recommends practical actions on evidence-based professional development for school leaders and education stakeholders on the protestant school profile and leadership role to bring change in quality school development and the development of society.

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### List of abbreviations and acronyms

AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)
C2D	Contrat désendettement et développement (Debt reduction and development contract)
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CBC	Cameroon Baptist Convention
CEPCA	Conseil des Églises Protestantes du Cameroun (Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon)
Cevaa	Communauté d'Églises en mission (Community of churches in mission)
CNPS	Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale (National social Insurance Fund)
Défap	Le Département évangélique français d'action apostolique (The French Evangelical Department of Apostolic Action)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EEC	Églises Evangélique Du Cameroun
EED	Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst (Protestant Development Service)
EFA	Education for ALL
EKD	Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Protestant Church in Germany)
EPC	Église Presbytérienne Camerounaise
EZE	Evangelische Zentralstelle für Entwicklungshilfe e. V. (Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development)
FDA	French Development Agency
HIPIC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISTP	Pedagogic In-service Training Programme
MINEDUB	Ministry of Basic Education
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINESEC	Ministry of Secondary Education

MINFI	Ministry of Finance
NSIF	National social Insurance Fund
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEPP	Organisation de l'Enseignement Privé Protestant (Protestant Private Education Agency)
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
PPEA	Protestant Private Education Agency
PPEA	Protestant Private Education Agency
PPTE	Pays Pauvres très Endettés (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries)
PTA	Parents-Teachers-Association
UEBC	Union des Églises Baptistes du Cameroun (Union of Baptist Churches of Cameroon)
UEM	United Evangelical Mission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
VEM	Vereinte Evangelische Mission (United Evangelical Mission)
WBES	Wissenschaftliche Beratungsstelle Evangelische Schule (Academic Advice Centre for Protestant Schools)

**Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother and late father, Bridget Biy Winkar and Raphael Kwala Njobati respectively, who greatly impacted my life and sacrificed in my upbringing and education from a humble financial background.



## 1 Introduction

The following study is concerned with a qualitative research about the self-understanding of Protestant secondary school leaders in the framework of their school leadership. It is contextualized in Cameroon, a bilingual country in Central Africa whose education is rooted in missionary and colonial times. In this context, faith-based schools of which Protestant schools constitute an important part are shaping the educational landscape. As such, this research seeks to associate the experiences of secondary school principals to their theological thinking in regard to the Protestant school profile.

The attainment of the fourth United Nations Sustainable Goal (SDG4) that emphasizes on inclusive, equitable and quality education for all children in all localities is far from being reached in poor and low-income countries such as those in sub-Saharan Africa (Wagner, Castillo & Lewis, 2022, p. v) where the study at hand is conducted. Meanwhile, the role of non-state actors in education cannot be underestimated as it goes beyond the offer of schooling but also to care and develop the society. However, the question of providing education as a common good requires a shared understanding to get a better focus (UNESCO, 2021, p. v & 1). This situation therefore calls for greater attention on sub-Saharan Africa that has low levels of education quality (Lauwerier & Akkari, 2015, p. 1-2; UNESCO, 2015, p. 1) and where faith-based non-state schools are substantially shaping educational development amidst the challenges of poor financing and operating in a fragile context (Backiny-Yetna & Wodon, 2009, p. 165). From this background, the role of principals in Protestant schools and how they perceive their school profile in their leadership matter.

In the section that follows, the context of the study is first described with analysis showing the problems that emanate and the relevance of the study (chapter 1.1). This is followed in the second part by the description of the research questions (chapter 1.2) and a summarized elucidation of the research methods (chapter 1.3) on which the study is conceptualized. The chapter ends with the description of the outline of the study (chapter 1.4).

## **1.1 Context and problem description**

In this section, the background of the study on the self-understanding of principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon is described. The question as to whether none-state schools are widening inequality gaps or not is framing the debate at international level (Scheunpflug & Wenz, p. 4, 2015; UNESCO, 2015, p.12; Dronkers & Avram, 2009, p. 895-896, Dronkers & Hemsing, 2005, p. 73-75). This requires an in-depth contextual analysis which in the framework of this study, is differentiated into three parts. The school situation in Cameroon where the study is anchored is first described (cf. chapter 1.1.1) followed by the analysis of faith-based none-state schooling (cf. chapter 1.1.2). In the third dimension, questions about school leadership quality are described (cf. chapter 1.1.3). This is important in understanding how the nature of none-state schooling is shaped in regard to quality as well as giving the visibility of gaps that necessitate the conduction of the study at hand. The summary (cf. chapter 1.1.4) highlights the main points that have emerged from the context analysis.

### **1.1.1 School situation in Cameroon: Shaped by colonial and missionary times**

In this section, the school situation in Cameroon is described. As the organization and functioning of schools in this context is very rooted in the colonial and missionary past (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 1-4), the underlying background for the study at hand is differentiated into four parts. The first part highlights the complex understanding of education grounded by colonial and missionary times. This is followed by the description of government policies and the administrative organization of schools. While the distribution of faith-based schools is described in the third place, subsequently the analysis of the state system and the question of financing faith-based schools follow.

## **Complexity of education in Cameroon grounded in missionary and colonial times**

Post-colonial sub-Saharan Africa with Cameroon inclusive had transited from slavery, missionary and colonialism experiences through independence to experiments of democracy and new religious movements (Matemba, 2021, p. 33). This narrative mirrors the complex nature of religious and cultural character that permeates education in Cameroon. Formal education in Cameroon and school leadership are therefore shaped by the changing regimes down memory lane from the missionary times, through the colonial to post-colonial experiences (Njobati, 2021a, p. 2; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 1-22 & 124-134). In the following paragraphs, missionary and colonial understanding of education in Cameroon are described with the critical look on how this has shaped schooling in the post-colonial era.

Protestant Missionaries namely the English Baptist Missionary Society and the Basel Missionary Society in 1843 and 1886 respectively were the first groups to introduce western formal education in Cameroon (Okia, 2014, p. 178; van Slageren, 2001, p. 146-147; Gwanfogbe, 1995, p. 165). Education by these missionary bodies emphasized on literacy with focus on reading the bible in own local language and inserted the Christian religious education, agriculture and vocational training. On the other hand, the Africans were considered to have no values and their culture, music, dance and habits considered not worthy of appreciation and excluded from the curriculum (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 22). Even though some of the missionaries protested against human right abuse by colonialists, the attitude of others had been ambivalent towards imperialism (Ustorf, 2011, p. 235-236) with schooling processes accompanied by strict discipline and corporal punishment. Missionary intervention in education is believed to have contributed greatly to the enlightenment of the African society with many of the school buildings still being used and missionary networks sustained.

Education during the colonial period had different forms under the three former colonies of Cameroon, namely Germany (1884 – 1916), France (1916 – 1960) and Britain (1916 – 1961) (Dupraz, 2019, p. 632).

Faith-based schooling under the missionary bodies continued with different treatment by the different colonies. On one hand, the German and British colonialist had more trust on missionary bodies, supported the running of faith-based schools, encouraged the use of local languages and connected education to entrepreneurship (Kleinöder, 2022, p. 1; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 59). The case of the German colonial powers was more peculiar as they left most of the school running business in the hands of the missionaries while the British focused on indirect rule. Even though, the German and British colonial approach to education showed support and recognition of faith-based schools, the curriculum still did not reflect the Cameroonian reality (Ndille, 2018, p. 97). For example, within the period from 1920 to 1950, about ninety percent of the content of history in schools focused on Europe (ibid, p. 97). This situation seems to confirm the expression by the German idealist philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel who stated, “Africa is not a historical continent, it shows neither change nor development.” (Dladla, 2020, p. 424; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 5; Zeleza, 2027, p. 4). On the other hand, the French colonialists instilled centralization, making French the main language of instruction and restricted the functioning of faith-based schools, giving grants only to fewer schools teaching in French (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 59). For example, in 1937, while close to 70% of mission schools in the then British Cameroon received subsidies under British rule, less than 20% of faith-based schools in Francophone Cameroon under the French colonial rule were subsidized (Dupraz, 2019, p. 634). These scenarios have shaped education in Cameroon during the post-colonial era as described in the next section.

In the post-colonial era and from the cultural context, Cameroon runs two sub-systems of education, the Anglophone and Francophone sub-systems that are rooted in the colonial history of the country (Njobati, 2021, p. 2-4; Ndille, 2018, p. 91-93, Su, 2001). The Francophone sub-system caters for eight regions of the country that constitute the former French Cameroon which gained independence in in 1960. On the other hand, the Anglophone education sub-system operates in the two Anglophone re-

gions of the country whose former colony is Britain and gained independence in 1961. The Anglophones and Francophones in Cameroon have therefore developed differently with two different educational systems. While education in the Anglophone sub-system has aspects of democracy that encourages autonomy, participation and creativity of the learner and the recognition and support of faith-based schools, the situation with the Francophone sub-system is different (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162). The focus on discipline and obedience to state central administration characterizes the Francophone sub-system which sticks to the French colonial profile with a curriculum that is based on colonial content and methods (Foleng, 2015, p. 11). Conversely, more Francophone Cameroonians are interested in the Anglophone sub-system of education for their children (Ngalim, 2017, p. 841).

Matemba (2021, p. 33) argues that persistent colonial mentality in the post-colonial independent sub-Saharan Africa necessitates decolonization by African education stakeholders in conceptualizing curriculum including religious studies to respond to the needs of their context. On the contrary, it is observed that decolonization process in Cameroon had not brought an end to oppression but instead ushered an increasing marginalization of Anglophones by the Francophone dominated government whereby Anglophones experience social, legal and educational injustice with treatment as a category of inferior people (Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2). The assimilation policy by the francophone majority on Anglophone sub-system of education that seeks for accountability and democratic practices in education (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162) is a challenge for educational development and school leadership. Furthermore, the Government of Cameroon segregates against the Anglophone education policy with ruthless and brutal repressions (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 133). The situation gets worse as the Anglophone part is geographically and numerically in the minority and experiencing dominance by the Francophone majority (Lange, 2014, p. 590). For instance, between 1983 and 1991, the state had tried severally to abolish the Anglophone system of education and its form of examinations but the nation-wide pe-

tition and civil strife from Anglophone students and the Anglophone community made some of the reforms to be withdrawn (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208). In spite of the fact that Anglophones constitute the minority in Cameroon, their school system opens up to the globalized world, due to the fact of English as language of instruction.

The increasing expression by Anglophones in Cameroon on the quest for educational, social, legal and economic justice escalated into war in 2017 (World report, 2022; Akame et al., 2021, p. 6). From the study by the World Bank Group, it is observed that the gravity of the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon is rooted in the colonial history with inheritance of two distinct colonial traditions (The World Bank Group, 2021, p. ix-xi; Willis et al., 2020, p. 3-7). Even though the situation is already bad and characterized by fragility, escalated conflict and war, it still remains one of the most neglected crisis in the world with room for further escalation if genuine dialogue does not take place to address the root causes and questions related to nature of state and governance (World Bank Group, 2021, p. ix-1). The analysis of this crisis shows that there is more negative impact on education (Muki, 2021, p. 147)

The bicultural system of education in Cameroon is further made more complex as there are about 250 indigenous languages spoken (Aghah, 2014; Echu, 2004, p. 1) in addition to French and English, which are the two official languages. In such a complex situation, school leadership matters. The study covers Protestant schools in both the Francophone and Anglophone parts as well as in both sub-systems of education in Cameroon. Meanwhile, the situation of faith-based schools in Cameroon vary from region to region (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 3) especially along the lines of cultural sub-systems described above.

### **Government policies and the administrative organization of schools**

In Cameroon, both state and non-state schools are administered and organized under an educational structure that is defined and set up by the government. In this framework, all schools created, owned and managed

by the state are described as public schools while all other schools managed by the community, faith-based organizations and private individuals are considered private schools. All Protestant schools in Cameroon are administratively under the national office of Protestant education that is answerable to the various ministries of education. The national office of Protestant education mainly serves as an administrative link to the government with little attention and influence on the theological and educational character which remain the concern of the individual church proprietors. There is therefore the need to research about leadership understanding and the profile of Protestant schools.

Education in Cameroon experiences governing problems. It is argued that since independence, Cameroon has not had a clear education policy but rather functions on incomprehensive legislations (Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187). For example, the Cameroon law number 98/004 of 14th April 1998, that provides the guidelines for the operation of non-state schools, emphasizes on centralized management and state control (The Law of Orientation of Education in Cameroon, 1998). Within this law, faith-based schools in Cameroon are described by the state as private and this can be misleading especially as there is no clear policy to clarify this. On the contrary, most of the faith-based schools in Cameroon are low-fee, opened in all parts of the country, giving access to children from diverse religious, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds. Therefore, most of these schools are possibly serving as a public good. From this background, Protestant schools in Cameroon on which the study is conducted are considered in this research work as none-state faith-based schools that are serving the public good. They are therefore not private with respect to access.

### **The financing of faith-based schools in Cameroon and the link to the state system**

It is a challenge to obtain valid statistics on none-state faith-based schools in Cameroon as well as in other African countries. This is based on the fact that statistical information at both national and international level document schools that receive financial support from the state as a

government schools and does not consider the provider (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p 11-14). The share of faith-based primary and secondary schools in Cameroon is estimated at 14.0% mainly comprising of Catholic and Protestant schools (ibid, p. 14). Even though the percentage of faith-based schools in Cameroon is not as high as in some countries of sub-Saharan Africa such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), their role as service providers responding to quality and development of the society is still very significant (Backiny-Yetna, & Wodon, 2009, p. 168). Before independence, the greater proportion of schools in Cameroon were run by missionary bodies (Kouega, 2018, p. 2).

The state of Cameroon does not fulfil its obligation in financing faith-based schools (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 59-60) in spite of the fact these schools offer education as a public utility. The International community had asked for the financing of education in Cameroon including non-state schools in the HIPIC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) and C2D (Debt reduction and development contract) projects facilitated by the IMF and the World Bank since 2000 (AFD, 2021, p. 4-5; IMF, 2004; World Bank, 2000, p. 23), but faith-based schools have since not directly benefited. Coupled with the increasing shortage of teachers wherein sub-Saharan African is one of the highest affected sub-regions in the world (UNESCO, 2024, p. 26), the recruitment of teachers by the Cameroon government continues to focus on state owned schools (STOPBLABLACAM, 2023) whereby the state recruits teachers from faith-based schools. This seems to raise a multi-dimensional challenge for faith based schools as they are not only excluded from funds from international cooperation but also lose the teachers they have trained to state schools. Since 2000, the organization of Protestant Education Agency (PPEA) in Cameroon have not succeeded to secure funding from the World bank that is earmarked for teachers' salaries and school infrastructural development (Organisation de l'Enseignement Privé Protestant, 2013). PPEA had opened up dialogue spaces with church development cooperation partners in Europe such as Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE), Protestant Development Service (EED), Bread for the World, Mission 21, and networks of Protestant churches in France and Switzerland such as Défap

and Cevaa which have been supporting Protestant schools in Cameroon, but the joined voices have not yielded success (Organisation de l'Enseignement Privé Protestant, 2013, p, 1-3). The non-financing of faith-based schools in Cameroon by the state can be argued to have an implicit understanding of gradually weakening confessional schools. It can also be observed that the collaboration and solidarity amongst confessional education providers in Cameroon is weak and without a profound lobby network and strategy to face both the state and international funding organizations. The financial support from the state to non-state faith-based schools is very small and irregular (Barber et al., 2020, p. 7). For this reason, the running of faith-based schools mainly depends of low tuition fee charged learners meanwhile it is expected that the state takes the responsibility to cater for the offer of education to all children regardless of faith (Scheunpflug et al, 2021, p. 17-18). Barber et al. (2020. p. 2) observe that Christian schools in sub-Saharan Africa are fulfilling the provision of education as a public good and therefore argue that such schools should benefit from state financing. As earlier described, the contrary obtains for Cameroon which in itself is a fragile state. On the other hand, the narrative drawn from the expanded commentary of the Dakar framework for action (UNESCO, 2000, p. 12) emphasizes on the right to education as an obligation for states to take responsibility to ensure that all citizens meet their learning needs with an open space to allow for diversification and support by educational partners at all levels. Scheunpflug & Wenz (2015, p. 20-21) reveal that the possibilities of innovation and extension of an educational system are greatly limited by financial constraints within its support structures especially in the developing context.

Another challenge on education in Cameroon is that it is contextualized in a fragile and unstable state system. The state of Cameroon is perceived as being autocratic, monolithic, centralized and repressive at the expense of federal constitutionalism and participation (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p1-3). The situation gets most complex as Cameroon is ranked amongst the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2021). This further makes the Cameroonian society socio-culturally fragmented. One of the major problems that emanates from

this state structure is what is known as the “Anglophone problem”. This is the feeling of Anglophones (people of former Southern Cameroons) being marginalized, exploited and assimilated by a francophone dominated state that further represses ideas of self-determination and autonomy (Lange 2014, p. 590; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208). This led to an outburst in 2016 with a peaceful protest march by lawyers and teachers on claims of social, educational and legal injustice and eventually escalated into war in 2017 that the state of Cameroon declared, framed as the Anglophone crisis (World, report, 2022; Akame et al., 2021, p. 6; Chiatoh, 2019, p. 629-630). The state’s response by military action against peaceful protesters seems to be the origin of the armed conflict between government soldiers and Anglophone militia secessionist groups with major consequences on education (Gerald, 2022, p.62). While over 80% of schools had been shut down in the Anglophone regions for about seven years, with over 600,000 children deprived of schooling and over 6,000 people killed, there is no meaningful dialogue yet to address the situation (International Crisis Group, 2022, p. i). It should also be noted that this crisis had also registered over 300 villages burnt, 765,000 people homeless and about 70,000 persons as refugees in neighbouring Nigeria with many people brutally arrested and in prisons (Ketzmerick, 2023, p.247; World report, 2022; Willis et al., 2020, p. 3-7 & 16; Agwanda, Nyadera, & Asal, 2020, p. 1; Human Rights Watch, 2020; Norwegian refugee council report, 2019). It has been argued that this crisis has the potential to degenerate into a complex emergency as the right to education of children and other human rights have been violated (Bang & Balgah, 2022, p.1). In spite of the situation, faith-based organizations and the civil society are fighting for a genuine peaceful dialogue and for school re-opening. Even though the population of the affected regions have more trust on the churches, the voice of the church and theological discourses from Cameroon have not yet adequately addressed the gravity of the crisis (Fuh, 2024, p. 41; Agubamah, 2023, p. 10; Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p. 4). The Cameroon Anglophone crisis alternatively described as a new element in the understanding of terrorism in Africa (Okereke, 2018, p, 8) has been analyzed to be one of the most neglected in the world (Willis et al., 2020, p. 3-

7). The effect on education has been more challenging for faith-based schools whose high concentration is in the Anglophone regions, yet many teachers have lost their jobs and many school infrastructure dating back to missionary periods get into ruins. From this precarious context in which faith-based schools are functioning in Cameroon and their role in the society, the study about school principals' self-understanding and the Protestant school profile gets more pertinence and relevance. Beyond the administrative description of Protestant schools by the state, the following section will outline the content-related dimension of Protestant schools.

### **1.1.2 Faith-based schooling: An ambivalent context**

The purpose of this section is to describe the background of faith-based schooling in Cameroon which in itself is complex and ambivalent. In the description that follows, the narrative about fundamentalist movements is first explored. This is closely linked to the debate at international level whether non-state schools are widening inequality gaps or reinforcing access (UNESCO, 2021, p. 1). The question whether school leadership is contributing to enlightenment or to fundamentalism is then analyzed.

Faith-based schooling is unstable with a changing landscape on the advent of both Islamic fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements. On the one hand, the increasing infiltration of the Islamic fundamentalist movement known as "Boko Haram" in the Northern part of Cameroon with insurgents attacking Christian churches, abducting and killing people provokes new responses of copying strategies (Kpughe, 2017, p. 1). This has an implication on Muslim-Christian relationship, the form of education behind the ideology and its meaning for societal cohesion and development. On the other hand, the rise of Christian revivalist or pentecostal movements alongside the Muslim fundamentalist group is perceived to pave the way for religious intolerance and radicalism (International Crisis Group, 2015, p. i-ii). It is observed that such developments do not only bring conflict between Muslims and Christians but also amongst Christian groups, Muslim communities and within the traditional and state structures. While mainline Protestant and Catholic churches explicitly create spaces of inter-religious dialogue and denounce

political excesses of poor governance, war and abuse of human rights, the Pentecostal movements seem to be indifferent (Akoko, 2007, p. 1). Paradoxically, it is feared that as a way to counter act the growth of Pentecostal movements, some mainline Christian churches in Africa are adapting Pentecostal rituals (ibid, p. 1). From the background of faith-based organizations described above, it is possible that faith-based schools could reflect two opposite profiles, a fundamental character on the one hand and an inclusive character on the other, thus giving an ambivalent character. This ambivalent context could be one of the aspects that provokes the debate at international level about the role of faith-based schools. Thus, there is the need to research about the school profiles and their understanding or shaping by school leaders especially in a state system like the fragile Cameroon system (cf. Chapter 1.1.1).

Debate at international level also questions the role of non-state schools as to whether they are widening or narrowing inequality gaps, reinforcing or limiting access, contributing to education as a public good or just to the private religious body (UNESCO, 2021, p. 1). These questions are pre-occupying given the broad understanding that education provision requires not only the state but also the role of non-state stakeholders. The debate gets further intricacy given that non-state schools are generally referred to as “private schools”, a terminology that can be misleading and therefore necessitates that such a complex field is clarified in the function of access, sources of funding and legal status (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4). This would suggest that not all non-state schools are elite’s schools or are profit-making. Kollontai (2013, p. 69-70) has analyzed that those who oppose religious schools mostly base their arguments on the fact that religious schools could tend to divide or segregate on the grounds of religion as in societies with mixed ethnicity and religion but fail to recognize the fact that there are also religious schools in such context that offer respect for all individuals and offer education as common good. Protestant schools in sub-Saharan Africa besides their numerical strength when combined with other Christian schools are providing access to education in enclaved areas, and mostly reaching out to the poor and less privileged persons in the society (Barber et al., 2020, p. 2). From this backdrop, these

schools could be considered public with respect to access and non-state with respect to the education provider. This distinction needs a shared understanding by the international community in order to distinguish protestant schools like those in Cameroon from profit-making private schools (Courtney & Gunter, 2017, p. 295).

The discourse on differentiating faith-based and state schools (Dronker & Hemsing, 2005, p. 74) also inserts the scientific interest on the parameter of educational outcomes, yet international debate strengthens this on the autonomy of parents in making school choices for their children. With respect to educational outcomes, learners from faith-based schools in Germany and the Netherlands, as examples in the broader European development have similar or better competence achievement in comparison to those from state schools when other factors are controlled (ibid, 74). In a similar way, the narrative on the impact of faith-based schools on lives and society (Glenn, 2014, p. 45-46) highlight meaningful contributions of graduates of Christian schools in the United States of America from both attitudinal and cognitive competences. This seems to be rooted in educational quality meanwhile little is known about the differentiation of faith-based non-state schools and state schools in sub-Saharan Africa with respect to learner outcomes. This would be important to reflect from discourse how quality of education is shaped by religious schools functioning in precarious circumstances like sub-Saharan Africa (Wodon, 2019. p. 4).

The question whether the leadership of school principals is contributing to enlightenment or to fundamentalism is important as international debate is concerned with how schools address or respond to tolerance and cultural diversity (Maussen et al., 2012, p. 6). The meta-narrative by Baker (2014, 177-178), suggests that faith-based schools can shape beliefs in learners which can be linked to specific world views of which some may be fundamentalist in nature. More specific concerns on the question of how apt faith-based schools are developing attitudes, competences and spaces needed for harmonious living in the complex society that is both

ethnically and religiously diverse (Mason, 2018, p. 204) add to the international debate. Very little of this is investigated in faith-based schools in sub-Saharan Africa, hence the need for the study at hand.

### 1.1.3 Leadership quality

As the subject of the study is focused on leadership understanding in Protestant schools, this section reflects the context in the light of quality leadership by first delineating how leadership matters in shaping school development. School leadership is not only framed in a changing context of societal pressure but also on aspects of globalization for which the description of how to position a balance between these forces and the needs of the students are described. Subsequently, school leadership is examined against the challenging circumstance of quality schooling in the Global South.

In order to achieve better learners' needs and outcomes, school leadership that reflects on developing the quality of the school and bringing about change has been shown to play an important role (Acton, 2021, p. 43). Given that quality school leadership requires transformation to ensure not only autonomy for both teachers and learners but also the pivotal role of supporting and the developing teacher professional communities towards innovation and educational change (Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė, 2023, p. 1), the task of school leaders becomes daunting. In the document, "Preparing Teachers and Developing School Leaders for the 21st Century: Lessons from around the World" published by OECD, Schneider (2012, p. 11-12) observes that with the fast changing world, education needs an improvement not only to address existing circumstances of schooling but most importantly the challenges for the future. This calls for leaders who are able to coordinate and ensure quality development of teachers that could prepare lifelong competences for learners including digital, complex ways of thinking and solving problems. Such leadership needs to be creative and adequately reflect the dynamics of quality development (Waite & Robbins, 2017, p. 29-41). All of these are connected to narratives of change and improvement which requires the centrality of educational leadership in the transformation process by reflecting on the underlying

purpose of education itself, and what educational leadership ought to address in preparing children for their life (Biesta, 2017, p. 15-16).

As there is increasing complexities of pressure from the society, school leaders and education do not need to conform to the societal pull, but in certain situations resist to the demands of society, in an approach described as leadership responsibility to resist (Biesta, 2017, p. 24-25). This requires that school leaders should have an effective overview of teaching quality towards effective learning by responding to the needs of learners. In this complex scenario, school leadership, while reflecting on the demands of the surrounding society, ensures that these are buffered as the function of the school is to serve the needs of the learners and not the direct implementation of the societal demands. Nevertheless, schools would be expected to educate the children in such a way that they know how to deal with the demands of the society. By this, the mediating role of school leaders is necessary to place the needs of the learners at the centre of education. Newman (2001, p. 33) argues that school leaders need to clarify the vision and the form of governance which their leadership stand so that they are not tilted towards public needs.

On a wider view, educational leadership would consider the processes of globalization that call for social justice and inclusion (UNESCO, 2020, p. 1-12; Hardman, 2017, p. 139 & 142). At the same time, the school leaders have the challenge of how to deal with social conservatism (Blackmore, 2017, p. 82). The navigation by school leaders in these situations requires a strategic and systemic thinking with a conscious check in order for leadership not to be compromised or become ineffective (Lakomski & Evers, 2017, p. 45; Ryan & Higginbottom, 2017, p. 103-118). This suggests that the operational field of educational leadership in the changing society needs to be broadened and controlled to strengthened learner achievement (Gronn, Vignoles & Ilie, 2017. P. 175; Zepeda et al., 2017, p, 242).

The situation of school leadership in sub-Saharan Africa is peculiar and more challenging as quality schooling is a problem (Hassan et al., 2022, p. 1). Looking back at the specific background of Cameroon where the study is contextualized, school leadership seems to articulate on mis-

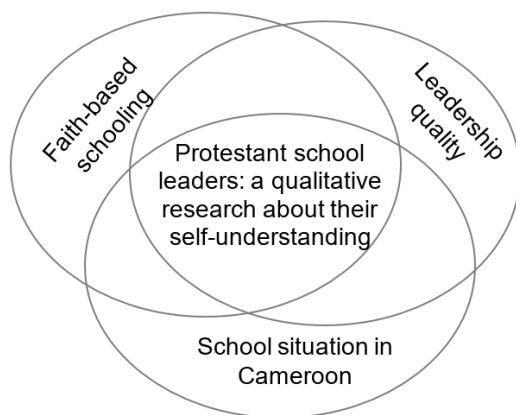
sionary and colonial roots with little visibility of insertion in the international debate regarding its role and what it is contributing to (cf. chapter 1.1.1). The narrative about education in-sub-Saharan Africa as earlier described, shows that it is characterized by low levels of quality in fragile states (Lauwerier & Akkari, 2015, p. 1-2, UNESCO, 2015, p. 1), thus rendering school leadership more complex. As the school organization in the Cameroon context is observed to be bureaucratic (chapter 1.1.1), school leadership could face challenges in transformation processes that seeks to foster a critical and democratic leading (Saltman & Means, 2017, p.125-135; Bush, 2014, p.163). Even though sub-Saharan Africa is facing major challenges in education, Lindsay et al., (2017, p. 272-288) argue that there is room for improvement if states prioritize education as a public good, as was the case with Julius Nyerere and Nkwame Nkrumah, former presidents of Tanzania and Ghana respectively who placed education and educational leadership at the centre of their country's development agenda.

From the foregone analysis, school leadership matters regarding school quality development (Fullan, Rincón-Gallardo & Hargreaves, 2015, p. 1; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013, p. 36-38; Hattie, 2012, p. 17-19). As faith-based schools are hoped to create inclusive learning spaces, leadership in these schools would require dialogical mind-sets that reflects the realities of students and communities as well as religious socialization (Buchanan, 2013, p. 6-7). This makes leadership in faith-based schools even more complex with room for being misunderstood. Therefore, faith-based school leaders need space to reflect on their self-understanding and beliefs and the meaning for their professional responsibilities as leaders in religious schools (Buchanan, 2013, p. 9; Siddiqui, 2011, p. 22). The situation gets more compounded in the Global South with Cameroon inclusive where quality schooling is a problem (Lange, 2016, p. 2; UNESCO, 2008, p.5). Therefore, conducting research on school leaders in Protestant schools as conceptualized in this study is essential to contribute to the discourse from the Global South.

### 1.1.4 Summary of the contextual and theoretical positioning of the study

The study at hand which seeks to investigate the self-understanding of principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon makes an in-depth contextual description and analysis with an overarching reflection of the educational background that is rooted in the missionary and colonial past. The context has been differentiated into three parts that overlap by first describing the school situation in Cameroon (cf. chapter 1.1.1), which connects in the second part about the nature of faith based schooling (cf. chapter 1.1.2). The third dimension analysis leadership quality and why it is important to research on it (cf. chapter 1.1.3). These three dimensions that show interconnectivity are summarized by figure 1 presented below.

Figure 1: Dimensions of the context of the study at hand



Source: by researcher

The recap of the school situation in Cameroon shows that faith-based schools, most of which were founded by missionary bodies are still shaping the landscape of education and viewed to offer access to learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The situation gets more complex as the state system is fragile and autocratic with the character of corruption

and social fragmentation, yet the people in Cameroon look up to churches and faith-based organizations for strategies of stabilizing the country. Researching about faith-based schools in such a precarious context contributes to discourse from the Global South which at this point is still scarce.

As the study focuses on Protestant schools, the synopsis on the nature of faith-based schools articulates on the debate at international level, whether non-state faith-based schools are widening inequality gaps or reinforcing access. From the analysis, the situation about faith based schools in Cameroon is ambivalent due to the unstable context characterized by the prevalence of the Islamic fundamentalist movement known as Boko Haram and Pentecostal movements. From this background, the question whether leadership of school principals is a contribution to enlightenment or to fundamentalism is important and thus underscores the need for the study at hand.

As leadership matters, regarding school quality development, the theoretical background shows that quality schooling in the Global South especially sub-Saharan Africa is a problem. Therefore, there is the necessity to research on school leaders and on the situation of faith-based schooling understanding in Cameroon. This is relevant and would contribute to the discourses from Cameroon on the theological thinking of responsible persons in education relating to the question about inequality. From the context and problem analyzed above, the research questions of the study are framed.

## **1.2 Research questions**

This study is embedded in the research interest on school leadership and the protestant school profile and how this is shaping educational landscapes. In the discourse on the improvement of educational quality, leadership is shaping school profile and Protestant schools therefore get their profile from leadership.

It is in the interest of this study to understand leadership in the protestant schools in Cameroon as guided by the following research questions. The main research question of the study is: What are the perceptions of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their

school leadership? This main question has three parts as follows: (i) How do Protestant school principals describe their school leadership? (ii) What is the understanding of the Protestant school principals about the Protestant school profile? (iii) What are the challenges principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon perceive in their leadership?

To answer these research questions, the study design ensures intersubjectivity through the analysis of the state of research (cf. chapter 2) and description of research methodology and methods (cf. chapter 3). In the next section, the explanation of what this means in detail for the methodology and the chosen methods of the study is described.

### **1.3 Methods**

This section gives the summary of the methods used in the study. As the topic of the research about the self-understanding of Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon in regard to their leadership role is new in the research context of the Global South, an exploratory and hypothesis-generating study is needed. For this reason, a qualitative approach is used (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 5 & 11) as it offers the possibility to explore perceptions and experiences of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their school leadership. Given the exploratory nature of the study, data collection and analysis which are guided by the research questions earlier described (cf. chapter 1.2) follow the grounded theory to ensure abstract theoretical explanations from the data itself (Charmaz 2014, p.1 & 8). Data which constitute the perceptions of principals about leadership in Protestant schools is collected by the method of semi-structured interviews and analyzed by qualitative content analysis. Given that the study at hand is framed as theory-generating, the sampling technique follows theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2014, p. 7-8; Calman, 2006, p. 14). The implication for the study is that the sample size of school principals is not pre-determined. The data interpretation for the study shall follow the abduction process which is complex and inferential geared towards generating new hypothesis and theories (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167). The detailed description of methods and methodology is presented in chapter 3.

#### 1.4 Outline of the study

The presentation of this study is divided into six chapters. In chapter 2, the theoretical foundation which gives the present state of research is described with focus on the Protestant school profile and school leadership. In this, the argumentation is differentiated into seven parts. The Protestant school profile is analyzed (chapter 2.1) with bearings on theological and pedagogical understanding. This is followed by the analysis of discourses on school leadership and quality school development (chapter 2.2) with argumentations differentiated into ideal leadership types and the challenges of school leading. As the study at hand is contextualized in Cameroon, the discourses about school leadership in Cameroon are analyzed (chapter 2.3). This is followed by the analysis of leadership in Protestant schools, how it looks like from discourse (chapter 2.4), why profile non-state Protestant schools (chapter 2.5), the relevance of the study and the research gaps addressed by the study are described (chapter 2.6). The conclusion (chapter 2.7) ends the chapter.

In chapter 3, the methodological approach is described. The design of the study conceptualized as a theory- and hypothesis-generating (chapter 3.1) is explained. This is followed by the description of data collection instruments (chapter 3.2) and the sampling technique which is theoretical sampling as the study is framed as theory-generating (chapter 3.3). Data analysis by qualitative content analysis using the grounded theory is described (chapter 3.4). The systematic presentation of content analysis is differentiated into the description of the interview transcription process (chapter 3.4.2), category formation and coding which is an iterative deductive-inductive simultaneous process (chapter 3.4.3) and the abduction process for data interpretation (chapter 3.4.4). This is followed by the description of quality control of the findings (chapter 3.4.5) to ascertain intersubjectivity, coherence and systematic alignment of the study. The chapter ends with the description of the ethical considerations (chapter 3.5).

The empirical findings from this study are described in chapter 4. The portraits of interviews of the different school principals are first described (chapter 4.1). This is followed by the description of the structure of the field that analyses the categories of quality chosen by Protestant school

leaders to characterize their field about their self-understanding while the qualities of the categories are described in chapter 4.3. The chapter ends with the summary of the results (chapter 4.4)

In chapter 5, the discussion of the results is presented beginning with the summary of findings (Chapter 5.1). The results are then discussed in the light of discourses (chapter 5.2).

The conclusion of the study at hand is presented in chapter 6, in which the first section addresses implications for further research (chapter 6.1) while the second section dwells on implications for practice (chapter 6.2). This is followed by a conclusive statement.

## 2 State of research: Protestant school profile and school leadership

Global concern and research has attributed the necessity to improve the quality of education and school leadership in different context (Gellel, 2013, p. 16-22). This makes the study about faith-based schools and their leadership important as religious education providers claim to be global with different conceptions that further shape the ambiguities and complexities about the nature of the world (Turner, 2002, p. 9 & 105). This chapter analyses discourses and theoretical narratives about the Protestant school profile and school leadership which constitute the foundation of this study.

The state of research described in this chapter is closely linked to the research question of the study at hand that seeks to find out the self-understanding of Protestant secondary school principals about their school leadership. The analysis of discourses therefore radiates on the protestant profile of schools and school leadership understanding as the debate on education in the face of globalization touches both cultural and religious diversity (Buchanan, 2013, 5-9). In this regard, the theological thinking on the question of dealing with inequality and developing quality in education gets the overarching attention of this study.

The specific profile of Protestant schools, how this is linked to leadership understanding in shaping the educational landscape and the wider society, constitutes the basis for the theoretical underpinning of this study. As such, this chapter is divided into seven sections. The first part (cf. chapter 2.1) focuses on what the Protestant school profile is, with argumentation lines differentiated into the theological and pedagogical understandings. In the second part (chapter 2.2), the theoretical models of school leadership are deepened and their links to quality education analysed. As the study is reflecting the situation in Cameroon, discourses about school leadership in Cameroon are examined (cf. chapter 2.3). The question of how leadership in Protestant schools looks like and what it is serving for are analysed in the fourth section (cf. chapter 2.4). In addition, the question regarding the importance of the profile of non-state faith-based schools is discussed (cf. chapter 2.5). Based on the findings that emerge from the analysis of the state of research as described in the first

four sections of this chapter, the summary that delineates the research gap in the light of the research questions is described (cf. chapter 2.6). This gives the relevance of the study and ends with a conclusion (cf. chapter 2.7) which connects to the description of the main lines of the methodology designed for the study.

## **2.1 Theoretical background of the protestant school profile**

In this section, the protestant school profile is analyzed, leading to the reflections about what is protestant in Protestant schools. Given that Protestant schools exist and function in context, the understanding of their profile in itself is complex (Miedema, 2016, p. 10). The complexity is further heightened by the plurality of Protestant denominations which consists of but not limited to Lutherans, Reformed churches (Presbyterians inclusive), Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Anabaptists, Adventists, and Pentecostals (Höllinger & Makula, 2021, p. 347-349; Jacobsen, 2021, p. xxi-xxii; Zurlo, 2015, p. 46-47). Current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in Western countries (Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 13; de Wall, 2012, p. 173, Becker & Wößmann, 2010, 224-228, Dronkers & Avram, 2009, p. 895-909; Dronkers & Hemsing, 2005, p. 73-74). On the other hand, Christian schools are more prominent in sub-Saharan Africa and other low-income countries where they serve in fulfilling the right to education (Barber et al., p.3), yet little is known in research about their situation. There is therefore the argumentation to make visible educational profiles of non-state religious schools (Scheunpflug, 2015, P. 38-44; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-6) with the emphasis on differentiating the character of inclusivity and exclusivity (Bertram-Troost et al, 2015, p. 204).

The profile of Protestant schools is rooted in the Reformation and differentiated into two dimensions, namely; the theological and pedagogical perspectives. In the section that follows, the theological aspect is first described (cf. chapter 2.2.1), giving an explicit understanding. The pedagogical dimension which mirrors the implicit understanding of the Protestant profile is described in the second part (cf. chapter 2.2.2), also showing its interconnection with the theological dimension. As

Protestant schools exist in context within specific framework of the church and the state, their relationship with the state system is argued (cf. chapter 2.2.3).

### **2.1.1 Protestant school profile: Theological perspective**

The understanding of Protestant reformation provides the basis of positioning Protestant schools yet this gets more complex in the process of continuing reformation in a secular world wherein Protestant schools themselves function in context and linked to a plurality of Protestant denominations (Miedema, 2016, p.10; Zurlo, 2015, p. 46-47). As the research is about leadership self-understanding in Protestant schools, the state of research about the theological understanding of the Protestant school profile is explored. This theological perspective gives the explicit understanding and is shaped by reformers' theological convictions that are conceptualized in five solas. These solas are considered to be the essential elements of Christianity (Bender, 2019, p. 109, Luther, 2012, 15-30, Canale, 2012, p. 179-195, Soulen, 2004, p. 251). In the following section, the solas are first described followed by the analysis of what this means for the Protestant identity.

#### **(a) Five Solas: Shaping reformers' conviction about the essential teachings of Christianity**

The five solas signify five Latin phrases that emerged during the Reformation to summarize the theological beliefs of reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin in their pursuit to transform Christianity (Williams, 2017, p. 13). These solas comprise of *sola scriptura* (scripture alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), *solus Christus* (Christ alone), *solus Deo gloria* (to the glory of God alone) (Wellum, 2015, p. 5-6). They were first contextualized in the specific historical framework to reform the Roman Catholic church but met with stiff resistance at that time. Given the increasing controversies of dealing with ethical issues, the debate as to whether basing only on the five solas is sufficient to understand the Protestant school profile, ushers in more argumentation (Anderson, 2005,

p. 77). It can therefore be argued that these solas which are mainly theological convictions do not necessarily seem to connect to the school profile. From this premise however, the explicit understanding of the theological perspective of the school profile is analyzed (cf, chapter 2.1.1 b) that is directly linked to the pedagogical understanding. From the consideration that the Church is still in an ongoing reformation process in a complex and changing secular world, questions regarding the profile of Protestant schools can be better answered from the global reflection (Simojoki, 2016, p. 16). In the following paragraphs the five solas which mainly provide the basis of theological thoughts are described beginning with sola Scriptura and solus Christus.

### **Sola scriptura and solus Christus (Scripture alone and Christ alone)**

Sola scriptura, translated as scripture alone means that the holy scripture is not only the true and important standard of faith, but also a huge release and an obligation (Simojoki, 2016, p. 18). Strauss (2021, p. 1) argues that the principle of sola scriptura means that scripture provides the principles or norms for a church polity with the implication that articles in a church order should align with the Bible. The implication of sola scriptura in regards to the Protestant identity gives a relief on the freedom of a Christian to read the Bible by self, understand and argue with convictions. This explains why Martin Luther in the reformation journey invested in the translation of the Bible with the convictions that sola Scriptura describes the authority of the Bible and the way in which individuals know God (Williams, 2017, p. 14-17). The emphasis and affirmation of the sole authority of the Bible shapes the Protestant understanding that places the Bible as the unifying point for global Protestantism. With the freedom of a Christian to read the Bible by self, there are possibilities of contextual differences in interpretation. The situation gets more challenging with the complex global society, necessitating the development of competencies in Christians to deal with differences in a tolerant and constructive way (Simojoki, 2016, p. 18).

While sola scriptura shapes the central authority of the Holy scripture, solus Christus (Christ alone) on the other hand profiles Jesus Christ as

the image of the invisible God through whom and for whom all things were created (Williams, 2017, p. 17-18). In the Protestant understanding, Christ is considered the only channel of intercession for human beings and not any other human being. *Sola scriptura* can be understood as the hermeneutical rule for the realization of the *solus Christus*, thus clarifying the decisive position of the church towards the word of God as its divine authority (Hofheinz, 2017, p. 275-278). From this background, it can be argued that the reformatory theology is on constant transformation as the word of God is always reforming, focusing on the bible alone as the highest authority. This is equally reflected in *sola gratia* and *sola fide* that are described in the next paragraph.

### **Sola gratia and sola fide (Grace alone and faith alone)**

The shared understanding of *sola gratia* (grace alone) within Protestantism underlines God's unconditional granting of grace to human beings. This implies that people are justified (or saved) by grace alone, thus upholding that God's grace has a global focus and recognizes that all humans are created in God's image and deserve respect and dignity (Simojoki, 2016, p. 17-18). This understanding is further deepened in *sola fide* (faith alone) that emphasizes justification by faith alone in Jesus Christ. The Reformers argue that the understanding of *sola fide* needs to situate faith beyond the basic level of belief as faith needs to be linked to Jesus Christ who shares his love by grace (Anderson, 2005, p. 77-78). Therefore, faith is not static but dynamic with a public character wherein Protestantism is expected to show an inclusive identity as reflected in the ninety-five theses of Martin Luther (EKD, 2015, p. 18). Conversely, the Protestant understanding recognizes that being saved by grace alone (*sola gratia*) through faith alone (*sola fide*) shows that human beings are saved by grace as a gift of God without depending on any human effort (Williams, 2017, p. 18-19). Thus *sola fide* is the direct outworking of *sola gratia*. This leads to the question of understanding of God's creation, that is described in the next section under *solus Deo Gloria*.

### **Soli Deo gloria (to the glory of God alone)**

The Protestant response is that the whole creation is for the glory of God alone (*soli Deo Gloria*) (Williams, 2017, p. 19-20). Therefore, *soli Deo gloria* is at the very heart of all the *solas* as it gives the centrality of God's glory alone. VanDrunen (2015, p. 109) argues that what matters regarding the question of salvation and authority is not the satisfaction of spiritual needs but the glorification of God. The question of how human beings carry out their vocation knowing that they are serving God and not human beings radiates around *soli Deo Gloria*.

Based on Protestant theology, all the five *solas* are interconnected with *soli Deo Gloria* as their goal, emphasizing that human beings live for the glory of God alone. From this background, *sola scriptura* emphasizes the glory of the word of God alone, while *solus Christus* presents the unique glory of Christ. On the other hand, *sola gratia* is linked to the glory of God by grace alone meanwhile *sola fide* radiates on the glory of the works of Christ through justification by faith. The five *solas* analyzed above give the impulse to address the explicit theological dimension of the Protestant profile as described in the next section.

#### **(b) Theological perspective: An explicit understanding of the Protestant Profile**

In this section, the theological perspective of the Protestant school profile is reflected. It is very rooted in the Christian understanding (EKD, 2017, p. 10-13). As earlier mentioned (cf. chapter 2.1), Protestant schools exist and function in context. This means that they are diverse both globally and locally and seem to be shaped by their denominational affiliation, educational systems of their state, regional and individual school specificities. From this complex and diverse context, it is difficult to realize a common theological perspective for Protestant schools. However, by basing on the reformation tradition, Protestant schools are expected to be shaped by common attributes comprising of but not limited to the freedom of a Christian, justification by faith, priesthood of all believers, independent reading of the bible and service in God's creation. These attributes are respectively analyzed in the section that follows.

## Freedom of a Christian

Martin Luther summarized the freedom of a Christian in the following paradoxical expression: “A Christian man is a free lord over all things and subject to no one. A Christian is a servant to all things and subject to everyone” (Luther, 2016, p. 1). This is rooted in the bible and means that freedom should be perceived as responsible freedom in sociality and towards others. As the two thesis in the statement of Martin Luther seem to contradict each other, they are each analyzed in the following section to deepen the understanding and their connectivity.

The thesis, “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.” does not only talk about freedom, but is also linked to being “lord of all.” It suggests that as God has created people in his image to serve as kings or priests on earth and are restored to these positions by Christ, a Christian becomes “subject to none.” From this understanding, it would be expected that no person or institution including church or church leaders should create or impose rules of what to do that are not directly backed by the Bible. The thesis is therefore a reminder that Christ’s work involves bringing freedom and delivering people from tyrannous rule (Dennert, 2023; Caldwell & Baltutis-Lecture, 2020, p. 24). The second thesis about “A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” draws attention to the difference between freedom and independence as being free would not imply that people do what they want. In other words, freedom of a Christian would infer that Christians are called to serve God by serving other people, thus being servants to all and at the same time depending on God (Dennert, 2023, Luther, 2016, p. 1-2). The description of the two thesis in the statement of Martin Luther about freedom of a Christian as shown above indicates a connectivity with emphasis on liberty that goes with responsibility for other persons so that they might experience life and satisfaction that is found in Christ alone (Johnston, 2017; Luther, 2016, p. 1-3). Christian freedom is thought to be based only on the Word of God and it is justified by faith alone and not by any works, thus being at the heart of Protestant theology (Kolb, 2016, p. 62; Luther, 2016, p. 1-3).

From the background on “The Freedom of a Christian” (Luther, 2016, p. 467-468), freedom could be further seen as a gift for which each individual has spiritual liberty, characterized by love and which could manifest itself in the service to humanity. Protestant education would be expected to insert this by offering a safe space for the respect and support of the freedom of individual conscience to reflect on self and take informed decisions in matters of faith and life orientations (EKD, 2017, p. 12). As the freedom of a Christian does not mean absolute liberty, it is argued that it should be controlled by love focused on the good of all, based on life experiences and guided by the conscience in the word of God (Painter, 1889, p.54). There is emphasis on the free nature of human beings, liberated and not slaves to others, thereby giving an understanding that freedom is extended beyond spiritual realms to include moral physical, intellectual, cultural and social aspects. Weir (2018, p. 171) argues that the academic freedom cherished in higher education has had an important push from the Protestant theological understanding of the freedom of a Christian. Education is not only one of the spheres of action of the society but arguably one of the most important institutions of socialization in modern society where tolerance and cultural diversity are nurtured in children (Maussen et al, 2012, p. 13-15). Therefore, education in Protestant schools is hoped to be holistic and would call for responsibility and mutual cooperation between teachers, learners, parents and educators to strengthen this holistic development (EKD, 2013, p. 233).

### **Justification by faith**

From the Protestant view point, justification by faith is given great importance as it constitutes the central truth of Reformation. Justification by faith is therefore hoped to bring individuals into direct relationship to God with unconditional forgiveness and love (Painter, 1889, p.56-59). This is buttressed by one of the Reformers’ theological convictions about the essentials of Christianity in *sola fide* (faith alone) and *sola gratia* (grace alone), earlier described in the sub chapter 2.1.1 (a). This central belief of Christianity shapes the Protestant emphasis on the fact that people are

saved by grace through faith alone (Anderson, 2005, p. 77-78). The implication for education in Protestant schools is that human beings are not considered to be perfect and should not be perfect, yet qualified to receive God's unconditional love (EKD, 2017, p. 11). Therefore, all students would need to be respected and expected to be given the dignity just for whom they are and not based on what they are capable of doing or of accomplishing or on the social class, ethnic group or performance.

### **Priesthood of all believers**

The Protestant theological understanding of the priesthood of all believers, has both important implications in spiritual and public life and reflected from the three solas, sola scriptura, sola fide and sola gratia (Lindsley, 2013, p. 1). The universal priesthood of all believers would imply that by faith, all Christians have a direct access to God; and do not need another human being to intervene for them meanwhile, the position of Christ as the high priest who ends all priesthood is acknowledged through solus Christus (Christ alone). This understanding shows that individuals are considered to have equal opportunities and autonomy to come before God (Painter, 1889, p. 56-59). Like in the reformation term of justification by faith, the term of priesthood of all believers buttresses the need for the acceptance of all individuals with tolerance of diverse opinions within the framework of Protestant education. The understanding of the theological implication of the priesthood of all believers further stresses the importance of education for everybody in society shaped by care, educational and social justice. Education in Protestant schools has the responsibility to side with the poor, weak and vulnerable in an inclusive way (Barber, 2020, p. 3-4). This emphasizes the fact that Protestant education could be offered as a public good with a broader reflection of responding to human rights, equity and social justice (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-5). From this premise, Protestant schools would build on hope, peace and justice and thus need to develop the culture of building resilience in teachers and students to embrace the future with confidence (EKD, 2017, p. 13).

Protestant schools are also expected to build on the holy spirit as an important gift from God. Cameron and Swezey (2015, p. 1) argue that the

submission of Christian schools to the authority of the Bible is the direct recognition and trust in the holy spirit. With this understanding, teachers in Protestant schools are looked forward to be aware that they are not in total control of the development of their students and learning processes. The teachers are supposed to be cognizant of developing an open mind for circumstances of surprise and as well as celebration of milestones (EKD, 2017, p. 12).

### **Independent reading of the bible**

The emphasis of independent reading of the bible aligns with the Reformers' believe that the scriptures as rule of faith means scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule and standard for humanity (Painter, 1889, p. 56-59). This is very connected to one of the affirmed solas of Reformed theology which is; sola scriptura (scripture alone). Reformers like Luther, Melancthon and Calvin understood sola scriptura to mean that the church's authority is derived from scripture which alone points to the saving grace of Jesus Christ (Anderson, 2005, p. 80-81). This is argued to offer major relief for Christians in matters of faith to directly gain insights from the bible by themselves, thus ushering the development of self-concept, autonomy, reading competences and critical minds (EKD, 2015, p. 18). It is from this background that one of the outstanding outcomes of Luther's Reformation was the translation of the bible into the mother tongue, making it the most translated book in the world that is accessible to everyone society including the church, schools and homes. The independent reading of the bible is most importantly very connected to the development of quality competences not only for the restricted few but for everyone and in all subjects. Tröhler (2021, p. 258) has argued that the model of education that focuses on competence development alongside self-reflection and hermeneutical thinking is rooted in the Protestant Reformation. From this background, Protestant schools are looked upon to take the responsibility of enhancing reflection, critical and creative thinking. Protestant schools would therefore seek to uphold high quality in education. Griffis (2017, p. 1-3) has argued that Protestantism has contributed in developing both self-reliance and quality literary tradition.

## **Service in God's creation**

The Protestant theology strives for the responsibility of individuals to render service to God by manifesting faith in the acknowledgement of God's creation. This means that Protestant theology upholds global and ecumenical aspects in education from a wider perspective to include intercultural dimensions, social justice and care for nature (EKD, 2017, p. 11). This further reveals the concern for Protestant education to invest in ecological awareness, sustainable development and caters for the splendor of God's creation in a globalized world (Hitzhusen, 2006, p. 9-10, Lähne- mann, 1995, p. 22-26).

In summary, the theological basis of Protestant education seeks to promote popular education with a public school character that operates in context. Education in Protestant schools is therefore hoped to look at service to God and service to humanity in an inclusive way with emphasis on autonomy, social justice and care for God's creation. It emphasizes the offer of school as a public utility as underlined in the pioneer ideas of Philip Melancthon, Zwingli and Calvin; that of seeking to develop competent, liberated, and responsible and respected individuals (Painter, 1889 p. 67-69). From the explicit theological understanding of the Protestant profile, pedagogical insights are analyzed in the next section as implicit perspectives.

### **2.1.2 Pedagogical perspective: An implicit understanding of the Protestant profile**

In this section, the pedagogical perspective of understanding the Protestant school profile is described. As already mentioned in chapter 2.1, the understanding of the Protestant school profile is differentiated into two aspects, namely; the theological and pedagogical dimensions of which the theological aspect is already described (cf. chapter 2.1.1). These two dimensions are interconnected. The description that follows will not only give visibility to the pedagogical understanding but will as well build on and highlight the link to the theological perspective. In the following section, six broad aspects of the pedagogical perspective of the Protestant profile are described.

### **Protestant schools are committed to learners' autonomy, diaconal learning and social justice**

Protestant schools seek to uphold learner's autonomy and strive for social justice. Regarding learners' autonomy, Protestants schools are expected to offer the possibilities for learners to experience freedom with responsibility. This pedagogical position aligns with the theological understanding of the freedom of a Christian (Simojoki, 2016, p. 189). Even though, Protestant schools aim at supporting the development of the competences of individual students, the dimension of the communicative and collaborative drive towards social life is simultaneously reflected (EKD, 2017, p. 14). The understanding of autonomy is argued to be backed by responsibility wherein, students are supposed to be groomed to take responsibility not only for themselves, but as well for others, for nature and for the future. This has an overarching concern for the role of Protestant schools on sustainability and requires that Protestant schools should have the possibility to provide safe places for children, upholding children's and human rights (Barber et al., 2020, p. 5). Protestant schools are therefore looked upon to take the responsibility and ensure creativity and critical thinking in learners, with the liberty to differentiate faith from factual knowledge (Painter, 1889, p. 56-66). From this stand point, Protestant schools may uphold educational responsibility that goes with reflection on a wider global level (Sendler-Koschel, 2016, p. 41).

Besides the assurance of learner's autonomy with responsibility, Protestant schools are considered to be concerned with ensuring social justice and diaconal learning. This charge focuses on the question of how education should be organized in order to give all individuals the possibility to access and develop competences immaterial of their socio-economic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17-18; Painter, 1889, p. 65-68). As Barber et al. (2020, p.4), argues, the question of social justice is about the preferential support for the poor, marginalized and vulnerable individuals thus giving the response of the offer of schools as a public good. This aspect of care for the individual students is anticipated in the diaconal focus of Protestant

schools. Therefore, Protestant schools would seek to enhance social justice not only at regional or national level but on a global level by reflecting education as a public good.

### **Protestant schools accepts every individual student regardless of their performance**

Protestant schools see every learner as an accepted individual with unique characteristics, talents and opportunities. From the theological understanding of individuals being created in the image of God, the pedagogical understanding sees the centrality for the acceptance, care of individuals and support of human dignity a crucial responsibility (Gellel, 2013, p. 27). Protestant schools therefore strive to be safe spaces of hope to ensure meaningful relationships and encounters of happiness by developing and recognizing the personalities of individual students regardless of performance (EKD, 2017, p. 14). As learning for every child is unique, tedious and complex, including the making of mistakes, teachers in Protestant schools are expected to offer individual support and constructive feedback to shape individual student's learning goals and progress (EKD, 2017, p. 14). This calls for the offer pardon, different learning opportunities and chances to students with the possibilities of them celebrating their milestones in learning. The argumentation above on the acceptance of individual students also has an intersection with enhancing educational and social justice.

### **Protestant schools strive for high quality teaching**

Protestant schools endeavour to offer quality education through dimensions of good quality teaching through the use of participatory, reflective and activating methods not only for the attainment of cognitive outcomes but as well for building socio-emotional resilience (Barber et al, 2020, p. 3). This pushes for continuous reflection in empowering teachers to improve on their teaching quality, given that teachers constitute an important influencing factor for students learning achievement based on empirical evidence (Gauthier et al., 2004, p. 5-9). As the development and reflection on content is an essential part of quality, Christian schools are

expected to be aware of developing and promoting the use of curriculum that respond to cultural diversity and inclusion. The insertion of global citizenship education and education for sustainability could equally be valued for curriculum development. This is partly rooted in theological perspective of independent bible reading as this ignites the understanding to develop literacy and critical thinking competencies, care for self, for others, for the community and for nature. Protestant schools are thought to be aware that equitable quality education is equally a daunting task specially to reach out to the poor, vulnerable children and marginalized in low-income countries and in precarious context of conflicts (Wagner et al., 2022, p. v). This guides Protestant schools to reflect on questions related to how the different stakeholders can be integrated and engaged in innovative pedagogical concepts and how to ensure quality in schools and in the public (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 19-20). Protestant schools seek to involve parents, youth organizations, parishes and the community in the strides for education with conscious awareness that they constitute a wider educational landscape (EKD, 2017, p. 17).

From the Protestant pedagogical stand point, value is expected to be added to education through singing, music and arts. This is not only a medium of promoting cultural understanding and socialization (Ilari et al., 2013, p. 202) but also gives the space for persons of different walks of life (theologians, educators and the general public) to work and reflect together (Loewe, 2013, p. 69). Therefore, quality education from the Protestant pedagogical lens strives to add aesthetics and quality orientation in all subjects, differentiating all of these from faith.

### **Protestant schools aim at supporting ecumenical learning for global social justice**

Protestant schools do not only strive to underpin the spiritual and religious development of students but also their world view development as spirituality is expected to be a core consideration in Christian schools (Klenke, 2007, p. 68). Buchanan (2013, p. 127 & 141) has argued that the role of Christian schools is not only about improving basic educational goals but also to include aspects of faith, religion and spirituality to reflect

the holistic identity of the school. Protestant schools would seek to offer the space to teach religious education and integrate spirituality in daily school life through services, prayers and songs. As the pluralism of denominations and religions has to be uplifted, the manifestation of spiritual beliefs in schools need to be controlled (Penthin et al., 2022, p. 281-282). Protestant schools would therefore strive for religious tolerance and are encouraged to develop a capacity for dialogue to find a good balance and overcome dichotomies that hinder dimensions of inclusion in a pluralistic society (Preez, 2013, p. 63).

Simojoki (2016, p. 17) remarks that the network of Protestant schools in a global scale needs to be shaped by Protestant identity yet opened to the entire inhabited world framed within the concept of “global ecumene”. This stresses the key beliefs of global Protestantism that are addressed through the three solas; sola, gratia, sola scriptura and sola fide (cf. chapter 2.1.1 (a)). Leaders in Protestant schools would need to consider religious pluralism in shaping their school profiles and constantly reviewing their beliefs and attitudes (Siddiqui, 2011, p. 22) not losing the moral function of Protestant education in shaping the worldviews and lives globally (Kim et al., 2018, p. 8). Protestants schools are expected to contribute to the development of global social justice and understanding learning about the world society. This is complex, yet the analysis by Scheunpflug (2020, p. 11) which emphasizes the teaching of abstract social relations as a deep reflection of understanding global social justice gives the green light and hope. Global learning as a response to the development towards a world society is equally connected to concerns of sustainability and this is addressed in the next section.

### **Protestant schools are committed to education for sustainability**

Education for sustainability is considered an essential arm of Protestant schools, rooted in the acknowledgement of God’s creation as analysed in the theological understanding (cf. chapter 2.1.1 (b)). Protestant schools aim at caring for nature and for the future and strives to insert ecological dimensions in education as well as the value of solidarity and cooperation (Gellel, 2013, p. 20-21). Emphasis is drawn by Barber et al. (2020, p.4) and

point to the fact that Christian schools have as mandate to ensure education for sustainable development and the preservation of creation.

The Protestant profile from the pedagogical understanding as described in the sections above show a connection of the insights to the theological dimension. The pedagogical identity besides its emphasis on striving for quality education and ensuring the autonomy, acceptance and support of the individual learners, also shows commitments towards ecumenical learning for global social justice. Protestant schools in their pedagogic agenda would want to learn and contribute to the development and future of the global and rapid changing society.

### **2.1.3 Protestant schools and the state system**

In this section, the relationship between Protestant schools and the state system is discussed. This is important as the schools exist in context shaped by the policies of the countries in which they exist. The contextualisation of the relationship may be complex that the Protestant schools may be grouped together with profit-making elite schools as private. As this generalization as private could be misleading, this section ends with addressing the question of how Protestant schools can be understood as either private or public.

#### **(a) Relationship between the Protestant schools and the state system**

In many countries, especially in Europe, America and Sub-Saharan-Africa, Christian schools are the majority of all non-state schools (Scheunpflug, 2015, p. 38-39). Above all, a greater proportion of the Christian schools are found in sub-Saharan Africa and other low-income countries (Barber et al., 2020, p. 2), yet most of the studies about Church-state relationships are conducted in countries of the Global North. It is expected that a democratic state should be neutral by itself in regard to religion and worldview, therefore the differences in how the relations between religions and the state are organized necessitates discussion (Francis, 2019, p. 7759: These relationships differ between countries. That notwithstanding, a systematic overview in stable western democracies (Germany, the United States of America, Australia, England and the Netherlands) where

the church-state separation model exists is analysed (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 1 &10). However, the question how the separation looks like differs for which we distinguish three forms of church-state relationship which comprise of the laicity model, the model with public sphere for religion and the established church model. These three models of church-state relationship will first be described, then followed by an analysis of models of Christian faith-based schooling and relations to the state from case studies in Africa where the study is contextualized.

### **Laicity model**

In the laicity model, also understood as secularism model, the state and church are separated and religions are accorded a private status and do not have a public space (Francis, 2019, p. 778 – 790; Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 10-11). This is the church-state relation model practised in France and better captioned in French as “Laïcité” wherein religion is seen as an individual, personal and private option vested on personal choice (Torfs, 1996, p. 950-951). Such a model is also guided by a constitutional barrier that prevents the public and financial support by the state to any one religion or religious organization (Sandberg, 2008, p. 330). It is observed that the influence of faith-based contribution to education within the laicity church-state relation model is limited in spite of religious neutrality (Valasik, 2016, p. 129). From this backdrop, the laicity model can be considered to offer negative religious freedom.

### **Public sphere for religion and state cooperation model**

In this model religion is seen as a public sphere and with the state cooperation that gives the impression of religion being viewed as a human right (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 12). Germany, Netherlands, the USA and Australia align to this model though with their specificities. In these states, common tasks or ways of operation that connect the state to religious structures are recognized through agreements or treaties (Sandberg, 2008, p. 330). With such provisions, the church-state relationship takes new levels as some activities especially of social welfare previously run by government agencies are devolved to none-state and none-profit

organizations most of which have religious orientations (Francis, 2019, p. 794.795; Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 2). This model has a pluralist character and seeks to offer positive religious freedom.

### **Established church model**

The church and the state in this model form a partnership in promoting a vision that places both the church and the state as two structures on which the society rests (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 11). The established church model is characterised by the existence of close links between the state and a particular religious' community that is captioned as the 'state' or 'national,' church (Sandberg, 2008, p. 330). In other words, the government recognizes and supports a particular church or denomination while all other religions are merely tolerated without favoured considerations. England leans more on this model and with the visible presence of the church of England. Brugger (2012, p. 265) argues that the established church model has the possibility of excluding some organizational structures in its framework and therefore poses questions for example on the respect of fundamental human rights.

From the three models described above, the following arguments are reflected. A critical look at the categorization of the state-church relationship shows that such grouping pays more attention to history and traditions yet ignoring the sociological consideration and implicit values that religion brings to the society (Sandberg, 2008 p. 329, 331 & 350). Huber and Stanig (2011, p. 835) argue that as religious organizations have the potential of creating networks of social inclusion or exclusion, the relationship with the state needs to take such extreme divides into consideration. It is for this reason that conversations that subscribe to church-state relationships which favour religious freedom and the respect of human rights are given visibility (Brugger, 2012, p. 265). Meanwhile, Kalkandjieva (2017, p. 587), in the comparative analysis of church-state relations in Eastern Orthodoxy, argue from the view point of political and social sciences experts that Orthodox church-state relations could be characterized by a domination of state over church, thus limiting the advancement of democracy in that context. This shows a power-relation lens in

church-state relationship. It becomes evident that church-state relationship cannot be generalized. The background that shows diversity is necessary to take into consideration when analysing the relationship on non-state schools in the development cooperation by paying attention to individual school system specificity and the country context (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 53). This has an implication on understanding what those schools serve for and questions regarding financial sponsorship. In the following paragraph, models of Christian faith-based schooling and relations to the state from case studies in Africa are presented.

### **Models of Christian faith-based schooling and relations to the state from case studies in Africa**

In this section, the relationship between the state and Christian schools in sub-Saharan African countries wherein their footprint is very remarkable in unstable and fragile state context is presented (Barber et al., 2020, p. 5). In the background paper for the Global Education Monitoring Report of UNESCO captioned, “Relationships between Christian schools and the state: A comparative analysis for five sub-Saharan African countries”, Scheunpflug et al. (2021) highlight case studies from Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Rwanda and Tanzania. Each of the cases represent different models of relationship with the state as well as different forms of education provision in varied circumstances rooted in missionary and colonial history (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 3). All the models in the cases chosen operate in the context wherein the state organizes secular educational institutions which do not allow for the expression of faith or religion. In these circumstances, faith-based non-state schools operate as the cases under review where the state sees itself as religiously neutral. In Rwanda, DRC and Madagascar faith-based schools operate in the framework of “laicity” that is rooted in the French tradition of the secularization of the school system (Baubérot, 2008, p. 18-19). It should be noted that the DRC is the country with the highest proportion of Christian faith-based schools in the world (over 80% of all schools). In Cameroon, the models of the operation of non-state faith-based schools vary greatly between regions within the same country

as rooted in the colonial and missionary past (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 3). On the other hand, Tanzania goes through a transition from a socialist to post-socialist regime wherein church-owned schools were banned before being allowed to operate later (*ibid*, p. 20).

The schools in the five cases described above, are not only fulfilling the right to religious education but also contributing to access and quality education in fragile and precarious context (Barber et al., 2020, p. 5). Even though the forms of cooperation with the state vary amongst the five cases described above, all of them operate in state systems that organize secular educational institutions which do not allow for the insertion of religion. It also becomes visible that other models of cooperation as earlier described in western democracies are not applicable in sub-Saharan Africa. These include models wherein the state itself offers religious education for distinct religions as the case in Germany for Christian religion or in Indonesia for Islam (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 19). Another relationship in which the state offers secular educational institutions in which religions are given spaces to practice do not also exist amongst the cases in sub-Saharan Africa (*ibid*, p. 19-20).

From the models of state-church relationship described, it can be possible as well as misleading for the state to group non-state faith-based schools as private. This requires the clarification and argumentation on which basis Protestant and other none-state faith-based schools can be considered private or public. The next section provides the analysis.

### **(b) Protestant schools: Private or public**

The discourse on non-state schooling is mainly focusing on private schools established by profit-making private bodies even though churches are providing the highest number of non-state schools (Scheunpflug, 2015, p. 38-39). The major challenge to the discourse of situating non-state schools is that there is no internationally recognized definition of private schools (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-6). The narratives about the recognition and funding of faith-based schools could be the starting point of gaining an understanding as summarized in the next paragraph.

The recognition and financial support to faith-based schools vary widely in different countries in Europe as public and political debates are concerned about their toleration with respect to access of students and the promotion of democratic virtues (Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 87-88). Maussen and Bader (2012, p. 21) further argue that basing only on toleration is not enough as there can also be good reasons to tolerate or not to tolerate a particular form of behaviour. Following the international human rights law, faith-based schools have the right to function on the basis of freedoms of education. That notwithstanding, the relation between state and faith-based schooling remains often unclear, especially in countries that have unstable educational frameworks as the context of the study at hand in Cameroon. To get a deeper understanding, Scheupflug and Wenz (2015, p. 4-6) argue that the nature of non-governmental religious schools need to be based on the questions about their level of offering access to education, responding to inequalities and the navigations on quality development. Non-governmental schools in this context are those owned and run by religious organizations or associations whether financed (partly or fully) or not financed by public funds (Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 88). These are schools earlier described in this study as non-state religious schools (cf. chapter 1).

Jointly labelling non-state schools as private schools with an elitist and selectivity profile assumption only makes the situation more ambiguous as each school type is complex and dynamic. To give a clear understanding, Scheupflug & Wenz (2015, p. 4-6) also suggest three aspects from which to base the description and differentiation of non-state schools, namely, financing of education, legal status and sponsorship. While educational financing focuses on who is providing funds and whether the running of the school is profit-making or not; the aspect of legal status on the other hand addresses issues of registration, curriculum and qualifications (Scheupflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-6, Scheupflug, 2015, p. 39-44; Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 87-101). Sponsorship also vary including both public and private actors. Therefore, sponsorship can be by religious organizations, parents' associations, communities, non-governmental organizations (NGO), state or a combination of the different entities

(Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 6). The three aspects described above are not adequate enough to identify a non-state school as private or public, thus it is necessary to also check what the school is serving for in a broader way as described in the next section.

The understanding of what the school is serving for is verified in regard to how the school responds to questions of access, inclusion, social justice (Fox & Vidra, 2012, p. 74) as well as how the school is dealing with aspects of plurality to religions and other world views (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-6; Olsen, 2012, p. 63-65). The question of how quality is developed is also of major importance.

Even though it can be argued that freedom as a right to express religious identity clashes with freedom from religion (Olsen, 2012, p. 65), securing the rights of education and religion is not private but public. Non-state Protestant schools can be described as public depending on the circumstance. Those that offer access and pluralism to different beliefs are providing education as a common good and with respect to this function can be described as public schools. However, some may tend to restrict access for particular aspects and can then be described as private with respect to access. Most non-state Christian schools in sub-Saharan Africa offer education to children from various backgrounds and religious beliefs, yet they charge low fee in circumstances where the state does not fulfil its responsibility of financing education. Besides this, Barber et al. (2020, p. 2-3) in a joint document by the International Office of Catholic Education (OIEC) and GPENreformation (Global Pedagogical Network - Joining in Reformation, the international network of Protestant schools) for UNESCO's Futures of Education Commission, argue that most Christian schools offer education as a public good and for pluralism, thus merit state financial support. This seems to be crucial for many countries of sub-Saharan Africa which have many non-state Christian schools serving a greater proportion of the vulnerable communities. The understanding that education is a public duty and a right for children is a great stimulus by the German development cooperation that is contributing and supporting partners in the developing context in this domain (Scheunpflug & Wenz, p. 5-6).

From the background of understanding Protestant schools as public or private, it would be misleading for UNESCO for example, to count all schools that are not funded by the state as private. On the contrary, Christian schools contribute large savings for state budgets by the fact that parents pay part or the total cost of sending their children to these schools (Barber et al., 2020, p. 7). The financial contribution of public funds by the state to non-state public faith-based schools is important as it is an investment for globalization, yet Anderson et al. (2013, p. 45) caution that such subsidies if not well reflected, may tend to enhance social stratification.

Non-state Christian schools continue to play an important role in fulfilling the right to education and developing quality yet it is not clear how well these schools are included in the donor policy. Therefore, leadership in protestant schools needs to shape this visibility. In the next section (cf. chapter 2.2), narratives about school leadership and quality school development are discussed.

## **2.2 School leadership and quality school development**

In this section, discourses about school leadership and how this is shaping school quality is analysed. This is very linked to the main research question of the study at hand that is concerned with perceptions of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their school leadership. The aspect of how the Protestant school profile looks like has already been analyzed in the previous sub-chapter (cf. chapter 2.1). This section will deepen on quality school leadership by first seeking to understand why school leadership matters (cf. chapter 2.2.1), followed by the analysis of models of school leadership in order to understand their effectiveness on school quality (cf. chapter 2.2.2). As one of the sub-research questions of the study is concerned with the challenges of school leadership, this aspect on the discourses about school leadership challenges concludes the section (cf. chapter 2.2.3).

There exist different conceptualizations of leadership. However, leadership understanding is argued by Bush (2013, p.4-5), to comprise of three attributes as follows: Leadership in the first place needs to involve a pro-

cess of influence by one person (or a team) over other people. Subsequently, while it is expected to be grounded in personal and professional values it also needs to develop and articulate the vision of the organization.

Irrespective of the fact that principals are the main persons to ensure school improvement towards better learning outcome, their impact is observed to be indirect through the teachers (Bush, 2022, p. 533). This therefore suggests that teachers and teaching quality matter (Gauthier et al., 2004, p. 5-9). Therefore, the question about why school leadership matters, needs deeper argumentations and this is analyzed in the section below.

### **2.2.1 Why school leadership matters**

There is realization that educational leaders are shaping school profiles and educational change and this gets success when the school leaders are perceived to work closely with teachers towards ensuring better learning and learning outcome for students (Buchanan, 2013, p. 1; Siddiqui, 2011, p. 21; Hallinger, 2003, p. 329). This conversation gets its focus when the look into how school leadership matters is narrowed to the specific argumentation about the role of school leadership on the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a school (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2006, p. 3-4).

Arguments about what schools are serving for have highlighted issues of access and quality. It would also be important to examine different forms of school leadership in order to unmask their influencing roles on issues of social justice, equity diversity and dealing with pluralism and how they connect these to power, authority and learners' outcome (Evans, 2013, p. 4-5). Blount (2013, p. 10) argues that one of the strategies to enhance social justice in education is for the educational leaders to respond to narratives that account for those oppressed or denied the right to education. As society keeps widening the gap between the privileged and the less privileged, the intervention by school leadership is necessary to bring change through education. Therefore, school leadership matters. In the section that follows (cf. chapter 2.2.2) the different ideal forms of school leadership are described.

### **2.2.2 Models of school leadership and implications for school quality**

This section concerns ideal types of school leadership also considered models of school leadership. These ideal types of principal's leadership have been adopted from experiences and research conducted in the Global North (Bush, 2022, p. 534). From the perspective of leadership theory, three models of school leadership are highlighted in this description and comprise of transactional (or administrative), transformational and instructional (or pedagogic) (Lavery, 2013, p. 146, Bush, 2013, p. 3-4). The implication of each type in regards to school quality is analyzed in function of student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2006, p. 7). It is not however clear which set of behaviors are likely to produce the most outstanding learning outcomes. In the paragraphs that follow, each of the ideal leadership types is described, beginning with the transactional leadership model.

#### **Transactional (or administrative) leadership model**

The transactional leadership type also known as administrative leadership type mirrors the traditional approach to school leadership by focusing of organizational and policy issues as vested on hierarchy (Bush, 2014, p. 163). It is concerned with everyday transaction characterized by the top down running of the school with bureaucratic directives (Lavery, 2013, p. 146-147). Amanchukwu et al., (2015, p. 8), emphasizes that the administrative leadership style articulates on organizational management and the relationship of the leader with staff is not only hierarchical but stresses on reward for those who succeed in accomplishing tasks and reprimands or punishment for those who fail in their duties. The consequence is that, teachers working within this leadership style are perceived not enthusiastic nor innovative to bring about growth in students learning and system development (Njobati, 2021, p. 15).

#### **Transformational leadership model**

Transformational leadership is characterized by the leader and teachers working together in a participatory way within the framework of the

school vision thus getting the staff committed (Anderson, 2017, p. 3-4). It is argued that with transformation leadership, there is more room for problem-solving by both teachers and students as decentralization is enforced and tasks managed by professional learning communities (Lavery, 2013, p. 147). This has a positive influence on school leaders to facilitate change. Transformational leaders do not only instill confidence in staff, but also make them see the benefits of working together for professional development and for the growth of the institution (Amanchukwu et al., (2015, p. 8-9). Even though transformational leadership is hailed for sustaining innovation using the bottom-top approach, ability to maintain continuous and sustaining innovation (Asbri et al., 2020, p. 11), it is criticized for not explicitly working towards learners' outcome. However, results from the analysis of 205 schools in Canada show that higher level of transformational leadership promotes higher teacher efficacy and commitment yielding overall student achievement even if the effect is small (Ross & Gray, 2006, p. 798 & 804). Marzano et al, (2006) have shown from results of meta-analysis that school leadership is shaping school effectiveness with great impact on student achievement, reinforcing that instructional leadership matters (p. 3-7).

### **Instructional leadership model**

Instructional leadership and transformational leadership styles have dominated the debate on the most effective leadership role of school principals. Hallinger (2003, p. 329) argues that sustainability is linked to factors within and without the context of the school thus necessitating leadership role in responding to the changing needs of schools in regards to the global educational reforms. Instructional leadership in particular is seen to enhance learning effectiveness as the leadership approach is facilitating better classroom instruction through quality teaching strategies (Bellibas et al., 2022, p. 812). Instructional leadership is mainly concerned with the students learning outcome wherein the school leader is guided by the school mission, developing the teaching learning process in a conducive learning climate (Njobati 2021, p. 16-17). Findings from studies conducted by Goddard et al. (2019, p. 197) reveal that instructional leadership

is related to teachers' differentiated instructional practices regardless of the school size and prior student achievement. Similarly, differentiated instruction is a predictor of student achievement. This requires that the school leader focuses on teaching and learning which are considered the central tasks of a school (Lavery, 2013, p. 147).

### **Implications of leadership models for school quality**

From the three ideal types of school leadership described above, both transformation and instructional types suggest an orientation towards better quality with instructional leadership creating a better learner outcome. However, a school principal does not exhibit only one type of leadership theory or style (Martin, 2018, p. 159). Hargreaves and Fink (2006, p. 550) further argue that the stability of leadership effects are connected to the sustainability of professional learning communities. This requires deepening learning with focus on learner outcome and by distributed leadership. It therefore requires that besides the typical models of school leadership, there is also increasing interest in models such as distributed, participative and democratic leadership that are considered shared models with teacher leadership (Bush, 2022, p. 533).

Debate about school leadership implications on school quality, uphold the insertion of school leaders as change agents both at the school and system levels by first determining the impact and reflecting on change processes and strategies (Fullan, 2012, p. 1). Leaders working as change agents need to challenge unethical policies and practices as a social responsibility (Duignan, 2006, p. 11-12). This requires great courage and a combination of resources from different ideal leadership types. Even though discourses on school leadership have shifted from inputs to learning outcomes as ultimate indicator for quality (Anderson et al., 2013, p. 57), narratives on the implications of leadership models need to consider the shift as well as to include the dimension of social justice. The emergence of distributed leadership also known as shared or democratic leadership particularly seeks to redefine power relations in the school setting thereby contributing to the reduction of inequality gaps in the school

landscape (Diamond, 2013, p. 83 & 95). Research on educational leadership besides the focus on learners' outcome, need as well to place arguments that deal with the development of inclusive societies (Evans, 2013, p. 4-5).

### **2.2.3 Challenges of school leadership**

Bush (2022, p. 533) observes that school principals face various challenges in their main responsibility to ensure school improvement, students learning outcome and welfare but that the situation varies with context and is more acute for those who have not had professional preparation and training as school leaders. In a scoping review to analyze literature concerning problems and challenges faced by school leaders within the period from 2003 to 2019, (Tintoré, Cunha, Cabral, & Alves, 2022, p. 536), a high number and complexity of problems emerged. Of the problems identified, the complex nature of the job as school principal and the complexity involved in dealing with educational authorities and educational policy have been registered as most recurrent even though the nature of each problem varies with context (Tintoré et al., 2022, 536).

Arguments on educational policies related to social justice, equity and response to diversity and demanding the enhancement by school leaders have been current in the Global North, yet the practical response is faced with the difficulties to meet the expectations (Evans, 2013, p. 1-3). Therefore, the challenge of educational justice is not only the problem of the developing countries even though the degrees and intensities vary. By exploring the inclusion of critically oriented leadership theories, Capper and Green (2013, p. 62 & 77), highlight that school leaders can have the potential to develop both learner outcome and enhance social justice in education. Tintoré et al, (2022, p. 536 & 563) then conclude this by underlining that educational policies need to be designed in a way that the leadership job of school principals is facilitated and accompanied by professional leadership training with room for more autonomy from educational hierarchies.

The pressure of authorities at various system levels on school leaders is observed to be high. From the Danish education system experience,

Moos (2011, p. 65) notes that school leadership development influenced by transnational insertions on questions guided by international organizations such as OECD for the training of school leaders can be over tasking as a checklist for leadership success. School leaders do not only face the pressure from their hierarchy but also from parents and the society at large. This makes educational leadership to be considered a risk taking responsibility as the expectations from school leaders goes to aspects that could be beyond their competence. The situation gets more intriguing where the school leaders pay more attention in enhancing elite institutions for the economic class rather than consciously distributing learning opportunities more broadly with greater attention given to the socially disadvantaged learners (Blount, 2013, p. 7-8).

As already noted on the relevance of instructional leadership in shaping better learner outcome through the focus on learning and teaching quality (Bellibas et al., 2022, p. 812), the job of teachers themselves goes beyond classroom activities to include leading responsibilities. Crowther et al., (2009, p. 1-2) argue that for a paradigm shift in the teaching profession whereby teachers visibly take new forms of leadership captured as teacher leadership, this has challenges on how to deal with exigencies and expectations from parents and the society, given that the teachers' leadership role is less recognized. Zidan (2011, p. 1011 & 1024) insinuates that sustaining the school culture which upholds educational quality outcomes, would require recognition, professional support and empowerment of teachers within an inclusive leadership framework. From this background, it can be argued that discourses on school leadership need to give visibility to teacher leadership which has emerged as complement to models of school leadership by principals (Bush, 2022, p. 53-534).

From the description about school leadership challenges, discourses have raised concerns of limited professional training and difficulties in understanding and dealing with educational policies that have a wider spectrum such as social justice. The complexities linked to pressure from educational authorities who function in hierarchical structures and the diverse expectations from parents and society abound. The emerging field of teacher leadership poses new challenge of how to recognize and

develop it. Most of the challenges describe come from school leadership discourses in the Global North. The reflection of school leadership challenges from the discourses in sub-Saharan Africa are few with challenges limited to local contextual issues such as financial difficulties in running schools and lack of professional training (Njobati, 2021, p. 80-83, Ebot-Ashu & Bisschoff, 2015, p. 82) meanwhile school principals' reflection on challenges related to global policy issues are not highlighted.

### **2.3 Leadership in Cameroon schools**

In the framework of the study at hand that is contextualized in Cameroon, this section reflects on discourses about school leadership in Cameroon. Research about school quality development and leadership in Cameroon schools is limited and more lacking as far as Christian schools are concerned.

Besides challenges of quality in education, Cameroon has since independence witnessed different forms of inadequacies in school leadership, meanwhile there has been increasing interest of different stakeholders about how to develop this; yet the situation of leadership education and practice still remains unclear (Ashu, 2014, p. 1). In a quantitative study by Ebot-Ashu and Bisschoff (2015, p. 83-103) that sampled 190 school leaders from both state and non-state schools to survey Cameroonian educators' beliefs about the elements required for primary school leadership, results were two fold. On the one hand, results showed that principals lack a broader portfolio on school leadership and on the other part school leaders lack the awareness and competences of dealing with global challenges in spite of the precarious context in which they function.

Regarding the form and focus of leadership in Cameroon schools, results from a qualitative study though limited to non-state schools (Njobati, 2021, p. 69-83) show that school leadership focuses mostly on administrative routines. These results reflect the centralized nature of education by the state with state-control patterns. On the other hand, Lange (2016, p. 64) reveals perspectives from another lens that shows a more interactive and reflected school leadership. Results from her study in which she analysed the intervention in professional teacher development by non-state

faith-based in-service teacher training programme in the Anglophone part of Cameroon show findings in two aspects. First, trained teachers in program schools make a difference for learners' achievement and function in systemic support structures that ensure professional learning communities and innovative teaching (Lange, 2016, p.168-169) with room for improvement on learners' activation. Regarding school leadership, the results of the study point to the professional development of principals towards learners' achievement (ibid, p. 170-171). The study of Lange (2016) shows that effective and efficient in-service teacher professional development can compensate the absence of pre-service teacher training. The school leadership landscape in Cameroon is therefore diverse. In another quantitative study by Etomes and Molua (2019, p. 109-111), that sampled 320 teachers on the question about strategies used by principals in state (government) secondary schools in Fako division of the South West region of Cameroon, results rather show more administrative and supervisory role of school principals.

There is still a gap on the question of the nature of school leadership, the self-understanding by school principals and professional capacity needs. Training of school leaders in state institutions still focuses on the supervisory and managerial functions (Lyonga, 2022, p. 35-37). From this backdrop, Ashu (2014, P.31) argues that leadership development of school principals in Cameroon should address informed responsibilities on learners and school development.

Findings from the systematic literature review of school leadership in West Africa (Bush & Glover, 2016, p. 80) point to the fact that no country in this sub-Region provides clear preparations for school principals and that the school leadership style is not only managerial but also centralized both within and beyond the school. As far as education in Protestant schools is concerned, there are no studies so far connected with the theological self-understanding of school leadership in faith-based schools in Cameroon.

## **2.4 Leadership in Protestant schools: How it looks like and what it is serving for**

The study at hand is concerned with the self-understanding of the Principals of Protestant secondary schools about their leadership in Protestant schools. It is therefore important to understand what is specific about leadership in Protestant schools. This section analysis the nature of leadership in Protestant schools and tries to respond to the question of what it is serving for.

Even though non-state faith-based schools operate within states that have set their national standards, it does not mean Protestant schools in such a context cannot contribute in different ways by adding value from the richness of faith community. This calls for effective leadership in the faith-based schools to open for dialogue with the society (Gellel, 2013, p. 21). Leadership in Protestant schools may not only be concerned with educational goals but much more on aspects of faith and spiritual life of individuals, thus giving the school a specific identity (Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 141). However, spiritual aspects and faith need to be operationalized in the daily life of the school. How to do this requires the reflected role of the school leaders to bring about transformation. Therefore, leaders in faith-based schools would be expected to empower teachers and students, and foster quality, social justice and sustainability as a conscious dimension of the school profile towards the positive transformation of society (Gellel, 2013, p. 22).

Understanding society first requires the understanding and perception of human beings. From the Christian perspective, human beings are valued not only on the premise of being social individuals but much more as persons created in the image and in communion with God thus deserving to be respected and supported for who the individuals are (Case-Winters, 2004, p. 813). This necessitates that a leader of a faith-based school has to be conversant with such a theological understanding which highlights students' individuality and rational autonomy (Gellel, 2013, p.27-28). The leader in this regards needs to create space to enhance self-reflection for self and others, connecting between solitude, silence and inclu-

sion (Stern, 2013, p.109-112). The creation of appropriate spaces for solitude and silence are rooted in religious monastic traditions that are suggested to enhance self-reflection for the professional life of teachers and students learning (ibid, p. 112 &122).

One of the important aspects hoped for Protestant school identity is the commitment to learners' autonomy, diaconal learning and social justice (cf. chapter 2.1.2). This requires that Protestant school leadership are expected to constantly dialogue with teachers, students, parents and community representatives about the understanding on issues of social justice and how the school is responding to them (Blount, 2013, p. 19). Therefore, leadership in Protestant schools seeks to care for individuals in the school community, accepting and supporting students for who they are and simultaneously being vigilant in reducing the socio-economic gaps between the more fortunate and the poor and vulnerable groups (Gellel, 2013, p.28). Astonishingly, some state and non-state schools may be contributing to practices and processes of reinforcing injustices, thus widening the socio-economic gap (Duignan, 2007, p. 7), an issue Protestant school leaders need to be sensitive about.

Leadership in Protestant schools like other faith-based schools is also challenged by the phenomenon of the secularization of the population. In spite of this, school leaders need to work towards the enhancement of religious socialization in an inclusive way (Engebretson, 2013, p. 165). This calls for Protestant school leaders to see themselves as agents of change, framing education in their schools as a moral enterprise with a critical responsibility to bring about systemic school transformation (Fullan, 2003, p. xiv-xvi). Such leaders need besides technical efficiency, the cultivation of virtues that consider the learning process as the development of humanity, giving school leadership an ethical understanding (Starratt, 2004). Based on this, school leaders do not only need to show efforts of inclusive school development but should also create moments to celebrate diversity and strive to free the school and society from the grip of ethno-national religious fundamentalism (Kollontai, 2013, p. 83-84).

As the future gets more complex for the global society, school leadership itself gets greater complexities necessitating that aspects of ethics

and authenticity visibly constitute part of school leading. This is a daunting challenge for faith-based school leaders for whom society looks up to in matters of tolerance about diversity or mutual respect for differences (Duignan, 2007, p. 11-12). From this background, it is important to understand school leaders' or teachers' religious and worldview beliefs and how this is related to their professional thinking and acting, yet there is scarce empirical knowledge about the nature of such relations (Häusler et al., 2019, p. 24). Based on two studies conducted by Häusler et al. (2019, p. 24 & 36) and by Penthin et al. (2022, p.282) and connected to teachers' religious and worldview beliefs, results show that there exists a relation between the teachers' beliefs and their professional thinking and acting. There is little information in regards to school leaders' religious and worldview beliefs and how this is related to their professional responsibilities.

From a study conducted in some Christian schools in the United States of America and Canada (Martin, 2018, p. 157), on the questions about instructional leadership qualities of school principals, results show that Christian school leadership is focusing more on the spiritual and cultural aspects. On the other hand, there is less visibility on instructional leadership. Without undermining the importance of spiritual concerns in Christian schools, leaders in protestant schools would need to be committed towards instructional leadership as Protestant schools want to improve school quality.

In summary, Protestant school leaders are expected to be responsible for shaping the profile of the schools they are leading by enhancing dimensions of the Protestant school profile described in chapter 2.1.2. School leaders in Protestant schools therefore have the daunting task to teach and lead not only quality education improvement, but more importantly diversity which is quite demanding and requires a balance between the commitment to their own beliefs yet opened to others (Preez, p. 65, 2013). This thought for faith-based schools can also contribute to a plausible response of how the fourth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) that calls for inclusive, equitable and quality education (Wagner et al., 2022, p. 1) can be achieved.

## 2.5 Why to profile none-state religious schools

This section brings the argumentation about the importance of profiling religious schools. As already explained in sub-chapter 2.1, Protestant schools are globally, locally and functionally diverse, yet much can be achieved for the benefit of the global society by exploring and rooting in the heritage of the Reformation (EKD, 2017, p. 10).

The analysis of the Protestant school profile (cf. chapter 2.1) gives impulses that go into the debate about Protestant schools and globalization, Protestant schools and pluralism, and Protestant schools and their relation to the state system. Therefore, Protestant schools themselves and the society need to have an explicit and shared understanding of what these schools are serving for, what challenges they face and what potentials they have. In the following paragraphs, the argumentations to make visible profiles of non-state religious schools are analysed.

Human civilization has continued to experience the role of religious institutions in providing education, reflecting on how to improve quality and shaping communities world-wide (Gellel, 2013, p. 13), yet this is not visibly shared. Churches through their educational landscapes add value to school quality development with further compliments by the fact that the more civil society is involved in schools, the more its quality is raised (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 19). This gets greater impact on society when churches show their commitment to the inclusive function of their schools, thus providing quality education for responsible freedom (Scheunpflug 2015, p. 38).

Besides quality school development, non-state religious schools are providing safe spaces that strengthens the spirituality of the learners, giving them room to be critical about both Christian traditions and globalization, promoting human dignity, solidarity and tolerance (Buchanan, 2013, p. 1-2; Klenke, 2007, p. 68 & 88-90). Therefore, the dimension of responding to education and religion as a human right is underlined with plurality of ideological beliefs upheld (Scheunpflug 2015, p. 40-41; UNESCO, 2000, p. 12-13). This role of Protestant schools in regards to educational justice gets pertinent in unstable and fragmented societies most of which are low-income countries that paradoxically register the

most rapid population growth (United Nations, 2022, p. 1-2). In spite of this, the infiltration of fundamentalist aspects which stir exclusion is a risk that constantly needs to be controlled (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 14-18). The situation of dealing with fundamentalism as well as well as ideological perspectives of democratic states would have the possibility to be discussed and controlled, only if the profile of Protestant schools is explicit.

By rooting on the Protestant school profile and school networking, there is greater and more visible connection to a positive global mutual partnership (Simojoki, 2016, p. 17). Litz (2011, p. 47) has argued that schooling in globalized context needs to evolve and to be sensitive to the multiple and complex effects brought by globalization on society. The uncertainties related to globalization such as the emergence of multicultural societies is a challenge for schooling (Buchanan, 2013, p. 3-4). As a contribution to overcome uncertainties of globalization, Hornberg (2002, p. 187-195) suggests the mandatory inclusion of human rights in the general education curriculum with emphasis on the didactical aspects. However, if schooling is organized in a way that students hold attitudes and believes that are rooted in pluralistic understanding of society, they would have the possibility of dealing with diversity with more competences of leading intergroup change and peace building (Yablon, 2013, p. 102). This further reiterates the necessity for an explicit school profile. The religious dimension in education can be a good foundation for building inclusive globalized societies and by also reflecting on secularized Christianity which is seen to offer spaces of enhancing religious diversities and worldviews in schools (Bertram-Toost et al., 2018, p. 1). Therefore, by offering protestant schools, churches are offering a service to the global society and also taking responsibility. By this, non-state religious schools need to be explicit by their profile in mediating these processes.

Churches in matters of education, also demonstrate global solidarity in adding extra funding for education by their members, international cooperation and networks (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 14-16 & 20-21). These contributions are not visibly acknowledged or reflected in national and international educational reports. There is the need to give visibility

to this. Questions on education about its financing, accountability and dealing with equity and diversity are shaping the politics of education with increasing concerns of what this means for school leadership in a post-racial era (Lerma, Linick, Warren-Grice & Parker, 2013, p. 23 & 39). The role of the church and religion in both private and public life is therefore of great importance in contributing to a just and fair society and this can be shaped by reflected faith-based education, captured by an explicit profile (Gardner et al. 2005, p.2). From the afore-mentioned analysis, an explicit profile of non-state religious schools is crucial. This is because, the profile does not only give an orientation of how to enhance learners' and school development, but also provides an explicit base to guard against religious fundamentalism and beliefs that may be contributing to widening inequality gaps or fragmenting the society. As school leadership is shaping the profile of schools, the argumentation of an explicit profile finds a central place in the study at hand.

## **2.6 Relevance of the study and the research gaps addressed**

The present study that seeks the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders about their leadership in Protestant schools shows research gaps in the previous sections of this chapter in regards to the Protestant school profile and school leadership.

As far as the Protestant school profile is concerned, current research mainly highlights this in countries of the Global North. There are still gaps in research when it comes to the question of inclusivity and exclusivity and argumentation regarding the role of non-state religious schools and their relationship with the state. This research gap is re-echoed by debate at the international level whether faith-based schooling is widening or reinforcing inequality gaps. On the other hand, as far as school leadership is concerned, there are also research gaps especially about the self-understanding of Principals regarding their roles as leaders in non-state religious schools. The concerns whether leadership of schools is contributing to enlightenment or fundamentalism emerges. This research gap is further amplified, as leadership matters in shaping school quality development yet schooling quality is still a major problem in the Global South.

As far as further discourse related to school leaders' or teachers' religious and worldview beliefs are concerned and how these are related to their professional thinking and acting, there is no empirical knowledge from sub-Saharan Africa. The existing empirical studies are few and are based on studies conducted in the Global North.

These research gaps as presented above represent pressing questions in the quality gap in many countries and in international discourses. In the specific context of the development cooperation countries where Christian schools are shaping the landscape of education as the case of Cameroon and many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, yet functioning under economic and financial restrictions, it becomes necessary to overcome these gaps. This is relevant with the objective to develop educational quality that simultaneously enhances social justice in a pluralistic society and with the recognition of religion as a right.

The reduction of these gaps as set out in this study are consistent with the international movements on sustainable development goals (SDG) especially on the fourth goal that stresses on inclusive, equitable and quality education (cf. chapter 2.3). Therefore, conducting research on school leaders from faith-based non-state schools as conceptualized in this study is essential to contribute to the discourse from the Global South.

In the attempt to address the research gaps, this study provides the space and is guided by the research questions (cf. chapter 1.3). The main research question seeks the perceptions of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their school leadership. This main question is operationalized in three parts, first about how Protestant school leaders describe their leadership. This is followed by how the school leaders understand the Protestant School Profile and ends with sub-question that seeks to find out the challenges the principals perceive in their leadership. The following findings based on the state of research have been reached.

### **How do Protestant school principals describe their school leadership?**

Literature about how Principals in the context of the study describe their leadership is lacking. However, some literature about school leadership in Cameroon (cf. chapter 2.3) show that school leadership in Cameroon

mainly focuses on administrative routines within an educational system that is centralized. As far as education in Protestant schools is concerned, there are no studies so far connected with the theological self-understanding of principals in faith-based schools. Discourses from the Global North highlight leadership in Protestant schools (cf. chapter 2.4) and raises the argumentations about the responsibilities of school principals in dealing with issues of social justice, dealing with plurality of belief and religions as well as other world views.

### **What is the understanding of the Protestant school principals about the Protestant school profile?**

In the study contextualized in Cameroon, there is lack of literature about the explicit Protestant school profile. Current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in Western countries (cf. chapter 2.1) and suggests the common ground for understanding the Protestant school profile in spite of the fact that Protestant schools exist and function in context. The Protestant profile based on discourses is rooted in the Reformation and differentiated into theological and pedagogical dimensions. The profile bases its explicit narratives on the freedom of a Christian, justification by faith, priesthood of all believers, independent reading of the bible and service to God's creation. The pedagogical understanding from these narrative suggests beyond the enforcement of educational quality, the efforts to ensure care and autonomy of learners, and ecumenical learning for global social justice. The Protestant school profile therefore pays attention to the diaconal dimension.

### **What are the challenges principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon perceive in their leadership?**

From the discourses about school leadership in Cameroon, literature is lacking in regards to the perception of challenges by school leaders. From the context analysis (cf. chapter 1), Protestant schools like other non-state faith-based schools in Cameroon face the challenge of limited financing. These schools also have the challenge of being considered as private schools. Additionally, the school leaders themselves do not profile the

public character of the schools. Literature about school leadership in Cameroon (cf. chapter 2.3) show that school leadership lacks professional training. School principals' reflection on challenges related to global policy issues are not highlighted. On the other hand, school leadership discourses from the Global North highlight challenges (cf. chapter 2.2.3) which range from limited professional training to school leadership challenges of how to deal with complexities of educational policies that address broader fields such as social justice and dealing with diversity and pluralistic societies.

## 2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter about the state of research with focus on the Protestant profile, specifications and analysis from discourse regarding what the study is about have been made. This has been based on the research interest that seeks school leaders understanding about their leadership in Protestant secondary schools. Two key concepts, protestant profile and school leadership which are outstanding for the study have been deepened from the respective discourses (cf. chapter 2.1 and chapter 2.2). As the study is contextualized in Cameroon and about leadership in Protestant schools, discourses about school leadership in Cameroon have been highlighted (cf. chapter 2.3) with argumentations about what is peculiar about leadership in Protestant schools (cf. chapter 2.4). In addition, the question regarding the importance of the profile of non-state faith-based schools have been discussed (cf. chapter 2.5).

The state of research has also been analyzed to bring out the relevance and gap the study seeks to address (cf. chapter 2.6). Based on the state of research, the research questions have been developed showing the gap for which the study seeks to engage in as a contribution of discourses from the Global South. As this research is new in the context of the Global South, an exploratory study design is adopted in the framework of qualitative approach. This is described in the next chapter about the methodology (cf. chapter 3).

### 3 Methodology and methods

Based on the discourses analyzed for the study at hand (cf. chapter 2) on the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders about their leadership in Protestant schools and the analysis of the research questions (cf. chapter 1.3), this chapter describes the methodological approach of the study. In the first section, the research methodology that englobes the decision and choice of the research approach is described (cf. chapter 3.1). This is followed by the description the method of data collection (chapter 3.2), the sampling technique on which the study is framed (cf. chapter 3.3) and the method of data analysis and quality control of the findings (cf. chapter 3.4). The chapter ends with an ethical consideration (cf. chapter 3.5).

#### 3.1 Methodology: Hypothesis-generating qualitative approach

The topic of this research, captioned as “Protestant school leaders — a qualitative research about their self-understanding: Case of Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon” is new in the research context of the Global South. This therefore requires an exploratory study about the experiences of school principals for which a qualitative approach is used (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 5 & 11). As qualitative research aims at investigating the experiences, understandings and perceptions of individuals (Thanh & Thanh, 2015, p. 24, Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p.11 & 525), this becomes suitable for the main research question of this study at hand that is interested on the perceptions of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their school leadership. It is important to note that framing this study as a qualitative research is not about the quality of research project itself or about the qualification of the participants involved but rather about the social field and the qualities that emerge from data (Krüger, 2010, p. 53). This may explain why qualitative research features more in the social domain to facilitate the conceptualization of the social world (Hammersley, 2018, p. 1 & 6). Based on this understanding, Berg (2001, p. 6) argues that qualitative research does not only seek to answer questions that are related to the experiences of individuals but also examines the social settings that inhabit the individuals. In the study at hand, the social setting is contextualized in protestant secondary schools

in Cameroon for which the self-understanding of school principals about the Protestant school profile gets its relevance in the research approach chosen. The decision and choices about the object of the study and the research processes are important to shape the methodological understanding of the study (Steinke, 2004, p. 186-189). More precisely, the research strategy used in the study at hand is framed as hypothesis-generating that is based on the grounded theory (Bohnsack et al., 2010, p.14, Pfaff et al., 2010, p. 14). In this methodology, the research design does not first set hypothesis, but rather generates hypothesis and theory development from what the school principals say about their self-understanding of school leading in Protestant schools (Kuczynski & Daly, 2003, p. 385, Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 7). By using the grounded theory that is embedded in the section about data collection and analysis (cf. chapter 3.2 and chapter 3.4), through iterative processes, this leads to the abstract theoretical explanations and hypothesis generation from the data itself (Charmaz 2014, p.1 & 8).

It is by reflecting on the research questions that the exploratory approach, hypothesis-generating methodology using the grounded theory and other research choices such as deciding on the participants and how to collect and analyze data have been considered (Malhotra, 2017, p. 172; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 87-89). These decisions on scientific investigation in the study are appropriate to gain the meaning of what school's principals attribute to their leadership actions in Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon (Gatti et al., 2010, p. 41; Dey, 2003, p. 11-12). The use of the grounded theory to generate the hypothesis and theoretical explanations for the study is deepened in the next sections about data collection and analysis. Therefore, the study will use narrative interviews with secondary school principals by a theoretical sampling which will be interpreted and analyzed by content analysis with inductive and deductive coding.

### **3.2 Data collection: Semi-structured narrative interviews**

This section explains the method of data collection by semi-structured narrative interviews for the qualitative study at hand about the self-understanding of Protestant secondary school principals about their leadership. As the study is exploratory and hypothesis-generating (cf. chapter 3.1), the method of data collection and analysis follows the grounded theory leading to the abstract theoretical explanations from the data itself (Charmaz 2014, p.1 & 8). The perceptions of principals about school leadership are collected by semi-structured interviews (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 359). In the paragraphs that follow, the description of the grounded theory that underlines the decision for semi-structured interviews as method of data collection is described.

#### **Decision for narrative semi-structured interviews**

The grounded theory seeks to develop a theory that is grounded in data which is systematically gathered and analyzed, thus suggesting that there should be a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis (Malhotra, 2017, p. 172). That is why in this study at hand, both processes of data collection by semi-structured interviews and data analysis had been engaged simultaneously from when the first set of data was collected. In spite of this and for the purpose of logical presentation, the description of data analysis would be presented later (cf. chapter 3.4). Data collection in itself is conceived as an interactive process through which the researcher finds the possibilities to elicit meaningful interpretations (Dey, 2003, p. 38). Even though grounded theory is outstanding as it leads to the emergence of new theories, this innovation is still scarce because of its commitment of letting theories emerge inductively from data rather than imposing analytic frameworks in advance (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167). On the one hand also, not all induction processes logically lead to novel theoretical insights. Nonetheless the debate about the philosophical positioning of the grounded theory methodology profiles it under positivism, hermeneutics and pragmatism philosophical paradigms, this theory is understood as a conceptual theory that enhances understanding

(Age, 2011, 1599 & 1612-1613). The implication is that the grounded theory can fit in a variety of research immaterial of the research tradition and philosophical position. The deep understanding of the grounded theory necessitates the systematic, and yet flexible way of data collection and analysis in an iterative way in order to construct theory from data itself, (Charmaz 2014, p.15). Therefore, the method of data collection for this study by semi-structured interview is described with explanations linked to the grounded theory.

As the research question of the study at hand seeks to find out the experiences of school principals about their leadership in Protestant schools, interviews have been chosen as a suitable method of data collection. This is because they offer a process in which the researcher and participant (school principal) engage in a conversation that is linked to the research question (deMarrais, 2004, p. 54). More precisely, semi-structure interviews have been adopted for the study with preset open-ended questions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 359). Even though the guiding questions are developed in advance, their open nature give space to interviewees to express their thoughts, opinions, perspectives, or descriptions of specific experiences (deMarrais, 2004, p. 54). Furthermore, in the course of the interview, additional questions, comments and impulses are asked or probed. This makes the difference with structured interviews wherein there is no room for additional questions. Compared to unstructured interviews, the interviewee in semi-structured interviews has limited opportunity to offer a unique perspective outside of the research question frame (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 259-260). The decision to use individual semi-structured interviews for this study was guided by the fact that it facilitated the collection of experiences of individual principals wherein the interviewer had only once possibility to meet the interviewee. An additional suitability of this method is that the interactions between the interviewer and the participant were focused to the main area of the study. The semi-structured character also allowed the researcher to amend the line of conversation on issues not earlier identified thus improving the overall quality of the data. As argued by Savin-Baden & Major (2013, p. 361), the type of interview is related to the research approach that is guiding the

study. In the following paragraphs, the structure and process of the interviews in this study are described beginning with the interview background questions and interview guide. This is followed by the description of the interview process and post-interview reflections.

### **Background questionnaire for the interview**

In order to get detailed leadership experiences from the school principals, the interview background questionnaire was developed, paying attention to the research questions, ethical considerations, stimulation for extensive talk by interviewees as well as reflecting interviewer roles and responsibilities (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 332-333 & 359-361; Berg, 2001, p. 53-58). The interview background questionnaire of this study was formulated in two versions based on the two languages, English and French used by the school principals in their professional lives as earlier explained in the context of the study (cf. chapter 1.1.1). Both versions carry the same content (cf. annex). The interview background questionnaire was structured in four parts, namely the reference, introduction, stimulations and closing with provisions for the collection of biographical information of the interviewee and workplace.

In the reference section of the background questionnaire which is the first part, the provisions for the entry of the date, venue, starting and ending times, as well the anonymized label of the interviewee and name of interviewer are entered. Identifying the interviewee with an anonymized label is essential for ethical working purpose (Berg, 2001, p.58). This information in the reference section would later be necessary in introducing interview portraits in the results chapter (cf. chapter. 4.1). The reference section of this study at hand was filled within each interview session.

The second section of the background questionnaire which is the introduction, responds to two purposes. First, it gives an overview for the interview encounter and most especially ensures the ethical fulfilment of consent, choice and anonymity (Berg, 2001, p.56-57). This dimension during data collection of the study at hand was treated with high importance as participation in social science research is voluntary and with ethical considerations (Berg, 2001, p.53). As consent can either be ensured

through writing using an informed consent slip or through implied consent through an explanation of the study (Berg, 2001, p.56-58), the study at hand made use of the latter (implied consent) as school principals in the study did not have available time to fill the consent slip. The detailed ethical consideration for the study is described in chapter 3.5. The introduction which is found within the background questionnaire (cf. appendix 1) was explained to the interviewee for their consent before the start of the interview proper.

### **Interview guide**

The interview guide which offers the stimulation is the core and comprises of the open-ended questions for the interview. The formulation of these open questions took into consideration on the one hand, the research questions of this study that focuses on the perceptions of secondary school principals about their leadership in Protestant schools and their understanding of the protestant school profile (cf. chapter 1.2). Secondly, the model for semi-structured interview questions that ensures the systematic and progressive description of experiences, moving from general to specific stimulations that elicit in-depth data for the study was adopted (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p 364-370). It is argued that in semi-structured interviews, the formulation of questions that can stimulate interviewees to give full accounts and narratives of their experiences need to be short, clear and open-ended (deMarrais, 2004, p. 61-62). For the study at hand, this is reflected already in the initial question which was as follows:

(1) I will like to learn from your experiences as a principal of a protestant secondary school. Tell me about your everyday work in school.

This initial question was more general to collect background experiences as well as usher possibilities to probe for follow-up or for deepening. Also in the formulation of questions, care was taken to ensure that interviewees stayed to talk about their experiences without them being pushed to sympathetic conversations or to aspects of intellectual testing (Savin-Baden &

Major, 2013, p. 366). Besides, the initial question, the following questions were formulated for the interview guide:

(2) You are in charge of leadership in your school, how do you do this? Tell me!

(3) Can you tell me more about your school! what makes your school different?

(4) From your experience, how would you describe school leadership in a protestant school? (Or from your experience, can you further tell what leadership means in a protestant school like yours?)

(5) From your experience as a Principal of a Protestant secondary school, tell me the challenges (difficulties) you face.

(6) Tell me, what are the most important things from your experience of leading a Protestant school like yours?

(7) As a Principal of this Protestant college, what plans do you have for the future? Tell me.

(8) Are there other things you will like me to know concerning your experience as principal of a protestant secondary school? (cf. appendix 1).

Even though the opened questions were numbered on the interview guide, during the interview process, the order was flexible and not strictly followed depending on which angles the interviewee already talked about during the initial question. As the same guide was used for all school principals in the study, it allowed for comparable data across respondents, an aspect that is important in the chapter about data analysis (cf. chapter 3.4).

The following part is concerned with closing and offers the space to thank the interviewee and assure the confidentiality of the data as well as exchange contact address for further information if necessary (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p 367-368). At the closing of each interview session I offered each principal interviewed a diary and a pen given that their leadership responsibilities involves time management and project management. This also serves as an ethical consideration in the framework of respect and honour (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 333) as described later in the section about ethical consideration (cf. chapter 3.6). The collection of information about the biography of the interviewee and that of the work

place is then completed. This biography is important in the sample description (cf. chapter 3.3). Even though, some aspects of the interview process have featured in the description of the interview guide above, the following section addresses important concerns for the process of conducting the interviews in this study.

### **Interview process**

The interview process comprises of getting the interview guide stable, establishing the medium for the interview, ensuring the preparation and practice of interviewers, organizing the appointment, venue and setting for the interview as well as ascertaining the conditions, responsibilities and roles during the interview proper. In order to stabilize the interview guide for the study at hand, the draft version was first shared with my supervisor and PhD learning community<sup>1</sup> for constructive feedback and for a shared understanding. In regard to the medium of the interview, I framed it as a face-to-face interview wherein both the interviewee and I, as the interviewer are in the same physical space at the same time (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, P. 362-364). Even though there were possibilities to use other technologically assisted media such as telephone and computer conferencing, my decision to use a face-to-face option was to ensure trust and an original encounter for an in-depth conversation to elicit experiences of the school principals. Also given that I had physical access to the participants in a context of the study characterized by poor telephone and internet connection, the choice of a face-to-face meeting turned out to be the best for the study.

Besides the medium for the interview, Bryman (2012) argues that successful interviews amongst other aspects require preparation in regards to self-readiness, the setting and equipment control (p. 473). For this

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study, my self-preparation was guided by the ethical dimension of ensuring a transparent process of situating myself in relation to the school principals and reflecting on power relations (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, P. 332-333). Given that some of the principals in the study function within my professional context of intervention, I ensured that such principals were not interviewed by myself but rather by a member of my PhD learning community who is external to this context. This is also an ethical aspect of transparency (Moravcsik, 2014, p. 48) as further discussed later in the section about ethical consideration (cf. chapter 3.6). Based on this, I did several rehearsals and simulations with the learning community member on the use of the interview guide to assure consistency of the research. By reflecting and checking power relations, the interviews were planned outside of office settings in neutral, quiet and safe venues to keep the interviewee relaxed and less distracted. In a few cases, and based on the choice of the school principal, the interviews were conducted in their own offices. As the interviews were to be recorded, I checked the recording device in advance to ensure the availability of recording space as well as additional Badgerteries to boost a consistent recording quality. In addition, as soon as the interview was over, I stored the recorded file in my computer and a back-up in an external drive to ensure safety of not losing data.

During the conduction of interviews, it is important to constantly ascertain the role and responsibility of the interviewer to ensure quality (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, P. 361). In the case of this study, besides my responsibility of probing questions, I kept the interviewees more confident and inclined to the conversation by how I asked questions, listened and observed them. I posed the questions in a simple, clear and gentle way, ensuring that I maintained a balance. The understanding of balance is ensuring that that mostly the interviewee is talking (Bryman, 2012, p. 475) while the interviewer mainly nods the head or make simple sounds like “mmm”. In addition to setting the balance, I assured ethical sensitivity by ensuring the confidentiality of the data. In addition to effective listening, I also ensured in a simultaneous way a conscious observation of

the interviewee by giving a facial expression of encouragement to continue talking, maintaining a posture that showed a feeling of being alert and getting clues from eye contacts (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 361-362). During interviews I took notes as well as ensured that all the interviews of this study were audio-recorded and later transcribed as text for analysis all of which are registered in a CD accompanying the study. The recording ensured a complete account of the series of exchanges in the conversation, the richness of the data and its originality (Bryman, 2012, p. 482). The quality of recording was strengthened by placing the recorder in an appropriate place within the interview venue and switching off the mobile telephones. Interview sessions ended with the expression of gratitude to the interviewee.

### **Post-interview reflections and decisions**

Using the notes taken during the interviews and by listening to the audio, this helped me to identify aspects to be improved in the subsequent interviews thereby improving the quality. Given that the study is exploratory, with data collection and analysis following the grounded theory, the first few interviews were transcribed, anonymized, and analyzed by coding and inter-coding (cf. chapter 3.4). This is necessary as there is the need for the continuous interplay between data collection and analysis given that the study seeks to develop a theory grounded in data. In the framework of this study, saturation was attained with 26 interviews whose portraits are described in chapter 4.1. While most of these interviews lasted for about 60 minutes, a few others exceeded 150 minutes. The understanding of how the school leaders involved in this study were sampled as described in the next section (cf. chapter 3.3) about the sampling technique.

### **3.3 Sampling technique: Theoretical sampling**

In this section, the sampling technique is described. Given that the study is framed as hypothesis- and theory-generating, the type of sampling technique used is theoretical sampling, as it relies on the production of theoretical perspectives derived from the data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 7-8; Calman, 2006, p. 14). The implication for the study is that the sample size of school

principals is not pre-determined but sampling begins with a small number and new elements of quality added successively until saturation point is reached. Glaser (1978, p. 36) argues that researchers working on theoretical sampling do not know in advance the precise sample of the study and what this will lead to as it is rooted in the grounded theory. Theoretical sampling therefore involves constant comparison and is more aligned with the grounded theory whereby data gathering is guided by the evolving theory (Gentles et al., 2015, p. 1772-1789). As the grounded theory itself refers to a variety of processes by which theory is derived from empirical data, this makes theoretical sampling its symbol as it ensures the process of data collection by evolving theory rather than by a pre-determined population sample (Draucker et al., 2007, p. 1137). Theoretical sampling however has a challenge of how to deal with large data, meanwhile, for the study at hand, this challenge was overcome as the process of theoretical sampling started with the first set of data collected. This process has its peculiarity in that, sampling, data collection and analysis are conducted concurrently thus making theoretical sampling an emergent process in the grounded theory (Age, 2011, p. 1599 & 1612-1613).

In the study at hand, as earlier explained in the preceding paragraph, sampling was carried out during data collection and grounded in data itself, a process more linked to the Glaserian or classic grounded theory (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 313). The Classic grounded theory places theoretical sampling at the centre as this is necessary to the develop and refine a theory that is grounded in data (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009, p. 113-114). Breckenridge and Jones (2009, p. 313) further argue that the credibility of a theory cannot be disconnected from the process by which it has been generated thus theoretical sampling needs to be linked to the methodology of classic grounded theory.

However, at the beginning, I collected data from the initial group of school principals whom I considered could maximize the possibilities of providing data in a broad spectrum. This data was analyzed and the qualities from the analysis gave the direction of seeking further data based on the analytic needs of the study rather than on random selection or selection following my decisions. That is why Mores et al., (2021, p.6) argues

that pursuing theoretical sampling already necessitates some abductive reasoning. The abduction process which is about data interpretation shall be described in detail in chapter 3.4.4. This means that theoretical sampling is an iterative and not linear process as it has to combine data collection and data analysis in forward and backward reflective steps and proceed based on decisions of analytical needs (Krüger, 2010, p. 62-63). This process of data collection and sampling is controlled by the emerging theory itself (Coyne, 1997, p. 624-625). Deciding where to sample next is based on to the emerging codes and categories as an ongoing iterative process (Coyne, 1997, p. 624-625). Codes and categories are described in the chapter about data analysis (cf. chapter. 3.4). Therefore, theoretical sampling was very relevant for this study as the research question that centres on the self-understanding by secondary school principals of their school leadership in protestant schools, seeks to generate a theory (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 313). This required that I explore the possibilities to get all qualities so that the search for further data is completed when the theoretical saturation in the research field is reached (Gentles et al., 2015, p. 1772-1789). From this background, theoretical saturation does not mean the same thing as repetition of events, but rather denotes that during analysis, no new properties and dimensions emerge from the data (Strauss, & Corbin, 1998, p. 158). It is therefore the theoretical saturation which is the determinant to finalize further data collection.

Getting all qualities in the field as guided by the research question required the decision on the selection of the participants of the study. I decided to select only principals of Protestant secondary schools to interview as they are persons who have the knowledge and experience about the focus of the study (deMarrais, 2004, p. 59) that is concerned with school leadership in Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon. If theory has to emerge from data, it suggests that the raw data itself has to be analyzed for abstract interpretation and for the process itself to ensure that no theoretical aspect or quality about the field of study is omitted (Strauss, & Corbin, 1998, p. 159). This follows Glaser's understanding of the theoretical sampling which considers that in the process of data collection for generating theory simultaneously necessitates data collection, coding,

analysis and deciding which data to collect next and where to find them (Glaser, 1978, p. 36, Coyne, 1997, p. 25). Coyne (1997, p. 25), amplifies that the heart of theoretical sampling is in the framework of deciding where to sample next according to the emerging codes and categories. From this assertion, a theory that is grounded in data should be recognizable on the sample (Strauss, & Corbin, 1998, p. 161), therefore the sample criteria matters.

### **Sampling criteria**

From the argument that theoretical sampling is based on concepts derived from the data, it suggests that the sampling criteria concerns sampling concepts and not people, and ending when saturation is attained (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 317). Even though the sampling procedures in qualitative research is flexible (Coyne, 1997, p. 623), it is still necessary to select the sampling criteria in a reflected way too facilitate the process of exploring the qualities in the field. In the following section, the description and choice for sampling criteria of the study at hand about leadership self-understanding by principals of Protestant schools is presented with focus more on the concept sampled. Three categories of criteria are distinguished comprising of personal, professional and contextual. As the participants in the study are principals, personal the criteria include age and gender while those connected with professional characteristics are profession, professional training and professional experience. By the understanding that protestant schools exist and function in context (cf. chapter 2.1), the school type, cultural background of the school and school setting are criteria deemed important in the context domain. These criteria are described beginning with personal, through professional to contextual.

## **Gender**

The consideration of gender as a criterion is important as it can make a difference not only in leadership role and leadership experiences but as well in the understanding of power relations (Wolff, 2019, p. v-vi, Paustian-Underdahlet al., 2014, Krüger, 2008, p. 155). In the study at hand, each of the principals interviewed presented themselves either as male or female giving a representation of four females and twenty-two males at the point of reaching saturation (cf. appendix 2).

## **Age**

Discourses about school leadership show that the age of a school leader as well as the experience in school leadership can provide a variety of understanding to school leading (Murphy & Johnson, 2011, p. 459; Swearingen, 2014, p. 71-78). This study considered the age and experience of principal as separate criteria. As far as age is concerned, three age intervals for representability were used in order to increase anonymity. These age intervals comprise of less than thirty years, between thirty and forty-five years and above forty-five years. From the twenty-six principals sampled, there was none with less than thirty years of age, twelve were between thirty to forty-five years while fourteen were above forty-five years.

## **Experience as principal**

The experience as principal is differentiated into two groups, less than ten years of experience and above ten years of experience to strengthen the anonymization. While nine of the twenty-six principals sampled had less than ten years' experience as principals, the rest of the seventeen had more than ten years as principals.

## **Experience as teacher**

The teaching experience of a school leader could make a difference in leading understanding given that teaching matters in shaping quality education with respect to learner achievement (UNESCO 2014, p. 233-276;

Hattie 2012; Gauthier & Dembélé, 2004, p. 2-9). While 22 out of the sampled principals have more than ten years of experience as teachers, the remaining four have no teaching experience.

### **Type of profession**

Given that school leaders shape the school profile and that discourses on school leadership show that leadership which reflects on teaching and learning makes a difference in contributing to better learner outcomes (Day et al, 2016, p. 221, Bush & Clover, 2014, p. 553-556), it was found necessary to include the criteria of type of profession and professional training. As far as the type of profession is concerned, this articulates on the context of the study wherein Protestant school principals in Cameroon are either appointed from amongst pastors or from amongst teachers. That is why this criterion is differentiated into parts, teacher or pastor as profession meanwhile the criterion on professional training is presented in the in the next section. From the sample of the study, twenty-two of the principals have teacher professional background while four are pastors and non as both.

### **Professional training**

Research has shown that professional training as teacher or principal can be learnt and can contribute in developing classroom and school quality (Maxwell, 2020, p. 175; Lipowsky & Rzejak, 2015, p. 27). The sample criterion on professional training is concerned with professional training as school principal or as a teacher. Twenty out of twenty-six principals have had teacher training (in-service or pre-service) and six have not had while eleven out of the twenty-six have had in-service training as school principals. Four of the principals have not had training either as teachers nor as principals.

### **Type of denomination to which the school belongs**

Given the aspect of the plurality of Protestant denominations adds to the complexity of understanding the protestant school profile (cf. chapter 2.1)

especially (Höllinger & Makula, 2021, p. 347-349; Jacobsen, 2021, p. xxi-xxii; Zurlo, 2015, p. 46-47), the sample criterion of type denomination to which the school is affiliated is deemed relevant for the study. Based on this criterion, the 26 schools in the sample that reached saturation belong to eight denominations which for the purpose of this study, are regrouped into two main blocks, Reformed or Lutheran on the one hand or Pentecostal on the other hand. While two of the schools belong to the Pentecostal churches, the rest of the 24 belong to Reformed or Lutheran churches.

### **School type**

This criterion on school type differentiates schools in two sub-criteria, as either boarding or day and as either single sex or mixed sex schools. As the boarding school tradition in Sub-Saharan Africa is very rooted in missionary times (Frankema, 2012, p. 335), the context as boarding or day could make a difference on how school principals perceive their school profiles and their leadership. Seven of the schools are boarding while nineteen are day. The aspect of single sex or mixed sex schools can make a difference in school leadership understanding in faith-based schools as this is not only rooted in missionary times but could open different lenses of power relations and gender equity (McCall, 2019). In the saturated sample of 26 schools, only one is a single-sex school.

### **Cultural background**

This sample criterion on the cultural background of the school differentiates schools as having an Anglophone or Francophone heritage. This seems to be important for the study as earlier analyzed (cf. chapter 1.1.1), whereby education in Cameroon and school leadership are shaped by the changing regimes that are rooted in missionary and colonial experiences (Gwanfobge, 2018, p. 1-22 & 124-134). For the cultural differentiation as Anglophone or Francophone cultural backgrounds, the distribution of the schools in the study is respectively nine and seventeen.

**School setting**

This criterion is about school location in either, rural, semi-urban or urban. From the background provided earlier (cf. chapter 1.1.3) that shows low levels of educational quality in Sub-Saharan Africa especially in rural areas (Lauwerier & Akkari, 2015, p. 1-2, UNESCO, 2015, p. 1), the criterion about school location may make a difference in school principal's experiences. In terms of the school setting for the study, six of the schools are found in rural areas while twenty are located in either semi-urban or urban areas.

The sampling criteria as described above are summarized on the table below (cf. table 1). Meanwhile the table showing the criteria with which the saturation was controlled to attain twenty-six principals interviewed for the study at hand is presented in the annex (cf. appendix 3).

Table 1: Sampling criteria

Criteria	
Age	
Gender	Female
	Male
	Diverse
Profession	Teacher
	Pastor
Professional training	Trained as teacher
	Trained as principal
	Not trained
Experience as teacher	
Experience as Principal	
Denomination to which school belongs	Old churches (Lutheran & Reformed)
	New churches (Pentecostal)
School type	Boarding
	Day
	Single sex
	Mixed sex
Cultural background	Anglophone
	Francophone
School setting	Rural
	Urban

Source: from own data

As theoretical sampling simultaneously involves the collection, coding and analyses of the data in order to decide what data to collect next (Coyne, 1997, p. 25 & 624-625), the section that follows describes the analysis of data by qualitative content analysis.

### 3.4 Data analysis: Qualitative content analysis

In this section, the method of data analysis for the study at hand is described. As already explained in the previous sections, the study is exploratory and hypothesis-generating (cf. chapter 3.1), and the method of data collection and analysis is carried out simultaneously following the grounded theory. By using the grounded theory, abstract theoretical explanations emerge from the data itself (cf. chapter 3.2 & chapter 3.4).

The data in this study is analyzed by the method of qualitative content analysis. To proceed with the analysis, the research questions need to be taken into consideration to build the coding frame that provides the basis for the systematic description of the meaning of the material of the study (Schreier, 2012, p. 6). In the paragraphs that follow, qualitative content analysis and its suitability for the study at hand is first explained (cf. chapter 3.4.1). Given that the data in the study was first collected in the form of audio, I will then describe the transcription process for converting the audio into text (cf. chapter 3.4.2). This will be followed in the third place by the description of the analysis processes of categorization through coding and inter-coding of transcribed interviews (cf. chapter 3.4.3). From the attainment of saturation, the subsequent step describes the generalization process that is known as abduction (cf. chapter 3.4.4). The section on data analysis ends with the explanation of the quality control used in the entire process (cf. chapter 3.4.5).

### **3.4.1 Choice of qualitative content analysis for the study at hand**

As the study at hand is exploratory, it calls for a qualitative approach to explore the experience of school principals in their leadership in Protestant schools (cf. chapter 3.1). By using a qualitative approach, data analysis needs to fit in the qualitative framework, thus qualitative content analysis is used. We know from discourse that qualitative analysis requires a dialectic between ideas and data, meanwhile, data cannot be analyzed without ideas, but these ideas at the same time need to be shaped in a systematic way from data itself (Dey, 2003, p. 7). Schreier (2012) has focused the understanding of qualitative content analysis as a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material (p. 1 & 3). As the material of the study at hand is communicative in form of text, the analysis necessitates a systematic examination of the content without quantification for which qualitative content analysis becomes appropriate (Marying, 2004, p. 266). Given that the data collection and analysis of the study follow the grounded theory, it is operationalized as a simultaneous process of generating hypothesis and constructing theory from analysing and conceptualizing qualitative data (Charmaz 2014, p.1 & 8, Jørgensen,

2001, p. 6396-6397). With the interlink between data and ideas such that theories emerge from the data itself, the central character of qualitative content analysis is an iterative spiral process which simultaneously combine induction and deduction (Dey, 2003, p. 31-32 & 55). Marying (2004, p. 268) argues that content analysis seeks to reduce the materials in such a way that the essential contents are preserved, yet with inductive categories realized from data in an inductive way. Therefore, the combination of theoretical sampling (cf. chapter 3.3) with the strategies in data analysis such as coding, inter-coding, memo writing that shall be subsequently discussed (cf. chapter 3.4.3) which are all iterative processes help to build the grounded theory. The process of content analysis needs to begin with data that has been prepared. In the next section, the description of data transcription process which is about the preparation of data for analysis is presented.

### **3.4.2 Transcription process**

In this section, the transcription of interview audios is described. As already explained earlier in the section of data collection (cf. chapter 3.2), 26 interviews were documented as audios, with this number attained through theoretical saturation (cf. chapter 3.2 & chapter 3.3). The transcription process comprises of two major parts, the transformation into text and anonymization which is an ethical requirement.

#### **Transformation of interview tape recording into text**

The data needs to be converted into text in the process of transcription in order that it can be analyzed. Transcription can be understood as the graphic representation of selected aspects of the behaviour of participants engaged in a conversation, such as interviews for the study at hand, making the graphic or text representation permanently available for scientific analysis (Kowal & O'Connell, 2004, p. 248). This transformation of spoken language into text needs rules which constitute the transcription system (Marying, 2014, p. 45). For the study at hand, transcription began with the data that was saved as tape recording which is considered as secondary data (Kowal & O'Connell, 2004, p. 250.). I chose to do a pure verbatim

transcription which is a word for word process including every utterance from the audio files (Marying, 2014, p. 45, Baden & Major 2013, p. 420-421) as this has the possibility to maintain the details and originality of what the school principals are saying about their leadership understanding. I did not however use special signs to describe nonverbal aspects (Marying, 2014, p. 46-47) as the analysis processes of coding and inter-coding in the study at hand focuses only on the text. As some of my interviews were recorded in English while some were recorded in French based on the language of convenience of the school principal (cf. chapter 3.2), I choose in the first step to translate all into the respective languages. In all, I transcribed twenty interviews, nine in English and eleven in French, and hired someone else to transcribed six others all in French<sup>2</sup>. Before engaging the person hired, I trained her to ensure that the transcription had to respect word verbatim format including all audio utterance. Thereafter I double checked to ensure that all information was correctly transcribed. As I planned to proceed with categorization and abduction as well as use the interview transcript segments in my results chapter, I decided to translate all the seventeen French transcripts into English. I doubled checked and proof read to make sure that the translation into English was a true representation of the French version.

### **Anonymization**

In this study, anonymization was implemented as a very important part not only limited to the transcription process but also to development and description of interview portraits (cf. chapter 4.1). Once the transcriptions have been proof read, the versions in both French and English are given ethical control on two dimensions, namely, confidentiality and anonymity. For confidentiality, all elements that might indicate the identity of the participant or that of the institution or partners are removed while for anonymity, the original names of participants, institutions, locations and activities are replaced (Berg, 2002. p. 58). In this study, details about the

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<sup>2</sup> I am sincerely very thankful to Mrs. Anastasie Florence Ntjam for her support in transcribing interviews in the study that were conducted in French

anonymization process with examples are further explained. As mentioned above, for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, In the case of the interviews in the study, names of school principals interviewed were replaced by names of animals randomly chosen while the names of their schools or the location of schools were coined with the respected name of the animal. For example, for a school principal with an anonymous name is “Possum”, the name of the school was replaced by “school of Possum” and the location of the school by “town of Possum”. The descriptive characteristic of the school location was replaced by “rural”, “semi-urban” or “urban”. Even though the interviewees were anonymized with names of animals, this was controlled to ensure that names that symbolize mythological interpretations or characteristics attributed to humans such as Dog, Pig, Parrot were not used. Instead names of animals that do not carry such attributes or the names that are not popularly known such as Axolotl, Possum, Raccoon were used (cf. appendix 2). Anonymization was also ensured for the ages and experiences as teachers or principals whereby the real number of years was replaced by age range. For example, a 43-year-old principal was described as a principal “of 40 to 50 years old” while a principal with three-years’ experience was described as experience of “less than ten years” (cf. chapter 4.1). The specific names of denominations to which the schools of the principals in the study are affiliated were equally replaced by broad names such as Lutherans, Reformed or Pentecostals (cf. chapter 3.3). Regarding school subjects and specific fields of studies, the real names were replaced with subject domains. For example, “biology” or “chemistry” was replaced by “natural sciences while “economics” was replaced by “management sciences”. This process was controlled by further proof reading especially for the portraits (cf. chapter 4.1) and the interview transcripts (found in the CD submitted with the PhD).

Below, I present an example of segment from the interview transcript in French followed by the version that is translated into English. The school principal in this example is anonymized and the name replaced by a name of an animal, Axolotl. The school is simply called the school of Axolotl. The French version of the transcript segment is first presented.

### French version of the segment from the transcript of Axolotl:

“Q<sup>3</sup>: ... J'aimerais apprendre de votre expérience en tant que directeur de cette école protestante. Veuillez me parler de votre travail quotidien dans l'école en tant que directeur

I<sup>4</sup>: Oui c'est un collège d'enseignement secondaire. Mmm c'est un établissement, d'enseignement general parce qu'il n'y a pas d'enseignement technique. Oui nous voulons, nous voulons nous voulons réaliser un project nous voulons même ouvrir une section bilingue. Mais on attend la reconstruction des bâtiments. Oui, pour qu'on essaye, que le collège vraiment ait aussi une section bilingue. parce qu'on commence vraiment dès la sixième, oui donc c'est notre souhait. Mais, mmm mais comme principal la tâche n'est pas très facile parce que nous essayons d'évoluer comme les proviseurs des lycées. Oui parce nous les approchons pour que nous nous vivons aussi leurs expériences oui à ceux qui dirigent aussi dans les lycées, nous, nous nous les rapprochons. Mais vous savez qu'à l'église c'est difficile parce que la gestion on n'est pas autonome. C'est-à-dire ce n'est pas nous mais ce sont les fondateurs de l'établissement. L'établissement appartient à l'église et nous rendons compte à l'église. Donc, et celui qui est l'intermédiaire entre l'église et nous c'est le Secrétaire à l'Education. C'est le Secrétaire à l'Education, donc. Mais au niveau de la gestion financière nous sommes autonome. Nous gérons l'argent qui vient des élèves lorsque nous inscrivons les élèves, nous fonctionnons avec cet argent bon et nous contribuons à l'église. Nous donnons une certaine contribution au Secrétariat à l'Education oui pour le bon fonctionnement. Mais sinon, nous travaillons aussi avec les délégués départementaux de l'éducation, délégué régional, mmm, ou les représentants, les inspecteurs passent nous les recevons ils vont bon, administrativement je crois que l'expérience c'est cela bon et quand on est chef d'établissement nous devons suivre les enseignants, nous suivons leur travail. Donc c'est une parenthèse c'est pour cela que je suis partie de mon bureau pour venir m'asseoir ici, je vois, parce que j'ai leur emploi du temps et j'essaye de contrôle, je contrôle les cahiers de texte même quand le censeur a déjà visé moi je prends encore les cahiers, oui les cahiers de texte pour voir et j'ai aussi les fiches de progression, parce que lorsque un enseignant sur le plan pédagogique, parce que quand on est principal on doit aussi avoir une bonne base sur la pédagogie quand on est principal, j'ai été censeur j'ai été surveillante générale, donc au niveau de la discipline, de la pédagogie, j'ai quand même une formation à ce niveau, je suis passée par toutes ces étapes ce qui fait que, lorsque au niveau administratif, le travail même du principal dans l'établissement, je contrôle la pédagogie, la discipline, je supervise [...].” (Axolotl, lines 2-37).

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<sup>3</sup> “Q” is question by interviewer

<sup>4</sup> “I” is response by Interviewee

## English translated version of the segment from the transcript of Axolotl:

“Q: ... I will like to learn from your experiences as Principal of this protestant school. Please tell me about your daily work in the school as principal

I: Yes, it is a secondary school. Mmm it is a general education establishment because there is no technical education. Yes, we want, we want to carry out a project, we even want to open a bilingual section. But we are waiting for the reconstruction of the buildings. Yes, for us to try, that the college also has a bilingual section. Because we really start from the first class of secondary school yes so that is our wish. But mmm as principal the task is not very easy because we try to evolve like the principals of government schools. Yes, because we want to evolve in the same way like principals of government high schools. We approach them to also live their experiences, yes for those who lead government high schools we approach them. But you know that in the church it is difficult because with management we are not autonomous. That is to say it is not we it is rather the founders of the establishment. The establishment belongs to the church and we report about the establishment to the church. So, the person who is the intermediary between the church and us is the Education Secretary. It is the Education Secretary. But at the level of financial management we are autonomous. We manage the money that comes from students. When we enroll students we operate with that money, and we contribute to the church. We give some contribution to the Education Secretariat yes for the good functioning. But otherwise, we also work with the government divisional delegates of education regional delegate mmm or representatives. Government inspectors come and we receive them and they go, good. Thus administratively I believe that, that is the experience and when you are a school head, we have to follow the teachers we follow their work. So in parenthesis, that is why I left my office to come and sit here, I see, because I have their time table and I try to control, I control the record books even when the vice principal has already checked them. I still take the books, yes the record books to see and I also have the progress sheets, because as the teacher uses the teaching plan, I do the follow-up because when one is principal, we must also have a good base on pedagogy when one is a principal. I was a vice principal I was in charge of discipline so at the level of discipline and of pedagogy I had at least training at this level. I went through all these stages, so that when, at the administrative level, the work of the principal in the establishment, I control pedagogy, discipline I supervise [...]” (Axolotl, lines 2-36).

The anonymized transcripts are given line numbering and constitute the data for analysis. The transcripts and the line numbering are doubled checked before commencing with the analysis to ensure that material is not altered once analysis has begun (Marying, 2014, p. 56-57). All the audio files and transcripts are on the CD which is submitted with my PhD.

Once the interviews have been transcribed, the content analysis process commences.

### **3.4.3 Content analysis process**

This section describes the process of coding and inter-coding transcribed interviews which constitutes the heart of content analysis and is characterized by the inductive category formation that is embedded in the grounded theory (Maring, 2014, p. 79). In this study, data analysis has been facilitated by the use of a software program called MAXQDA. Content analysis is a complex iterative inductive-deductive process. As qualitative content analysis is a dynamic iterative process, I decided not to be pushed by rigid analytical steps while conducting the analysis for this study as the process itself has room for new decisions regarding the procedure and individual stages of analysis (Maring, 2014, p. 41, Krippendorff, 2003, p. 88). Strauss's approach to qualitative research analysis suggests that researchers enter analysis with an open mind, ready to follow what participants are saying and to let insights that emerge from analysis and material of the study guide the next steps in data collection and analysis (Corbin, 2021, p. 42). In the following paragraph, the category formation is first described followed by the inductive-deductive iterative process, even though they were not carried out in separate steps.

#### **Category formation and codes**

Content analysis requires a defined line of inquiry to give a logical and transparent direction (Maring, 2014, p. 51). In the process of content analysis, it is not possible to interpret the whole data as a whole, but requires working with analytical units that are emerging from segments of the text (Maring, 2014, p. 51). This suggests why Schreier (2012) emphasizes the systematic description of qualitative material analysis in content analysis by assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of the coding frame (p. 1 & 3). Therefore, the purpose of qualitative content analysis is to systematically describe the meaning of the material from the study.

This ushers the notion of category formation as categories are assigned to segments of texts. The process of segmentation needs to be reflected in advance to facilitate the coding and inter-coding process (Marying, 2014, p. 51). For the study at hand, complete sentences or paragraphs together with utterances constituted segments as long as the material was linked to the research questions. The segments or portions of text were then confronted with the category system. While segments otherwise called bits are part of data with a unit of meaning for analysis purposes, a code refers to smaller chunks of data representing the name associated with a category (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 421, Dey, 2003, p. 283). A code therefore represents an abstract descriptive label that captures the meaning of a data segment. This implies that patterns of codes and categories are important critical components of content data analysis and must be linked to the research questions (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 428). Within the framework of the grounded theory, a category can be understood as concept which denotes a pattern that is carefully realized by constant comparing of theoretically sampled data until conceptual saturation is attained (Glaser, 2002, p. 24). The naming of such patterns is done by trying to get the best fit that captures the meaning or the property of what it is representing. Category formation is an important aspect in content analysis as it contributes to textual understanding and interpretation in regards to summarizing, explication and structuring (Marying, 2014, p. 63-64). Summarizing has to deal with material reduction in such a way that the overview with respect to the research questions gets its visibility and with the essential content maintained. Berg (2001, p. 238) argues that content analysis in qualitative research involves the condensation of data such that it is systematically comparable thus necessitating an objective coding scheme. For the study at hand, part of the condensation process comprised of summarizing in two ways: First the segments that are linked to different codes as extractions from the portions of the text were maintained word verbatim with the reference of anonymized interview and the interval for the line numbers of the segments of the transcribed interview indicated. The second form of summary comprised of writing the portraits of all the twenty-six interviewees by giving the background of the

interview, followed by the description of the conduct of the interview and ending with the description of how the school principals in the study described their leading experiences (cf. chapter 4.1).

As some parts of the material of the study at hand from the transcripts were contextualized to the local context of the study or not clear enough to understand, I found it necessary to give an explanation as foot note. This process did not reduce the material nor tamper with the original text. Find below an example from a segment of the interview transcript of Butterfly (cf. chapter 4.1).

“That is why sometimes I invite parents, there are certain cases I invite parents to come to the discipline council<sup>1</sup> we invite the PTA (Parents-Teachers-Association) chair to come to the discipline council so that they will listen to the children let the children be talking to their hearing because sometimes you think that your child is the best on earth and when the child embarrasses you would not act you will say oh, oh, my child cannot do this.” (Butterfly, MAXQDA lines 212 - 218).

The following is the explanation of “discipline council” in the context of Cameroon from the interview transcript of Butterfly written as footnote (cf. chapter 4.3.1):

In the Cameroon school context, a discipline council is a committee comprised of the school administrative staff and sometimes parents’ representatives. Its role is to judge students on acts considered by the school as indiscipline. The results of this council’s hearing are presented in the assembly during which all students are present and the “criminals” called to stand in front on the stage. Sanctions are proclaimed and can consist of corporal punishment, manual labour, suspension with hard labour or expulsion.

Connected to summarizing and explication, is also the dimension of structuring which is about giving explicit definitions to categories. Two types of categories are distinguished, namely, the deductive and inductive categories (Marying, 2014, p. 82). The study at hand made use of developing and using the deductive and inductive categories in an iterative way. I describe in the next paragraph how the two categories were realized beginning with the deductive category.

First by reflecting on the research questions (cf. chapter 1) and considering that theories and literature already exist in regards to quality education, school leadership and the Protestant profile (cf. chapter 2), I then

elaborated deductive categories. During the process of coding, inductive categories emerged progressively. On the following table (cf. table 2), the summary categories are presented with deductive categories associated with references. The detailed code book generated from MAXQDA is found in the annex (cf. appendix 4).

Table 2: Deductive and inductive categories

Main category	Sub-category	Reference
Explicit protestant theology		
	Diaconal	EKD, 2017 p.11, Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17, Painter, 1889, p. 65-68
	Reading the bible	Simojoki, 2015, p.18, EKD, 2013, p. 231, Anderson, 2005, p. 80-8, Painter, 1889, p. 62-65,
	Autonomy	EKD, 2017, p.12; Luther, 2016, p. 468, Miedema, 2015, p. 11 ; Maussen et al, 2012, p. 13-15, Painter, 1889, p.54 EKD, 2013, p. 223
	Bible as authority	Strauss, 2021, p. 1, Simojoki, 2015, p. 16-19, Painter, 1889, p. 56-59;
	Priesthood of all believers	Barber, 2020, p. 3-4, Lindsley, 2013, p. 1, Painter, 1889, p.55-62
	Church as authority	
	State as authority	
	Discipline	

Implicit protestant profile of school		
	Caring	EKD, 2017, p. 12-15; EKD, 2013, p. 234; Painter, 1889, p. 66 &140
	High Quality teaching	EKD, 2017, p. 11 -17; Miedema, 2015, p. 14 Scheunpflug,& Wenz, 2015, p. 17; Simojoki et al, 2015, p. 6; Krogull et al, 2014, p.30; Shatzer et al, 2014, p. 446; EKD, 2013, p. 239; Painter, 1889, p. 66-67, 130 & 236
	Autonomy	EKD, 2017, p. 11-16, Miedema, 2015, p. 14, Simojoki et al, 2015, p. 6, Scheunpflug,& Wenz, 2015, p. 17, Krogull et al, 2014, p.30, Painter, 1889, p. 66-67
	Spiritual offer of school	EKD, 2017, p. 16, Painter, 1889, p. 128
	Understanding Theology	Painter, 1889, p. 56 &66
Leading understanding		
	Instructional	Njobati 2021, p. 16-17, Gumus et al, 2018, p. 29-30, Bush, 2014, p. 443-444 Shatzer et al, 2014, p. 446-447, 448-449, Hattie, 2012, p. 154
	Transformational	Gumus et al, 2018, p. 31-32, Bush, 2014, p. 443-444, Shatzer et al, 2014, 447-449, Minckler, 2014, p. 660, Oterkiil, 2014, p. 5, Hattie, 2012, p. 154
	Administrative	Njobati, 2021, p. 15, Gumus et al, 2018, p. 28-29, Bush, 2014, p. 163
	Resource management	
	Relation with parents and the public	
	Relation with the state officials	
	Infrastructural development	
Professional capital		
Vision for the School		
Plans for the future		
Challenges		

Source: from author’s data

Once coding commences, inductive categories start emerging from the data. As already mentioned in the preceding paragraph, some of the materials are not related to the research questions, and thus are ignored with the process of inductive categorization making this transparent by focusing on interview segments that are relevant to the study (Marying, 2014, p. 79). Therefore, the critical attribute of inductive categorization suggests steps towards the realization of categories that are emerging from data itself. This buttresses the exploratory design (cf. chapter 3.1) that characterizes the study at hand (Marying, 2014, p. 12 & 16). The development of inductive categories allows for the grounding of these categories to the data from which they derive (Berg, 2001, p.245, Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 2-3). This process of inductive-deductive category formation is not disconnected from the coding process as all the processes move together in a continuous forward and backward pattern. It is through the coding process that codes in the inductive category formation emerge (Dey, 2003, p. 283). In the next section, I now describe the inductive-deductive iterative process.

### **Inductive-deductive iterative process**

Coding on its own is just a step in the process of analysis as coding provides clues to meaning and these clues and connections between them are then analyzed (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 426). Therefore, coding serves as preliminary analysis that can be developed during the final data analysis. The coding process itself is an art that is embedded in the grounded theory, as researchers interact with data in a comparative way by comparing data with data, data with codes and with tentative categories in an iterative way (Charmaz, 2012, p. 7). Inductive category formation through open coding is a central process within the methodological approach of the grounded theory (Marying, 2014, p. 53). The grounded theory therefore involves the interplay between induction and abduction that are conducted in an ongoing cyclic way (Rennie, 2000, p. 494). From this background, coding can be summarized as iterative or cyclic strategies of going back and forth in a simultaneous and continuous deductive-inductive way (Charmaz, 2014, p.1; Savin-Baden & major, 2013, p. 435) leading

to the assignment of a code to a selected section or part of data that is linked to the study (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019), p. 19). As mentioned in the previous section about category formation, after establishing the first set of categories and fixing the coding rules to stay consistent and transparent, I started with the coding of the first five interviews, whose process is summarized in the next paragraph.

Even though, I eventually used the software program for data analysis, I decided to code the first five interviews manually. This help me to better understand and take ownership of my material and the coding system as well as revise the coding system and check areas of improvement on the interview guide. In this initial process, I also engaged a member of the PhD interpretation group<sup>5</sup> to do the inter-coding of the same materials to provide for the comparison of results and intersubjective arguments (Marying, 2014, p. 83, Krippendorff, 2003, p. 18 & 21-24). Inter-coding therefore assures content-analytical quality criterion (Marying, 2014, p. 107-109). Besides a shared understanding of the coding system, inter-coding also helped in updating the coding process, identify inductive codes emerging from the material of the study and in addition, the inter-coding process helped to shape the decisions about which set of interviews should be conducted next. It is from this point onward that I continued using the software program, MAXQDA for qualitative data analysis that is referenced to the sociologist, Max Weber (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019, p. v). MAXQDA belongs to a broader group of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software abbreviated as CAQDAS (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2019, p. 1-2).

Besides constant comparing and sorting that goes with coding, in the study at hand, I also engaged the writing of memos which are researcher's short notes while working with data about names of concepts and their relationship with each other (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, P. 175, Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 189). Jørgensen, (2001, p. 6398) upholds that memo writing and other strategies in grounded theory such as coding,

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<sup>5</sup> I am very grateful to Claude Ernest Njoya, Dr. Christine Nyiramana, Dr. Onja Rariojoana, Etienne Uwajyiwabo and Emmanuel Niyibizi for supporting in the inter-coding of interviews in this study

and theoretical sampling serve to build the theory. Morse et al. (2021, p. 6) asserts that the generation of memos which include the researcher's ideas about codes or segments of the materials of the study is concurrently carried along the research design, data collection and data analysis. It should be noted that the process of reading to identify segments linked to the study is not linear. It involves the process of sorting which is about reading and re-reading the material in order to uncover categories and their relationships through comparative and inductive processes (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 189). It is in this way that a data-driven theory that emerges from the data is developed. This background shows that coding is an interpretive process involving the interaction between the researcher and the data ensuring that the concepts derived are a combination of participants' data and researchers' ability to unveil the meaning implied in those data (Corbin, 2021, p. 27). Therefore, the coding process in the study at hand necessitated abstract thinking with deep reflections in checking and re-checking data for meaning. Even though the computer software is important for the analysis process, the abstraction process is the mental responsibility of the researcher. In the paragraph that follows, I describe the role of MAXQDA in facilitating the data analysis process.

MAXQDA has various tools that build up the code matrix, code relations and document comparison thus making it easier for me to code large data, get a deep overview and ownership of data and by continuous deductive-inductive iterative processes, could generate theoretical insights until saturation was attained (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 180). In the framework of the Glaserian grounded theory methodology, the theoretical insights otherwise considered theoretical codes must emerge from the data as the case in the study at hand and not preconceived (Hernandez, 2009, p. 51-52 & 55-56). These theoretical codes are important to grounded theory because they strengthen its explanatory function and increase its completeness. As MAXQDA, has the possibilities to attach specific segments of materials to respective categories, bring together segments of materials of specified categories, alter and adjust categories, as well as generate the final code book (Marying 2014, p. 116-117), it is easy to monitor for theoretical saturation. All the 26 interviews of the study at

hand that were attained through saturation were coded and inter-coded with the help of members of my PhD learning community, earlier acknowledged (cf. chapter 3.2). Saturation as also explained earlier (cf. chapter 3.3) was attained by continuous collection and analysis of data by theoretical sampling until no new characteristics of the analytic categories emerge (Morse et al., 2021, p. 6). At the point of saturation, I proceeded by inductive-deductive reflections to check if the logic of categories for no overlaps, category definition and if the level of abstraction was adequate to the subject of the study and aims of the analysis (Marying, 2014, p. 81-82). Even though saturation was attained, the analysis by deductive-inductive process was not adequate for my data interpretation that required further mental processes of working towards surprises that emerge from the field. For this reason, I proceeded to the next stage referred to as the abduction process (cf. chapter 3.4.4)

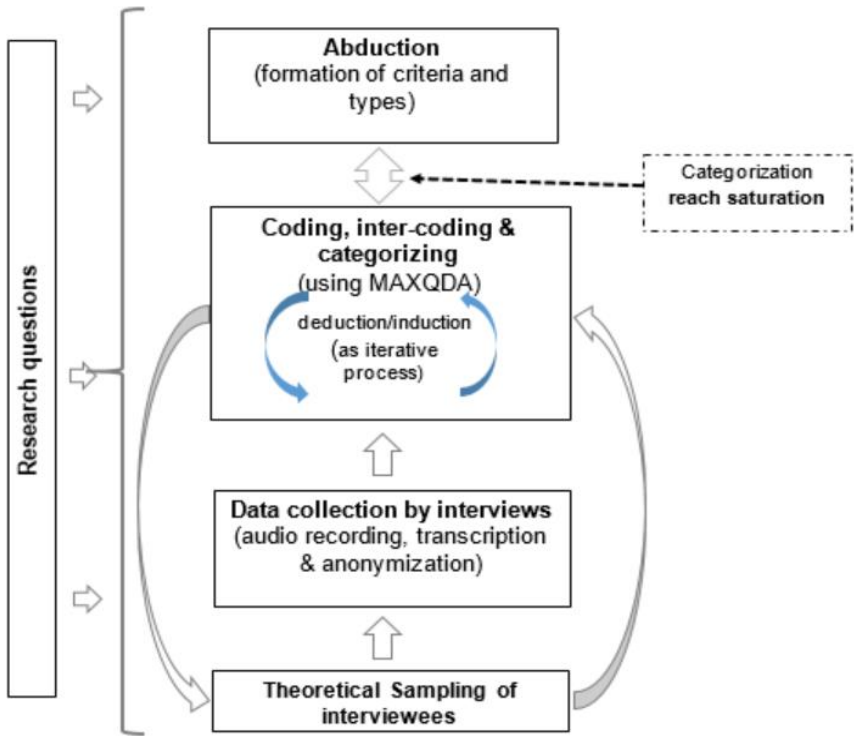
#### **3.4.4 Data generalization: By abduction**

This section is about the abduction process which englobes data interpretation that follows the process of the qualitative content analysis described in the previous section (cf. chapter 3.4.3). In the paragraphs that follow, the abduction process is first described, followed by how this was conducted for the study at hand.

The abduction process which focuses on data generalization is complex as it is difficult to specify the processes underlying it as well as the steps to follow (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 451). In the narrative about abduction, Timmermans & Tavory (2012, p. 167) refer to it as an inferential process whose purpose is to generate new hypothesis and theories based surprising evidence. Reichertz (2004, p. 162) explains the act of surprise in abduction by referring to it as a cerebral process which is a complex intellectual act, ushering a mental spring, that brings together things the researcher had never associated with one another. The entire process of abduction ensures that theories emerge from the material of the study by iterative mixture of logic and intuition (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 451). This suggests that abduction in itself is a combination of process and product by constantly allowing that findings emerge from data. It

therefore comprises of processing and discovering on the basis of an interpretation of collected data without basing on a store of knowledge or on prescribed guidelines but necessitating mental processes that work towards a surprise to discover a new theory (Reichertz, 2004, p. 161-162). Morse et al. (2021, p. 5) argue that the abduction process requires abduction reasoning of considering diverse theoretical explanations that emerge from the data and choosing the one that fits better. The abduction process cannot therefore be understood in isolation as the different stages in the content analysis are leading to it. Glaser (2002, p. 23) argues that conceptualization which is at the heart of the grounded theory in providing patterns which together by constant comparison generate concepts from data, constitutes the basis of generating theory. There is only a fine line that divides analysis, interpretation and generalization. By referring to the study at hand, analysis imply breaking data to produce concepts focusing on the description of what school leaders have said about their school leading while interpretation is the translation of these concepts to uncover the meaning behind them (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 451). The grounded theory model used for the study at hand is summarized in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Grounded theory model



Source: by researcher adapted from Charmaz, 2014, p. 18

In regard to the abduction process for the study at hand, the summary of the processes leading to abduction is first described followed by the explanation of the abduction process which all follow the grounded theory in an interconnected model (cf. figure 2). As established earlier, the methods for data collection (cf. chapter 3.2) and analysis followed the grounded theory as a requirement based on the exploratory and hypothesis-generating study as the topic of the study is new in the field (cf. chapter 3.1). By framing the study as theory generating, theoretical sampling has been used (cf. chapter 3.3) relying on theoretical perspectives that emerge from

the data itself. The implication of this is that the sample size of school principals has not been pre-determined. Therefore, sampling began with a small number and new elements added successfully until saturation point was reached (cf. chapter 3.3). Perceptions of school principals about school leadership were collected by semi-structured interviews (cf. chapter 3.2) operationalized by open-ended questions that elicit thoughts, perceptions and specific experiences. Saturation was reached with a total of twenty-six interviews that were transcribed and anonymized (cf. chapter 3.4.2). The data was analysed by qualitative content analysis in the process of coding and inter-coding (cf. chapters 3.4.3) of transcribed interviews using a software programme called MAXQDA. The coding process followed iterative or cyclic strategies of going back and forth in continuous and simultaneous processes ensuring that concepts were emerging from data itself. Categorization stopped when saturation was attained and offered the possibility to transit to the abduction stage that is described in the next paragraph.

For the study at hand, the abduction process followed the grounded theory and aimed at finding theoretical explanations from the data by exploring the data and finding patterns. (Rodrigues, 2011, p. 132, Kudo et al., 2009, p. 1215, Yu, 1994, p.1). The abduction process was guided by methodological aspects of revisiting and de-familiarization (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167). Revisiting is an important aspect of data interpretation practices that calls for openness, negotiation and rethinking of knowledge to ensure that findings are consistent with participants' descriptions and thus necessitates a shared understanding and dialogue in the interpretation process (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 463). For the study at hand, this was possible through the involvement and reflection of my PhD learning community and interpretation group (cf. chapter 3.2). The whole process required the revisit of different research materials such as interview audios, transcripts, coding system, code book, memos and portraits of interviewees. This simultaneously assured de-familiarization which is about creating productive distance between the researcher and data (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 167). Creating a distance required reflexivity which helped me as the researcher to consider constantly my

position and level of influence by being self-critical and self-conscious yet embedding myself into the research itself to reflect the emergence of the quality of the field from data (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 76-77). In this process of de-familiarization and distance, writing the portraits is an important step (cf. chapter 4.1). From this lens, abduction can be considered a type of inference that characterizes the development of theoretical insights from data itself, constituting the central point for the grounded theory (Richardson & Kramer, 2006, p. 497). This argument is supported by both Glaser and Strauss who conceived inductive reasoning with inferences built on data, thus leading to a systematic process for generating theory that is grounded in everyday real-life data (Porr & Stern, 2021, p. 80). Timmermans & Tavory (2012, p. 179) assert that an abductive inference involves the initiation of a preliminary guess based on the interplay between existing theories and data when unexpected findings occur. By working in collaboration with my interpretation group members (cf. chapter 3.2), the coded material was reflected in an iterative and abductive analytical way (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 180). This required first an overview of the study from its conceptualization, walking through the process of analysis and reading the interview transcripts and code book to properly understand and get immersed in the material of the study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 451). In this collaborative and systematic way of working, following repeated deductive-inductive iterative strategies (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 180, Rodrigues, 2011, p. 131, Kudo et al., 2009, p. 1215, Rennie, 2000, p. 494), the categories of quality also known as criteria emerged from the data.

### **Explanation of criteria**

In the study at hand, seven criteria emerged from the material of the study which constitute the coded interview transcripts and portraits. Criteria come from all interviews by comparing them thereby specifying the quality of the field (cf. chapter 4.3). There is therefore no criterion in the study that comes from one interview. These criteria show what connect the principals together as well as give a structure and shape the interwoven field, even if the principals have different experiences. The criteria in this study

comprise of the main activities of the school leader, understanding of teaching, relationship and communication by the school leader, self-understanding of faith, the role of the church, the role of society and challenges (cf. chapter 4.2). Staat (1993, p. 225 & 236) observes that Charles Peirce's logical system of abduction which involves deduction and induction strategies with the help of categorical sequence in the inquiry process, provides the basis of understanding abduction. On the other hand, Yu (2005, p. 5) has argued that in the abduction process, not only the inductive and deductive inquiry is important, but also the interplay between doubts and beliefs which is dialectic in the process of acquiring knowledge. Timmermans & Tavory (2012, p. 180) on the other hand stresses on the development of creative and novel theoretical insights through a dialectic theoretical sensitivity and mental short cuts that enhance problem-solving. Based on the theoretical argumentations described, the abduction pathway adopted for the study at hand, did not only focus on the inductive-deductive repeated and iterative strategies, but also invested on mental processes of reflections towards a surprise of coming out with the qualities of the field. It was therefore incumbent on me as researcher to reflect from a broad and deep theoretical base with an open mind of developing theoretical repertoires throughout the abduction process (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012, p. 180).

### **Explanation of ideal types**

By stabilizing the criteria and further comparing the patterns, then analyzing the similarities, differences, and connections among these categories of qualities while working from the material of the study (Reichertz, 2004, p. 160-161), the qualities of the categories referred to as types emerged. For the study at hand, six ideal types of self-understanding of Protestant school principals emerged (cf. chapter 4.3). While criteria show what connect the principals together, even if they have different perceptions, the construction of types follows from the emerged criteria and is empirically grounded, shaping the qualities of categories as each type understands a given criterion differently (Stapley et al., 2022, p. 1; Kluge, 2000, p. 4-5). To reach the attainment of typology which Reichertz (2004,

p. 160-161) describes as bringing order to chaos in the data, it is important to follow the abductive inference by allowing the different components of hypothesis and patterns that emerge, get a complementary association and a relevant reference context (Reichertz, 2004, p. 332). The six ideal types of self-understanding of Protestant school leadership consist of the call for superiority, state-conformational, ecclesiastical, community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership (cf. chapter 4.3). All these six types of leadership understanding are ideal as none of them completely reflects a real school leader in the study. In other words, each school leader in the study portrays leadership understanding that cut across different ideal type attributes.

In summary, the outcome of the abduction process of the study emerged in three steps. In the first step and during the process of defamiliarization and distance, portraits were developed (cf. chapter 4.1). In the second step, the seven categories of the qualities otherwise called criteria emerged from the interwoven field by comparing all interviews (cf. chapter 4.2). When the criteria were stabilized, and while working with them in an intuitive way, six qualities of the categories which constitute ideal types of self-understanding of Protestant school leadership emerged as the final step (cf. chapter 4.3). To attain these results, there was the necessity to have a quality control to reinforce the inter-subjectivity by methods. This is described in the next section.

### **3.4.5 Quality control of the findings**

In this section, the quality control for the study at hand is described. This control has been ensured at various levels of the study to ascertain inter-subjectivity, coherence and systematic alignment of choices and decisions (Chenail, 2011, p. 1719-1720). In spite of the subjective nature of qualitative research, coupled with its diversity and heterogeneity, the application of quality control measures is valued as this offers trust to the findings (Lester & O'Reilly, 2021, 297-298; Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012, p. 1728). In this study, as explained below, quality was assured by communicative validation from the stage of data collection, through data analysis and to data interpretation.

At the level of data collection for the study by narrative interviews (cf. chapter 3.2), quality control was made at three levels, first by a systemized approach in designing the interview guide of being consistent with the research question (cf. chapter 1.2). This guide went through the processes of discussion with the first supervisor of the study and the PhD learning community earlier acknowledged (cf. chapter 3.2). These discussions controlled the alignment of the guide with the research questions, the clarity of the interview stimulations and the consistency with the exploratory frame of the study (cf. chapter 3.1). Constructive feedback that emanated from these discussions were integrated to update and stabilize the interview guide in a flexible way and revisited in the course of carrying out interviews. In the second control measure for data collection, complete audio recording was made for all the interviews to avoid errors and subjectivity as well as ensure that the transcription that followed maintained the originality of the perceptions of the participants (Poortman & Schildkamp, 2012 p. 1732-1735). As a third quality control dimension in data collection, the audio files that were transcribed, were proof read and controlled by listening to the audios once more to ensure that transcripts were authentic and quality not lost before setting them out for analysis. Given that the content analysis for the study at hand required categories of the coding frame, I ensured that both the deductive and inductive categories aligned with the research questions. As a follow-up to this, the code book was equally presented and discussed with the supervisor of the study and the PhD learning community whose constructive feedback was integrated in shaping the deductive categories before coding commenced. The code book was finally stabilized upon saturation of the sample after progressive discussions and control by my interpretation group (Marying, 2014, 110).

The sampling criteria was reflected upon with my supervisor and the PhD learning community to control that the relevant theoretical underpinnings were respected (cf. chapter 3.3). As the sampling technique used in the study is theoretical sampling that relies on the production of theoretical perspectives derived from the data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 7-8; Calman, 2006, p. 14), these criteria were progressively checked by the learning

community in the process of data collection by updating the sample representability table (cf. appendix 3) until saturation was reached.

Data analysis process also followed quality control measures of which I first ensured that the trial and pilot coding of three interviews selected from the first set of interviews was conducted simultaneously and independently from my inter-coders. This helped me to ensure a consistency check, the adjustment of the coding frame as well as helped to familiarize my inter-coders and I with the coding system (Schreier, 2012, p. 146). The inter-coders at this point did not only familiarize themselves with the coding system but also with the entire study as questions about the problems encountered, the shared understanding of categories and the research design were discussed and further checked with my supervisor (Schreier, 2012, p. 162). By considering the pertinence associated with the necessity of exploring and understanding all the categories on the coding system, I decided to choose the interviews in the trial and pilot coding phases based those that had most categories and could offer the possibility to explore the entire field (Schreier, 2012, p. 148-152). I also decided to code all dimensions simultaneously as the number of categories were easy to handle. This further permitted my inter-coders and I to have a deep and complex understanding of the materials as well as the code system. After the pilot phase, I proceeded with the main coding wherein I first engaged with intra-coding, by coding some of the interviews I had earlier coded, ensuring that I respected a time lapse of not having memories of how the previous coding looked like (Schreier 2012, p. 157). As a quality control measure, this permitted me to compare the new results with the previous so as to stabilize the coding system as argued by Marying (2014, p. 109 & 111) with underlying arguments that intra-coder agreement ensures the stability of the coding system. The major differences I noted resulting from this comparison were related to category definitions and category overlap. These were discussed in the PhD learning community from where I made revisions and all the material from the start were again analysed. From this stage, I handed the intra-coded materials to my inter-coders for inter-coding. The quality control by inter-coder check ensure that the coding of the same material under different circumstances led to the same results

(Marying, 2014, p. 109-112). By putting in place intra-coding and inter-coding measures for quality control of my findings, this helped to shape in a transparent way, the inter-subjectivity of my study with respect to methods.

During the stage of interpretation and generalization of results, I presented the first draft of abduction to the PhD learning community and facilitated by my supervisor. The categories of qualities (criteria) that emerged were controlled and checked to be stable before I could proceed to the stage of coming out with the qualities of categories (ideal types), with the entire process controlled as spiral and iterative. I equally got constructive feedback from my participation and the presentation of the findings of this study at research seminars<sup>6</sup> and at scientific conferences<sup>7</sup>.

The discussions that emanated and reflection of feedback comments with my supervisor and some members of my PhD learning community improved the quality control measures of the study. The control and considerations for the study at hand are not only focused on the quality dimension but also on ethical issues.

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<sup>6</sup> Joint research weekly seminars in the framework of Leibniz Institute for Educational Trajectories (Leibniz-Institut für Bildungsverläufe) in cooperation with the Chair of Developmental psychology at the University of Bamberg (2020.07.15). I extend special thanks to Prof. Dr. Cordula Artelt (LifBi), Prof. Dr. Ilka Wolta (Joint Research Seminar of Department 1) and Prof. Dr. Sabine Weinert (Chair of Developmental Psychology) for their engaging facilitation as well as to the participants for their reflective contributions

<sup>7</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> PhD Colloquia of the Doctorate School on Adult Education hosted by the Chair of Intercultural at Ruhr-University, Bochum within the framework of United Evangelical Mission (UEM) in collaboration with the Chair of Educational Foundations at the University of Bamberg (4-5.10.2021). I express immense gratitude to UEM for the invitation, Prof. Dr. Claudia Jahnel and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Jütte for their facilitation and doctorate school participants for their contributions

19th Academic Colloquium on Protestant Schools organized by the University of Hildesheim Foundation, Institute of Protestant Theology and the Academic Advice Centre for Protestant School (WBES: Wissenschaftliche Beratungsstelle Evangelische Schule) in collaboration with the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD: Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland), (17.03.2023). My special thanks go to Prof. Dr. Martin Schreiner (Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, Institut für Evangelische Theologie) and Mrs. Annika Kastner (Kirchenamt der EKD, Wissenschaftliche Beratungsstelle Evangelische Schule) for their organization as well as sincere gratitude to the colloquium participants for their contributions.

### **3.5 Ethical consideration**

This section about ethical consideration positions the study at hand within the framework of professional competence and integrity of the scientific process as a shared responsibility of myself as researcher and the community of scientists in ensuring high quality study (Shaughnessy et al., 2009, p. 59). The question of ethical considerations is understood as an obligatory responsibility as researchers have an ethical mandate to the scientific community, the study population and the larger society. This becomes incumbent on me as a researcher to ensure the respect of rights, privacy and welfare of the participants and community within my study (Berg, 2001, p.39). The discussion of ethical concerns for this qualitative study is differentiated into three parts beginning with the aspect of respect, protection and justice for participants in the study. This will be followed by ethical considerations in regard to the transparency of the research process. I will end with the third ethical dimension that is related to the effectiveness and credibility of the study.

#### **Ethical consideration related to respect, protection and justice**

The participants in the study at hand are principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon (cf. chapter 3.3) with whom semi-structured interviews for data collection hand to be conducted (cf. chapter 3.2). I first of all considered ethical aspects at the very start of the research with the understanding that the participation of the principals under study had to be voluntary (Berg, 2001, p.53). I therefore engaged a conversation with each of the principals to check for their acceptability before coming out with a schedule for the interview process (Shaughnessy et al., 2009, p. 61). During the interview process, the ethical concerns with the school principals took into consideration respect, protection and justice as pointed out in the previous paragraph. From this background, I engaged a conversation of shared understanding with individual principals in a kind request to ascertain that their participation was seen as voluntary and not by placing them under duress. Before beginning with the interview, I explained in a transparent way the purpose of the conversation and how it would be conducted. As the approach for the study is exploratory, I also built trust

in the principals by introducing myself as one who was in the position to learn from their expertise and that all what they say would remain confidential and also not considered as right or wrong. I am aware that informed consent which is a written consent slip is important to carry the necessary information and social contract (Berg, 2001, p.56). However, I used an implied consent which is the verbal explanation about the purpose and process, thus replacing the written consent (Berg, 2001, p.57) as the principals were comfortable with this and also coupled with the fact that they expressed limited time on their side to fill in written slips. Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p. 332-333) have buttressed this assertion by explaining that one dimension of respect is to ensure the autonomy of the participants to decide whether or not to participate. I also effected the respect of privacy by ensuring confidentiality whereby I removed from the transcribed interviews any elements that could indicate the identities of principals or their institutions (Berg, 2001, p.58) and as earlier described (cf. chapter 3.4.2). Similarly, as described in chapter 3.4.2, the school principals in the study were anonymized by replacing their names randomly with the names of animals (Berg, 2001, p.58). Also, anonymization was done for their ages by associating their ages with age intervals and not the exact figures. The ethical aspect of privacy is connected to the rights of individuals to decide how information about them should be communicated (Shaughnessy et al. 2009, p. 67-68). Besides, the aspects of consent and dealing with privacy, Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p. 333) argues that one dimension of respect is showing recognition and honour to the participant's time and contribution. For the study at hand, I showed honour by first expressing words of gratitude to the participants individually for their time and contributions, then I gave each of them a diary and a pen as school leadership involves time planning and the documentation of events and activities. I have further acknowledged their contributions to this study on the acknowledgement section of the study at hand. To all principals interviewed, I ensured a fair treatment for them and offered all of them similar gifts (a diary and a pen) which equally aligns with the aspect of ensuring justice (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 333). In the study at hand, an ethical concern about the protection of participants from

harm and ensuring their wellbeing was expressed and combined with anonymization and confidentiality (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, p. 319). By putting this measure in place, I ensured that information from the participants remained anonymous and protected especially from persons whose interests or perceptions may be in conflict with those of the interviewee.

### **Ethical consideration related to transparency of the research process**

Besides the ethical aspects of respect, protection and justice as described in the preceding paragraph, the aspect of transparency was deeply considered in the study as it is argued to be a cornerstone in qualitative research methodology (Moravcsik, 2014, p. 48). For this study, as some of the principals are connected directly to my daily professional life, I ensured that another member of my PhD learning community<sup>8</sup> conducted the interview for such principals (cf. chapter 3.3), ensuring both an ethical consideration as well as a control measure for quality. This helped to situate myself as researcher in relation to participants as well as ethically controlled power relations (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 333). Connected to power relations, another ethical aspect I put in place was about ensuring that interviews were conducted in neutral quiet, and safe spaces wherein in sitting was symmetrical. In order to ensure that readers and the scientific community access evidence that support empirical claims in the study at hand, the presentation of findings (cf. chapter 4) included quotations from interview transcripts backed by line numbers. Transparency as an ethical concern takes an important place in social science research as readers are not only interested on the results of the study but get greater impulses and conviction by understanding what was behind the research process, how and why it was done (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017, p. 126). In addition to ensuring transparency, the ethical concern of the study at hand also addresses effectiveness and credibility as argued in the next paragraph.

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<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Claude Ernest Njoya for supporting me to conduct some interviews in this study

### **Ethical dimension related to effectiveness and credibility**

The ethical question regarding the effectiveness of qualitative research articulates around appropriate processes and argumentations of developing new knowledge and the methodological approaches that underlie the rationale of the study (Royadi et al., 2019, p. 84, Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, p. 333). The current study as earlier argued explains the necessity as an exploratory study, thus giving the need to use a qualitative design as the topic is new in in the research context of the Global South (cf. chapter 3.2). From this background, further justifications have been advanced explaining why the methods of data collection and analysis follow the grounded theory (cf. chapter 3.2-3.4). Very connected to ethical consideration of effectiveness is credibility that seeks to ensure the accountability and authenticity of the final narratives of the study (Savin-Baden & & Major, 2013, p. 333). Barbour (2003, p.1019) argues that instilling credibility requires rigour to respond to the complexities and the uniqueness of qualitative research. One explanation why such rigour is challenged is linked to the fact that some studies are less reproducible (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019, p. 229). For the study at hand, the reproducibility as a measure of both quality control (cf. chapter 3.4.5) and ethical concern was ensured through the inter-coding process (cf. chapter 3.4.3). The consistent involvement of my PhD interpretation group to check for accountability in an iterative pattern through all the stages of data analysis, interpretation and generalization assured scrutiny and accountability. My next step on credibility assurance for this study would be to disseminate the findings to participants, and the scholarly community by publishing so as to contribute to knowledge production (Savin-Baden & & Major, 2013, p. 333).

Through the ethical considerations described above, I am sure that this gives visibility to the resonance of the qualitative research process as well as provides a balance between the potential risks of this study and the possible benefits (Arifin, 2018, p. 30). As an outcome from the different methodological steps in data collection, analysis, interpretation and generalization of data as guided by the research questions of the study on the one hand, and in respect of the quality and ethical control on the other

hand, the findings of the current study are presented in the next section (cf. chapter 4).

#### **4 Results: Typology of leadership in Protestant secondary schools — The case of Cameroon**

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented. With the research questions focusing on the perceptions of the principals of Protestant secondary schools about their school leadership, twenty-six interviews were carried out, transcribed and anonymized (cf. chapter 3). In order to understand the qualities of leadership, the portraits of the school principals (interviewees) who are telling their experiences about their leadership are first described (cf. chapter 4.1). This is followed by the description of the categories of quality, that comprise of the explanation of the criteria defining the field. This explanation of the field is presented in chapter 4.2. The description of the quality of the categories follows in the next step, which is about the results of how the types are looking like in relation to the different criteria that make up the field (cf. chapter 4.3). The types of leadership are generated from the condensation process described earlier (cf. chapter 3.4.4). In chapter 4.4, the findings are summarized with the presentation of the completely filled abduction table.

##### **4.1 Portraits**

From the abduction process concerned with data generalization (cf. chapter 3.4.4), more specifically in the process of de-familiarization and distance, portraits of the interviews have been developed. Twenty-six interviews were conducted with principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon. To ensure ethical considerations and confidentiality, interviewees were given anonymous names which in this study, are the names of animals.

In this section, each of the portraits of interviews is described under three dimensions. The first part gives the background of the interviewee, highlighting both the personal and professional context. While the personal context describes the age and gender of the interviewee, the professional background addresses the educational qualification, professional experience as school leader as well as professional development. The conduct of the interview is described as second dimension, wherein the interview environment, duration and the state of the interviewee during the

interview session are explained. The third dimension of each portrait is connected to interviewee's descriptions of their experiences of school leadership in a Protestant school. As this is linked to the research question of this study, the description of how interviewees explain their daily activities, their leading responsibilities in a protestant school, of what makes their schools different and of the challenges they face, are highlighted.

A total of 26 portraits are described in the section that follows and this is done in the alphabetical order of the anonymized names of interviewees.

### **Portrait of Axolotl**

Ant is above 50 years and is female principal of a Protestant secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon. She holds a Bachelor degree in languages and had taken part in in-service training seminars. Axolotl has a teaching experience of over 25 years. She has an experience of less than ten years as principal. Besides her functions as principal, she carries out duties as lay person in her church.

The interview with Axolotl lasted for 54 minutes and was conducted by the author in a calm environment. During the interview, Axolotl was open, confident and proud to talk about her experiences as school principal.

With regard to daily activities, Axolotl explains that she works following her planned daily schedule which focuses mainly on controlling pedagogy and discipline. She says that in the morning she checks and follows up the discipline master to ensure that the school campus and classes are clean. Thereafter she goes for the morning assembly. During the day, she explains that she teaches, goes round the different classes to control what the teachers are teaching. She indicates that she does this by positioning herself outside of the classroom, listens and takes note of what goes on in class. She adds that at the end of each day, she gets the financial report and makes an overview. Axolotl says that although the discipline master is responsible for discipline, she also punishes some students with deviant behavior. She explains that she writes reports, takes part in meetings but that this is only for some days.

Axlotl describes her way of leadership as collaborating with the church hierarchy, the state pedagogic inspectors and her staff. She explains that by collaborating with the state inspectors, she invites them to school and they together with her and her vice principal follow and control how teachers teach and what they teach. She says she gives feedback to teachers with humility. She also explains that based on the trust the state inspectors have for her, this makes them to send state teachers to teach in her school in subjects where she lacks teachers. Axlotl explains that she updates the church hierarchy about the school and they accept the suggestions she makes for improvement. Besides the church, she indicates that she also gives reports to the state.

Axlotl explains that her school is different by the study of the bible and which makes it confessional. She says attention is given to religious and ethical teaching. She emphasizes that in carrying out bible studies, the school encourages students to participate without being forced. She explains that this is because not all the students are Protestant and further explains that as some of the students are Catholics, Muslims and Pentecostals, they make their choice to join in worship service or not. Axlotl says that even though the school respects the religious background of students, they offer lessons on spiritual, ethical and future life for all the students. She explains that all religious programs in school are coordinated by the pastor. Axlotl also mentions that one her school different based on the good results in examinations.

Axlotl describes leadership in a Protestant school as being consultative with church hierarchy and not being free hand.

Axlotl points out that the main challenges of the school are poor infrastructure and limited financial resources. She explains that the infrastructure is dilapidating with no maintenance even though the church has promised to assist. Axlotl reveals that the only source of income for the school are school fees which is little. She expounds that parents do not pay regularly. This she adds leaves the schools with debts of unpaid salaries.

For the future plans, Axolotl explains that she has two main projects, namely, opening a bilingual section for the school and setting up an information and communication technology centre.

### **Portrait of Badger**

Badger is a male principal of a Protestant school in an urban town of Cameroon and is between 40 to 50 years old. He holds a master degree in the domain of educational sciences and has teacher professional experience of over twenty years after being trained in a pre-service higher teacher training institution. While his experience as principal in the current institution is less than ten years, his cumulative experience as principal is more than fifteen years. Besides his function as principal, Badger also serves as a lay person in his local church.

The interview with Badger lasted for 50 minutes and was conducted by the author in an office space. Even though, a few persons knocked at the door during the interview session, the process went focused. During the interview, Badger was open, confident and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

Badger explains that his daily activities comprise of preparing documents, attending meetings, attaining to parents and responding to his hierarchy, all of which always begin with his personal prayer and meditation in the morning. Badger says that in carrying out these activities he follows his daily activity plan paying attention to what is priority. Badger mentions that one of his priority activities is having a daily meeting with the senior discipline masters to address cases of indiscipline. He says that in giving sanctions, he reflects a lot and uses the internal rules and regulations. Badger believes in punctuality.

Badger describes that his way of leading the school is by following the text that defines the tasks of workers. He further explains that when there is a fault, he uses the internal rules and regulations to give sanctions. Meanwhile he indicates that he first invites the person who has committed the fault to explain where he or she went wrong. He believes in seek-

ing the face of God in all his actions. In addition, Badger says that hierarchy is also involved in his way of leading as he has to assist other newly created schools of the church that have financial challenges.

Badger expresses that his school different by the presence of God and that by calling the name of God each day as priority gives the confessional character of his school. He explains that a particular character of his school is the integration of faith whereby all lessons in all subjects show biblical values. Badger indicates that other things that make his school different comprise of the teaching of the bible by chaplains, daily morning devotion in each class coordinated by teachers and students.

Concerning what is particular in leading a Protestant college, Badger says that it is humility and collaboration and not domination. He points out that in his school community, everyone is respected.

As far as challenges are concerned, Badger explains that there is limited finances to pay personnel salary, difficulties to improve on school infrastructure and dealing with his hierarchy. He reveals that his hierarchy imposes on him the employment of unqualified staff and that he had experienced some injustices from them leading to him being transferred. One other challenge Badger indicates is that of maintaining the good results of the school so that the school stays on top.

Badger highlights that his plans for the future are to improve on infrastructure, stabilize school enrolment and train teachers and not to depend on part-time employees<sup>9</sup>. In diverse matters, Badger explains that he spends most of his time in carrying out school or church activities.

### **Portrait of Bison**

Bison is male principal of a Protestant boarding secondary school in an urban city of Cameroon and is 40 to 50 years of age. He holds a first degree in natural sciences and has had in-service training as teacher and as school principal. Bison has a teaching experience of more than 20 years

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<sup>9</sup> Teachers employed on part time bases in the context of Cameroon are those who already have a full time employment contract in another institution, and only take some teaching hours during their spare time in the school where they are considered teachers on part time employment. In this context, the paymnt for part time teachings is not taxed.

and his experience as school principal is less than ten years. Besides being a school principal, he is also an active lay person for his church.

The interview with Bison lasted for 56 minutes. It was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community in a calm space. Bison was confident, open and proud to share his experiences as principal.

Bison explains that his daily work commences before students and teachers arrive school and that during this time he makes his personal prayers and proceed to ensure that the students get ready for morning devotion. He explains that although the discipline master is responsible to ensure the readiness of students, he does the follow-up and supervision. Bison believes that his active participation in morning devotions is not only an example for teachers and students to follow, but also a matter of conviction on the role that devotion plays in his life and that of the school. For the rest of the day, Bison says he follows up both the teaching and auxiliary staff to ensure that they carryout their duties. He explains that he cares about students learning and welfare given that the school is boarding. This according to him from what he indicates keeps him alert for 24 hours each day thus making the work as principal tedious.

Bison explains that the focus in his school leading is guiding both the teachers and students in the fear of God to live ethical values in school. To assist in his leadership, Bison mentions that he selects collaborators based on the various potentials and competencies they have. He then supervises the tasks which is shared to them. Bison reveals that he keeps track by using a daily work diary and reflects most of the time by bringing change in the school. Bison is confident and indicates that he ensures staff professional development to register the good results he has for the school. Bison explains that his leading places religion as the foundation to mold the life of students. Although Bison points out that he listens and delegates responsibilities, he also follow-up from what he says by spying to ensure that work is effectively done.

Bison explains that what makes his school different is the God-fearing and committed nature of teachers. He indicates that the school is characterized by a very good learning climate with students supporting one an-

other. Bison is proud to say that he has an influx of Francophones enrolling in his school that is based on Anglophone tradition, providing space for children from various social and cultural backgrounds to learn together happily. In addition, he explains that the school offers space for internally displaced students as the result of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon even though he has limited space. One of the things that he considers which makes the school different is the provision of regular and adequate water and electricity supply. Above all, he explains that the school cooperates with the neighbouring Protestant school.

The challenges Bison faces from what he tells comprise of limited financial resources to complete the buildings and limited space to expand the school as more parents want to enroll their children. Bison explains that some challenges are connected to resistance of change by staff members who have been long in the school as well as managing teachers' attitudes that are based on ethnic affinities. Bison sadly expresses the challenge of not being able to retain the teachers they have trained due to low salaries resulting from the small school fees they charge.

Bison explains that his plan for the future is the intensification of strategies to instill a culture of honesty, truth, transparency and fight against corruption in the children.

### **Portrait of Butterfly**

Butterfly is a male principal of a Protestant boarding secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon and he is above 50 years of age. He holds a first degree in languages and had participated in in-service training workshops. He has a teaching experience of over thirty years. His experience as school principal falls in the range of 10 to 20 years.

The interview with Butterfly lasted for 59 minutes. It was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community in a calm environment. Butterfly was very proud and confident in sharing his experiences as principal even though at the time of the interview, he explained that his school had been shut down due to the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon.

Butterfly explains that his daily work focuses on ensuring that students are supported to develop. He argues that in spite of the fact that children make mistakes, such mistakes should be considered as learning opportunities and not crimes. He explains that he does mentoring for his collaborators, giving them autonomy even though some of them cannot still take decisions on their own.

Butterfly explains that his way of school leading is dynamic with a human or fatherly touch. In this way of leading, Butterfly says that he is patient, caring and gives a lot of attention to children, giving them opportunities to learn from their mistakes. For cases of deviant behaviour of students, Butterfly explains that he always involves parents, considers change of perspective before taking a decision. Butterfly believes that a leader of a Protestant school should be one who grooms, mentors his collaborators, and makes them autonomous.

Butterfly says that what makes his school different is the counseling and support that is given to students. He considers his school a reformatory centre and that his dynamic leadership style also adds to the specific character of his school.

Butterfly points out that the main challenge of the school is that it is shut down and no one can determine its future. He however says that at the time the school was operational, the challenges have been the non-payment of school fees by parents, and how to deal with deviant behaviour of children. In the current crisis scenario when the school is shut down, Butterfly explains that the challenge is that of settling unpaid bills of suppliers as the church hierarchy pushes the debtors back to him when the debts were incurred by the school. He further explains his worry about teachers who have lost their jobs and what the future holds for his school that is currently in the bush.

Butterfly says he has no plans for the future as the school is shut down and not existing due to the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon.

### **Portrait of Cat**

Cat is 40-50 years old and a male principal of a comprehensive Protestant secondary day school in an urban area in Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor

degree in social sciences. Cat's teaching experience and experience as a school principal is less than ten years.

The interview with Cat lasted for 75 minutes and was conducted by the author in a calm office environment of the interviewee. During the interview, Cat was open, confident and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

Cat explains that his daily activities comprise of ensuring that the classrooms and materials are set before classes begin. He indicates that he is always the first person to arrive the school and spends his whole day in the school except when he is to attend meetings. Cat mentions that he welcomes parents and students and even get connected to others by telephone to discuss matters that concern their children. He discloses that some of his time is spent on secretariat responsibilities for the school as he does not have a secretary.

Cat describes that his way of leading the school is by participation of the teachers and by delegating his functions. He further discloses that in his leading, he remains humble and listens attentively and ensures that the decisions he takes should not frustrate anybody. He explains that he makes himself accessible to parents, teachers and students and holds regular meetings with teachers. He explains that focusing on students' discipline and ensuring that only experienced teachers are recruited are important in his leading. He believes that God takes control of his actions and challenges.

Cat says that what makes his school different is the discipline and the role of the chaplain who according to Cat is above him, the staff and students in matters related to God. Cat explains that the non-congested classrooms, recruitment of experienced teachers makes the learning situation of students different. He adds that in his meetings with parents, he focuses more on students' learning and their well fare than on money issues.

Cat says that his main challenge is how to run a school with a teaching staff that is mainly composed of teachers employed on part-time basis. He raises the difficulty he has in managing multiple functions as principal

and secretary due to inadequate staff. Cat says that the central church before appointing him as principal had not provided any administrative, financial and material support and this makes his work difficult. Cat connects this to the challenge of limited financial resources to pay teachers and run the school.

### **Portrait of Chickaree**

Chickaree is a female principal of a Protestant boarding secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon and is 40 - 50 years. She holds a first degree in languages and had participated in in-service training workshops. She has a teaching experience of close to 20 years. Her experience as school principal is less than ten years.

The interview with Chickaree lasted for 36 minutes. It was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community in a calm environment. Chickaree was timid in sharing her experiences as principal.

Chickaree explains that in her daily experiences as principal, she is concerned with the discipline of students and does individual counseling when students have disciplinary problems. She says that she works with students using slogans like “do not do anything that will bring disgrace to your family and the school” and “Be at the right place at the right time doing the correct thing”. She argues that these slogans put the students in the right track of discipline. Chickaree explains that the enabling environment for school life comes from the support of the pastor. Besides basic family chores, Chickaree says that she spends most of the time on school activities.

Chickaree describes that her way of leading the school is through team work with her immediate collaborator. She adds that she organizes frequent meetings with examination class students and listens to both teachers and students.

Chickaree says that what makes her school different is the quietness that characterizes the school environment. She believes that the school being quiet is a pointer that the students are disciplined. She further explains that the school focuses on academics and discipline which she believes is a reason for parents bringing their children to the school.

Chickaree points out that that leading a Protestant school is based on service, humility, steadfastness and respect to both students and teachers.

The main challenges Chickaree describes centre on what she calls minor disciplinary behaviours exercised by senior students on junior ones. Such minor crimes as she explains comprise of threats, cases of students slapping others, students taking food out of the refectory or late coming. Chickaree argues that disciplinary problems like breaking bounds are not yet committed by students and for which if they do, this can lead to their dismissal. She narrates that other challenges comprise of completing the syllabus as the school re-opened late and the housing problem for teachers.

The future plan Chickaree has for the school is to improve on the school enrolment.

### **Portrait of Cow**

Cow falls is 40 to 50 years old and is male principal of a day Protestant secondary school in an urban area in Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in natural sciences and has had an in-service training as teacher and as school principal. Cow has a teaching experience of close to 20 years and an experience as school principal in the current school of over ten years.

The interview with Cow was conducted on a day of public uprising in the locality connected to political crisis thus making the general atmosphere tense. Meanwhile Cow was welcoming and accepted to be interviewed. He was open in sharing his experiences as principal. This interview lasted for 36 minutes and was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community.

Cow explains that his daily work comprises of first welcoming students early in the morning and ensuring that teachers on duty follow-up students to keep the campus clean. After this, he says he jointly takes part in devotion which is daily for both teachers and students. Cow describes his activities after morning devotion in two parts. In the first part he indicates that he concentrates in the office to write administrative letters, receive parents while in the second part of the day, he moves around the

staffroom and classroom areas to follow-up what teachers are doing. He adds that on some of the days he goes out for official meetings.

Cow believes that a leader in a Protestant school must have spiritual and religious responsibilities of conducting devotions, counseling teachers with the use of the bible, organizing retreats together with the chaplain. In his leadership experiences cow explains that he follows directives from hierarchy as well as consult teachers and students. He does planning with his close collaborators and emphasizes that even the schedule for conducting morning devotion must respect school hierarchy such that the principal first conducts devotion before other persons follow. Cow adds that he works very closely with the local church.

Cow says that what makes his school different is the daily school schedule which offers self-learning and individual follow-up of students in the afternoon before students return to their homes in the evening. He adds that the school offers lunch for all students at minimal cost and have a bus service that transport students who live in different parts of the town. Cow explains that this is one of the things that makes a difference is the outstanding results of the students at end of course examinations.

Cow says that the challenges he has, range from personnel instability, through financial to infrastructural. As far as personnel instability is concerned, cow explains that it is difficult to retain young teachers as they easily leave for better jobs elsewhere. As the school income solely depends on school fees, Cow explains that this is not sufficient to pay teachers' salaries given also that the state subvention is small. On the infrastructural platform, Cow says the buildings are inadequate to contain the fast-increasing enrolment of the school and that the school needs a fence to curb trespassing. He argues that most of the problems are connected to limited financial resources.

Cow explains that his plan for the future comprises of introducing a program of gospel music, find the strategies to stabilize the good examination results of the school, develop the science laboratory and build additional classrooms. He says that this fits in the five-year plan of the school.

## Portrait of Degu

Degu is above 50 years and is male principal of a boarding Protestant secondary school in an urban area in Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in social sciences and has had an in-service training as teacher and as school principal. Degu has a teaching experience of over 25 years. Even though he has been school principal for more than 15 years, his experience as principal in the current school is less than ten years.

The interview with Degu was conducted on a day of public demonstrations in the locality connected to political crisis thus making the general atmosphere tense. Meanwhile Degu still expressed the willingness to be interviewed and this interview lasted for 25 minutes. He was confident of himself in sharing his experiences as principal. The interview was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community

Degu explains that his daily work is a combination of routine and innovation. As far as routine activities are concerned, he says that they comprise of ensuring that students get up in the morning, do their morning chores, take part in prayers and morning devotion in the chapel, follow-up lessons during the day and evening activities for students.

Degu says that he leads by delegating power and use of team work. He explains that he is the one who endorses all the tasks he delegates. He says that his leading goes with a lot of sacrifice and commitment. He adds that he leads by being a good example, good listener and staying on the truth.

On what makes his school different, Degu says that it is the integrity of both students and teachers. In addition, he says the school builds on discipline, to get the students focused. He explains that the school encourages students to be creative in solving problems meanwhile he encourages competition by rewarding departments that perform best. He mentions that he instills democratic values whereby students democratically elect their leaders in the student government. Degu believes that a protestant school is a free enterprise that upholds democracy and free thinking.

He says that students have freedom of expression, talk freely to their teachers, to complain if they are not satisfied following the hierarchy. He

sums up that students in his school have integrity and take responsibility to make choices.

Degu explains that the main challenges he faces is dealing with deviant behavior of students and giving examples like students keeping overgrown hair or flying their shirts., He explained that for some of the challenges, the chaplain takes the responsibility of counseling. He believes that some of the deviant behavior comes from the lack of parental care.

Degu explains that his plans for the future about the school concerns the continuous building of the students' integrity to enable them fit better in their community, society and future professional work.

### **Portrait of Donkey**

Donkey is above 50 years and is a male principal of a Protestant comprehensive secondary school in a rural area of Cameroon. He holds a bachelor of science (BSc) degree in sciences and had undergone an in-service training. He has a teaching experience of close to 20 years and experience as principal of less than ten years. Donkey has additional responsibilities as a lay person of his church.

The interview with Donkey lasted for 130 minutes. It was conducted by the author in a calm office space. During the interview, Donkey was self-confident and proud to share his experiences as principal in an elaborate way.

Donkey says that in his day to day work, he comes to school early in the morning, controls the effective presence of teachers, overviews the financial situation of the school, takes part in assemblies and morning devotions. He emphasizes that he checks to ensure that his collaborators carryout their responsibilities. Donkey says that because of inadequate staff, he additionally carries out secretariat duties alongside attending to parents and taking part in meetings.

Donkey explains that his leading is characterized by coordination and consultation. He further describes his leading as highly contextualized in a difficult financial situation of the school regarding unpaid salaries and other debts. He says that his leading is in strict respect of guidelines from the state hierarchy and from the hierarchy of the church. He believes that

leadership in Protestant schools should be more rigorous and to strictly follow instructions from hierarchy.

Donkey says that what makes his school different is the religious character with a new subject which he calls hope for the future. He explains that this subject addresses puberty problems of students and other related challenges. Donkey says his school additionally makes a difference in the devotion and worship services organized for the whole school and for individual classes guided by the chaplain. He proudly indicates that the school is connected to the community and families of students as the school pays visits to students in their homes when they are bereaved.

Donkey explains that his main difficulty lies in the limited financial resources that makes it difficult to pay teachers' salaries, employ teachers in all services and improve on the school infrastructure.

Donkey points out that his plan for the future is mainly concerned with how to clear off the outstanding debts, pay teachers' salary and improve on the quality of the different school services.

### **Portrait of Duck**

Duck is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in a rural area of Cameroon and is between 30 to 40 years old. He holds a first degree in political sciences and has had training in social sciences. Duck had taken part in in-service training workshops. Both his teaching experience and experience as school principal is less than ten years. Besides being a school principal he is also responsible for a parish of his church.

The interview with duck lasted for 51 minutes. It was conducted by the author in a quiet environment and Duck was open and proud to share his experiences as principal.

Duck says that he begins his daily work by reviewing his work plan. He adds that every Monday, he holds administrative meetings to discuss the plan for the week and having shared responsibilities with his collaborators. He explains that his main daily activities comprise of working on administrative and financial documents, transmission of mails to hierarchy and meeting parents and students. Duck highlights that in addition to this, he moves around the school to ensure that there is discipline. As

far as discipline is concerned, he says that he checks to guarantee that students are not loitering and he controls the attendance of teachers. Duck indicates that in his daily activities, besides his role in the parish, he responds to two hierarchies, namely, the hierarchy of the state and the hierarchy of the church. He says his work with these two hierarchies centres on filling and transmitting administrative forms, and taking part in meetings and seminars.

Duck explains that what makes his school different is first the fact that it is denominational and does not only focus on intellectual capacity building but much more on integrity. Duck argues that building integrity focuses on the fear of God and therefore the school chaplaincy service supports and work with students in this regard. He also says that his school gives responsibility to students and make financial records transparent to the staff. Duck points out that his school commemorates Christian feasts and holidays such as Christmas, thus making a difference. Duck describes his way of leading the school as participative management in which there is collegial decision making even though he takes some of the decisions alone. He further explains that his leadership involves a lot of writing in regard to reports and projects.

Duck believes that leading a protestant school implies implementing values in school to make them concrete. He explains that the school is also given physical Christian marks such as crosses which are found in the classrooms. Duck says that leadership in protestant schools enforces prayers, morning meditations for both teachers and students and beginning each lesson with a prayer. He believes that students with disciplinary problems should be severely reprimanded and punished so that the potential that God has put in them should not be destroyed. He also argues that the best teacher at end of the year with respect to punctuality should be rewarded.

Concerning the future plans for the school, Duck explains that he is concerned with infrastructural development given that the existing buildings are more than 50 years old without any maintenance. He also plans to improve on academic results which as he indicates are currently not encouraging. He argues that it is only when the academic results are good

that the school can have a voice and make its visibility. On the one hand he says that he wants to invest in building integrity of students and yet on the other, he has a dream to make the school an elite establishment.

Duck says that his main challenges are the limited financial resources and the low enrolment of students.

### **Portrait of Elephant**

Elephant is over 50 years old and a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in a big city of Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in social sciences. He has a teaching experience of more than 10 years with experience as principal of less than ten years. Elephant additionally functions as a lay person of his church.

The interview with Elephant lasted for 63 minutes. It was conducted by the author in a calm environment. During the interview, Elephant was self-confident, proud to introduce himself as ex-student of the school and glad to share his experiences as principal.

Elephant describes his daily work as being that of supervising the different services in the school. He explains that he works on files, welcome students and ensures discipline to avoid misbehaviour from students. On the platform of discipline, Elephant indicates that he works very closely with the state police.

Elephant explains that in his leading, he views the school as a company and focuses on supervising the different services. He describes his supervisory work as comprising of working to improve the school situation through communication and in collaboration with students' mentors and association with parents. Elephant believes in Christian values and transparency.

Elephant says that what makes his school different is the existences of all services in the school including a library and digital communication services. According to Elephant, the existence of a food security control and a control check point for visitors makes a great difference. Other points that make a difference from Elephant's explanation comprise of the support given to students who are academically weak and the existence

of a chaplaincy department with two chaplains coming from two different Protestant churches.

Elephant explains that his main difficulties comprise of improving the poor school climate from the part of the teachers and finding the possibilities to pay outstanding debts on salary arrears and taxes. He explains that he came and met the situation of the poor school climate connected to outstanding unpaid salaries. Elephant argues that although the school buildings are dirty and dilapidating, his priority is to settle debts.

The plan of Elephant is to progressively settle the unpaid salary arrears owed teachers as well as unpaid taxes.

### **Portrait of Fish**

Fish is male principal of a Protestant secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon and between 40 to 50 years. He holds a Bachelor degree in sciences and has had a professional teacher training in a pre-service higher teacher training college. Fish has a teaching experience of over 20 years and an experience of less than ten years as principal. Besides his functions as principal, he carries out duties as lay person in his church.

The interview with Fish lasted for 45 minutes and was conducted by the author in a calm space. At the beginning of the interview, Fish was reserved meanwhile in the course of the interview he became more confident, reflective and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

In the day to day work, Fish explains that he oversees the progress of planned work following the schedule of activities and timetable that have been planned in advance. He says he checks the effective presence of the staff and students and gets to parents by phone call if their children are absent. At the beginning of each day, Fish says he reads the bible, does a self-meditation and prays before consulting the activity plan. He explains that his activities extend up to the evening given that the school also runs an evening section. He ends each day with prayer and individual devotion.

For the whole student body, he explains that there is weekly devotions following a quarterly theme drawn from the bible. He adds that the students' devotions are facilitated by pastors, church elders and evangelists.

Fish informs that each class has an evangelist who organizes special prayer sessions for each class based on students' requests.

Fish says that his way of leading is by ensuring team spirit, enhancing work committees, collaboration with staff, coordination and supervision. He explains that he is assisted by a director of studies who follows up matters of studies and reports to him. Fish points out that the work committees develop quarterly activity plans and time table for the school. Fish believes that besides the staff meetings he holds with teachers, fraternal meetings of sharing joint meals enhances staff cohesion. Fish explains that activities that feature in the school general plan include religious activities, extra-curricular activities like sports and cultural events. He assures that his leading fulfills the rights and needs of teachers from where he then encourages them to work hard. He adds that hard working teachers are given bonuses with the support from parents meanwhile he also checks to warn lazy teachers.

Fish says the organization of his school is based on effective planning with objectives and that this makes his school different. He mentions that his school identifies and supports struggling students by organizing refresher classes for them. He explains that he works closely with parents for them to be updated on the support plan for students. Communication with parents, he adds, is facilitated through a software program that connects the telephone contacts of parents. Furthermore, he says class meetings are held with parents having children in the individual classes. Fish indicates that the choir, clubs and inter-class games also makes the school different.

Fish describes leadership in a protestant school as service to the learners and to the community. He says the leader should be one who fears God, gives support to weak students and organizes fraternal communion.

Fish believes that organizing staff social, excursions and appreciations to workers forms part of leadership in a protestant school.

Fish explains that as his school is already saturated with influx of students, the main challenge is that of opening an annex for expansion of the school. He says his school has already created other colleges that are already self-sustaining.

Besides the opening of other annex schools, Fish explains that one of his plans for the future is professionalizing education and setting up appropriate workrooms for the branches. He believes that the idea of vocational training aligns with the requirements of the head of state of Cameroon.

### **Portrait of Giraffe**

Giraffe is female of between 40 to 50 years and principal of a Protestant boarding secondary school in a rural location in Cameroon. She holds a Bachelor degree in physical sciences and had also undergone an in-service teacher training program. Besides the professional training as teacher, she also had additional educational training linked to the civil society. Giraffe has an experience of close to 20 years as teacher and an experience of less than ten years as principal.

The interview with giraffe lasted for 95 minutes and was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community. This interview was conducted in a very calm environment. During the interview, Giraffe was very self-confident, open and proud to share her experiences as principal.

Giraffe explains that her daily work commences very early in the morning before students arrive in school during which she ensures that students carry out their early morning chores and get into early morning individual learning. She says that her main activities comprise of taking part in morning devotion, follow-up of students' learning, daily schedules for the school and students security. Giraffe explains that during the morning devotions organized in the chapel for all students and teachers, she sometimes conducts it while on other days it is shared between the chaplain, teachers and students. She explains that in collaboration with her administrative staff, she checks to ensure that learning is effectively taking place in various classrooms. Giraffe indicates that even though the school has a poor financial situation, she jointly works with the entire staff to organize catch up classes for students during extra time. She explains that during the evening she follows up the individual learning of students and later checks to ensure that they are secure in the dormitories at night.

Giraffe says that her way of leading the school is by collaboration as well as the use of democratic practice with her staff. She explains that she organizes planning meetings during which tasks are shared and that she communicates regularly with her staff. She explains that she dialogues with teachers on individual basis as well as ensures that problems in school do not escalate. She believes that the successes her school is registering comes from the enabling environment in the school community and collaborative spirit. She points out that she involves her school in international projects and is proud of the reflections and other contributions developed by her students in such activities. Giraffe explains that her leading role is supported by the team of school prefects (student leaders) who are democratically elected. She says that she supports them to be assertive and gives both girls and boys equal opportunities. She explains that she promotes students club activities and that through all of these she develops self-confidence in her students. Giraffe explains that besides being a principal she also teaches and she believes that most of her leading skills were developed during her in-service teacher training. She explains that she encourages learner-centred teaching in her school whereby teachers enhance group work, use different teaching methods and learners' ideas. She is proud to explain that she takes all her teachers and students along with her towards the vision of the school and that this makes the school very outstanding in academic achievement and public manifestations in the region. Giraffe explains that she also trains teachers, observe their lessons and is proud to invite them to observe her own lessons.

Giraffe explains that what makes her school Protestant is that students take responsibility of their actions and that the students and teachers live as a community, supporting one another. She also says that in her school, students have the liberty to raise their voices against injustices. Giraffe also indicates that other things that make her school different comprise of very outstanding student academic results and students working towards the goal of excellence. Besides academic excellence, she says her school encourages singing and dancing. Giraffe says that her school is well respected by parents and community members. She further argues

that even though the students pay very low fee, teachers are still motivated to work very hard to support students learning.

The main challenge Giraffe describes is the shutdown of schools in her region due to political crisis and she gets worried that students will miss their education. The other challenges that pre-occupy Giraffe as she explains are financial difficulties to pay teachers and improve on the school infrastructure.

In other matters, Giraffe says she socializes, does presentations in the church and in the community and does sensitization through the local radio. She explains that she networks with the government administration as well as the local community.

### **Portrait of Gorilla**

Gorilla falls in the age range of 40 to 50 years and he is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in an urban town of Cameroon. He holds a Master degree in the field of social sciences. He has a teaching experience of over 20 years. Even though his experience as principal is over ten years, he has been principal in the current school for less than five years. Gorilla is additionally responsible for the coordination of the parish of his church.

The interview with Gorilla lasted for 62 minutes. It was conducted by the author. During the interview, Gorilla was self-confident and proud to share his experiences as principal.

Gorilla describes his daily work as being that of supervision. He explains that he oversees and follows up the execution of tasks by his collaborators in the following domains: pedagogy, discipline and spiritual life. He says that he is pre-occupied in his daily tasks by relating with the hierarchy.

Gorilla explains that his leading is by supervision of shared responsibilities. He argues that to this, he does a lot of listening and in a few occasions visits lessons to give feedback to teachers. Working on administrative matters relating to the state and church hierarchy makes part of Gorilla's leadership as he explains. Gorilla believes that leadership in a

Protestant school is characterized by humility, fear of God, hard work and above all, leading by example.

For what makes his school different, Gorilla explains that the main aspect is conforming to the text of the state that regulates teaching. Gorilla indicates that another aspect that makes a difference is the aspect of morality and ethical education which respond to holistic education. Even though he argues that the success in all of these lies in the emphasis on discipline, he still maintains that additional support to the learning of weak students and not only focusing on intelligent students makes a great difference.

Gorilla explains that his main difficulty is the payment of teachers' salaries even though he still struggles not to owe teachers. Another challenge as Gorilla explains is dealing with the church hierarchy that sometimes imposes and hold a different vision of the school from that which the he as the principal has.

Gorilla points out that his plan is to stabilize the financial situation of the school given that the state subvention is negligible and irregular.

### **Portrait of Groundhog**

Groundhog is a male within the age range of 40 to 50 years and principal of a Protestant secondary school in a semi-urban location in Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in languages and had also been trained in a pre-service higher teacher training college. Groundhog has an experience of over 20 years as teacher and an experience of less than ten years as principal.

The interview with Groundhog lasted for 65 minutes. It was conducted by the author in a calm restaurant. During the interview, Groundhog was very self-confident, assertive and proud to share his experiences as principal.

Groundhog explains that in his daily activities, he oversees the general functioning of the school and invests more time on teaching. He says that in the mornings, he ensures that students keep the campus clean before morning devotion begins. He indicates that he also attends to parents as well as prepare school documents. Groundhog explains that he teaches as

well as follows up lessons of other teachers. He indicates that he spends most of the time in school and in the afternoon, he does sports with his students. Groundhog declares that in the evenings, he reviews his activity plan and prepares for the following day.

Groundhog mentions that his way of leading is by collaborating with his teachers and maintaining a good working atmosphere. He explains that his collaborators have confidence in him and even trust him to share the challenges of their families with him. He emphasizes that he listens and delegates responsibilities. Groundhog indicates that his leadership does not have prejudices. He explains that he pays attention to support children from poor family backgrounds and those with deviant behaviour. Groundhog further explains that he strengthens partnerships with parents, ex-students and international organizations in matters of improving students' results, students' welfare and infrastructural development. He is proud to say that even with financial difficulties, his teachers' salaries have been paid up to date.

Groundhog explains that several things make his school different. He informs that end of course exam results have been outstanding and consistent with his school being respected in the region. Groundhog says the school makes copies of learning resources and give students and offer extra teaching hours. He explains that the support of the school both financial and moral to orphans and internally displaced children make a big difference for his school. Additionally, Groundhog says, the school organizes common fellowship meals as well as sporting events for both teachers and students. He explains that even though the chaplain is responsible for chaplaincy activities, teachers and students also take turns to read bible lessons and conduct morning devotions. He is proud to say that his teachers use mobile phones WhatsApp function to share exercises and tasks with students.

Groundhog explains that his main challenge is financial as financial resources are inadequate to facilitate infrastructural development and maintenance. He explains that he has set a fund raising project for staff with support of international partners to subsidize the payment of teachers' salaries. He says the project is about the fattening and selling of oxen.

For future plans, Groundhog explains that he needs more strategies to maintain the good results of the school and focus on building capacities of teachers in competency-based approach.

### **Portrait of Hippopotamus**

Hippopotamus is above 50 years old and is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in a rural area of Cameroon. He holds a master degree in political sciences. Hippopotamus has an experience as school principal of less than ten years and a teaching experience of over 25 years. He has additional responsibilities in the parish of his church.

The interview with Hippopotamus lasted for 66 minutes. It was conducted by the author. During the interview, Hippopotamus was very open and confident to share his experiences as principal, even though he was reserved at the beginning.

Hippopotamus says that in his daily work, he follows specifications and instructions from the ministry. He explains that in the mornings, he supervises the work of his collaborators to ensure that students move to class after the assembly. Hippopotamus indicates that he also holds meetings with staff and assign tasks as well as work on correspondences and reports in his office. In addition, he mentions that that sometimes he moves along the corridors to control the activities of teachers.

Hippopotamus describes his leading as mainly following instructions from the hierarchy. He explains that he supervises, pedagogy, discipline and finances as guided by hierarchy. Hippopotamus explains that his leading is moderated by the fact that the school owes teachers huge sums of salary arrears and this keeps him stressed up as well maintain a humble attitude towards teachers. In addition, Hippopotamus says his leading is framed by two hierarchies; the church and the state for which he gives both their due respect. He believes that leadership in a Protestant school needs to be guided by reflected decision taking.

Following Hippopotamus' explanation, religious education and chaplaincy activities that are given attention to, make his school different. He also says that the teaching of life skills and the offer of additional teaching to students who are academically weak make a difference as well.

Hippopotamus explains that the challenges he faces in school leading are all connected to lack of financial resources. He indicates that these difficulties are debts on school running, unpaid taxes, and unpaid salaries.

Hippopotamus reveals that the future plans for the school comprise of building the school fence, sports infrastructure, improve students' academic results and recruiting permanent teachers for the school to replace those that are part time. In addition, he plans to invest in the professional development of eachers.

### **Portrait of Horse**

Horse is above 50 years and is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon. He holds an MA degree in sciences and had been professionally trained as a teacher in a pre-service higher teacher training college. He additionally has theological training. Horse experiences both as teacher and principal between 10 to 20 years. Besides his functions as principal, Horse is also responsible for running a parish of his church.

The interview with Horse lasted for 41 minutes and was conducted by the author in a calm environment. During the interview, Horse was confident to talk about his experiences as school principal.

Horse says that in his daily work, he follows the job description as defined by the state ministry of secondary education. By this, he explains that he deals with school administration activities like correspondences with hierarchy and supervises the work of the dean of studies and discipline master. Horse adds that he is answerable to the state administration and reports the school business to them. He explains that he is called on daily or weekly basis to report in written form or verbally.

Horse explains that his way of leading is through coordination meeting with his collaborators. He responds to mails addressed by hierarchy and informs hierarchy about the situation of the school. Horse says that one of his preoccupations is working to instill discipline in school as he believes that there is increased indiscipline in Cameroon schools through drug consumption by students. He explains that he follows up to ensure that discipline masters search students before they enter the gate of the

school and while in class, teachers can continue the search. He argues that this search follows the guidelines from the ministry of education which equally forbids telephones from students. In addition, Horse indicates that with his collaborators, they carry out roll calls. Horse also says that he is pre-occupied by indiscipline from the part of teachers in regard to late coming and absenteeism.

Horse explains that what makes his school different is its being Protestant. He argues that even though the religious and ethical dimensions form the Protestant character of the school, his school strictly follows the program as defined by the ministry of education. He believes that Protestant schools are better organized in the Anglophone part of Cameroon than in the Francophone section. Horse says that one other important thing that makes his school different is that he has many Muslim children in the school. He explains that there is good collaboration with Muslim parents as the school is tolerant to Muslim students to make choices in taking part in bible and religious studies. Horse is proud to say that Muslim children now study the bible knowing that his school does not force them to become Christians.

Horse says he has challenges at both the pedagogical and at the financial levels. At the level of pedagogy, he explains that teachers are not fully equipped in competency-based education. Meanwhile he is proud of his teachers who have already had an in-service training in this domain and says that they even serve as resource persons to the state inspectors. He explains that the school faces financial difficulties as the only source of income is school fees and that the situation is made more difficult as a majority of parents are poor.

Horse describes leadership in Protestant schools as pushing others towards the goal, adding ethics and morality. Meanwhile, he believes that the prototype set by the state must be followed.

Horse explains that his plans for the future comprise of opening an institution for teacher training and another institution for technical and vocational education.

### **Portrait of Lemmings**

Lemmings is a female principal of a protestant secondary school in an urban town of Cameroon and is between 40 – 50 years old. She holds a bachelor degree in languages and has a teaching experience of close to 20 years. Her experience as principal is less than ten years.

The interview with Lemmings lasted for 30 minutes and was conducted by the author in an outdoor calm place. During the interview, Lemmings was open and proud to talk about her experiences as school principal. However, at the start of the interview, Lemmings was timid and later opened up.

Lemmings explains that in her daily experiences as principal, she is concerned about punctuality and conduction of morning devotion. She says that she receives parents in the morning and teaches in the afternoon. Lemmings explains that she spends most of the time in school and checks to ensure that all classes are locked at the end of the day.

According to Lemmings, what makes her school different is the outstanding results at end of course examinations from what she says. She also explains that she enrolls students from different backgrounds, those who are dismissed from other schools as well as internally displaced students. She mentions that the school has a chaplain who coordinates devotion and prayers and that teachers and students also conduct them at some moments. Being a mission school, Lemmings says that the word of God is central. She explains that she checks to ensure hygiene, orderliness and the respect of rules and regulations such as haircut and dress code. Lemmings explains that Christian religious activities are compulsory for all students, even for students who are Muslims.

As far as leading is concerned, Lemmings says she functions by delegating powers to the vice principal and discipline master. She believes that dialogue and involvement of teachers and students brings success in her school leadership.

Lemmings explains that her main challenge is the bottlenecks from hierarchy. She also reveals that there are no measures for job security.

Concerning plans for the future, Lemmings believes that all depends on what God has planned for her.

### **Portrait of Magpie**

Magpie is a male within the age range of 40-50 years and principal of Protestant comprehensive college in a rural location of Cameroon. He holds a master degree in social sciences and had undergone an in-service teacher training. He has a teaching experience of over 20 years and less than ten years' experience as principal. He additionally serves as a lay person in his church.

The interview with Magpie lasted for 50 minutes and was conducted by the author in a very calm environment. During the interview, Magpie proudly declared himself as a product of the Protestant school. He was very self-confident and proud to share his experiences as principal.

Magpie explains that his daily work focuses more on reflecting and managing the deplorable financial situation of the school that ranges from heavy debts he inherited from his predecessor, salary debts to unpaid taxes. Magpie says he works on the strategies to schedule the payments of debts and improve student enrolment. In spite of the efforts which according to him are succeeding, he works daily with fear that any of the debtors may come in to confront him. In the midst of all financial crisis, Magpie expresses that he does the follow-up of teaching with inputs on short training workshops for teachers and students' discipline together with his close collaborators. On the follow-up of students' discipline, he explains that he devotes a lot of time on this as his students have deviant behaviour.

Magpie says that his way of leading is by exercising humility and making himself accessible to students. He explains that he makes use of the participation of teachers and presents the state of the school to them in a transparent way. Magpie believes that Protestant school leadership is biblical leadership whereby the bible is used to convince the people who are being led. He however adds that the use and following of the bible has to be made mandatory in the school.

Magpie explains that what makes his school different is the presence of the gospel and chaplaincy support. He indicates that his school offers care and warm welcoming to students. He argues that his school embraces both the weak and strong learners and gives support to the weak

learners. Magpie further explains that the job satisfaction he and the teachers have by struggling to improve the situation of the school in spite of the challenging financial situation makes a difference.

The major challenges Magpie explains are the heavy financial difficulties of the school, the poor enrolment, dilapidated and dirty infrastructure; and the high number of untrained teachers.

### **Portrait of Peccary**

Peccary is male principal of a Protestant boarding secondary school in a big city of Cameroon and falls in the age range of 40 to 50 years. He holds a PhD in education and has undergone several in-service training workshops. Peccary has a teaching experience of over 20 years and an experience as principal within the range of 10 to 20 years. Besides his functions as principal, he takes part in the teaching of his students.

The interview with Peccary lasted for 68 minutes and was conducted by a member of my PhD learning community in a calm environment. During the interview, Peccary was very open, confident and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

In the day to day work, Peccary explains that he generally begins his day at early in the morning as the first person so as to accompany teachers on duty to get children up, follow them up to carry out their morning chores and then move in for morning devotion. He says the morning devotion is very important and in addition to the chaplain, he and the rest of the teachers take turns to run it. Peccary says he spends the major part of the day by moving along the corridors to follow-up teaching in the school meanwhile he also finds time to receive parents in his office.

Peccary describes his way of leading as servanthood leading where he emphasizes on working for people and not to bully or impose on them. He believes that his appointment as principal is from God and he therefore has the responsibility to prepare people who would take over from him. Peccary argues that even though the school has rules and regulations, he uses them as a guide but pays more attention to listen to students and give them a chance. He explains that he works very closely with his

teachers, motivating them to be committed in teaching. Peccary says that although his job as Principal is demanding as he generally works from early in the morning till night each day, he finds time to rest one day in a week.

According to Peccary, what makes his school different is his leadership style. He explains that his accessibility and welcoming nature to parents and students is unique. In addition, Peccary mentions that he empathizes with his teachers, finding different possibilities to motivate them. He adds that from his approach to teachers, they are committed and work happily even though they earn little salary. He says the constant monitoring of students' learning and follow-up of teachers places the school amongst top schools in academic performance in the country. Peccary also says that another thing that makes the school different is the care and attention given for students' welfare. Peccary believes that the morning devotions and services they have together with students and staff makes a difference in their commitment.

Peccary says that his main plan for the future is to leave a legacy for good school leadership. In other aspects, he explains that his plans are to continue with monitoring to ensure good teaching, and continue with good feeding for the students.

Peccary explains that his main challenge comes from parents who are very protective of their children and approach him and teachers with insults. However, he explains that he manages the situation by giving a listening ear and using non-violent approach. Peccary highlights that one of his challenges is how to deal with students' deviant behaviour in a way that they are supported in their development.

### **Portrait of Possum**

Possum falls in the age range of 40 to 50 years and is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in a rural area of Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in social sciences. Possum has an experience as school principal of less than ten years. Before being appointed Principal, he had not taught before in secondary school. He is additionally responsible for a parish of his church.

The interview with Possum lasted for 69 minutes. It was conducted by the author. During the interview, Possum was open to share his experiences as principal.

Possum describes his daily work as mainly receiving instructions from the hierarchy, both state and church, and implementing them. He says he generally sits in the office, receive parents, check finances and make rounds in the school to control activities of teachers and students.

Possum spells out that his leading is characterized by hard work and responding to instructions from hierarchy. Possum explains that he is responsible for supervision and coordination re-enforcing the discipline of students. He believes that the state authorities should be the ones to determine and guide everything that goes on in school. Even though Possum says he leads by example, he argues that he has to put in hard work in order to be appreciated by hierarchy. He explains that his leading includes conducting fund raising for the school during church services.

Possum explains that what makes his school different is the teaching of spiritual and moral education, meanwhile he emphasizes that the teaching of religion is directed by the state. He informs that another specificity of the school is the existence of two hierarchies in control, the state and the church. Possum says that the offer of worship services, pastoral care to children who are sick and bursaries to academically strong students, give another specific dimension for his school.

Possum discloses that the main difficulties comprise of poor school infrastructure, poor staff quality and financial difficulties to pay teachers.

The future plan of the school as Possum reports is building permanent buildings for the school.

### **Portrait of Rabbit**

Rabbit is within the age range of 30 to 40 years and is a male principal of a Protestant technical and vocational school in an urban area in Cameroon. He holds a Master degree in management sciences. Rabbit has a teaching experience of less than five years. Even though Rabbit's cumulative experience as principal is more than five years, his experience as principal in the current school is less than five years. Rabbit explains that he

does not have any teaching responsibility as he has no mastery of the technical and vocational subjects offered in his school.

The interview with Rabbit lasted for 74 minutes and was conducted by the author in an office environment. During the interview, Rabbit was very confident, open and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

Rabbit explains that his daily activities comprise of holding regular planning and follow-up meetings with his collaborators. He says that he and his staff make a close follow-up of students' progress in skill acquisition. Rabbit explains that his activities mostly focus on creative ideas to improve and expand on the technical and vocational domains in his centre as well as writing project proposals and exchanging with partners within and out of the country.

Rabbit points out that he uses a participatory approach in school leadership characterized by transparency and truth. He explains that even though he is not a teacher or trainer in the vocational and technical field, he still succeeds to develop innovative programs that respond to the needs and competences of his students. Rabbit explains that he functions by delegating responsibilities and ensuring the in-service professional development for teachers. He describes his school as a company wherein he creates income generating activities to fund the running of the different sections. Rabbit indicates that he keeps the bond and commitment of teachers through encouragement, follow-up and payment of incentives. Besides the encouragement, he explains that he also sanctions teachers who are not assiduous given that he is interested in effective learning of students.

Rabbit explains that there are many things that make his school different from others. He says more time is devoted for students' practical skill development than for theory. He argues that his centre does not just implement programs as set by the state but select and add theirs which better equip the students for real life insertion. This has given credibility to his centre as the products from there offer quality services in society. Rabbit indicates that his school is concerned about the support of children

from poor social backgrounds and those who are academically weak. Rabbit narrates that the peculiarity with his centre is that it offers bursaries to all the students as they are mostly from poor backgrounds. He explains that the bursaries are provided by international funding organizations. Rabbit indicates that another aspect that distinguishes his school from others is that the recruitment of teachers is based on competence and follows a transparent and quality procedure. He emphasizes that a majority of teachers and students are not members of his church, thus giving an additional attribute of the institution that is opened to the whole society. Rabbit believes that the counseling they offer to students gives them the liberty to make choices during the training. He says that the school has a chaplain who offers devotion, prayers and counseling to both the students and staff. Rabbit proudly says that his school has opened an annex in another part of the town which is already functional.

Rabbit mentions that one of his main challenges is how to manage the staff that is largely made of part time teachers. Another challenge Rabbit raises is the financial difficulty to sustain funds for bursaries given that the school does not receive subvention from the state but rather pays taxes to the state.

The plans of Rabbit for the future comprise of making the school financially independent of external funds as well as recruiting and training more teachers with full time contracts.

### **Portrait of Raccoon**

Raccoon is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon and his age falls in the bracket of 40 to 50 years. He holds a Bachelor degree in management sciences and had been professionally trained as a teacher in a pre-service higher teacher training College. Raccoon has a teaching experience of more than 25 years and an experience as principal of less than ten years.

The interview with Raccoon lasted for 173 minutes and was conducted by the author in a calm and relaxed environment. During the interview, Raccoon was very confident, open and proud to talk about his

experiences as school principal. In certain instances, he would start talking when he has not listened to the end of a question.

Raccoon explains that his daily work comprises of following up and checking how the teachers teach and evaluating them regularly on aspects like methods and lesson plans. He says that once he feels an imbalance, he shuts his office door, meditates and read a verse from the Bible. Raccoon goes further to explain that in his practice of teaching, he commences by reading a bible verse and asking a student to pray. He says he would eventually stop to teach and rather focus on the follow-up of teachers. Raccoon indicates that one of his daily concerns is instilling discipline in students. He argues that his form of disciplining students is not done through corporal punishment but rather by counseling with the chaplain and later giving additional study work to the student to help in his or her learning.

Raccoon says that what makes his school different is the fact that it is a Christian school. He explains that basing on the word “Christian” shows that Christ and the bible are the foundation and that by this he dislikes the terms denominational or confessional. His school as he describes, shows the manifestation of love, humility, honesty and respect for one another. Raccoon discloses that even though he accepts all children no matter their religious background and intelligence level to enroll in school, all of them are obliged to follow Christian practices. On obliging all students to follow Christian practices, Raccoon explains that he learnt it from a Catholic college and he believes that it is good. Raccoon indicates that the teaching of religion is reinforced and he plans to organize catechumen classes in school to be taught by priests from denominations of the students. He explains that during the reopening, a solemn worship service is organized in school and the school, staff and students are dedicated to God.

Raccoon says that his way of leading is based on service to others. He explains that in this way, he takes his collaborators and teachers along with him and keeps his office door opened to them at all times. He up-

dates that it is based on this form of leading that he replaces corporal punishment by giving students study work to do and for which it is supervised.

Raccoon describes leadership in a protestant school as rendering service, being humble and giving respect.

From the description of Raccoon, the challenges he faces is how to control and terminate the contract of teachers with fraudulent diplomas. He observes that some church officials recruit unqualified people to work in school because those persons are their relatives.

Raccoon explains that his plans for the future comprise of upgrading teachers' salaries and re-instating their benefits, improving the school infrastructure, building the chapel and introducing the Anglophone section.

### **Portrait of Ratel**

Ratel falls in the age range of 40 to 50 years and is a male principal of a Protestant girls boarding secondary school in an urban area of Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in sciences and had taken part in in-service training seminars as both teacher and school principal. Ratel has a teaching experience of over 20 years and an experience of more than ten years as principal. Besides his functions as principal, he is actively engaged in the teaching of his subject.

The interview with Ratel lasted for 53 minutes and was conducted in a calm space by a member of my PhD learning community. During the interview, Ratel was open, confident and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

Ratel explains that his daily activities follow the calendar of planned activities for the school. He indicates that he generally begins his day at early in the morning before teachers and students arrive whereby he accompanies the discipline master to ensure that children get up, do cleaning and go for morning devotion which is for all students and staff.

Ratel explains that in his daily activities, he follows-up to ensure that effective teaching goes on and that students and teachers are actively involved in executing assigned tasks. He says that he openly welcomes, parents, teachers and student in his office.

Ratel reveals that his way of leading is servant leadership in which he functions as a coordinator. In his role as coordinator, he delegates functions but ensures that tasks delegated should be possible to accomplish. Ratel says he does follow-up and gives constructive feedback. Ratel informs that he actively involves teachers and students in school leadership responsibilities. He is proud to mention that in his school, school rules and regulations are jointly developed with the students. Ratel says that he considers the care and support for children very important and reflects in his leadership the difference in the background of children. Ratel explains that even though his functions as principal are enormous, he finds time to teach and ensures that the in-service training of teachers is promoted.

Ratel indicates that what makes his school different is discipline that is implemented with tolerance ensuring that the children are well cultured. He argues that while the parents and students like this atmosphere, he is sometimes blamed by the church hierarchy of being lenient. Ratel proudly says that the results of his school have always been outstanding and that the ex-students are proud to identify with him and with the school. One other thing that Ratel considers typical to his school is that the students are allowed to use mobile phones and laptops in a guided way. He explains that the regulation and the understanding of how to use these gadgets is shared with the students, parents and teachers.

Ratel mentions that one of his main challenges is managing fee collection without sending children out for fee drive. He also specifies that the negative peer pressure of students and the arrogant approach of some parents makes leading difficult.

In regard to the future plans, Ratel explains that his focus is the continuous molding of young minds to develop both ethical life skills and competences for their future life.

### **Portrait of Skylark**

Skylark is above 50 years and is a male principal of a Protestant secondary school in a rural area of Cameroon. He holds a Bachelor degree in social sciences and had taken part in in-service training workshops. Skylark has

a teaching experience of over 25 years. He has been school principal for more than fifteen years in the current school.

The interview with Skylark lasted for 53 minutes. It was conducted by the author in a calm environment. During the interview, Skylark was self-confident and proud to share his experiences as principal.

Skylark says that his main activities comprise of ensuring that planned activities of the school are executed by ensuring discipline on the part of students and teachers.

Skylark describes his way of leading as being transparent with his collaborators especially on the financial records of fees collected from students. In his leading, Skylark says that he delegates duties, gives guidance and considers everyone on the staff including the auxiliary staff members as important. As salaries are not regularly paid, he explains that in his leading he cares about the workers and thus he has instituted and supports the financial saving scheme for the staff. Even though he delegates duties, Skylark says that he spends most of his time on school matters. He explains that he is pre-occupied that the school enrolment should not drop and he includes pastors to campaign for students in their different churches.

Skylark says that what makes his school different is discipline and results. He indicates that parents want discipline and the school ensures discipline for both the students and teachers. Skylark explains that he is pre-occupied checking the disciplinary problems by students and ensuring that are disciplined. He reveals that when a student jumps over the school fence he/she pays money equivalent to the cost of a bag of cement and later the student is given the bag of cement to carry on the head and move around the school. In the second example, he says that when a student puts up a tight fitting trouser, the senior discipline master tears it off. Skylark argues that in matters of discipline he strictly follows the regulations from the ministry of education and that is why when students bring mobile phones to school he destroys them in front of the school population. He expresses that his actions are also backed by the regional state officers in charge of education. Concerning results, Skylark explains that although his school works hard to produce good results, each time

results of end of course examination have to be announced nationwide, he is stressed up due to the stiff competition amongst schools in his locality. Skylark further explains that the holding of worship service at the beginning of the year and the weekly devotions conducted by the pastor, also makes a difference. He indicates that he always updates parents on what the school is doing and also receives support from the parents-teachers' association towards infrastructural development. He is very proud to say that one of the things that makes a difference is the availability of pipe borne water supply in school which was assisted through funds raised from a project.

Skylark points out that his main difficulty is the lack of money to run the school especially the payment of teachers' salary. He complains that the state does not give financial support. Skylark explains that although he has tried to reduce the debts over the years, there are still huge amounts of unpaid salaries and debt owed the national social insurance. One of the problems he presents is that the majority of students who enroll in his school have low quality as the state schools first select the better ones. Skylark highlights that he has a difficulty of managing a staff that is mainly comprised of part time teachers. He adds that he is also confronted with the problem of some full time teachers who do not show commitment.

Skylark reveals that his plan for the future is mainly concerned with how to clear off the outstanding debts and pay teachers' salary.

### **Portrait of Zebra**

Zebra is a male principal of a protestant school in an urban town of Cameroon and falls in the age bracket of 51 – 60 years. He holds a master degree in the domain of social sciences and has no teacher professional experience. Meanwhile his experience as principal is less than ten years. Besides his function as principal, Zebra has had experiences of serving in the administrative and parish units of his church.

The interview with Zebra lasted for 35 minutes and was conducted by the author in a calm restaurant. During the interview, Zebra was open, confident and proud to talk about his experiences as school principal.

Zebra explains that his daily activities comprise of coming early to school to watch the arrival of teachers and students, preparing documents for the delegation, attending meetings, attaining to parents, do pastoral work, counseling students, organize staff meetings and responding to his hierarchy. Zebra says that he also takes part in morning devotions organized once in a week. He explains that on daily basis he is vigilant to issues of insecurity as his school is in an area facing insecurity from a neighbouring country.

Zebra describes that his way of leading the school is by controlling the administrative life of the school, and responding to the administrative exigencies as stipulated by the ministry of education. Zebra explains that as he is not experienced in pedagogical matters, he delegates these to his collaborators and also seeks support from government inspectors. He also says that in his leading, he also ensures punctuality of teachers to classrooms.

Zebra believes that what makes his school different is the chaplaincy work and counseling reinforced by preaching and working on ethics. He adds that punishment of misbehavior constitutes part of the counseling process. Zebra explains that the school welcomes both Muslims and Christians, injecting the culture of obedience to the administration and ensuring the respect of rules and regulations. He says that the school offers additional classes to students who have academic challenges and also invites parents to talk to students.

Zebra explains that the main challenges of the school comprise of limited finances to pay personnel salary and improve on school infrastructure. Zebra underscores that in the face of these challenges, some partners from out of the country have been approached and they have financially supported the school in infrastructural development. He also announces that; he uses part of this financial support to pay for the accrued salaries of teachers.

From the explanation of Zebra, his plans for the future are to look for more partners to support infrastructural development. He also explains the need for the in-service training of his teachers.

## Summary of portraits

In the preceding section, the portraits which have been reflected under the personal and professional context, the conduct of the interview, and the interviewees description of school leading experiences show variety and richness of the field. As the dimension of the portraits on leading experiences is linked to the research question of the study at hand, all the principals in the study have explained their perceptions regarding their leading responsibilities in Protestant schools, what make their school different and the challenges they face in school leading. As analyzed in the abduction section of the study (cf. chapter 3.4.4), through the the process of de-familiarization and distance, portraits were developed (cf. chapter 4.1). These portraits give the background to better understand each of the interviews of the study as earlier described in the sections about data collection (cf. chapter 3.2). These experiences together with the analysis by qualitative content analysis which is a deductive-inductive iterative process facilitate the emergence of the categories of quality that are described in the next section (cf. chapter 4.2).

### 4.2 Description of the structure of the field: Categories of the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders

In this section, the structure of the field which is about the categories of quality is described within the study at hand that is contextualized in the perception of school leaders of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon about their self-understanding. As indicated in sub chapter 3.2, the data of this study was composed of transcribed interviews of principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon. In the preceding chapter (4.1), the portraits of the interviews have been given. From these portraits and the coding of the interviews, the categories of the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders emerged (cf. chapter 3.4.4). It is based on these categories that the structure of the field is shaped and the description of the qualities of experiences of school leadership in protestant schools is presented.

Data was first prepared by the anonymization of the interview transcripts and analyzed by content analysis through coding, intra-coding and

inter-coding processes. This analysis was facilitated by the use of a software program called MAXQDA. The coding process in the first step was characterized by an iterative deductive-inductive strategy of going back and forth in a simultaneous and continuous way. This was followed in the second part by the abduction process (sub chapter 3.4.4) that is focused on typology. In this abduction process, during the process of defamiliarization and distance, portraits were developed, followed by the emergence of criteria coming from the material of the study. These criteria show what connect the principals together as well as shape the interwoven field, even if the principals have different experiences. The different patterns that characterize the material of the study are identified, giving the specific quality. These categories of quality constitute criteria that shape the field. By stabilizing the criteria in the study at hand, the reflections led to the realization of types. The entire process was supported by the contributions from the interpretation group earlier acknowledged with gratitude (cf. chapter 3.2).

As earlier mentioned, all the criteria have come out from the material of the study which include the coded interviews and portraits. The criteria in the study at hand show the aspects that connect principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon. This means, what every one of them is talking about, even if they are coming from different types. By comparing the interviews, it became visible that these criteria specify the quality of the field. There is the need for the criteria to be introduced because no criterion comes from one interview. On the other hand, criteria come from all interviews by comparing them (cf. chapter 3.4.4). A total of seven criteria were stabilized and are described below with examples of quotations from interview transcripts.

### **Main activities of the school leader**

Concerning the main activities of the school leader, this is connected to what the principals of protestant secondary schools in Cameroon describe as focal activities in their day to day functioning as school principals. The material of the study shows different qualities regarding the main activities of school leaders. For example, in the following quotation, Gorilla is

talking about his leadership experience as school principal, explains during the interview that he leads by focusing on learners' achievement. From this background he says:

"I still say that we, what makes our difference is that we think that we must give each child the chance to succeed, it gives a lot of work! A lot, a lot of work, but this is our mission. That is our mission, that is to say, to produce results with these children who were not at the beginning academically strong to be successful and for whom we do a lot. We work a lot with the parents as well, we do a lot of work with the parents, we try to associate them, so that they cause the children to work, to supervise the children at home. Which is not obvious at all. Okay, all in all we can say that, we firmly believe that our mission goes beyond, diplomas but get to train the man, the accomplished man, a balanced man, a man who does not judge only on the number of degrees he has, but on his ability to positively impact society." (Gorilla, MAXQDA lines 196 - 206).

Another interview by Hippopotamus, while talking about his school leadership in an interview indicates that he focuses on obedience to the administration of the state as he declares:

"the daily work at school revolves around the elements defined in the specifications for a principal that is governed and supervised by the ministry of education. It means that we adapt to ministerial instructions." (Hippopotamus, MAXQDA lines 4-6).

## **Understanding of teaching**

On the aspect of teaching understanding, this criterion describes the experiences and reflections of school principals about the purpose and orientation of teaching in Protestant secondary schools. In the quotation below, Badger is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal and he explains that he ensures that teaching integrates faith to all school subjects as he says:

"Perhaps this concept to my understanding is particular to our church. It is a concept we call the integration of faith. In fact, it is the integration of values in learning [...] in fact it means that when I prepare my lesson, I have to tell the child the values contained in the lesson. No matter the subject I teach, I can always find values. If I teach mathematics, I can always find values, that means values such as punctuality, respect and all the others. No teacher can say that in teaching his/her lesson, he/she cannot find those notions, either in between the lines or in a general way. Hence, it is what we ask from teachers, to put the child on the

transmission of these values in their lessons. And we call that, the integration of faith in education. It is not a bible lesson per say but it is a normal lesson, but I say that I draw the attention of the children on the fact that God is at the centre of all. There are subjects where it is easier to integrate. If I teach biology, it is much more easy and if I teach human biology, human physiology, I go straight away instead of letting children remain on the composition of the body, I take the opportunity to tell them that it is God who has created all of that. It is even very complex if man tries to understand it, he cannot understand all. All of that, is what God made.” (Badger, MAXQDA lines 120-139).

Another example is from Degu who in the following quotation from his interview explains his focus of teaching is ensuring democratic practice and tolerance in the classroom. From this background, he says:

“The school promotes liberty, promotes democracy, promotes the fact that children should be able to express themselves, freedom of expression. It is a very very major thing in our Protestant education. And the issue of responsibility is also taken to be very important as far as this school is concerned [...] Good. Responsibility here has now to do with children knowing that they are responsible for their environment, they are responsible for even peace in their class. Just like for instance, what we do is that, for each class, students develop their own rules democratically, they call them class rules. So that in some classes, what the children will say is for instance there shall be no cutting of classes [...] there shall be no laughing at another student when she or he makes a mistake, so in other words tolerance.” (Degu, MAXQDA lines 74-87).

### **Relationship and communication by school leader**

As far as the relationship and communication by the school leader is concerned, it consists of the description that principals have given about their experiences with respect to their relationship with students and teachers. It also includes the description by the principals about how they communicate with students and teachers. In the following example from the interview with Magpie, he explains his communication with students by giving pressure to gain obedience and says:

“The stubbornest students [...] I take them to appear before the police commissioner or before the gendarmerie brigade commander. Sometimes, they are threatened, their ears are pulled a little bit, and when they return, they are soft and these concern the youngest who excel in delinquency. Hence, it is in this way that

we manage the situation. eeee! mmmm! [...] I use the bible to try to convince others. To try to implement this or that action or point of view. And each time, we force the bible, and it works.” (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 131-154).

From the quotation of Magpie above, his perceived relationship with students could be described as hierarchical. Another example is from Giraffe who in the following quotation from her interview about her school leadership experiences perceives communication by focusing on improving teaching and learning. Giraffe says:

“We organize workshops on different key issues that are plaguing our learning environment, as far as education and learning are concerned. Yes, so from time to time we study and see the areas in which we are lacking. Since we have stayed at home for some time without teaching the students due to the crisis, I monitor and talk with teachers to be sure of what the teachers are giving to the students, the manner in which they are teaching and pass across information, how they interact with the children, the relationship with the students, to ensure that this is very comfortable, the rapport between teachers and students. Because if the environment, the atmosphere is very conducive, then we easily achieve our goals. Yes, so, I ensure that we organize more training workshops in school. Yes, during which. I always tell the teachers that I do not know it all. Yes, even if I am there as the facilitator or another person has to facilitate the workshop, that person is not there because he knows everything. Yes, we, it is just a kind of a platform during which we update ourselves, share our ideas and gain from one another, enrich ourselves as teachers in the field. And in addition to that, if we are well equipped professionally as teachers, then certainly our learners will benefit from us, yes. And we shall certainly gain much and achieve our goals, our dreams and vision,” (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 825-841).

### **Self-understanding of faith**

As for the self-understanding of faith, this criterion describes the experiences and reflections of secondary school principals in matters of faith. From the material of the study, the criterion also describes the understanding of principals about faith in the day to day school life. Skylark in the following quotation from his interview emphasizes on the school serving for Church members who from what he tells are expected to send their children to the church school, placing the church as an institution in the centre. In the following quotation he says:

"[...] at the level of Christians, we have launched an operation, operation one child per Christian family. Because we told ourselves that if every Christian in this city [...] sent us a single child, we could have many students. We could have many students and each time, we seek the support of the clergy. Because in fact the institution belongs to them. This is the establishment of the church. So, we seek the support of the clergy to try to raise awareness, for Christians to send us their children." (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 114-121).

A segment of the interview of Possum shows from what shows what he perceives regarding self-understanding of faith combines the state and the state. Possum declares:

"There are times when the church is calling us for a seminar, the state is also asking us and we have to decide within us. I am obliged to send perhaps my senior discipline master here and I go on the other side and after we meet, we put everything together. we said on the other hand and to move forward. When you have two bosses you cannot give up one boss." (Possum, MAXQDA lines 232-237)

### **Role of the church**

On the aspect of the role of the church, this is linked to the understanding of the secondary school principals of Protestant schools about what the church serves for in the functioning of the schools. It also describes the perception of school leaders about the role of the church in their school leadership positions. An example from the interview segment of Axolotl that shows that the role of the church by her perception focuses on enhancing ecumenism and autonomy of students and she says:

"[...] freedom I can tell you because, that is what we do. When the other students go to pray, here there is the church. Those who are not Protestants, who do not want to go, they stay. As we cannot force some Muslims, but Catholics who like, go with us. There was a child who was Jehovah Witness, he said he cannot join prayers with us and we allowed him. We do not disturb the choice of students. We leave him. For the Muslims, there were some who said no. For some, they said, their father said that when there are prayers in the church at school, they can join to pray. Those other Muslims say that it is the same God, so they go with us. So it's at this level. Yes! And when a parent brings a child to enrol, he always asks, what religion do you belong to? and we tell them that it is a Protestant college of our church here [...]! So it is like that. We do not really force children to join our Protestant worship, no. We do not really oblige. Meanwhile there are other schools that force students, even forcing to baptize them. For us, we are really at the level

of freedom! Parents and their children make the choice. But we simply offer training to all children. mmm! We train them.” (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 214-224).

Possum states in the following quotation from his interview that the church is under the state which is giving direction and setting standards. From what he says, the role of the church in matters of pedagogy and administration seem to be negligible. Possum says:

“One must not go against this government norm since after all, the church is under the state. The church is in the state and it is the Cameroonian state that directs, which sets the standards. That is why we cannot go ahead with any project without the state's consent. You see, so here, at the level of relations with the hierarchy, we work in close collaboration with the government divisional delegation of secondary education. The reports are forwarded. All that they ask us to produce, we produce and we give them, we deposit them and within the deadlines that they have planned. It is like for example during this period we are doing the official exam files, and as soon as everything is ready we will deposit them to the divisional delegation of secondary schools and on time. And it will be up to them to forward to the regional delegation etc. It's our duty. The Delegate if he needs us at any time, he can convene me and as soon as I have the information of the Delegate you get up, I must go to listen to what the delegate has to say because he receives the instructions of the hierarchy and it is his duty to transmit it to us. In return we must be answerable to him so that he can transmit to the hierarchy.” (Possum, MAXQDA lines 108-124).

### **Role of the society**

The subject of the role of the society, describes the experiences and reflections by the school principal on their connection to the external school environment. The criterion also describes the interests and nature of school partnerships based on the experiences and understanding of the school principals. Rabbit in the quotation from his interviews talks about engaging in networks with international partners to realize capacity building for students in his institutions. Rabbit declares:

“We have a project with international partners [...] to train close to 300 youths [...] the project already started [...]. What attracted them is the clear difference between our centre as opposed to other vocational training centers. To me this is thanks to the testimonies we get from within the country and from abroad. This comes from feedbacks, interviews, the opinions of everyone who comes here based on how we support students to succeed in life skills. We listen to our students, teachers and other people and try to improve. This already makes us different [...] We also have

other development projects with other organizations [...] which in addition to training integrates environmental concerns." (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 308-318).

In the following quotation from the interview of Duck, he associates the role of the society by focusing on the sublimation of society by the state from what he says:

"It means that it is first the state that is the first boss. It is the state that regulates, that defines the school programs, the contents of teaching, even the schedule of school activities, the government regulates them." (Duck, MAXQDA lines 77 – 80).

## Challenges

Concerning challenges, this criterion describes what the secondary school principals explain as the main difficulties they face in running the school and carrying out their functions as principals of Protestant secondary schools. For example, during the interview with Donkey, he expresses that he has limited financing for the school and adds that this makes it difficult for him to get hold of his authority as school principal. He says:

"Understand that it is not the same exigency because when you pay, you have authority. When you pay, you have authority. You command, that is normal. When you do not pay, you are obliged to manage so that things move. When you have not paid even if you are to pay afterwards, someone who has salary arrears, you no longer have the possibility to reflect on whatever thing." (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 251-255).

Magpie in the following interview segment also says that his difficulty is linked to inadequate financing and declares:

"we are never able to pay our debts, how do I put it; we always do our job with joy but we always doubt whether when the team from the National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS) is coming. if, if, if they come, what shall we do when there is no enrolment, no money! Sometimes, we are forced to postpone some management meetings because during the whole week, we spend time at CNPS. The entire week is on taxation. We struggle to collect school fees to pay debts [...]. Thus altogether, each day that passes, is a totality of problems to solve at a time. No one accepts that we treat their own debt later. Eeeeeee, day by day we struggle to stabilize debts. The debt with the XXX bank is also there [...]." (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 22-32).

By stabilizing the criteria and further comparing the patterns, then analyzing the similarities, differences, and connections among these categories of qualities while working from the material of the study, the types of self-understanding of Protestant school leaders emerged (cf. chapter 3.4.4). As earlier explained, while criteria show what connect the principals together even if they have different perceptions, the construction of types follows these criteria and is empirically grounded, shaping the qualities of categories as each type understands a given criterion differently (cf. chapter 3.4.4). Based on the abduction process and guided by the research question of the study, the six ideal types of self-understanding of Protestant school leaders that emerge from the study consist of the (1) call for superiority leadership, (2) state-conformational leadership, (3) ecclesiastical leadership, (4) community-participatory leadership, (5) vocation to serve leadership and (6) diaconal leadership leadership (cf. chapter 4.3). All these six types of leadership understanding are ideal as none of them completely reflects a real school leader in the study. Each type is explained using the following seven criteria: main activities of school leader, understanding of teaching, relationship and communication by school leader, self-understanding of faith, role of the church, role of the society and challenges. Table 3 below summarizes the structure of the field that presents the seven criteria and six types.

Table 3: Criteria and types identified: Unfilled abduction table describing the field

→ Types ↓ Criteria	Type 1: Call for superiority leadership	Type 2: State- conformational leadership	Type 3: Ecclesiastical leadership	Type 4: Community- participatory leadership	Type 5: Vocation to service leadership	Type 6: Diaconal leadership
Main activities of school leader						
Understanding of teaching						
Relationship and communication by school leader						
Self-understanding of faith						
Role of the church						
Role of the society						
Challenges						

Source: Primary data, 2020

### 4.3 Types of the self-understanding of Protestant school leadership

This section gives the description of types. From the abduction process as explained in chapter 4.2, a total of six ideal types of school leadership have been identified. The description of the types gives the visibility of the qualities of the categories that emerged from the field. This explains the division between the different types of leadership perception by principals of Protestant schools in Cameroon as each type understands a given criterion differently. The section that follows gives the description of each of the six ideal leadership types based on the seven criteria. The description of each type will be supported by citations from the interview transcripts. This will be based on line numbering from the MAXQDA interview transcripts.

### 4.3.1 Call for superiority leadership type

This leadership type as revealed by the material of the study, shows the variants of fundamentalist Christian beliefs with leader's perceptions focused on the vocation based on superiority of the leader. It is the call for superiority and obedience on what the school leader says about the bible that is shaping leading understanding. The call for superiority leadership type is now described in the following paragraphs based on the seven criteria that came out from the material of the study as mentioned in chapter 4.2.

#### **Criterion 1: Main activities – Led by the superiority-based vocation of the school leader**

Talking about the main activities, the description that reflects the understanding of the call for superiority leadership type as shown by the material of the study, lays emphasis on call for superiority and the thoughts of the school leader about the bible. This understanding comes from interviews which shape the quality of the field as presented below. In the following quotation, Bison (MAXQDA lines 249–256) is talking about his leadership experience in his school. In the course of the interview he mentions how his ideas about prayers lead to his successes and in this context he says:

“When I just came here we did not really have a sports teacher, we struggled and did not still have (...) the main problem was that we did not first turn to the bible and pray. When I prayed, God gave us a talented young man, a good sports teacher. We just rounded up with our olympics yesterday with the award of medals that makes this school different. If anybody comes from any of our church school or protestant school and see the sporting events he will be astonished. Even though we do not have big pitches, we still succeed and it makes us so unique because it is the Lord's making.” (Bee, MAXQDA lines 249-256).

The quotation of Bison above explains what the school leader says about the bible and prayers in the implementation of his activities as well as superiority on his actions. In this regards, Bison (MAXQDA lines 249-256) argues that the possibility to have a good sports teacher and the suc-

cesses his students register in sporting events is because he reads the bible and prays, positioning himself as being called. He supports this line of thought (Bee, MAXQDA lines 225-227) by explaining that his school is outstanding because he has many God-fearing teachers than other schools. Another material from the interview of Peccary (MAXQDA lines 24-27) contributes to this case by the school leader declaring that his appointment as school principal in a church school is by God and not by human beings. Peccary from this backdrop says:

“... that is what is making me to excel to a certain extent. The first thing I understand is that if you are appointed as a principal in a church school, it is God who appointed you not man. So you should have that notion that it is God and not man then you will lead [...] in the right direction. If you do not have this notion, you fail in your leadership ....” (Peccary, MAXQDA lines 24-27).

Peccary argues in the quotation above that based on his belief as being appointed by God he succeeds in school leading and goes ahead to emphasize that if a school leader does not believe in the notion of being appointed by God, the person fails in leadership. Another interview which is that of Badger (MAXQDA lines 275-286) contributes to this case by the school leader declaring himself as the source of truth which comes from God for which teachers and students have to depend on in their daily work. During the interview, Badger talking about his experiences declares that he is answerable to God in his duties as school principal. Other quotations from the interviews of Donkey (MAXQDA lines 803-805), Horse (MAXQDA lines 70-76) and Fish (MAXQDA lines 66-69) add to this case in a similar way with the school leaders emphasizing that their superiority based on their claim of being by God.

The material described above on the main activities of the call for superiority leadership type, makes visible its specific quality which is about a superiority-led vocation to what the school leader says about the bible. The material also describes the authoritarian character of the school leader on the bases of his experiences about being called and acting on biblical basis.

## **Criterion 2: Understanding of teaching – Ensure moral pressure and link school subjects to faith**

Regarding teaching understanding, the description by the call for superiority leadership type shows from the materials of the study, emphasis on moral obligation as well as linking school subjects to faith. This perception comes from the interviews which are framing the quality of the field as described in the paragraphs that follow. In the quotation below, Badger is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal. During the interview, he explains that he ensures the integration of faith to all school subjects. From this background, he says:

“Perhaps this concept to my understanding is particular to our church. It is a concept we call the integration of faith. In fact, it is the integration of values in learning [...] in fact it means that when I prepare my lesson, I have to tell the child the values contained in the lesson. No matter the subject I teach, I can always find values. If I teach mathematics, I can always find values, that means values such as punctuality, respect and all the others. No teacher can say that in teaching his/her lesson, he/she cannot find those notions, either in between the lines or in a general way. Hence, it is what we ask from teachers, to put the child on the transmission of these values in their lessons. And we call that, the integration of faith in education. It is not a bible lesson per say but it is a normal lesson, but I say that I draw the attention of the children on the fact that God is at the centre of all. There are subjects where it is easier to integrate. If I teach biology, it is much more easy and if I teach human biology, human physiology, I go straight away instead of letting children remain on the composition of the body, I take the opportunity to tell them that it is God who has created all of that. It is even very complex if man tries to understand it, he cannot understand all. All of that, is what God made.” (Badger, MAXQDA lines 120-139).

From the description above, Badger indicates that the link of subjects to faith is obligatory for all teachers and for all the subjects. The expression of Badger above highlights the focus in his leading on obliging the link to faith and biblical aspects for all teachers and in all school subjects. Another quotation from the interview of Raccoon, (MAXQDA lines 153-160) aligns to this case. Raccoon during his interview explains that religious teaching is compulsory and based on the bible as the foundation of teaching and he says:

“... Here, this is what I do in religious education, because for me, the child who has a failed average in religious studies is punished. Because they have to be immersed in the bible, because the foundation of our teaching is the Bible. That’s the difference between private secular school, public school and us<sup>10</sup>. So, that is that, that is what will shape the behaviour, it’s one of the things.” (Ram, MAXQDA lines 153 - 160).

The declaration of Raccoon above expresses the pressure exerted on students to take religious education and at the same time accompanied by punishment in case of failure. By this position as shown from the materials, Raccoon argues that this is what in his understanding distinguishes the protestant school he leads from others. Other materials from the interviews of Duck contribute to this case by saying that an important character of teaching is beginning and ending each lesson with a prayer (Duck, MAXQDA lines 273-280).

From the materials described above, teaching understanding by the Call for superiority leadership type, highlights the specific quality of giving moral pressure and linking school subjects to faith. Furthermore, the material shows that the call for superiority leadership type manifests this moral pressure about teaching on both the students and the teachers with emphasis on him as leader being in a situation of superiority.

### **Criterion 3: Relationship and communication – Hierarchical, linked with obedience and punishment**

From the material of the study, the relationship and communication by the call for superiority leadership type is characterized by the respect of hierarchy and obedience. The materials further show that the respect of hierarchy is based on the moral guidelines from the school leader. This understanding comes from the interviews which shape the quality of the field as given below. In the quotation that follows, Elephant talks about his experiences as a school leader and during the interview, he declares

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<sup>10</sup> In the context of Cameroon, secular schools are understood as schools owned by private individuals while public schools are a terminology referring to state-owned schools

how he uses his position as principal to check students dressing and behavior as well as sanctions those who do not follow the regulations. From this backdrop he says:

"So, I receive the students! and the experience as principal that I have is that it is myself who receives them in the morning. They must be on time, they must dress well, that is to say have the normal attendance uniform and they are searched at the entrance of the college. It is it that we call therefore as I told you, the grip. Now when they are in the classrooms, they must respect the internal rules, know that they are there for their studies. They must avoid to quarrels and noise, not so. They must avoid, any behavior or any behavior that should prevent the good, or otherwise they are sanctioned for violating proper functioning." (Elephant, MAXQDA lines 33-41).

The disclosure of Elephant above, explains his emphasis on ensuring discipline and obedience in his communication and describes this as having a grip on the students. Another interview from Horse subscribes to this case by the school leader declaring how he tracks students who violate rules and ultimately dismiss those who persist. In the following quotation, Horse says:

"Students go out clandestinely. You know, they are there at a certain moment we do not see them. Either they climbed the wall or they entered through a door that the sector discipline masters did not see. And in such a way that we make the roll call in the first two hours and at the end of the lessons, we do again the roll call, so that if someone was there in the morning and in the end he is absent, that means that he had left the establishment in a clandestine way and so we summon the parents and we get along with each other how to do it in the presence of the students and give him an ultimatum. When the student persists violating rules and after disciplinary council, we dismiss him, we put him out of the school. So that is how the discipline is done in one way or the other. It is difficult, this is on the side of the students. On the teacher's side too, there is also indiscipline, when a teacher comes late, ten minutes, fifteen minutes later, that's it, it's a kind of indiscipline, and we note everything, we note all of that. The delays and the absences and at the end of the month, we bring that to the teacher in such a way that if he persists, we get rid of him, [...] So, that is pretty much about the control, but I remind you that with students, today it is difficult." (Horse, MAXQDA lines 60-77).

The expression of Horse above also includes the emphasis on discipline for both students and teachers. This case is also described by the material in the interview from Magpie (MAXQDA lines 131-154) who explains his

communication with students by giving pressure to gain obedience. In the following quotation Magpie says:

“The most stubborn students [...] I take them to appear before the police commissioner or before the gendarmerie<sup>11</sup> brigade commander. Sometimes, they are threatened, their ears are pulled a little bit, and when they return, they are soft and these concern the youngest who excel in delinquency. Hence, it is in this way that we manage the situation. eeee! mmmm! [...] I use the bible to try to convince others. To try to implement this or that action or point of view. And each time, we force the bible, and it works.” (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 131-154).

From the quotation above, Magpie talks about his experiences as a school leader and he declares how he uses threat and physical punishment as well as support from the law enforcement units of the state and also from what he thinks the bible says to communicate to students. Other materials from the study such as Raccoon (MAXQDA lines 70 – 73) subscribe to the case with emphasis on one-way communication from the school principal to the student.

As described above, the materials on the relationship and communication by the Call for superiority leadership type makes visible the special quality in three dimensions. The first quality being the hierarchical character based on moral guidelines from the school leader and the other aspects lay emphasis on obedience and punishment.

#### **Criterion 4: Self-understanding of faith – by the immediacy of divine action**

Regarding the self-understanding of faith by the call for superiority leadership type, the description from the materials of the study, links faith to the urgency and closeness of divine action. This perception is portrayed by the interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. Donkey in the following quotation, talks about his school leading experience and indicates that the employer in his school is Jesus Christ as he declares:

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<sup>11</sup> In the context of Cameroon, Gendarmerie is a law enforcement unit which is part of the state military. Besides military responsibilities, it also functions in enforcing law and order amongst civilians.

“This means that I have the possibility to counsel and facilitate school activities, the senior discipline masters and vice principals. And very often, these are things that were done on me. And I always have my small experience. Effectively, it is for this reason that I have to be very demanding in the contemporary context and dilute all of that, adopt another attitude that I consider paternalistic. To be exalted not to be administrative, but more rigorous administrator [...]. That is what is necessary for me. I did not know how to personalize, personalize weaknesses or difficulties, and it is everyone together with prayers, and that is not what is always done but has to be done. Prayers is what has to be resolutely done for the college which is not by accident. It is, it is God who wanted that this administration should be there. It is an institution of the church. If God allows things, then the true employer here is Jesus Christ. It is not when others say that the employer is the principal, no. It is not the national directorate. The employer here is Jesus.” (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 791-805).

Donkey in the statement above by his perception and experience, says that the employer of the school is Jesus Christ and not the Principal nor the national directorate. Donkey (MAXQDA lines 728-729) further describes his leadership as administrative and rigorous with emphasis on the contiguity to divine action. Other material from the interview of Magpie contributes to this case by saying that getting persons to support the school project depends on the person God has decided to choose. Magpie says:

“... we shall go and open our hands to well-wishers if they can help us put a coat of paint and put protectors on hind windows of the school [...] one of our challenges is a fence. Also, we shall meet well-wishers, if among them, God touches the heart of someone, then the person will assist us in the construction of a fence. Because, we secured the college with only with temporary materials in bamboo materials and the children remove them each day [...]” (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 97-110).

Magpie from the explanation above, explains his dependence on faith to get well-wishers support repairs in his school. Other materials from Badger (MAXQDA lines 283-284) are subscribing to this case with emphasis on self-understanding of faith by depending on divine action.

From the materials described above, the self-understanding of faith in call for superiority leadership type has as specific quality, the dependence divine action which the leaders believe is immediate.

**Criterion 5: Understanding of the Role of the church – the church serves as faith-related authority.**

With respect to the role of the church, the description by the call for superiority leadership type, shows from the material of the study that the church has as role as faith-related authority. As the material also shows, there is the moral pressure on teachers and students which is coming from the principal. This understanding comes from the interviews that are structuring the quality of the field. Badger while talking about his experiences as school leader in an interview, explains in the following quotation that the only person he is answerable to is God as far as the standards of the school are concerned. He says:

“... in my prayers, I ask God not to allow the structure that carries His name to fall. Perhaps it can be our own failure but then someone has said in the bible, even enemies will say, if such a thing is not done, others will say, where is God. Where is their God. I tell God that if the standards of the school fall, they will ask me, where is your God? Because I do not have another person, it is God.” (Badger, MAXQDA lines 208-213).

Based on the statement of Badger as presented above, he explains that as school leader, he defines the moral pressure to follow and is answerable only to God. Other material from the interview of Fish contributes to the case by saying that the school leader in a religious school has religious responsibilities as main role while education and school administration come next. From this background, while fish talks about her school in an interview, he says:

“I think the bottom line, the bottom line, is, when you are a director, a principal or a director of a religious college, you are first a religious man. It is this cap that must come before, even before the educational cap, or even the administrative cap. So, you must first introduce yourself as a religious man [...]” (Fish, MAXQDA lines 315-324).

From the statement of Fish above, the material shows that the moral pressure of connecting leadership position in a faith-based school to faith-related authority as self-defined by the school leader. Other material from Donkey (MAXQDA lines 800-805) support this case by emphasizing that

the employer of the school is Jesus and not the church, based on the understanding of the principal.

The aforementioned materials described on the understanding of the role of the church by the the call for superiority leadership type brings to the spotlight its specific quality. This is about the moral pressure from the principal for which the church is perceived in the leader's religious understanding to serve the role of faith-related authority.

### **Criterion 6: Role of the society – ensuring social feedback and discipline**

Talking about the role of the society, as shown by the material of the study, the call for superiority leadership type describes its understanding of the role of society as ensuring social feedback and discipline. This understanding comes from interviews which frame the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Butterfly is talking about his school leading experiences. During the interview he mentions how he invites parents to the discipline council<sup>12</sup> of the school with focus on disciplining students. From this background he says:

“That is why sometimes I invite parents, there are certain cases I invite parents to come to the discipline council we invite the PTA (Parents-Teachers-Association) chair to come to the discipline council so that they will listen to the children let the children be talking to their hearing because sometimes you think that your child is the best on earth and when the child embarrasses you would not act you will say oh, oh, my child cannot do this.” (Butterfly, MAXQDA lines 212-218).

Butterfly in his statement above, profiles his students on the aspect of indiscipline. As the material of the study shows, he subjects the students concerned to a hearing in a social setting involving parents and teachers. Another interview which is that of Skylark contributes to this case in a similar way by bringing in parents to endorse punishment in case their

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<sup>12</sup> In the Cameroon school context, a discipline council is a committee comprised of the school administrative staff and sometimes parents' representatives. Its role is to judge students on acts considered by the school as indiscipline. The results of this council's hearing are presented in the assembly during which all students are present and the “criminals” called to stand in front on the stage. Sanctions are proclaimed and can consist of corporal punishment, manual labour, suspension with hard labour or expulsion

children are absent from class. Skylark while talking about his school leadership in an interview declares:

“For example, for the final class (the seventh class) and then with the parents, we had a meeting for each level to tell the parents that their child would have two Saturdays out of four to come to school for revision. So, parents accepted to let children come for tutorials and if a child is absent, we punish. That is how we do it.” (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 358-362).

As shown in the statement of Skylark above, the material of the study explains the emphasis to involve the parents to accept on punishing their children when they are absent from lessons. Another material from the interview of Chickaree (MAXQDA lines 41-48) emphasizes on discipline when connecting the school to the society based on what the school leader says.

From the materials described above, the understanding of the role of the society by the call for superiority leadership type highlights the specific quality of show-casing students acts that are focused on discipline and ensuring social feedback.

### **Criterion 7: Challenges – Difficulties in managing different attitudes of teachers and limited finances**

In regards to challenges, the description that reflects the understanding of call for superiority leadership type as shown by the material of the study, lays emphasis on managing different attitudes of teachers on one part and on the other part limited financial resources. This understanding comes from interviews which shape the quality of the field as detailed below. Giraffe during her interview talks about her school leadership experiences and in the following quotation, she mentions the challenge of managing a recalcitrant teacher. In this background, she says:

“Last year for instance, we had, one very recalcitrant worker. By the end of the year, together with the college management team, we were able to maybe reform him to work on his reasoning and cause him to know that he is supposed to be a responsible person. This year I think he is still, we are still in that process of like, working on his attitude. That is another challenge that I have.” (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 781-786).

The statement of Giraffe above emphasizes what the school leader says about her difficulty to manage a different attitude of a teacher. Another interview coming from Donkey contributes to this case by declaring the difficulty on how to deal with teachers who do not attend class councils<sup>13</sup> (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 631-632). Based on another material from the interview of Donkey, he says that limited finances to pay teachers' salaries makes it difficult for him to get hold of his authority as school leader. In this context he explains as follows:

“Understand that it is not the same exigency because when you pay, you have authority. When you pay, you have authority. You command, that is normal. When you do not pay, you are obliged to manage so that things move. When you have not paid even if you are to pay afterwards, someone who has salary arrears, you no longer have the possibility to reflect on whatever thing.” (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 251-255).

From the statement of Donkey above, the emphasis of getting money to pay teachers as he says is to regain authority. Other materials from the interviews of Axolotl and Zebra (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 366-370; Zebra, MAXQDA lines 276-279) contribute to the case by saying that school leaders have financial difficulties as they depend on tuition fee expected from parents. The material of the study also points to the explanation that parents themselves have difficulties to raise money for tuition fees.

The materials described above on the challenges of the call for superiority leadership type highlights its specific quality on two aspects. While one aspect is connected to the difficulties in managing different attitudes of teachers, the other challenge is about limited financial resources. From the material of the study, the call for superiority leadership type argues that the limited finances to pay teachers weakens the authority over teachers. This description is based on the material and still points to the authoritarian dimension of the call for superiority leadership type.

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<sup>13</sup> Class council in the Cameroon school context is a meeting of the school administration and the teaching staff to discuss about syllabus coverage and examinations

### **Summary of call for superiority leadership type**

The call for superiority leadership type understanding is summarized based on the specific qualities that emerge from the material of the study. This leadership type ensures as main activity the emphasis on vocation for superiority and on the thoughts of the school leader about the bible. The teaching understanding thus combines school subjects to faith. While the relationship and communication of the call for superiority leadership type is hierarchical and linked with obedience and punishment, the self-understanding of faith is articulating on the immediacy of divine action. The understanding of the role of the church by the call for superiority leadership type is to serve as a faith-related authority while the direction of what the school follows is guided by the moral pressure from the school leader. In the framework of the understanding of the role of the society, the call for superiority leadership enforces social feedback and discipline. This leadership type faces the challenge of dealing with diverse attitudes of teachers and students. From the description above, vocation based on superiority with focus on discipline, exertion of moral pressure and obedience on what the school leader says about the bible is shaping leading understanding of the call for superiority leadership type.

#### **4.3.2 State-conformational leadership type**

The material of the study gives visibility to state-conformational leadership type with the understanding of the leader centred on ensuring allegiance to the state authority and guidelines. In this leadership type, obedience is to the state as an institution. In the paragraphs that follow, the state-conformational leadership is described with respect to the seven criteria that emerged from the material of the study.

##### **Criterion 1: Main activities - Ensure obedience to the administration of the state**

Regarding the description of the main activities by the state-conformational leader, the materials of the study show the focus of the school principal on obedience to state administration. This perception is portrayed by

the interviews which frame the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Possum talks about his school leading experience and emphasize on the respect of guidelines from the state:

"But it is the state that defines the rules of work. It is the state that defines the rules of work in each sector of education. Because education is the state that has responsibility. So, if anyone wants to be in the education sector, he must listen to what the Cameroonian state has said and continues to say in the training work of Cameroonians, moreover, it is the State that defines school programs." (Possum, MAXQDA lines 153-158).

Possum in the statement above and as shown from the material of the study tells his leading experience spotlighting education as responsibility of the state for which the state guidelines must be respected. Another interview by Hippopotamus, contributes to this case in a similar way by explaining that what the principal does is designed and supervised by the state ministry. Hippopotamus, while talking about his school leadership in an interview proclaims:

"the daily work at school revolves around the elements defined in the specifications for a principal that is governed and supervised by the ministry of education. It means that we adapt to ministerial instructions." (Hippopotamus, MAXQDA lines 4-6).

Hippopotamus in the quotation above explains the main activity of school leader as obeying to the instructions of the state ministry. Yet and other interview by Donkey, supports the case by explaining that his daily work centres on having administrative meetings with the state delegates of education:

"It is true that I am not always there because I have to go out from time to time for external meetings, either with the divisional delegation, not so, or with the regional delegation. Or even, there is a lot of request at the level of the sub-division where they can come to subscribe for the institution. I think that is it on daily basis." (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 67-71).

The case is further supported by Possum (MAXQDA lines 106-107) and Gorilla (MAXQDA lines 314-316) who declare the strict respect of government policies in school leading.

The aforementioned materials that describes the main activities of state conformational leadership type understanding hails the specific

quality of obedience to state administration and with rigor on the guidelines of the role of the principal. On the one hand, the quality shows state authority and administrative policies implemented by the principal and monitored by the state.

### **Criterion 2: Understanding of teaching – by controlling and punishment**

On the aspect of teaching understanding, the narration by state-conformational leadership type shows from the materials of the study, the focus on controlling and punishment with adherence to state guidelines. This understanding is revealed by the interviews which are shaping the quality of the field. It is on this background that Possum in the quotation below, is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal. During the interview, he explains that he ensures regular administrative check of lessons. He says:

"because at any time I'm doing the rounds. Every fifteen minutes to thirty minutes [...] I do the rounds so that the teacher in class knows that at every moment the head of the establishment passes, the senior discipline master passes, the discipline master passes, he makes an effort so to get to work. It is like that. This is what we call regular and mandatory rounds." (Possum, MAXQDA lines 383-388).

Possum in the citation above reflects teaching in what he says on basis of administrative routine by checking and controlling with pressure on teachers. In a similar way, Gorilla supports this case in his leading experience and explains that he rarely focuses on teaching. He says in the following quotation:

"That is the presence in the field of checking teaching. It is true that this is very rare but from time to time I do it. By the way, the first persons, the persons to do that are the vice principals and pedagogic animators. But as the head of the school, one can move to class once in a while. This permits to let teachers know that they are being followed-up." (Gorilla, MAXQDA lines 111-116).

Gorrilla from the quotation above explains that teaching concern is more the responsibility of the vice principals. Lemmings subscribes to this case by expressing that in his leading experience, he focuses on inspection and only when he has time. During the interview, Lemmings in the following quotation says:

" After morning devotion, I have to go to the office to start working. When I see that there is no work, I go round the school to inspect if all the classes are occupied." (Lemmings, MAXQDA lines 20-21).

Concerning teaching understanding, Lemmings in the quotation above is concerned by his expression about classes being occupied. Other material from the study (Fish, MAXQDA lines 18-19) support the case in a similar manner by basing on administrative concerns about the teaching perception of the school leader.

The description of the teaching understanding by a state-conformational leader as described above from the material of the study profiles the specific quality of administrative focus on teaching with emphasis on controlling and punishment. In addition, the state-conformational leaders from their expression show that less attention to teaching with their explanation that it is the responsibility of their assistants based on guidelines.

### **Criterion 3: Relationship and communication - Hierarchical with reference to state instructions and linked with punishment**

Regarding the relationship and communication by the state-conformational leadership type, the material of the study points to a hierarchical frame and relationship and communication. Furthermore, the relationship of the state-conformational school leader with teachers and students is linked with discipline. This understanding comes from the interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Degu talks about his experiences as a school leader and during the interview, he explains how he ensures that communication in his school follows a defined hierarchical flow. From this backdrop he says:

"... if students are not happy with teaching, or with a teacher, they already have the channel of how to go about it. They lay their complaint which goes to the vice principal who is dean of studies and the vice principal will come to me or they lay the complaint which goes to the class adviser before it goes to the vice principal."  
(Degu, MAXQDA lines 66-70).

In a similar way of hierarchical relationship as that of Degu, cited above, Donkey supports the case by stressing that appointment of teachers in the

academic council of the school is communicated through administrative reminders. He adds that this appointment is done by the minister of education which lays emphasis on hierarchical relationship. From this background, Donkey in the following quotation says:

"It is forbidden for a teacher to go to class when he has not presented his pedagogic project to the school administration. It has to be used for daily navigation. It is necessary that we are current of what has to be done, at what time, when and by who. From the school reopening, there is supposed to be appointments on the proposals of the education council. These are pedagogic facilitators (...). There is even information that is circulated and gives a precision that it has to be the minister to appoint. Now, we follow with that. Often, it is by correspondence. We do with the situation that way." (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 143-150).

From the quotation above, Donkey explains with aspects of communication with teachers, focusing on discipline respect of hierarchy whereby teachers must submit what they have to teach to the administration. One other interview that is supporting this case is from Skylark, with focus on the hierarchical relationship and communication with students. Skylark in the following quotation expresses how he communicates the ministerial text to students and ensures the respect of the state's guidelines in breaking students' mobile telephones. In this situation and during the interview with Skylark, he says:

"And the cell phone, you know, is another terrible phenomenon. There is a ministerial text forbidding the mobile phone at school. We have already communicated everything to students. The divisional delegate has passed by. He has given us instructions to break children's phone. We implement this." (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 325-329).

Other material from the study (Possum, MAXQDA lines 108-110 & Duck, MAXQDA lines 226-229support) support the case, showing a hierarchical relationship and communication by the state-conformational leader with focus on state norms.

The material described above on the state-conformational leader's understanding of relationship and communication shows the specific quality on three aspects. First, the state-conformational leader in his perception explains the necessity of the respect of hierarchy in the relationship with the teachers and students as well as with the state. The second aspect

of specific quality shows communication based on the implementation of state guidelines. This is further followed up in the third dimension by punishment based on what the school leader is telling.

#### **Criterion 4: Self-understanding of faith - Combines the state and the church**

In regards to the self-understanding of faith by the state-conformational leadership type, the description from the materials of the study shows the combination of the state and the church by the school leader. This understanding is revealed by the interviews that are moulding the quality of the field as in the paragraphs that follow. Donkey in the following quotation, speaks about his school leading experience and indicates that he as the school leader follows directives from two hierarchies, the church and the state. He states:

"We have specificities unique to our church [...]. It is necessary to integrate all these two imperatives which by nature are to move things forward [...]. I do all that the state demands and in addition, there are also exigencies of the church that have to be fulfilled. All the same, I practically have two hierarchies. The hierarchy at the level of the state and the hierarchy of the church." (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 518-521).

In a similar orientation of as in the quotation of Donkey above, Possum adds to the case by expressing that he as leader has both the state and church as bosses and gives attention to both. In the following interview citation, Possum says:

"he receives the orders of the hierarchy and enforces them in his establishment. And as a private structure within the denominational domain, we have two bosses, there is the state and there is the church. It means that we answer from the divisional delegation where the establishment is attached and we answer from the national directorate of education of the church [...]. These are our two hierarchies. And on each side we receive orders to apply in the establishment." (Possum, MAXQDA lines 24-30).

Other materials from Skylark (MAXQDA lines 349-354) subscribes to the case linking of the state and the church in the leadership perception of the state-conformational leader.

The state-conformational leader from the descriptions above shows the leadership experience of combining the state and the church as well as giving the authoritarian visibility of both.

### **Criterion 5: Role of the church – ensures dependence on state administration**

Concerning to the role of the church, the description by the state-conformational leadership type, shows from the material of the study that the church ensures dependence on state administration. This understanding comes from the interviews that are structuring the shaping the quality of the field. Duck while talking about his experiences as school leader in an interview, explains in the following quotation that the state is the first boss and is responsible for both administrative and pedagogic regulation in his school. He says:

"It's true that education is the responsibility of the state. It means that it is first the state that is the first boss. It is he who regulates, who defines the programs, the contents of teaching, even the schedules, the government regulates all of them. So, for example, at the beginning of each school year, there is a calendar of activities that the state establishes to ensure the quality of the education in our schools. So, every day we strive to transmit to the state all these documents that allow them to have a global view of the work that we are doing. Apart from that, we have meetings. For example, monthly coordination meetings at the divisional level, which allow the divisional delegate to pass on the instructions of the hierarchy to us. [...] so there are these reports that must be sent regularly to the state, there are these meetings to attend, teachers who are required to attend ongoing training meetings that the state organizes." (Duck, MAXQDA lines 77-92).

In a same way of leadership understanding as explained by Duck above, Possum also subscribes to the case by stating that the church is under the state which is giving direction and setting standards. When talking about his leadership experiences, Possum in the following quotation from his interview says:

"One must not go against this government norm since after all, the church is under the state. The church is in the state and it is the Cameroonian state that directs, which sets the standards. That is why we cannot go ahead with any project without the state's consent. You see, so here, at the level of relations with the hierarchy,

we work in close collaboration with the government divisional delegation of secondary education. The reports are forwarded. All that they ask us to produce, we produce and we give them, we deposit them and within the deadlines that they have planned. It is like for example during this period we are doing the official exam files, and as soon as everything is ready we will deposit them to the divisional delegation of secondary schools and on time. And it will be up to them to forward to the regional delegation etc. It's our duty. The Delegate if he needs us at any time, he can convene me and as soon as I have the information of the Delegate you get up, I must go to listen to what the delegate has to say because he receives the instructions of the hierarchy and it is his duty to transmit it to us. In return we must be answerable to him so that he can transmit to the hierarchy." (Possum, MAXQDA lines 108-124).

The description above on the self-understanding of the role of the church by the state-conformational leader, ensures anchorage, recognition and dependence on the state administration for directives on running the school. This understanding by the school leader also shows his loyalty to the state authoritarian structure.

#### **Criterion 6: Role of the society – sublimation of society by the state**

In regards to the role of the society, the state-conformational leadership type as shown by the material of the study, describes his understanding about the role of society by the sublimation of society by the state. This understanding comes from interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. Giraffe in the following quotation is talking about his school leading experiences and during the interview he mentions how he gets close to the state administration to strengthen bonds. In this background he says:

"At the same time, I do everything possible to keep a good relationship with the administration. The administration of our division. In the sense that, I go very close to the divisional administrator. By going close to him, I gain ideas from him. He gives me advice on how to go about the activities in school sometimes. Presently with the crisis in which we find ourselves, you know he visits the school regularly. I am talking about the senior divisional officer together with his collaborators. The divisional officer, the commissioner of police. Yes, so let me say the administration. They visit us from time to time. And I do not take it lightly. Whenever they come to pay a visit to us, I take them into the classrooms, to council the children. They talk to the children as councilors and as their teachers. But sometimes when they have guest speakers, they gain so much. And am so happy that

we have a fatherly senior divisional officer in our division. When he comes, he will take time and talk to the students. He will talk and talk. So, I go very close to them. Because I know, we are there because they are there." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 863-877).

Giraffe from the quotation above shows how he in his leadership experience connects his school to to the state by giving different spaces to the state authorities. Possum adds to the case by emphasizing that the state must be satisfied and during the interview, when telling about his leadership understanding he says:

"I really have to satisfy the state [...]. There are times when the church is calling me for a seminar, the state is also asking me and I have to decide within us. I am obliged to send perhaps my senior discipline master here and I go on the other side and after we meet, we put everything together." (Possum, MAXQDA lines 232-236)

The material from Duck (MAXQDA lines 97 - 100) also subscribes to the case by expressing the re-enforcement of ties with the state authorities. The description above shows the self-understanding of the role of the society by the school leader focusing on building ties with state authorities. This self-understanding by the state-conformational leadership type reveals the hierarchical connections to the state perceived to have sublimed the society.

### **Criterion 7: Challenges – dealing with resistance from students who defy administrative pressure**

In the framework of challenges and as shown from the material of the study, the description that reflects the understanding of state-conformational leadership type is highlighting difficulties in managing resistance from students who flout administrative pressure. This understanding comes from interviews which shape the quality of the field as described below. Skylark during his interview talks about his school leadership experiences and in the following quotation, he mentions the challenge of students who disobey the instructions of the school administration. He says:

"And we have war against tight fitting trousers, the bad trousers of students. It's very serious [...] very serious! Sometimes we tear them, we cut them, we do everything. But if you start cutting, you will cut all the trousers in the school [...] when it is too bad we apply the rule." (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 342-344).

From the background as expressed by Skylark above, the challenge of students disobeying the dress code is directly linked to punishment by destroying the students' uniform. Axolotl in the following quotation also adds to the case by explaining in his leadership experience the challenge of dealing with students who play and destroy the school infrastructure. He says:

"And there are difficulties because here when we close the school, we go as I left yesterday, all the boys who want to play football, they have created a football field within the classroom block. I have a guard. He's chasing them, they do not obey to the orders. I have filed complaints: This is the biggest difficulty. When I lodge complaints at the level of the brigade commander, when the gendarmes come, the boys disappear [...] but as soon as the gendarmes stop passing by, the boys start coming again. This is the biggest difficulty. it is these boys who spoil all this roof with their ball. It is the ball that spoils all of that. It is the ball. When they play, they push the soil which blocks the drainage paths. It blocks the channels, too many difficulties and that is it." (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 278-282).

Ant in the quotation above, further indicates that he uses the law enforcement officers to solve the resistance from students meanwhile this is still ineffective. Furthermore, another material from Magpie subscribes to the case by the state-conformational leader expressing a financial challenge of the inability to pay debts. This adds to the challenge of students' disobedience to the school administration. In the following quotation, Magpie during the interview says:

"we are never able to pay our debts, how do I put it; we always do our job with joy but we always doubt whether when the team from the National Social Insurance Fund (CNPS)<sup>14</sup> is coming. if, if, if they come, what shall we do when there is no enrolment, no money! Sometimes, we are forced to postpone some management

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<sup>14</sup> CNPS is a Cameroonian abbreviation in French with full meaning as Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale translated into English as, the National Social Insurance fund. It is a government organization responsible for collecting employers' and employees' taxes as well as managing the social insurance of workers

meetings because during the whole week, we spend time at CNPS. The entire week is on taxation. We struggle to collect school fees to pay debts [...]. Thus altogether, each day that passes, is a totality of problems to solve at a time. No one accepts that we treat their own debt later. Eeeeeee, day by day we struggle to stabilize debts. The debt with the XXX<sup>15</sup> bank is also there [...]." (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 22-32).

Other materials from Zebra (MAXQDA lines 242-242) and Duck (MAXQDA lines 130-131) add to the case by a state-conformational leadership type narrating financial difficulties in running the school but still keep the relation with the state even if the debts are there.

The narrative above on the challenges of the state-conformational leadership type shows the specific quality connected to the management of the resistance from students who disobey administrative orders. The state-conformational leadership type further argues from the expression of his leading experience that seeking support from state administration leaves the problem unsolved. Still based on the material of the study, another dimension of challenge for the state-conformational leadership type is on limited financial resources to pay debts. The priority is expressed by the state-conformational leadership type is debts pertaining to the state taxation department yet leadership understanding still maintains their relationship with the state.

### **Summary of state-conformational leadership type**

Based on the seven criteria that describe the categories of quality of the field, the summary of the state-conformational leadership type is presented. The state-conformational leadership type has as main activity ensuring obedience to the administration of the state and focusing teaching by controlling and punishment with the strict respect of state guidelines. The relationship and communication of the school leaders is hierarchical with respect to state instructions and linked to punishment. The self-understanding of faith combines both the state and church authorities meanwhile the church has negligible role in matters of pedagogy and administration. As far as the role of the society is concerned, understanding is

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<sup>15</sup> XXX is anonymized. The original name is withheld.

linked to the sublimation of society by the state & focus is on strengthening the relationship with the state. The main challenge that the state-conformational leadership type is facing inadequate financial resources to pay debts yet still keeping the relationship with the state. How to manage resistance from students who defy administrative pressure is another challenge that that this leadership type perceives. From the elucidation above, the specific quality of school fundamental leadership type is shaped by ensuring obedience to the administration of the state.

### 4.3.3 Ecclesiastical leadership type

This leadership type as shown by the material of the study, indicates the uniqueness of this type in the formal authority of the church with the leader's understandings driven by submissiveness to the church as institution. In the ecclesiastical leadership type, obedience and pressure are exerted based on what the leader says about the church. This leadership type is now presented following the seven criteria that were generated from the materials of the study.

#### **Criterion 1: Main activities of school leader - Ensure obedience to the church as institution**

With respect to the main activities, the description that reflects the understanding of ecclesiastical leadership type as shown by the material of the study, places the stress on the obedience of the church as an institution. This perception comes from interviews which shape the quality of the field as detailed below. In the following quotation, Rabbit is talking about his leadership experience in his school. In the course of the interview he mentions how the church is running and controlling the school and from this background he says:

“So a majority of members of the board of directors of the school are pastors. By this, we can say that the centre is run by the church. The director<sup>16</sup> simply is in charge of the day to day running of the centre. Strategic and important decisions are taken by hierarchy of the church. This means that the director has terms of

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<sup>16</sup> The word „director“ in this context mean the same as school principal

reference and this defines what he has to do. We have two board of directors meeting every year [...] this is how we do our management [...] You can see that the management structures of the church make the Centre different [...] the board of directors is made up almost completely by representatives of the church. All the members are connected in one way or the other to the church [...] there is a big risk of interference by the church which sometimes pushes us to forget our primary objectives. The church is always interfering with the running of the centre.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 742-760).

Rabbit from the citation above emphasizes on the pressure from the church based on his leading experience. Another interview of Axolotl is adding to the case on similar narrative by stating that the school belongs to the church for which the principal is answerable to the hierarchy. In the following quotation, Axolotl during the interview accounts:

“that in the church, it's difficult, because management has no autonomy. That is to say it is not the principal, it is rather the founders of the establishment. The establishment belongs to the church and we report about the establishment to the church. So, and whoever is the intermediary between the church and us is the education secretary [...] when we enrol students, we operate with that money, and we contribute to the church. We give some money to the education secretariat, yes, for the good functioning.” (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 14-22)

Ant from the quotation above and based on his leading experience also argues that the church is not only controlling but as well depends on the school for financial support. Another interview from Cow (MAXQDA lines 11-17) adds to the case and underscores the church giving directives in his school leadership experience.

The materials above that describes the main activities of ecclesiastical leadership type understanding make visible the specific quality of obedience to the church as an institution and with pressure on the role of the principal. The controlling authority from the church as shown from the material of the study includes financial dimensions.

## **Criterion 2: Understanding of teaching - Ensure formation of belief**

The perception of teaching as described by the ecclesiastical leadership type focuses on ensuring the formation of belief as portrayed by the material of the study. This understanding as described below comes from the interviews which are shaping the quality of the field. In the following

quotation, Rabbit is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal and explains during the interview that explains the focus on standardizing belief under the directives of the chaplain. From this background, he says:

“The job description of the school chaplain is stated in a church manual which was drafted since about 10 years ago [...]. I can try to explain how the chaplain operates in the centre. The chaplaincy is run by a chaplain appointed by the church. It could be a pastor, it could be an evangelist, well, and it always has to be one of the two. The chaplain is directly attached to the administration which means that he doesn't only work with students but also with the personnel. He is autonomous, as we have agreed, we have a thirty minutes' prayer session every day from 7.30am to 8.00am conducted by the chaplain. All staff members and students are supposed to take part.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 854-862).

The standardization of belief as described by Rabbit above is compelled on teachers and students as designed by the church as an institution. Cat confirms this case and argues that the formal aspects regarding belief are in the hands of the chaplain as he is above everybody in school given that he is God's minister. In the following interview citation, Cat says:

“The chaplain has to teach religious studies and ethics [...] I think that he will help us in the sense that, already the chaplain intercedes for us before God, he prays for the school. He prays, he takes care of the spiritual needs of the learners and the personnel. So, this makes it such that we all are normally under his wings and with him I think we interact much because the chaplain needs to know how a school functions, and to better to help us. To better help us in his mission because he, he was transferred as chaplain but he is a bit above us because he is God's minister.” (Cat, MAXQDA lines 188-190).

Another Interview from Donkey (MAXQDA lines 525-534) is adding to this case emphasizing that the formal aspect of belief gives the specificity of the church in their school. From the above description, teaching understanding by the ecclesiastical leadership type builds on safeguarding and the imposition or formation of belief in an authoritarian pattern contextualized within the framework of the church as an institution.

### **Criterion 3: Relationship and communication by school leader - Hierarchical with focus on loyalty to the church institution**

Within the dimension of the relationship and communication by the ecclesiastical leadership type, the material of the study shows a hierarchical perception of communication with focus on loyalty to the church institution. In addition, there is emphasis on the respect of regulations set by the church. This understanding comes from the interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Donkey talks about his school leadership experiences and he explains during the interview he emphasizes on the loyalty to instructions from the church hierarchy. He says:

" the management of a protestant school integrates instructions that come from the hierarchy of the church because we have the church's national head office for education. And the hierarchy in terms of education including the state of secondary education. At the same time, we have exigencies that come from the national directorate of education which we have to subscribe to." (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 507-509).

Besides the communication flow that is mainly from the church hierarchy to the school as described in the citation of donkey above, another interview from Elephant argues on communication that emphasizes of loyalty to regulations. Elephant in the following quotation states:

"Which means that on the re-opening day of the school year, we are doing on that day what we call the opening service [...] The pastor is in pastor's gown. That day when the pastor finishes the worship, we do the presentation of the school rules and all the staff is there to listen, so we circulate the same information amongst three partners that comprise of the parents, students and teachers. On this day we put the documents about the school rules in each class in a file and each assigned teacher takes to class where students sign engagement forms, what we call the commitments of honour after the reading the rules in the main hall by the senior discipline master. The room in which all three partners are students, parents and supervisors. And so, after the ceremony in the hall, once arrived in the classroom, the student has a sheet on which is condensed main points of the Rules. He makes a commitment and that's it. It keeps the student focused psychologically throughout the year. You see, that is what makes our school different." (Elephant, MAXQDA lines 223-236).

The description of communication understanding by Elephant in the quotation above shows that teachers, students and parents mainly listen to what they are told by the school administration. Other interviews from Badger (MAXQDA lines 73-78) and Skylark (MAXQDA lines 117-121) add to the case with similar assertion on relation and communication understanding that are hierarchical focusing on regulations and discipline. From this background as described above, the understanding of relationship and communication by the Ecclesiastical leadership type highlights a one-way communication of information from the school administration to students and teachers, focusing on obedience and loyalty to rule.

#### **Criterion 4: Self-understanding of faith - Places the church as an institution at the centre**

As far as the self-understanding of faith by the ecclesiastical leadership type is concerned, the description from the materials of the study places the church at the centre. This understanding is portrayed by the interviews which frame the quality of the field as described below. Skylark in the following quotation, when talking about his leading experiences, emphasizes in the following quotation on the school serving for Church members who are bound to send their children there. He says:

“... at the level of Christians, we have launched an operation, operation one child per Christian family. Because we told ourselves that if every Christian in this city [...] sent us a single child, we could have many students. We could have many students and each time, we seek the support of the clergy. Because in fact the institution belongs to them. This is the establishment of the church. So, we seek the support of the clergy to try to raise awareness, for Christians to send us their children.” (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 114-121).

Skylark further argues that the awareness about the school is the responsibility of the clergy and the church who are the owners. The interview of Rabbit also adds to this case by indicating that Church schools serve the spiritual needs of its members. In the following quotation, he says:

“... The church caters both for the spiritual and social concerns of its faithful because if one neither has peace of mind nor a full stomach, he can't go to church. He must have eaten first of all before praying [...] church schools are all services meant to cater for the needs of the followers.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 686-693).

Another interview from Axolotl (MAXQDA lines 15-18) subscribes to the case by highlighting that the school is the establishment of the church and has the clergy as intermediaries who connect the school to the church for directives. From the narrative above, the insertion of the church as an institution at the centre is the specific quality that reflects the understanding of faith by ecclesiastical leadership type.

### **Criterion 5: Role of the church - Supervisory function on school and personnel**

Regarding the role of the church, the description by the ecclesiastical leadership type, shows from the material of the study that the church ensures a supervisory role on the school. This understanding comes from the interviews that are structuring the quality of the field. Cow while talking about his experiences as school leader of a protestant school in an interview, expresses in the following quotation that the church directs how the school functions. He says:

“So in my leadership, the experiences I have had as far as this concerns running a protestant college is, I have worked closely with my local church administration and church leadership. And in case of anything, I run to the local church and the local church gives me directives and assistance. They give me assistance in terms of physical needs, in terms of advice, spiritual and even just the normal advice and I think that that is another experience that is worth sharing, that of functioning under the church, yes.” (Cow, MAXQDA lines 192-197).

Besides the supervisory role of the church for an individual school as described by Cow above, Badger adds to case by arguing in the following interview citation that the church supervises the schools in a combined way, taking resources from one school to another or serving church’s needs. Badger explains:

“... the church hierarchy has needs because hierarchy has a wider vision. There are other institutions that it supervises. It can be a school found in other regions of the country which is not doing well. They can instruct me to assist such a school [...] Thus, these are also challenges. It also means that we do not only concentrate on our school. We have the assignment by the church to create other schools, here and there. We cannot get now and say we will create a college in a certain region. That is the prerogative of church hierarchy. We can have a vision, but we are obliged to follow the vision set by the church. The Church hierarchy has the vision

and who can now say, if you have the means you can invest in such a way to realize the vision. It is especially at this level. [...] there are moments where the hierarchy says, I have such and such a person that we should employ. Often, you are embarrassed because such a person does not fulfil the criteria; the profile is not what we are looking for. But we are obliged to employ because the head of the church has said so [...] it is all the same a difficulty I meet from time to time. I am penalized if I say no to the church hierarchy ...." (Badger, MAXQDA lines 216-233).

The description of Badger in the quotation above, does not only show the supervisory role of the church on personnel but also its role on recruitment and placement of personnel. Badger adds that in the executive function of the church is done in an authoritarian way. Another material from Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 743 - 745) adds to the case by giving the visibility of how the church monitors and supervises personnel and students in the assigned role of the chaplain. Rabbit talks about his leadership experiences and in the following quotation from his interview he says:

"By this, we can say that the centre is run by the church. The Director simply is in charge of the day to day running of the centre. Strategic and important decisions are taken by church hierarchy." (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 743-745).

In the quotation above Rabbit is telling how the church hierarchy handles the major decisions about the institution he leads. He further explains in the quotation, Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 543-548) that the chaplain sent by the church directly monitors personnel and that he has to collaborate with the chaplain otherwise he misses the focus of the church. The descriptions above highlight the specific quality which is the supervision of the school and personnel regarding the role of the church in the understanding of the ecclesiastical leadership type.

### **Criterion 6: Role of the society - strengthening church growth and infrastructural development**

Concerning the role of the society, the ecclesiastical leadership type as shown by the material of the study, describes his understanding about the role of society by focusing on infrastructural development and the growth of the church. This perception comes from interviews which describe the quality of the field. Duck in the following quotation is talking about his school leading experiences and during the interview he mentions how he connects with the ex-students association to support infrastructural development. From this context he says:

“When you come to this college, you have to feel like you are somewhere else. As you can see, the buildings are very old. So we have developed a project on infrastructural development with the support of former students who are forming an association to rebuild it. It is about the infrastructure.” (Duck, MAXQDA lines 309-310).

Just like Duck in the quotation above, another interview from Magpie adds to the case with a similar focus on infrastructural development regarding the role of the society. Magpie, talking about his leadership experience, expressed his connection to influential persons in the society to assist in infrastructural development of the school. In the following citation of his interview, he says:

“As the anniversary of the college is next year, because it was created a long time ago, and it is the college that has trained some persons such as influential persons in government. One who schooled here stopped in the school. We therefore want to go to the capital city and meet some of them. We have set up a commission, presided at by the second vice president of the region in charge of works. I am a reporter and member. We shall go and open our hands to well-wishers to help us renovate the school.” (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 92-99).

While the focus on infrastructural development is upheld as described in the quotation of Magpie above, another interview from Donkey (MAXQDA lines 587-592) adds to the case by further showing the focus of the ecclesiastical leadership type in protecting the public image of the church in relation to the society.

Regarding the role of the society in the ecclesiastical leadership understanding, the specific quality is giving visibility and protection of the public image of the church and care about infrastructural development.

### **Criterion 7: Challenges - Limited infrastructural maintenance and inadequate finances**

Regarding challenges and as shown from the material of the study, the description that reflects the understanding of the ecclesiastical leadership type shows the difficulties in maintaining and expanding the infrastructure as well as inadequate finances. These perceptions emerge from interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. Groundhog during his interview explains his school leadership experiences and

in the following quotation, he mentions the challenge connected to the maintenance of school infrastructure. He adds that the situation is more difficult as there is delayed feedback from the church. He says:

"The challenges are enormous. Both structural and at the very point of the infrastructures. Because at the school, we have a piece of our land that has been washed away by the torrential rains and it affects our classrooms. If continues like this, it might take be a big blow. that is on the infrastructure. So far we have posed the problem to the church. But as it requires finances because it would really need to be well drained at the level of the bridge. So far, the church has not reacted positively." (Groundhog, MAXQDA lines 358-364).

The description of Groundhog in the quotation above shows challenges that are not only limited to the infrastructure and finances, but as well to the hierarchical administrative structure of the church. Another Interview from Raccoon subscribes to the case by expressing the difficulty to maintain deteriorating buildings or add new ones. Raccoon during the interview and talking about his leadership as school principal says in the following quotation:

"But, there's also a peculiarity, which is a bit on the negative side. As you see, the college is almost, mmm, the buildings are falling off. This college [...] was some time ago, a great establishment, but you see, the buildings are deteriorating, but fortunately when I go to the church to present the situation, they listen to me. So we are waiting for funding to break all this and rebuild and it is with this in mind that I proposed to them that when they rebuild, we think of opening a bilingual section. Yes, that is it, well, and the church is listening to me, so I can say it is a great experience because they accepted, I was very happy, good. That is really it. They accepted, this makes me very happy. But there is no financing so far." (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 66-75).

As Axolotl describes in the quotation above, even when the church accepts suggestions to maintain and expand the infrastructure, the difficulty to proceed lies on no finances. Badger adds to this case by explaining that with limited finances, the school is built with temporal materials. During the interview, Badger talks about his school leadership experiences and says in the quotation below:

"Difficulties are often sometimes at the level of finances. It is true that, most often, as we are still growing, we have limited funds. We do not do much in this regards but we have requests from here and there. Thus, we can have needs on the spot,

but no finances [...]. And there are things we cannot do. You only have to have the means. There are classrooms built with temporal materials. It means that these are difficulties. At the same time these are challenges to take note of." (Badger, MAXQDA lines 190-197).

Just like Badger in the description above, another interview from Cow adds to the case with emphasis on financial challenges. Cow during the interview about his school leadership says in the following citation:

"So that is another major difficulty that we have been facing, financial constraints. And that is why this project as you have seen has taken us about six years. This particular project. We are going peace mail, peace mail. And it is at this level not yet completed. Just because of financial constraints. That is a general issue that has been." (Cow, MAXQDA lines 178-182).

Other material from Raccoon (MAXQDA lines 499 - 504) subscribes to the case in a similar way by the school leader expressing challenges at the level of infrastructural development and finances.

The materials described above on the challenges of the Ecclesiastical leadership type gives visibility to its specific quality on two aspects that are interconnected. One aspect is connected to difficulties to maintain or develop school infrastructure while the other is limited financial resources. Meanwhile, the material of the study as revealed by the ecclesiastical leadership type shows that the need for financial resources is connected more on infrastructural development. This description is based on the material of the study and still points to the hierarchical structure of the church to which the ecclesiastical leadership type submits the challenges and looks up to for solutions.

### **Summary of the ecclesiastical leadership type**

The summary of the ecclesiastical leadership type is presented below based on the specific qualities that are differentiated under the seven criteria which shape the categories of quality of the study. Obedience to the administration of the church comes out as the main activity of the school leader and whose understanding of teaching is about formation or imposition of belief as guided by the church. The relationship and communication by the ecclesiastical leadership type is hierarchical, focusing on the

church as an institution. In a similar way, placing the church as an institution at the centre shapes the understanding of faith by this leadership type. In the understanding of the ecclesiastic leadership type, the church plays the supervisory role on both the school and personnel while the understanding regarding the role of the society focuses on strengthening the growth of the church and her infrastructure. The challenges as experienced by the ecclesiastical leadership type limited infrastructure and maintenance which necessitate financial resources that are inadequate following what the school leaders are telling. From the description above, the specific quality that radiates the ecclesiastical leadership type understanding is the obedience to the church as an institution.

#### **4.3.4 Community-participatory leadership type**

This leadership type as shown by the material of the study, indicates the specific quality of enhancing collaboration and participation with the staff and students. It is driven by the concern for the moral well-being of members of the school community. The community-participative leadership type is now presented following the seven criteria that emerged from the materials of the study.

##### **Criterion1: Main activities - Ensure solidarity and harmony of teachers and students**

Concerning the main activities, the description that reflects the perceptions of community-participative leadership type as shown by the material of the study, places emphasis on the solidarity and harmony of staff and students. This understanding as described below comes from interviews which shape the quality of the field. In the following quotation, Badger is talking about his leadership experience as school principal. In the course of the interview he explains that he leads by collaborating with his staff, a quality he describes as collegial. From this background he says:

"Again, I am not the head. It is not my institution. I am a manager. Hence, there is humility. There is collaboration. Thus we cannot work alone. There are people who surround us and in that regard, we have to work with all those who are there. That is to say, give chance to each one because I alone cannot do all effectively. I

think that, we have what we call school management collegial leadership. Practically with me, it is collegial leadership. This means for example, it is not me the head of the institution who gives orders." (Badger, MAXQDA lines 157-164).

The description by Badger in the quotation above equally stresses on the school leader giving opportunities to get contribution of ideas from each member of staff as shown by the material. Another interview that adds to this case is from Giraffe who emphasizes on succeeding in her school leadership through collective efforts of working with ideas that come from both the teachers and students as shown from the material of the study. During the interview, Giraffe talks about his school leadership experience and in the following quotation she says:

"I work with the people around me, I harmonize the ideas, that is what I believe in. I enjoy it so much and it makes work easier. When we brainstorm, discuss and harmonize ideas, at the end of the day we have the best ideas. Not just my idea. Therefore, my idea now blends with the ideas of the other people. Yes, many heads make work lighter. With our collective ideas, at the end of the day we have solid decisions that we take on behalf of the school [...] And I am so happy and proud to say that, ever since I was made a principal, I think I have been moving from one level to the next, to higher levels. We have recorded achievements. Thanks to the people around me. And I always make them to know that each time we succeed, it is thanks to our collective effort. Therefore, I don't under look what my friends, my colleagues do on campus. Yes, and I also have in mind that people have different competences, different talents in different areas, so I try to identify these talents of my colleagues and know where best to fit them. Yes, where to place them, where to position them, the task to give to them. So I maximize such opportunities. Through such steps or styles, or yes, at the end of the day we achieve much, we achieve much. Now, mmm, like I said, that was at the level of the teachers. On the part of the students, I have also made the students to know that, they also have much to offer to the school community, to their school. They have ideas that can benefit us. You know last year when we had the celebration of five hundred years of Protestant Reformation, my school took part in the activity. Because we had task to do with the students. They contributed in writing their own thesis." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 259-281).

Giraffe in the quotation above while indicating how she involves both teachers and students in her leadership, lays emphasis on the considering different competences from each person in the school community as the material of the study shows. Another material from Rabbit (MAXQDA

lines 621-625) adds to the case by the school leaders ensuring harmony and equality amongst the teachers.

The main activity of the community-participatory leadership type as described above points to ensuring collaboration, harmony and cooperation of teachers and students,

### **Criterion 2: Understanding of teaching - Ensure Democracy, peace, Justice and participation**

The perception of teaching as described by the community-participative leadership type anchors on ensuring democracy, peace and participation as portrayed by the material of the study. This understanding as described below comes from the interviews which are defining the quality of the field. In the quotation following quotation, Degu is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal and explains during the interview, explains his focus on ensuring democratic practice and tolerance in the class environment. From this background, he says:

“The school promotes liberty, promotes democracy, promotes the fact that children should be able to express themselves, freedom of expression. It is a very very major thing in our Protestant education. And the issue of responsibility is also taken to be very important as far as this school is concerned [...] Good. Responsibility here has now to do with children knowing that they are responsible for their environment, they are responsible for even peace in their class. Just like for instance, what we do is that, for each class, students develop their own rules democratically, they call them class rules. So that in some classes, what the children will say is for instance there shall be no cutting of classes [...] there shall be no laughing at another student when she or he makes a mistake, so in other words tolerance.”  
(Degu, MAXQDA lines 74-87).

From the quotation above, Degu in his description emphasizes of ensuring that students take their responsibilities and autonomy. Another interview from Giraffe adds to this case with the school leaders emphasizing on promoting participatory approach in the teaching. From this context, Giraffe in the following quotation says:

“You are guiding their activities. In class, this whole idea of team work, group work, we cause the students to know that they have to lean on one another. They have to learn from one another. So, when a task is given in class, we through it to them to work on it. They work as individuals, then work in pairs, finally they come

together in sub-groups, share their ideas and present them. Together with the students, you select now, the best ideas which are supposed to be take home as the material learnt for the day. Alright, so, in class, the teacher is not just the leader. The teacher is there as a facilitator and guide. Yes, because the children too are supposed to work in collaboration with you, so as to facilitate their learning process ...." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 429-439).

Other materials from Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 621-625) and Cat (MAXQDA lines 327-330) add to the case by emphasizing assuring fairness and equal opportunities in the teaching and learning environment.

The specific quality underlining the understanding of teaching by the community-participatory leadership type based on the description above is facilitating participation and justice in the teaching and learning processes.

### **Criterion 3: Relationship and communication by school leader - Enhance trust, moral wellbeing, and participation in school governance**

Concerning relationship and communication by the community-participative leadership type, the material of the study points to perceptions that are enhancing trust and moral well-being on one hand. On the other part, the relationship and communication of this leadership type further highlights participation and ensuring good governance. This understanding comes from the interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Elephant talks about his experiences as a school leader and during the interview, he explains how he ensures trust by telling the truth to the staff. From this backdrop he says:

"... it is a whole process. It is a process, everything is centred on communication. I communicate a lot with the staff, the new way to lead in the management of this establishment is to try to be sincere, to tell the truth, because I often feel that in our society we do not like telling the truth! We must tell the truth to people. That is what I do. Get the staff to understand the situation of their establishment, circulate information so that everyone can share it, because you cannot have information and you confide it in you while these people do not have the truth on the other side. This is the only problem, so communication is above everything. It is the central element, the driving element in the restoration of values in our institution. I call the staff, I give them inherent information on the life of their establishment and about the plan, in all situations. Because [...] this college was a disaster at the start before I came." (Elephant, MAXQDA lines 436-447).

The description of Elephant in the quotation above and as shown by the material, presents communication by being transparent and enhancing the truth as the central aspect in the values of the school. Another interview from Cat adds to this case by the school leader involving all the staff members in the communication process and giving mutual respect. Cat in the interview when talking about his school leadership experiences says in the quotation below:

“You know in our college, often [...] the salaries are not encouraging, and already with that, if you again frustrate your colleagues, this will not give good results. It is for that reason that it is necessary to give chance to everyone to express him or herself and then now put ideas which are taken into consideration, then listen to them. It is already very important for our school. When I listen and is ready to receive, to exchange, I think that it is already that. When there is already this communication, then I can solve many problems. Indeed, there are conflicts, eh, there are conflicts but we manage these conflicts through communication. Good, and then it is necessary to also know that we have to seek for pardon. When I have done wrong, let us say that I react poorly, but it was just like that. That is necessary for a leader, because I do not know everything. I think, it is necessary to acknowledge and say that I went wrong, and if this does not repeat itself. It is good. That is mutual respect. Thus, it is all these small parameters that have to be taken into consideration. Yes.” (Cat, MAXQDA lines 324-338).

Cat in the quotation above also presents the dimension of acknowledging any mistake caused in the cause of school leading and expressing an apology. He underlines that this reinforces mutual respect and solves problems. Another interview from Skylark adds to this case by emphasizing on transparency and ensuring the well-being of the entire staff. Skylark in the following quotation from the interview about his school leadership experiences says:

“... working in a Protestant institution is not easy [...] I have another philosophy that is based a lot more on the three maxims of Kant with focus on: do not do to others what you would not want them to do to you. That is why I put my collaborators at the centre of my activities because if I eat at home and my colleague who produces the work and results does not eat, it is difficult. So, I have played the transparency card a lot more so that employees understand that we are, we are working together and we all want things to move forward positively. I think, I must say very humbly that I took the college wherein teachers were owed several months of salaries [...] but the salary payment is almost up to date now [...] and I think it is positive for me.” (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 35-45).

While the quotation from Skylark above describes the specific leading quality that ensures transparency and wellbeing, another interview from Giraffe adds to the case by focusing communication and relationship in school leading by upholding participation and good governance. Giraffe in the following citation emerging from the interview in which she talks about her experiences on school leading says:

“We have caused the children to know that they have to be very assertive. Girls and boys alike. They have to be very assertive people and know that wherever they find themselves, the first thing, they are supposed to know their rights, and they work towards their rights. By doing the right things the right way and by being out spoken with self-confidence. Yes, being out spoken. So the students amongst themselves they elect the student prefects. The prefects are usually elected through democratic elections. We do not appoint prefects. They are the students who may find quality in their friends, talents in their friends, and then they easily elect a few who can rule them. So they carry out their elections democratically. They carry out their elections, and mmm, at the end of the day, their leaders are their choices. Yes, people that they choose to keep as their leaders. And when they carry out their elections, they have their own selected leaders, and they are bound to listen and work transparently with them and they work peacefully in school.”  
(Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 287-300).

The description of Giraffe in the quotation above highlights the involvement of the students by the school leader in democratic processes and good governance for the school as shown in the material of the study. Other materials from Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 303 - 305) and Skylark (MAXQDA lines 185 - 190) add to the case with similar focus on ensuring participation and well-being amongst teachers and students.

As described above, the relationship and communication of the community-participatory school leadership type focuses on trust, moral well-being of students and teachers and their participation in school governance.

#### **Criterion 4: Self-understanding of faith - linked to solidarity and community feeling**

As far as the self-understanding of faith by the community-participatory leadership type is concerned, the description from the materials shows

the link to solidarity and community feeling. This understanding is portrayed by the interviews which frame the quality of the field as described below. Badger in the following quotation, when talking about his leading experiences, emphasizes in the following quotation on community meditation facilitated by students in each class. He says:

"... children begin each day with morning devotion in each classroom. They have a bible text, they sing hymns together, read a bible text with commentary and they pray together with the teacher who is starting the first lesson of that morning." (Badger, MAXQDA lines 142-145).

In a similar way as the description of Badger in the quotation above, the interview of Giraffe adds to the case by expressing that students and students are involved in organizing and facilitating devotions for the whole school community. When talking about her leadership experiences, Giraffe during the interview says in the quotation below:

"So from time to time, we handle devotions together with students. We give the students time too to do this. Students must often within the week, are readers of bible texts during devotions. They read the bible lessons [...] sometimes students elaborate on bible lessons since we are trying to encourage them to. We are just encouraging them to know that they have something important to offer to the whole community [...] Once in a while also, we bring the students in so that they talk to their peers. You know, learners easily learn from their peers. So we give them that chance to also learn from their friends, from the students, so once in a while they too come up and elaborate on the bible passages that have been read." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 41-50).

The quotation from Giraffe as described above additionally shows the empowering of students by the school leader in community feeling. Another interview from Skylark subscribes to the case by focusing on the solidarity dimension. Skylark talking about his leadership experiences as a principal of a school, expresses that he enhances the involvement of the staff in a financial saving scheme. In the following quotation from his interview he says:

"... it must be shared with the colleagues, the staff members that [...] everything is not going to be the same throughout the year [...] so we try a little, try to dialogue, to make them understand that at a given time that we are here, we can plan to reach targeted levels. So, this requires to be belong to a staff financial saving scheme. we run such an internal structure. I often tell the staff that when we are

in the staff, we are in a saving scheme, each one can even save a month's salary in the scheme. That is to say, he knows that at the end of the academic year, when money from the scheme is paid out, it can help me to manage the remaining months in which salaries are owed." (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 181-190).

Skylark in the quotation above, expresses that the saving scheme for the staff does not only serve for solidarity alone but also as a community measure to assure sustenance during periods that the staff does not have a salary. This measure as shown from the material of the study therefore highlights managing difficult financial situations through the solidarity financial savings scheme. Another interview from Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 303-305) adds to the case by highlighting the dimension of finding solutions to problems through a collective approach of involving members of the school community. Based on the descriptions above, the sense of community shapes the self-understanding of faith by community-participatory leadership type.

### **Criterion 5: Role of the church - Enhance Ecumenism and social cohesion**

With respect to the role of the church, the perception by the community-participatory leadership type, as shown from the material of the study, ensures ecumenism and the fostering of social cohesion. This understanding comes from the interviews that are framing the shaping the quality of the field. Horse while talking about his experiences as school leader in an interview, explains in the following quotation that he ensures the co-existence of Muslim and Christian students. He says:

"Here in particular, we are [...] in a Muslim-Christian zone and all of that. A lot of Muslim children are here in school. You cannot tell a Muslim girl to undo her hair, as they will think that you have directly attacked Islam. So that is what makes the difference. In religious education all students are invited to attend the classes, Muslims inclusive. Here everyone follows, thank God, everyone actually follows and that is also noted. Everyone follows. At the beginning, there was reluctance from some of the Muslim parents, but we, we told them that there was no problem but rather a question of choice [...] And in such a way you see, by the way we do it and relate with them, there are many Muslims in our school and they all follow the religious and ethics lessons. It is not only religious education, but ethics as well. You know ethics, is about morality. So that is about how it is done. That is

the difference here. It is this form of teaching here [...] That is our specificity and also we understand the parents. You know we are at a difficult time.” (Horse, MAXQDA lines 99-114).

In the description of Horse from the quotation above, the school leader explains that he acknowledges difference as far as religion is concerned. From the material of the study as shown above, Horse explains that he works on the choices of parents and students, relating well with them and this has increased the number of Muslim students in his school who join religious lessons. Another interview of Axolotl adds to this case in a similar way as the experience of Horse. Axolotl in the following quotation when talking about her experiences in school leadership, focuses on enhancing ecumenism and autonomy of students. She says:

“... freedom I can tell you because, that is what we do. When the other students go to pray, here there is the church. Those who are not Protestants, who do not want to go, they stay. As we cannot force some Muslims, but Catholics who like, go with us. There was a child who was Jehovah Witness, he said he cannot join prayers with us and we allowed him. We do not disturb the choice of students. We leave him. For the Muslims, there were some who said no. For some, they said, their father said that when there are prayers in the church at school, they can join to pray. Those other Muslims say that it is the same God, so they go with us. So it's at this level. Yes! And when a parent brings a child to enrol, he always asks, what religion do you belong to? and we tell them that it is a Protestant college of our church here [...]! So it is like that. We do not really force children to join our Protestant worship, no. We do not really oblige. Meanwhile there are other schools that force students, even forcing to baptize them. For us, we are really at the level of freedom! Parents and their children make the choice. But we simply offer training to all children. mmm! We train them.” (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 214-224).

Ant in the description above, show from the material of the study that she enrolls students from various religious backgrounds in school, encourages them to have worship service together, but without forcing them. Axolotl in her leadership experience emphasizes on enhancing both freedom and ecumenism. Other materials from Skylark (MAXQDA lines 185 - 190) and Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 259-270) subscribe to this case by ensuring social cohesion.

The role of the church based on community-participatory leadership type and shown from the experiences above highlights ecumenism and communal living.

### **Criterion 6: Role of the society - Focuses on social living and cohesion**

As far as the role of the society is concerned, the self-understanding by the community-participatory leadership type focuses on ensuring social living and cohesion, based on the description from the materials of the study. This perception is revealed by the interviews which shape the quality of the field as described below. Rabbit in the following quotation, when talking about his leading experiences, emphasizes on the offer of social service by his school. He says:

“... a teacher may have emergencies, he or she may fall sick and inform and we give consideration even if he is a part time teacher with justifiable absences. One of our part time teacher says he is very impressed by the way we treat him because he knows he has a fixed salary where he is full time but in reality, in that particular school at times curtailments are made which he cannot understand. But here in our school where he teaches only for two, three hours a week, he receives the same bonuses like other teachers. To him, he cannot understand this as is very grateful. I tell him that we are a social service, because in a church school, all men are treated equally. When someone starts putting people apart with things that are not really important, it becomes a problem for us. We explain to teachers that our goal is not money, but the output. All problems are treated equally with concern.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 614-625).

Rabbit in the description above, further explains that social concern in his leadership is not only restricted to his permanent staff but also to part time teachers who come from elsewhere. Rabbit from the material of the study in the quotation above underscores that social support and output are more important than money. Another interview from Giraffe adds to the case by emphasizing on the necessity to connect to the society to enhance happiness. In the following quotation, Giraffe is telling about her school leadership experience and says:

“I socialize a lot. I believe that you cannot keep yourself happy by operating as an individual. You must help the people around you as well as. Because most of the time, even when you do not want to give a helping hand to the people out there, you realize that you can copy from what others do [...] We cannot succeed in that area, without operating, without having a good relationship with the people around us. No matter their status in the society. No matter their background, their position in life. So everybody around us, the poor, the rich, they are our friends.” (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 850-861).

The interview from Cat also adds to the case by directing the role of the society on the care for teachers social living and solidarity (Cat, MAXQDA lines 397-399).

As shown from the descriptions above, the understanding of the role of the society by the community-based leadership type reinforces social living and cohesion.

### **Criterion 7: Challenges - administrative bottlenecks from state and church, and inadequate finances**

Regarding challenges and as shown from the material of the study, the description that reflects the perception of community-participatory leadership type highlights on one hand, administrative bottlenecks from both the church and the state. On the other hand, another difficulty as described by this leadership type is limited financial resources to pay teachers' salaries. These understandings come from interviews which shape the quality of the field as described below. Duck during his interview talks about his school leadership experiences and in the following quotation, he mentions the difficulties in managing financial demands and pressure from both the church and the state. He says:

"It is thus a difficult situation to manage and deal with both the state and the church. The requests and expectations are not at all, not at all easy, because there are also even financial demands of these two hierarchical structures and sometimes we are in conflict with them because we tell them, well here we have no particular support, we operate on the basis of our own resources, which are mainly the school fees from students and you ask us all of these! This one asks this, the other asks for that, all these requests, we cannot in our, of our own abilities satisfy them. This creates tension with the national social insurance, it creates tensions with payment of taxes, it creates tensions with the delegations of education of the state in relation to the various contributions they ask for related to meetings, but we always manage to find a compromise. A compromise of trying not to compromise. So, it is, it is, it is really a difficult situation. It is really difficult to manage institutions that are in this situation. The institution is first of all in this financial and difficult situation." (Duck, MAXQDA lines 118-131).

The description of Duck as shown above also reveal from the material of the study that the school leader does not compromise with the pressure from the church and state and this brings tensions. Another interview

from Rabbit adds to the case in a similar way as that of Duck. Rabbit during his interview when talking about his leadership experiences explains that the church interferes in the running of the school, causing him to risk and deviated the main objectives of the school. Rabbit says:

"I observed one thing which I want to present among the difficulties with regards to leadership. At a given moment, if things are not clearly defined, there is a big risk of interference by the church which may push us to forget our primary objectives. The church is always trying to interfere with the running of the institution whereas to me, the institution is a company. Even if it is a school, it is a company that must function. It is a company because we must raise money to pay salaries. We must bear the running cost. When the church is interfering, she forgets that the company must function normally and that the way the company functions is different from how church congregations' functions. We always have conflicts over that [...]" (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 756-765).

Rabbit in the narration above, indicate that with the main source of income of the school being school fees paid by students, his priority is to pay teachers which he argues that it is not the way the church sees it. Another material from Badger (MAXQDA lines 225 – 233) subscribes to this case by the school leader showing how the church hierarchy interferes by imposing the recruitment of unqualified teachers. On the other hand, another material from Cat adds to the case, highlighting the financial challenge to pay teachers' salaries. In the following quotation from the interview of Cat about his school leadership experiences, he says:

"Yes, and when you are given a school to lead with no francs, a beautiful building like this, and you are asked by the church just struggle like a good father without any source of finances (he laughs). Well, you see, it is usually difficult [...] For what concerns me, eh, when I started, I spent months without, without any salary for teachers and myself. For example, when I went to the directorate of education of the church and explained the problem I was facing, I did not have any answer from the church [...] Now, I come to school here where I am supposed to pay the staff, but if as I have no money to pay to them, you see all that stress that is in me, you see. Well when schools start, some small money comes from school fees, some bits that are entering and then for the remaining half of the year, there is nothing else. You have to wait accumulated debts to add to the following year. Within this time, I and teachers have to survive. So it is not easy at all." (Cat, MAXQDA lines 350-368).

Cat in the description above explains that his focus is the payment of teachers' salaries meanwhile the difficulties to get funds as well as the neglect he receives from the church hierarchy gives him stress. Another material from the interview of Magpie adds to case in a similar way as Cat and shows the deplorable financial situation of the school yet he still maintains the collaboration with staff. In the following quotation from his interview, he states:

"The school was almost at the verge of being closed down. This was the deplorable financial situation the institution had in terms of debts. Salary debt for example was in hundreds of millions francs CFA, national social insurance debts was tens of million francs CFA, other taxes and debts in banks over a hundred million FCFA. Thus you can now understand that the daily work of a principal in such an institution is not easy, not easy at all. But with all of this situation, it is necessary to maintain the collaboration on daily basis with staff and manage with pedagogy." (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 12-20).

Other materials coming from the interviews (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 15-24; Gorilla, MAXQDA lines 269-275; Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 762-764; & Skylark, MAXQDA lines 185-190) subscribe to the case and points to the difficulties explained by the community-participatory leadership type. The difficulties that come from the material of the study are linked to getting financial support from the state and church to pay teachers' salaries.

The challenges as expressed by the community-participatory leadership are twofold. First, the challenge connected with the church hierarchical administrative difficulties and the second difficulty is about inadequate finances to pay for salaries of personnel.

### **Summary of the community-participatory leadership type**

The summary of the community-participatory leadership type is presented below along the lines of the seven criteria that defined the categories of quality. The main activity of the community-participatory leadership is ensuring harmony and solidarity. In a similar way, the teaching understanding of this leadership type pays attention to promoting democracy, justice and participation while the relationship and communication by the school leader is shaped by trust, moral wellbeing and participation

in school governance. Regarding the self-understanding of faith, the community-participatory leadership type ensures solidarity and community feeling. In the understanding of this leadership type, the role of the church focuses in ecumenism while the role of the society focuses on social living and cohesion. The challenges faced by the community-based leadership type as based on his experiences are the administrative bottlenecks from the state and the church as well as inadequate finances to pay the salaries of personnel.

#### **4.3.5 Vocation to serve leadership type**

Coming from the material of the study, the vocation to serve leadership type reveals the specific quality of fostering quality teaching. This leadership type focuses on better performance of learners. The vocation to serve leadership type is now presented below based on the seven criteria that emerged from the materials of the study.

##### **Criterion1: Main activities of school leader - Ensures quality teaching and learning with focus on better performance of students**

In regards to the main activities, the description that reflects the perceptions of vocation to serve leadership, places emphasis on ensuring quality teaching and learning. As shown from the material of the study, the focal activities of the school leader are linked to getting better performance of learners. This understanding as described below comes from interviews which shape the quality of the field. In the following quotation, Gorilla is talking about his leadership experience as school principal. In the course of the interview he explains that he leads by ensuring that all students especially those with weak academic background are supported to succeed. From this background he says:

“I still say that we, what makes our difference is that we think that we must give each child the chance to succeed, it gives a lot of work! A lot, a lot of work, but this is our mission. That is our mission, that is to say, to produce results with these children who were not at the beginning academically strong to be successful and for whom we do a lot. We work a lot with the parents as well, we do a lot of work with the parents, we try to associate them, so that they cause the children to work, to supervise the children at home. Which is not obvious at all. Okay, all in all we

can say that, we firmly believe that our mission goes beyond, diplomas but get to train the man, the accomplished man, a balanced man, a man who does not judge only on the number of degrees he has, but on his ability to positively impact society." (Gorilla, MAXQDA lines 196 - 206).

Gorilla in the description above, does not only explain that he works with teachers and students to get results but also emphasizes the involvement of parents to follow-up students learning. Another interview that adds to this case is that from Bee. From the material of the study, Bison while expressing himself as school leader during the interview, lays emphasis on monitoring students learning and he talks about his role of also teaching as an example for other teachers. In the following quotation, Bison says:

"If I do not follow-up students learning, then I miss the point as a principal. As a Principal too I also teach. I make sure that I have my teaching periods that I teach. Because when you are not teaching at times, you lose touch of the classroom. It becomes difficult for you to monitor other teachers. So I teach. For example, this year I am teaching final year class of high school (upper sixth) one of the science subjects. I have four hours every week. This Class, I took them from their first year in high school. I have accompanied them right to the final year. Look at the results, very encouraging. These results give the output and it is a way of evaluating myself too as a teacher. So I can use that as a reference for other teachers. So by the time I am telling a teacher that he or she is not performant, I am showing you what I have also done for those same set of students" (Bee, MAXQDA lines 133-142)

In the description above, Bee, talking about his leadership experience, expresses that he uses students results to evaluate himself as well as teachers' performance. In a similar description of main activities of the school leader like Bee, another interview from Skylark adds to the case by laying emphasis on results. Skylark telling his experiences says that teaching to get results is the central activity in the Protestant school. In the following citation from his interview, he says:

"... because we are a Protestant school, it is necessary that the teachers change their mentality and understands that it is their teaching job that gives them food. Therefore, teachers understand that if they do not teach well, they will not have any results. Huh! We need results. It is necessary, it is necessary to remove from the minds of teachers, the spirit and spirit of Cameroon civil servants (government workers) who do not bother about results. No! We are private and in the church

sector and therefore we work hard. We work hard to get results.” (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 111-112).

Besides the emphasis on focusing on students’ performance as described by Skylark above, he also states from the material of the study that working hard to get results for students gives the specific quality of his school. Other interviews (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 558-561 & Zebra, MAXQDA lines 288-292) add to this case pointing to quality teaching and learning as the central activities.

From the description above, the main activity of the vocation to serve leadership type is ensuring good teaching and striving for better results of students.

### **Criterion 2: Understanding of teaching - Ensure quality orientation, creativity and success of students in exams**

As far as teaching understanding is concerning, the vocation to serve leadership type focuses on ensuring quality orientation, being innovative to facilitate the success of students. This perception as described below comes from the interviews which are defining the quality of the field. In the quotation following quotation, Giraffe is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal and explains during the interview, how she focuses on ensuring in-service teacher training, lesson observations and feedback attain results for the students. From this background and in the following quotation, she says:

“... in terms of teaching and results results, honestly, we are very very outstanding. Very very outstanding and it thanks to the input made by the teachers. The teachers, they work relentlessly. They are very very well trained through in-service training. From time to time we hold our internal seminars. Internal seminars, you know, at the level of the school, wherein we share ideas and try to educate ourselves. These training workshops, as I am a teacher trainer from an in-service training program of Protestant churches. Like I told you, that I underwent that program, one of my duties is to monitor the work of the teachers, observe their lessons, go through their lesson plans and give them feedback. Yes, so all those aspects, those things are handled by the teachers. They prepare their lessons very well before they go to class. They make sure that as they get into class, they dwell more on students’ activities. They use more of learner-centred methods of teaching in their classes. Then, we observe lessons. Now I have made the teachers to

know that since I am the only teacher (Multiplier) in the school, I must not be the only one to observe lessons. Sometimes they come and observe my own lessons so that I cannot say what I cannot do, what is not done elsewhere. So, I give them that latitude to come into my own class and observe my lesson. Alright, I also cause them to know that, it is a kind of a mutual thing wherein you help me and I help you and we learn. Yes, so you can get into another teacher's class After which, there must be a post lesson discussion, and the discussion is mainly to help you in the areas where in you are lacking, and reinforce you in the areas where you are good through feedback. Alright, we do lesson observations, we do all these types of things that help to boast up the work of the teachers in the class. The teachers, even those who came with little or no training mmm, average teachers, in the school, but now, am just too proud of the calibre of teachers that we have in school now. Yes, it is for this reason that results of students are always very excellent. For this academic year, we are working towards a hundred percent at each of the levels of end of course national examinations, in the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination. I will take your contact number, so that I update you, when the results come out, that is my dream. We have been outstanding in the national classification. Yes, when the results come out, you will get the name of my school for national excellence. Yes, for the two past years, we have been in the national honour roll." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 637-667).

Giraffe in the description above argues that, by combining her experience as teacher trainer to that of school principal, she ensures that teachers support one another and give feedback in the professionalization process which has improved teaching quality for the entire staff. She also expresses her joy from students' performance that profiles her school in the national academic honour roll. In a similar way, the material from Rabbit adds to the case by ensuring the development of competences. Rabbit, talking about his school leadership experiences, talks about his focus on ensuring the acquisition of skills and competences by learners. Rabbit in the following interview citation, says:

"... when you come to my school, we explain to you that when a technical college gives you a technical foundation, you will need to perfect to gain competences if you have to work. When you graduate from a technical college, of course you are endowed with the basic technical knowledge but to use this knowledge in real life or to be able to work, you need to perfect it and have skills developed. And here at our institution, we have learners who after two years of training request for another one year of perfection. It is something that is particular to our institution. In reality, we offer an extra year to those who desire it, an extra year for perfection.

We call it the third year and it is one hundred percent practical work in the technical field. This means that after the two years of training, you get an attestation. After this graduation, others seek for perfection. They apply and we accept them depending on the capacity of our workshops. We take a maximum of three to four learners per year. These are students our centre but undergoing a year of perfection. So, they spend a whole year in the garage or in the workshop. They work as mechanics in the technical centre but are students. This third year permits us to assess the theoretical knowledge acquired, and how it is linked to real life. However, this is done more in our workshops. And what also accounts for the specificity of our centre is the seriousness with which we follow up learners, giving them support and feedback. These are testimonies we receive each time we attend meetings with the state delegation of technical education. We are cited for best practices in youth vocational and professional development [...] This is due to the seriousness with which we teach and follow up our learners, our teachers too because like I said, yesterday I attended a seminar organized by an international donor organization and the problem of quality was presented. My school was cited as good example of ensure quality training.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 342-367),

Other materials from Magpie (MAXQDA lines 76-79), Zebra (MAXQDA lines 288-292), Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 558-566) and Skylark (MAXQDA lines 111-112) add to the case in a similar way as described above with focus on teaching quality development and enhancing students’ success in examinations.

Based on the narrative above, teaching understanding by vocation to serve leadership type focuses on creativity and quality orientations towards better performance of students at examinations.

### **Criterion 3: Relationship and communication by school leader - Focus on students’ success, teacher professionalism and delegation of responsibilities**

In the framework of relationship and communication, the vocation to serve leadership type from the material of the study focuses on students’ success and teacher professionalism. The understanding from this leadership type also enhance the delegation of responsibilities in the relationship with the staff. These perceptions come from the interviews which frame the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Degu talks about his experiences as a school leader and during the

interview, he explains how he ensures the delegation of responsibility. From this backdrop he says:

“Actually, the way I do my school leading, it is personally through a lot of delegation of powers. I delegate a lot of powers and I emphasize on team work. There is a lot of team work but there is a lot of delegation of powers. So in other words, I make sure that I assign colleagues to particular duties. And allow them as the persons to take the decisions but they must come back to me for approval and coordination. And so, it is all very much about delegation, you know, team work, about delegating your functions and about coordinating to make sure that what you have assigned is being done in a proper way. And then, that follow-up must be there. So I have to see to it that that this is happening because if it is just I alone, I will just completely burnout,” (Degu, MAXQDA lines 24 - 33),

In the description above, Degu positions himself as a leader delegating power and yet ensures follow-up and coordination towards desired results, as the material of the study reveal. The interview from Bison also adds to this case in a similar way as Degu by ensuring delegation of responsibilities. In the quotation below, Bison is talking about his experiences and unlike Degu, Bison argues that he builds the capacities of his collaborators in the process of power delegation. He says:

“So that is the first thing as a leader in the school, I place the man power in their right professional positions. I close my eyes to friendship or anything of the sort. let the people do what they are supposed to do. Put them in the right places and in that way you can solve more than six percent of problems that you can encounter in the future. And then the next thing, is to groom them, because putting some people does not necessarily mean that they will do exactly what you want, you tell them to do or what you want them to do and then you make sure you follow up regularly. For me, I have what we call confidential report sheet that I keep. I may not keep for everybody but for those people that I see that are wanting, I keep for them. So when I call them, I point out that this is what you were supposed to do. You did this one you did needs improvement, this one correctly and you did that correctly, that way, they know that am following them up so they become conscious. So once after putting them in place, they must be followed up. If you don't follow-up, then you miss it out,” (Bee, MAXQDA lines 121-134).

The quotation from Bison above also adds the specific quality of the school leader giving feedback in his communication with his collaborators. Degu from his understanding of school leading also says that he delegates re-

sponsibilities based on the competences of the personnel. Another interview that adds to this case is from Giraffe who by her communication focuses on the professional development of the teachers as shown by the material of the study. Giraffe in the following quotation from her interview about her school leadership experiences says that she capitalizes communication on improving teaching and learning. She says:

“We organize workshops on different key issues that are be plaguing our learning environment, as far as education and learning are concerned. Yes, so from time to time we study and see the areas in which we are lacking. Since we have stayed at home for some time without teaching the students due to the crisis, I monitor and talk with teachers to be sure of what the teachers are giving to the students, the manner in which they are teaching and pass across information, how they interact with the children, the relationship with the students, to ensure that this is very comfortable, the rapport between teachers and students. Because if the environment, the atmosphere is very conducive, then we easily achieve our goals. Yes, so, I ensure that we organize more training workshops in school. Yes, during which. I always tell the teachers that I do not know it all. Yes, even if I am there as the facilitator or another person has to facilitate the workshop, that person is not there because he knows everything. Yes, we, it is just a kind of a platform during which we update ourselves, share our ideas and gain from one another, enrich ourselves as teachers in the field. And in addition to that, if we are well equipped professionally as teachers, then certainly our learners will benefit from us, yes. And we shall certainly gain much and achieve our goals, our dreams and vision,” (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 825-841).

The description of Giraffe above shows from what she explains that in her leadership, professional training workshops also provide the space for enhancing the community of best practices. Giraffe from the material of the study also argues that when communication focuses on strengthening teachers’ professional capital, the results of learners is better assured. Another material from the interview of Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 375-379) subscribes to the case by talking about the adaptation of the curriculum to students’ daily life as a central aspect of exchange with his teachers.

The relation and communication by the vocation to serve leadership type as described above emphasizes on students’ success and teacher professionalization. Even though power is delegated, the final decisions are still made by the vocation to serve leader following what the school leaders are telling.

#### **Criterion 4: Self-understanding of faith - Linked to the inner drive for quality**

Concerning the self-understanding of faith by vocation to serve leadership type, the description from the materials shows the link to the inner drive of quality. This perception as described below is portrayed by the interviews which structure the quality of the field. Zebra in the following quotation, when talking about his leading experiences, emphasizes on offering revision classes. By his understanding, Zebra explains that these efforts are aimed at getting better students' results. He says:

“... and what we have also taken as a measure here is to do everything we can to maximize the result next year. So we have initiated free revision classes every Saturday. Every Saturday, revision classes. And for the students who do not have a good level, we also offer refresher courses. So that is it, pedagogically speaking, to raise the level a little, and success is what we are working towards. That is it, that is it. It is like that. We are thinking that maybe after the end of course examination results [...] we will see what needs to be additionally done. Between now and next year, we will be putting all our efforts into revision, the commitment of teachers, and that is it. Well, there are also the sensitizing sessions with parents, some of which we are carryout during our assemblies too. We talk about that. So sometimes we invite some parents to speak with the students in person.” (Zebra, MAXQDA lines 286 - 297).

The description from Zebra above gives and added value to the offer of support lessons to students with poor academic background. The vocation to serve leadership type from that material enhances teacher's commitment for students better learning. Besides the focus on better results at examinations as portrayed by Zebra above, another interview from Gorilla (MAXQDA lines 247-252) adds to the case with emphasis on ensuring that work is well done. In the following, quotation from the interview with Gorilla, he says:

“... well, first of all you have to have a Protestant understanding. Being Protestant and proud to say that work in a Protestant school is not only characterized by humility as the church recommends but also by the taste for good work that is well done. This is the Protestant idea, the Protestant idea, is always characterized by the desire to do well. For this. I check what has to be done and I communicate this at all the levels, with the collaborators with whom I work, all staff and children so that they focus and do it well.” (Gorilla, MAXQDA lines 247-252).

Gorilla from the quotation above is telling that ensuring that work is well done is at the heart of Protestant understanding. He goes ahead to express that he communicates this desire of doing work well to the staff and students. Other materials from the interviews of Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 312-320) and Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 344-351) supports the case similar ways from what the school leaders are telling. While Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 312-320) deepens quality of his school by enhancing critical reflections and autonomy in learners on wider issues of the society and networking, Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 344-351) on the other hand subscribes to this case with the focus on connecting theory to practice in vocational training. The description above on the self-understanding of faith by vocation to serve leadership type shows a drive for better quality.

### **Criterion 5: Role of the church - Support professional development of teachers**

Concerning the role of the church, the ecclesiastical leadership type as shown by the material of the study, describes his understanding by focusing on the training of teachers. This perception comes from interviews which describe the quality of the field. Hippopotamus in the following quotation is talking about his school leading experiences and during the interview he describes how the training of teachers is the focus of the church. He connects teacher training to the stabilization of professional capital and from this background he says:

“That's what we're happy about a little and always in the educational project. it is also necessary to train the teachers, so that after a period of over ten years that the college has been existing, it should have its own teachers and no longer depend on part time individuals. It is true that training is the preserve of the church, of our church, yes. It is the church that has to take care of the training. If after ten years, we have trained teachers, trained teachers who are well treated, they will no longer have the desire to leave the college to go somewhere. They can stay.” (Hippopotamus, MAXQDA lines 341-346).

Besides the stability to the teaching staff as described above by Hippopotamus, the training of teachers as still shown from the material of the study, reduces dependence on part time teachers. The interview of Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 243-251) adds to the case by not only upholding teacher

training as the focus but also specifying arguing that in-service teacher teaching is more suitable to guarantee the continues functioning of the school. Rabbit in the following quotation while talking about his school leadership experience says:

“It would be a good thing for our teachers to benefit because when you have teachers who have not undergone training, it’s a problem. Almost all the teachers, our permanent teachers have not had training in pedagogy, they have been trained based on their own ideas. They lack the techniques of transmitting knowledge, and this retards our progress, given the new teaching methods. We cannot say that we will take them and send them for training for two or three years before bringing them back. It would create a dysfunction and so to me, the ideal solution is in short training sessions that we have started, in short recycling workshops which permit us fill the gaps they have and after several sessions we would be able to have teachers who have had some professional experience.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 241-251).

Rabbit as shown from the description above also links short term training of teachers to build competences in new teaching methods. Another interview which adds to case is the interview from Badger (MAXQDA lines 246-258) who upholds both pre-service and in-service options in teacher training by the church. That is for me the priority of priorities without neglecting the side of personnel. This means that

“... at the same time we train personnel because we stress on personnel development. At the end, we will not depend much on part time teachers who come [...] up till now. We recommend personnel of second grade who want to work with the church for studies at higher teacher training colleges [...] there are also those who are trained, perhaps those who are just employed and we train the persons that we will recruit in short training workshops. Also, we encourage youths, we give youths recommendations, those who have Bachelor degrees or who have a high school leaving certificate, they go for training and when they complete, the church employs them.” (Badger, MAXQDA lines 246-258).

Badger argues in the description above that teacher training focuses on teachers who decide to continue working with the church. He also expresses a broader view of teacher training by pointing to the fact that youths who show interest in future careers as teachers are given teacher training opportunities by church and thereafter get employment in church schools. Another interview from Magpie (MAXQDA lines 76-81) also add to the case by subscribing to the role of the church in in-service

teacher training. These argumentations as presented above show the emphasis and investment of vocation to serve understanding of the role of the church in teacher training.

**Criterion 6: Role of the society - Focuses on improvement of teaching and competency development**

In the framework of the role of the society, the vocation to serve leadership type as shown by the material of the study, describes his understanding about the role of society by highlighting competence development in learners and teaching improvement. This perception comes from interviews which describe the quality of the field. Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 192 - 210) in the following quotation is talking about his school leading experiences and during the interview he mentions how he connects with NGOs to offer training to vulnerable children in the society. This training he argues is aimed at equipping the youths to fit in society. From this background he says:

“... given the level of these young students in our technical schools, theory is given directly during the practical session. Ever since we launched this approach, we have been deeply satisfied because we are highly solicited very much on this angle by both local and international NGOs. These NGOs send youths to us given that they work with youths on socio-economic projects for resilience of vulnerable youths. We are recommended to train them. Usually there are contracts that bind us for the training of these youths given that they are vulnerable; others have not been to school. They just want to train these youths and let them fit squarely in the society but since this must pass through some training, they therefore hand these young people to us. And so within the year, you will discover that while some students are on holidays, there is always a group of learners who are being trained in our school. It is the result of these partnerships. So, thanks to these ideas, and here we exchange a lot with experts, partners, how can we improve on the quality of training, how can we make all these aspects practical and operational. So like I was saying, my every day job is simply a job of coordination, planning, concerting with persons from other organizations and the quest for ideas that can improve on training, while the close collaborators have the arduous task of ensuring the smooth functioning of the departments. That is the little that we do.” (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 192-210).

Rabbit in the description above also show the relation to society by offering education to children who do not have the opportunity to go to school.

Another material from the interview of Axolotl (MAXQDA lines 299-312) adds to the case by soliciting assistance on improving teaching. Axolotl in the following citation from his interview on school leadership experiences talks about connecting with state educational inspectors to support her school in teaching. From this background, she explains:

“... When I get the contacts of state inspectors of education [...] I call them. I introduce myself and my school. I tell them, I will like to meet you on such a day so that we have a little working session. Can you grant me your time? [...] that is how one inspector connects me to others, and we meet. That is how I have been doing it, that is how I have been doing it! I really had them, they were even surprised. I solicit that they support my school to improve teaching. It's good, we even worked more than I earlier needed. I remember last year, there was one who sent me two teachers, yes! he sent two, two teachers and he said, that is my contribution. You will give me nothing, you do not pay them. They will teach some of your classes for free. We must not close the school because we have to rebuild the college. So, that is that. That is what we do. So it is the also pastors who give me contacts of resource persons in their parishes and I often attend Sunday services, I do worship somewhere in different parishes to talk about the school. I go there I meet the pastors, I tell them, in your parishes do you have someone who can help to improve my school in such and such a field.” (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 299-312).

From the quotation of Axolotl above, she uses the parish landscape of the church to link to the outer world not only to solicit support for teaching improvement but also to find a solution to limited teaching staff. Another material from Cat (MAXQDA lines 10-11) adds to the case in a similar way to get part time teachers in his connection to the society.

The description above about the understanding of vocation to serve leadership type regarding the role of the society focuses on improving teaching and learning possibilities.

### **Criterion 7: Challenges - How to deal with inadequate trained staff, routine curricula from state, and inadequate finances for teachers' salaries**

Regarding challenges and as shown from the material of the study, the description that gives the understanding of the vocation to serve leadership type shows the challenges connected to three aspects. The descrip-

tions from segments of the interviews highlight inadequate trained teachers, problems in implementing state curricula and inadequate finances to pay teachers' salaries. These perceptions all emerge from interviews which structure the quality of the field as described below. Magpie during his interview explains his school leadership experiences and in the following quotation, he talks about the challenge connected to inadequate trained staff. He says:

"We have a staff size of over thirty members, with less than ten permanent teachers and over twenty-part time teachers. Of these ten permanent staff, less than five are trained, who are graduates from university. The rest of the permanent staff comprises of auxiliary members and teachers who were recruited a long ago and whose academic level is not good. This is a problem for us." (Magpie, MAXQDA lines 76 - 79).

Magpie as shown from the description above in his explanation of inadequate trained staff also links it to a challenge on recruitment and explains dependence on part time teachers. Another interview which adds to the case is the interview from Hippopotamus (MAXQDA lines 341 – 346). Hippopotamus in his explanation thinks that investing in teacher training by the church could contribute in a sustainable way. The same challenge of having inadequate qualified permanent staff is subscribed to this case by the interview segments of Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 243-251) and Cat (MAXQDA lines 10-11).

Other materials from the study, show the understanding of vocation to serve leadership experience in regards to the problem of implementing state-provided curriculum. Rabbit during his interview about his leadership experience talks about the situation of training curriculum and in the following quotation, he says:

"Our authorities in the ministry just sit in their offices and come out with programs for which I don't know what process. They produce training curricula saying this is what you should do [...]. Government professional training centers will say, well, this has been sent by the ministry and for which they must follow. Whether it is truly operational or not, they must follow it but for us, we have a worry which is that of the concern on checking to ensure quality training. This brings us to problems with government hierarchy." (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 432-439).

As shown from the quotation above, Rabbit explains that the curriculum from the state is imposed and for this he thinks it is a problem as he would like to check to ensure quality. Another material from the interview of Possum (MAXQDA lines 153-158) adds to the case with the understanding that the state imposes what has to be followed in education from what he is telling, making it difficult to adjust.

The material of the study also shows the challenge of inadequate funds to pay teachers as described by vocation to serve leadership understanding. This perception comes from interview segments that describe the quality of the field. Elephant in the following interview quotation, in talking about his school leadership experiences, says:

"We had the challenge of salaries, because there is no money, the salaries are paid up to eighty percent from the base and every year since I am here I already paid over twenty months of salary arrears. So in three years (...) we struggle to pay salary arrears, so, every time towards the end of each year, I pay seven months of salary arrears which is just twenty percent of what we owe teachers." (Elephant, MAXQDA lines 413-417).

Elephant shows in the description above from what he says about the difficult financial situation, that he pays attention to the salary arrears of teachers. Another interview from Hippopotamus (MAXQDA lines 72-76) supports the case by the school principal expressing the inability to pay teachers' salaries for up to half a year. Other segments of interviews from Duck (MAXQDA lines 27-28), Zebra (MAXQDA lines 245-247 & 262-264) and Cat (MAXQDA lines 324-327) add to this case by the school principals telling that inadequate finances to pay teachers' salaries is their major difficulty. Additionally, the interview from Cow (MAXQDA lines 173-176) supports the case and argues that the little and irregular subventions from the state accounts from what he is saying, for the difficulties to pay teachers. During the interview about his leading experiences, Cow in the following quotation says:

"Then we have also had the issue of eee, eee subventions, state subventions to the school is small and irregular. Given that we run both commercial and grammar sections, we need many teachers, need so many teachers but then the fees the children pay is very little and cannot be able to pay all the teachers." (Cow, MAXQDA lines 173-176).

Cow in the quotation above further explains that the source of teachers' salary is the fee paid by students which by itself is small.

The materials described above on the challenges of the vocation to serve leadership type highlights its specific quality on three aspects. One aspect based on what the principals are telling is about the problem of inadequate trained teachers with the staff characterized by a high proportion of part time teachers. On the second dimension, the material of the study from what the vocation to serve principals say, show their challenge of dealing with a curriculum imposed by the state as they observe that there is little room to adjust. The third challenge as explained by principals in vocation to serve leading experience point to limited finances. In connected to this, they further explain that subvention from the state little and irregular. From the material of the study, the vocation to serve leadership type argues the challenges described above are affecting the quality of teaching and the results of students in their school from what they are saying.

### **Summary of vocation to serve leadership type**

In the description that follows, the summary of vocation to serve leadership type is presented with respect to the seven criteria that categorized the quality of the field and based on what the school principals are telling. First, the main activity of the vocation to serve leadership type ensures the improvement of teaching and performance of students. In the same light, this leadership type understands teaching as ensuring creativity and quality orientation towards students' success. Regarding the relationship and communication by the school leader, attention is paid on teacher professionalism and students' success while the inner drive for quality characterizes the self-understanding of faith. The role of the church in vocation to serve leadership type understanding focuses on teacher professional development while the role of the society is connected to teaching improvement and students' competence development. The challenges faced by this leadership type comprise of dealing with routine curriculum imposed by the state and how to improve teaching with inadequate trained teachers and limited financial resources.

### 4.3.6 Diaconal leadership type

This leadership type as shown by the material of the study, indicates the specific quality of enhancing care and autonomy for individual students. It is inclined towards the happiness of each student as a human being. In the following presentation, the diaconal leadership type is described based on the seven criteria that emerged from the materials of the study.

#### **Criterion1: Main activities of school leader – Ensures care and autonomy of individual students.**

In the framework of main activities, the narrative that highlights the perceptions of diaconal leadership type as revealed by the material of the study, focuses attention on the care for individual students and ensuring their autonomy with responsibility. This understanding comes from interviews which tailor the quality of the field as described below. In the following quotation, Degu (Degu, MAXQDA lines 58-99) is talking about his leadership experience as school principal and during the interview he explains that he leads by offering space and freedom of expression to students. He says:

“... yaa, you know with our school, the one thing which is about the Protestant ethos is the issue of free enterprise, the issue of free thinking, the issue of democracy. That is the Protestant ethos for which we uphold. So in other words, what we do in our school is to make sure that we allow our students to be very open. To be able to talk to their teachers, to be able to complain if they are not satisfied. Look, I can give you an example in this school. What we do here is, when children go to the refectory, if they are not satisfied with their food [...] they already say, look we are not happy with this particular meal. This particular meal was not enough or if they are not happy with teaching, or with a teacher, they already know how to go about it and freely express their worries for which we listen. They lay their complains to us. So of course, if our students have not been brought up in a Protestant way, they would not take responsibility to ensure and get what is good for themselves [...] so, you know, that is what I know for my school and also for schools that are truly protestant. We promote liberty, promote democracy, promote the fact that children should be able to express themselves, freedom of expression. It is a very major thing in our school. And the issue of responsibility is also taken to be very important as far as our school is concerned [...] also responsibility is at the level of the students’ government. They are the ones who elect their leaders. In our school, if you dare appoint a school leader, unless you explain and agree with

them before hand, they will not accept it. Yes, they take that responsibility." (Degu, MAXQDA lines 58-99).

Degu in the citation above in addition to telling how he ensures the autonomy of students, also explains that he listens to them and ensures students' responsibility. Chickaree (MAXQDA lines 108 - 116) subscribes to this case by the school leader expressing her school leading understanding on ensuring autonomy not only for students but also for teachers. From this context she says:

"At any moment that a student comes with a problem I must understand and listen. I do not block him or her aside because he may have something to tell me that if I do not listen it may lead to other crises. Even to the teachers, the principal that I am is not all knowing or all doing. I do not know everything and I cannot do everything. When the teachers are there in the meeting, I allow them to speak out. I give them the latitude to speak out so that at the end I get where the problem lies I will solve the problem in an amicable way. At any given moment my colleagues are there, I must listen to them and know what there are about to do and what they are about to tell me for the benefit of the school." (Chickaree, MAXQDA lines 108-116).

Besides the focus on autonomy as described above in quotations from Degu, (MAXQDA lines 58-99) and Chickaree (MAXQDA lines 108-116), another interview from (Giraffe MAXQDA lines 179 – 196) adds the dimension of care in the main activity of school leading. Giraffe in the following quotation explains how she cares for students to ensure that they are alright in their dormitories during the night. She says:

"... as principal, in the night, I go to dormitories and check to be sure that all the students are in school. You know [...] we are in a boarding school [...] alright, at the same time during the night period, when they are sleeping, we get into their dormitories and do some checks. Normally it is the role of the discipline master of the school. The Vice Principal and I join. Alright, so that is what I also do. I do that as I take the position of their parents. And for easy check, we have put name tags on all the beds of all the children in the dormitories [...]. They have name tags on their beds<sup>17</sup> such that when I get into the dormitory at night, I must not necessarily get them up from sleep. I just move from bed to bed and read, check from the names of the children." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 179-196).

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<sup>17</sup> In the Cameroon secondary school context, a student dormitory hall can host about 75 students. As students often get up in the night to go to external toilets not close to

The case as explained by Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 179-196) above is also supported by the interview quotation from Elephant (MAXQDA lines 60-63) who expresses care to ensure the safety and security of vulnerable students. Other interview quotations from Axolotl (MAXQDA lines 200-204), Duck (MAXQDA lines 273-280), Groundhog (MAXQDA lines 313-354), Raccoon, MAXQDA (lines 266-270) and Zebra (MAXQDA lines 126-127) support this case by the leading understanding of the school principal stressing on the autonomy and care of the students.

In the framework of the main activities of the diaconal leadership type, the materials described above, show the specific quality that enforces autonomy, support, responsibility and care for individual students.

### **Criterion 2: Understanding of teaching - Ensure acceptance of students**

The perception of teaching as described by the diaconal leadership type stresses on ensuring students' acceptance. This understanding as described below comes from the interviews which are framing the quality of the field. In the following quotation, Groundhog is talking about his leadership experience as a school principal and explains during the interview, his focus on ensuring hope and happiness in students. From this background, he says:

"And there are a lot of students that we have recovered. The very ones we thought were rejected. A parent had called me requesting to enroll the child in school [...] he told me I am not going to hide from you. This child, he takes drugs, he does this, he does that. Uh, and he tells me, the child is an orphan. I am his uncle [...] if I said I was afraid to enroll this child, we would already misjudge the child we do not even know [...] I told him, let the child come to my school [...] He brought the child to me before school started [...] once in a while, I invite the child from time to time, we talk, I listen and encourage him [...] In the end, he, he passed his secondary school end of course exam [...]. He enrolled into the high school section of my school. I call his aunt with whom he was living [...] how does he behave? She tells me the child has changed. I say glory be to God. We have not done anything extra. We only accepted him as he was and from time to time we gave him encouragement and so on and so forth and the child is continuing on. So, uh,

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the dormitory halls, dormitory matrons (for girls' dormitory) and dormitory patrons (for the boys' dormitory) always do checks in the night to assure care and security. This is also deemed necessary by both students and parents as there is insecurity in the context.

right now he is happy and his family is very proud [...] so these are so many good testimonies that give us peace of heart. And, which push us to say [...] our way of seeing things changes so that it can have a positive impact on children's lives [...] we still believe there are weak children who need support. But weak people that we can transform." (Groundhog, MAXQDA lines 313-354).

In the quotation above, Groundhog further explains that he ensures acceptance by focusing on students in difficult circumstances. In another interview from Donkey (MAXQDA lines 499-504) that aligns to the same case, the school principal talks about his experiences and says how he shows empathy to individual students in sad moments. From this position he says:

"... for example students who have lost their father, a member of the family. The teachers and the chaplain find time to go and pray with the individual and the bereaved family. Thus, for example, most recently, there is the father of one child who died. There is also one student further away from here. We went there, sang, prayed, encouraged them and we gave them something symbolic. That is how we live. Good. We try to be as close as possible to the individual families." (Donkey, MAXQDA lines 499-504).

While the material above from Groundhog (MAXQDA lines 313-354) and Donkey (MAXQDA lines 499 - 504) is telling how the school leader ensures the recognition of students, another material from Fish (MAXQDA lines 169-176) adds to this situation by ensuring that teachers teach in a conducive environment. Fish in the following quotation says:

"So we do not need to be too severe on principles, but we put mechanisms that make teachers to do their job naturally with joy without having to be blamed for example. And when they have support they need and they are not blamed, there [...] is no animosity in their reactions [...] we give teachers and staff the rights to their work and we make them to teach in a conducive atmosphere." (Fish, MAXQDA lines 169-176).

In the following quotation, Lemmings (MAXQDA lines 86-100) talks about his experiences as a school leader and during the interview, he explains how he ensures that students who are rejected or dismissed from other schools are enrolled in his school. From this position he says:

"looking at the level of students we have here who have been rejected from other schools, we just have to bring them and that is why we equally practice inclusive education. We bring children that are being dismissed from other schools, we

support and teach them and we see them succeeding That is why most often when they are dismissed, they are looking for admission to come to my school [...], they know if they come here they are going to pass. I do not really want to blow my own trumpet, but that is the general view of it. To add to this, our school took internally displaced students from the crisis part of Cameroon. We took in many this year. Yes, so you can look at it at the level of this part of the country, we are the only private institution that has taken these displaced students [...] That makes a difference between our school and other private schools here." (Lemmings, MAXQDA lines 86-100)

Lemmings in the quotation above also emphasizes on acceptance of students and supporting them in their learning based on what he is saying.

Other materials from Groundhog (MAXQDA lines 54-62), Duck (MAXQDA lines 273-280) and Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 583-590) subscribe to the case by ensuring acceptance of learners through teaching and learning support. This is based on what the principals are telling and tilting attention more to children who are academically weak or are in difficult situations.

### **Criterion 3: Relationship and communication by school leader - Enhances individuality of teachers and students with focus on love and social justice.**

Regarding the relationship and communication by the diaconal leadership type, the material of the study points to perceptions that are enhancing the self-identity of students and teachers as well as showing compassion and inclusion. This understanding comes from the interviews which frame the quality of the field. In the following quotation, Raccoon (MAXQDA lines 266-270) talks about his experiences as a school leader and during the interview, he explains how he ensures the admission of students from all backgrounds. From this position he says:

"we take all the students who register here. They know nothing, we teach them to do something. So for me in my head, and I would always say it is like that. First, we work for that, because if we choose the best, then, we ask ourselves whether there is a school for the weak students? The school must give the same chances to everyone." (Ram, MAXQDA lines 266-270).

From the description above, Raccoon argues from what he is telling that school is not only meant best students but more importantly for the weak

ones. In a similar way, the interview from Zebra (MAXQDA lines 288-292) supports this case by the principal expressing that his school offers of free revision classes for students with poor academic level. Zebra in this connection says:

"So we have initiated free revision classes every Saturday. Every Saturday, revision classes. And for the students who do not have a good level, we also offer additional refresher courses. So that is it, pedagogically speaking, to raise the level a little, and success is what we are working towards. That is it, it is like that."  
(Zebra, MAXQDA lines 288-292).

Based on the experience of Zebra from what he is saying in the quotation above, he ensures additional support to weak students as a measure of getting them succeed. Zebra's perception from what he says is linked to enhancing teaching and better learning and goes beyond to consider equity and inclusive possibilities in learning. Other interviews from Fish (MAXQDA lines 106-113), Rabbit, (MAXQDA lines 83-89), Raccoon (MAXQDA lines 266-270) and Bison (MAXQDA lines 360-364) support this situation by the school principals telling how they ensure love and inclusion for teachers and students.

The elucidation of the materials above on the relationship and communication by diaconal leadership type from what the principals are telling depicts the specific quality in two perspectives. On the one hand, the expression of empathy for students is enforced by school leaders. On the other hand, another quality strengthens inclusion and the respect of difference and individuality of teachers and students emerges based on what the principals are saying about their leadership experience.

#### **Criterion 4: Self-understanding of faith – seeing everyone as an accepted individual**

As far as the self-understanding of faith by the diaconal type is concerned, the description from the materials of the study puts every an accepted individual regardless of performance and background. This understanding is portrayed by the interviews which shape the quality of the field in the descriptions that follow. Giraffe in the following quotation (MAXQDA lines 270-276) while talking about her leading experiences, emphasizes on

the acceptance recognition of differences amongst individual teachers. Based on this context she says:

"... yes, and I also have in mind that people are different, have different competences, different talents in different areas, so I try to identify the talents of my colleagues and know where best to fit each person. Yes, where to place each of them, where to position each of them, the task to give to each of them. So I accept all of them and maximize the opportunities. Through such steps or styles, or yes, at the end of the day we achieve more, we achieve much more. Now, mmm, like I said, that is at the level of the teachers." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 270-276).

Giraffe in the quotation above explains that she enhances individuality and assign tasks to teachers based on their individual skills and abilities. Another interview from Horse (MAXQDA lines 99 - 101) adds to the situation by the school principal ensuring tolerance to individual students linked to their religious beliefs. Horse says:

"Here in particular, we are [...] in a Muslim-Christian zone and all of that matters to us. A lot of Muslim children are here in school and you cannot tell a Muslim girl to undo her hair. They will feel that you have directly attacked Islam, so we understand, respect and accept them in that way. That is what makes the difference for our school." (Horse, MAXQDA lines 99-101).

In the quotation above, Horse expresses respect to the individuality of the students from what he says. In another interview from Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 35-39) that supports this case, the school leader explains how his school restructures the content to facilitate acquisition of practical skills by students with literacy difficulties. Rabbit explains:

"Among the students who come to our technical center, some have difficulties because they abandoned school some time ago. Their literacy level is very low, so as a result if you spend much time on theory, they practically understand nothing and find difficulties. We give support and chance to these youths, focusing on practice so that they can fit in the society." (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 35-39).

From what Rabbit explains in the citation above, different content focus and different levels of emphasis is attributed to teaching different groups of students based on their individuality. In a similar way, the interview citation from Badger (MAXQDA lines 180-182) also supports this situation with the stress on respecting all individual students as a sign that

everyone is a child of God. Talking about his leadership experiences, Badger says:

“It is true that we welcome everyone here, and we respect each one. That is, it. It is the respect of Christ [...] this helps us to equally have everyone as a child of God, in the name of God.” (Badger, MAXQDA lines 180-182).

Other interview citations from Cat (MAXQDA lines 220-226), Groundhog (MAXQDA lines 56 - 60), Raccoon (MAXQDA lines 266-270) and Fish (MAXQDA lines 106-113) subscribe to the case with principals expressing how individual students and teachers are accepted.

The description above on self-understanding of faith by diaconal leadership type shows from what the principals are telling the specific quality that makes visible the individuality of a person just for whom they are as human beings.

### **Criterion 5: Role of the church - Ensure tolerance to individual freedom of worship and prayer**

With respect to the role of the church, the perception by the diaconal leadership type as shown from the material of the study, ensures tolerance to individual freedom of worship and prayer. This understanding comes from the interviews that are shaping the quality of the field. Axolotl while talking about her experiences as school leader in an interview, explains in the following quotation that her school ensures liberty of worship to students. She says:

“... the difference is that we do not force our students, because they are individuals that they also pray to God like us. It is the difference. Everyone is free. If you are a Muslim, if you want to come to worship with Protestants, if your parents allow you, you come. But elsewhere in other denominational colleges it is obligatory. Here is the difference, because we respect the religions of others. But we train children much more for the future life and for their spiritual life. Because there is first of all their spiritual life and their responsible life in the society. That is it. When a child leaves here, he or she knows it and on top of that he knows some ethics, morality, morality [...] this freedom I can still tell you [...] when other students go to pray in church [...] those who are not Protestants, who do not want to go, they stay. As we would not force a Muslim or Catholic who does not want to join but many Catholics go with us. There was a child who was Jehovah's Witness, he said he cannot pray with us and we left him. We do not disturb. We leave him.

The Muslim, there were other Muslims who said, their fathers said that when we do the prayer, they should join, it is the same God, so they now join us. So it's at this level [...] We do not really oblige, even though there are other schools that force students ...." (Axolotl, MAXQDA lines 200-226).

Ant in the quotation above and based on what she is telling is not only accepting students with different religious backgrounds in school but in addition respects their individual decisions about how to worship. Axolotl also argues from her expression that even though she sees students as accepted individuals, she also enhances education that prepares them for responsible life in society. In another interview quotation from Duck (MAXQDA lines 271- 280), the school leader is talking about giving the opportunity for individual students to pray. Duck says:

"... that is about how we try to materialize the fact that we are in a Protestant school [...] students pray by themselves. We believe that all this already allows each child to discover what Luther wanted to teach the men of his time, is that we all have the opportunity to enter into personal relationship with God. This is not the business of a few people but of everyone. And so, in my school the students themselves are called to pray and that is why they learn to do it by themselves and discover that, their creator is directly accessible to each one of them. And as I said earlier, that is another Protestant value we uphold." (Duck, MAXQDA lines 271-280).

Duck in the citation above further emphasizes that every student has direct access to their creator. Other interviews from Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 44-50) and Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 804-813) support the case in a similar way.

The material as described above regarding the role of the church with respect to diaconal leadership type gives the specific quality of individual students' liberty to worship and prayer and accompanied with responsibility.

### **Criterion 6: Role of the society - International networks beyond the church**

With respect to the role of the society, the description by the diaconal leadership type, shows from the material of the study the engagement of networks beyond the limits of the church and national borders. This role is focusing on long lasting learning exchanges. This understanding comes

from the interviews that are structuring the quality of the field. Giraffe while talking about her experiences as school leader in an interview, explains in the following quotation (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 312-320) that she engages her school and students in international projects. She says:

"... as I said, we are part of an international school project [...]. Our students took part active part and their contributions of what they think about their community and the society at large to make the situation better received recognition and made the students proud of their work [...] We have won prizes in such events and celebrate these achievements with our students [...] I was really happy because right down to the junior classes, the form one children, they know that they have something to offer to the society, learn from others and we allow them to express their thoughts." (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 312-320).

In the quotation above, Giraffe from what she says sees the participation of her school and students in international networks as an opportunity to show case her school and the documented thoughts of her students on the changes they reflect for society. In her argument on school networking, Giraffe buttresses on the autonomy of students and contribution to society. Another interview from Rabbit (MAXQDA lines 308-318) adds to this situation by Rabbit talking about his networks with international partners to realize capacity building for students in his institutions. Rabbit declares:

"We have a project with international partners [...] to train close to 300 youths [...] the project already started [...]. What attracted them is the clear difference between our centre as opposed to other vocational training centers. To me this is thanks to the testimonies we get from within the country and from abroad. This comes from feedbacks, interviews, the opinions of everyone who comes here based on how we support students to succeed in life skills. We listen to our students, teachers and other people and try to improve. This already makes us different [...] We also have other development projects with other organizations [...] which in addition to training integrates environmental concerns." (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 308-318).

Rabbit in the citation above from what he says connects the success in his networks to his openness to the wider public, his ability and that of staff and students to learn from others to improve on life skill developments for students. Other interview quotations from Bison (MAXQDA lines 243-249) and Duck (MAXQDA lines 392-398) supports this case in a similar

way with the added value from what the school leaders say on helping to network students to the general public.

The materials from the description above on the role of the society in the understanding of the diaconal leadership type points to the specific quality of networks beyond the school, church and national borders for the purpose of long lasting learning. The principals from what they are saying also find networking as a window for empowering their students.

### **Criterion 7: Challenges - The understanding of social function of the school and inadequate finances**

In the framework of challenges, the description that reflects the perception of diaconal leadership type articulates on the understanding of the social function of the school which is not shared by both the church and the state. In addition, the challenge of limited finances to care for teachers and students emerges from the material of the study. These understandings come from interviews which shape the quality of the field as described below. Rabbit during the interview about his school leadership experiences in the following quotation, believes from what his is saying that the church sees the school as a financing department for the church. He says:

"The problems we face are mostly at the level of the role of the church, its services and its different parts. It is only when I discuss with other heads of service that I discover that we have similar problems, whatever their denomination. There is that belief by the church that when they have a department, the department must finance the church. The church thinks that she has created a finance unit and so expects money from that unit whereas I think differently. To me, these services like the school have been created to serve a social need. The church has to support this venture for it to continue to carry out the mission of evangelization. This is because by the quality of our products, the services we render to the public, like when we, build vocational capacities for young people, render quality services to the public such as our car repair services, we give testimonies to the public. People will certainly ask to know who we are, whether it is the church. This is our way of evangelizing. The pastor evangelizes by preaching the word and the other services of the church evangelize by what they do, by their moral ethics especially that they are not only working with people of our denomination. Different people of different faiths come here. When I was appointed, I did not know that the church would

start asking for money because the texts are not always clear about this." (Rabbit, MAXQDA lines 774-789).

In the quotation above, Rabbit from what he is telling thinks that the school has a social service for the public. He further argues that, even though the church sees the school more like a finance unit, the texts on school running do not make this explicit. Another interview from Duck (MAXQDA lines 121-128) supports this situation by the school leader saying how both the church and the state see the school as a financial institution from where to get money. Duck says:

"sometimes we are in conflict with the pastors and the church because we tell them, well here we have no particular support from the church, we operate on the basis of our own resources, that is the school fees from students which is small and yet you make requests to us for money [...] all these requests, we cannot in our own abilities satisfy them as we need to serve students and teachers. This creates tension between us and the churches, the national social insurance, it creates tensions with payment of taxes, it creates tensions with the government delegations in relation to the various contributions that they ask from us in order for them to organize their meetings." (Duck, MAXQDA lines 121-128).

Duck in the quotation above declares that the misunderstanding about the social function of the school creates tension between the school, the church and state. Other interview quotations from Skylark (MAXQDA lines 52-59) and Hippopotamus (MAXQDA lines 186-189) support in a similar way.

In regards to the challenge connected to inadequate resources, the diaconal leadership type reflects on the care for teachers and students based on what they say. In the quotation that follows, Skylark (MAXQDA lines 52-59) talks about the financial challenge to take care of teachers, both those retired and those still active in service. She says:

"Aaa, difficult when a retired staff member or even a staff member who is not yetretired, who still works, who puts himself in front of you and starts to cry [...]. He says to you principal! [...] He tells me, uh, principal, I do not even have a kilo of rice to eat with my children. So it is complicated for a manager that I am, to see a parent and teacher who stands in front of me and tells me he has nothing to eat, it is very sad, it is sad! This is what I face. And I must tell you that this disturbs me and I need to give him a smile yet there is no money [...]." (Skylark, MAXQDA lines 52-59).

While Skylark in the quotation above laments on the poor situation of teachers who are not able to take care of the basic needs for their families, another interview from Giraffe (MAXQDA lines 667-677) aligns to the case with steps to ensure hope in learners. Giraffe explains:

“... that is why when the general strike and crisis in the region went on for some time with schools shut down and the children were not there in school for us to work with them, it was as if I was bereaved. I felt very bad about it. I committed myself with the teachers and gave the students hope. Because we had to move a step sending study materials to their homes even when we did not have a salary. Because it is said that all that begins well, ends well. We started well and we had to end well. Unfortunately, up till the end of the academic year, the children were still with their parents. This time around, we have already started to work with the children. And with the children, they have confidence in us and already know that we are on a good footing and we must get to a good end. And the end has to be a very conspicuous one on good results for students to celebrate. Yes, so that people should know that there are students studying in our school, that there is a good institution there which we can compare with the other renowned schools in Cameroon. Alright, even though we are in the suburbs, with no salaries and in crisis ....” (Giraffe, MAXQDA lines 667-677).

In the quotation above, Giraffe is not only facing the financial challenge but as well facing a crisis situation in her region with schools shut down, yet she works with the staff to send learning materials to children at home from what she says She believes from what she narrates that her commitment together with that of her staff gives hope to the children in spite of the challenges they face. Other interviews from Hippopotamus (MAXQDA lines 173-189), Elephant (MAXQDA lines 430 - 431) and Horse (MAXQDA lines 113-116) support with school leaders telling how inadequate finances limit their provision of care to teachers and students.

From the description above, the challenges faced by diaconal leadership type based on their leading experience depicts two specific qualities. One of the qualities emerging from the materials of the study is the lack of shared understanding between the school leader and the church or state about the social function of the school. While the diaconal school leaders from what they say, see schools as serving the social needs of the public, the church or state on the other hand sees school as the institution from where they can get money. Another quality highlights the challenge

of inadequate financial resources to provide for the needs of teachers and students.

### **Summary of diaconal leadership type**

The summary of the diaconal leadership type is presented following the seven criteria that define the categories of the quality. Care and autonomy of individual students stand out as the focal activities of the diaconal leadership type while the acceptance of students is what shapes teaching understanding. The relationship and communication by this leadership type is enhancing social justice and the individuality of students and teachers. The self-understanding of faith is linked to God's infinite love for every individual immaterial of background and performance. By the understanding of diaconal leadership style, the role of the church is ensuring tolerance and freedom of individuals to worship and prayer while the role of the society is strengthening networks for lifelong learning. The main challenge faced by the diaconal leadership type and based on what they are telling is that the understanding of the social function of the school is not shared by the church and the state.

#### **4.4 Summary of result: Descriptive table of criteria and types**

In this section, the summary of the findings of the study conducted on the topic: Protestant school leaders — a qualitative research about their self-understanding: Case of Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon, is presented. With the research questions that focused on the perceptions of the principals of Protestant secondary schools about their school leadership, 26 interviews with Principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon saturated the survey. Through the abduction process of the coded interview transcripts, the portraits, criteria and types emerged (cf. 3.4.4). Through the process of de-familiarization and distance, portraits of the interviews have been developed (cf. chapter 3.4.4) and described (cf. chapter 4.1). Through the process of working with the coded interviews and portraits in an interwoven field, seven criteria which constitute the categories of the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders emerged (cf. chapter 4.2). By stabilizing the criteria and further

comparing the patterns, then analyzing the similarities, differences, and connections among these categories of qualities while working with the coded interviews, six ideal leadership types which define the qualities of the categories were generated (cf. chapter 4.3). Both the criteria and the ideal types that emerge from the material of the study constitute the results. The seven criteria generated from the study comprise of the main activities of the school leader, understanding of teaching, relationship and communication by the school leaders, self-understanding of faith, the role of the church, the role of the society and challenges. These criteria show what connect the principals together as well as give a structure to the interwoven field, even if the principals have different experiences. On the other hand, the six ideal leadership types that emerged from the data give the qualities of the categories and comprise of: call for superiority leadership (type 1), state-conformational leadership (type 2), ecclesiastical leadership (type 3) community-participatory leadership (type 4), vocation to serve leadership (type 4) and diaconal leadership (type 6). These types are given a detailed description in chapter 4.3 meanwhile in the section below, the specific qualities of each type are summarized.

The call for superiority leadership (type 1) emphasizes on the vocation of school leader based on superiority and is linked to obedience that is built on the beliefs of the school leader about the bible, ensuring moral pressure on teaching and connecting faith to the immediacy of divine action and school subjects with emphasis on punishment (cf. chapter 4.3.1). While the state-conformational leadership (type 2) ensures controlling, punishment and obedience with the strict respect to the state as an institution, focusing on the sublimation of society by the state (cf. chapter 4.3.2), ecclesiastical leadership (type 3) on its part emphasizes on obedience to the church as an institution and ensuring formation (or imposition) of belief (cf. chapter 4.3.3). Community-participatory leadership (type 4) shows the specific quality of social living and cohesion, enhancing collaboration and participation of teachers and students (cf. chapter 4.3.4). On the other hand, the leading understanding depicted by vocation to serve leadership (type 5) is linked to enhancing teaching quality and learners' success (cf. chapter 4.3.5) while diaconal leadership (type 6) has its

richness inclined towards, care, acceptance and autonomy of learners (cf. chapter 4.3.6).

The summary of the findings is presented as a complete abduction table (Table 4) that gives the visibility of criteria and types together with the specific qualities that define the field.

Table 4: Filled abduction table describing the quality of the field: Typology of leadership understanding based on the perceptions of Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon

Types → ↓ Criteria	Type 1: Call for superiority leadership	Type 2: State-conformational leadership	Type 3: Ecclesiastical leadership	Type 4: Community-participatory leadership	Type 5: Vocation to serve leadership	Type 6: Diaconal leadership
Main activities of school leader	Emphasizes on vocation of school leader based on superiority	Ensure obedience to the administration of the state	Ensure obedience to the church as institution	Ensure solidarity and harmony of teachers and students	Ensure quality teaching and learning; better performance of students	Care for individual students and ensure autonomy of students
Understanding of teaching	Ensure moral pressure and link school subjects to faith	Ensure controlling and punishment with the strict respect of state guidelines	Ensure formation (or imposition) of belief	Ensure democracy, peace, justice and participation	Ensure creativity and quality orientation -ensure success in exams	Ensure acceptance of students
Relationship and communication by school leader	Hierarchical, linked with obedience and punishment based on moral guidelines from school leader	Hierarchical with reference to state instructions; Linked with punishment	Hierarchical with focus on loyalty to church institution and regulations	Enhance trust, moral wellbeing, ensuring participation and collaboration in school governance	Focus on students' success and teacher professionalism, delegates responsibilities	Enhance individuality of teachers and students, focuses on social justice and love for individuals
Self-understanding of faith	Linked to the immediacy of divine action	Combines the state and the church	Places the church as an institution at the centre	Linked to solidarity and community feeling	Linked to the inner drive for quality	Linked God's infinite love to every individual (profile the individuality of a person as something wanted by God)
Role of the church	Church serves as a faith-related authority (moral pressure is from the principal)	Focus on school affiliation with negligible role of church in matters of pedagogy and administration	Supervisory function on school and personnel	Enhance Ecumenism and social cohesion	Support professional development of teachers	Ensure tolerance to individual freedom of worship and prayer
Role of the society	Focus on enhancing social feedback and discipline	Focuses on the sublimation of society by the state	Based on strengthening church growth and infrastructural development	Focuses on social living and cohesion	Focus on improvement of teaching and competency development	Engages in networks beyond the church and national borders for lifelong learning exchanges
Challenges	-Inadequate financing of education -Face difficulty in managing different attitudes of teachers	-Inadequate financing of education but maintain relation with the state -Face resistance from students who defy administrative pressure	-Inadequate financing of education - Limited infrastructure and maintenance	-Inadequate financing of education - difficulty to deal with administrative bottlenecks from state and church	-Inadequate financing of education - difficulty to deal with routine curricula from state and Inadequate trained staff	-Inadequate financing of education -problem of lack of shared understanding of social function of the school by the church and state

Source: Primary data, 2020

## **5 Summary of findings and discussion: The potential and conditions for the development of school leadership by grounding in the Protestant profile**

In this chapter, the findings on the study carried out on, Protestant school leaders - a qualitative research about their self-understanding, the case of Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon are discussed. As earlier mentioned (cf. chapter 2), this research topic is new in the context of the Global South and thus necessitated an exploratory and hypothesis-generating study for which the qualitative approach has been used (cf. chapter 3). The data, which comprised of interview transcripts obtained from 26 semi-structured interviews with secondary school principals and attained through saturation was analysed by content analysis (cf. chapter 3). This chapter focuses on connecting the empirical results earlier presented (cf. chapter 4) to the underlying scientific discourses (cf. chapter 2). To do this, the summary of the results is first presented (chapter 5.1) while in the second dimension, the results are discussed in the light of scientific discourses and giving the visibility of the added value that the study brings to science (chapter 5.2).

### **5.1 Summary of findings: The self-understanding of Protestant school leaders in Cameroon**

The summary of the results presented in this section is based on the leadership self-understanding of principals at Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon. As described earlier, these principals function in the Cameroonian educational system shaped by colonial and missionary times (chapter 1). From this background and by exploring the state of research about the Protestant school profile (chapter 2), the research interest of the study has been formulated and seeks to respond to the research question: What are the perceptions of the principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon about their school leadership? This research question is operationalized under three sub-questions as follows: (1) How do Protestant school principals describe their school leadership? (2) What is the understanding of the Protestant school principals about the Protestant school

profile? (3) What are the challenges principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon perceive in their leadership?

To explore the perceptions of Principals about their leadership in Protestant schools, a qualitative approach was used (cf. chapter 3.1). The study was framed as hypothesis and theory-generating, thus theoretical sampling which relies on the production of theoretical perspectives that are from the data itself was used (cf. chapter 3.3). As a consequence of using the theoretical sampling, the sample size of school principals was not pre-determined, but rather arrived at progressively by adding successively new elements of quality until saturation was reached. The perceptions of principals about school leadership was collected using individual narrative semi-structured interviews (cf. chapter 3.2) on a face-to-face setting. This was operationalized by an interview stimulation guide of open-ended questions that were formulated in connection to the research questions. Through these stimulations, the thoughts, perceptions and specific experiences of principals were elicited. Saturation was attained with 26 interviews from a sample of 26 principals. The primary data which comprised of interview audios was transcribed and anonymized (cf. chapter 3.4.2). In the next step the anonymized transcripts were analysed by content analysis (cf. chapter 3.4.3). The process of data collection and analysis followed the grounded theory on constructing abstract theoretical explanations from the data itself. Content analysis comprised of coding and inter-coding using a software program, MAXQDA. The coding process engaged iterative strategies of going back and forth in a simultaneous and continuous deductive/inductive process. The coded data was immersed into an abduction process (cf. chapter 3.4.4) which was carried out in three steps. In the first step and during the process of de-familiarization and distance, portraits were developed in order to understand the qualities of leadership from what the school principals are telling about their leadership experiences (cf. chapter 4.1). Subsequently, seven criteria which constitute categories of the self-understanding of Protestant school leaders emerged from the interwoven field by comparing all the coded interviews and working with the portraits (cf. chapter 4.2). When the criteria

were stabilized, and while working with them in an intuitive way, six qualities of the categories which constitute the ideal types of self-understanding of Protestant school leadership emerged as the final step of abduction (cf. chapter 4.3).

In this section, the summary of the findings is presented and is differentiated into two parts. First, the main findings about leadership experiences of secondary school principals of Protestant schools in Cameroon are described (chapter 5.1.1). This is followed by the answer of the research questions and conclusion (chapter 5.1.2)

### **5.1.1 Main findings**

In this part, the main findings from the qualitative study on the self-understanding of protestant school leaders in Cameroon are summarized with the reflections drawn from description of results earlier presented (chapter 4). Eight main findings are distinguished. In the first place, principals of Protestant secondary schools have own understandings of school leading. Then, six ideal leadership types emerge even if all are not contributing to quality. The materials from these ideal leadership types further show that there are fundamentalist leaders who have an influence in the school, focusing on normative aspects of discipline; there are school leaders who are related to democratic values, promoting democracy in a non-democratic environment; and there are others working in a diaconal way, promoting social justice. As one of the results, different styles of faith are more important than the affiliation to specific type of denomination but rather linked with different styles of leadership. On the one hand, the reflection of the school leaders by their perceptions is contributing to education as a public good, giving education to the socially and economically disadvantaged learners while on the other hand there is little awareness of belonging to the church as a global institution. The difficulties of funding education in protestant secondary schools raises a challenge for leadership. In these following paragraphs, the main findings are elaborated.

### **Principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon have individual ideas of school leading.**

As emerged from the interviews conducted, all the 26 principals talking about their experiences as school leaders showed the possession of individual ideas about how they lead the school. They were all able to explain their daily activities, their leading responsibilities, what makes their schools different as well as the challenges they face, as detailed in the portraits (cf. chapter 4.1). From this repertoire of the ideas of principals regarding school leading, categories of qualities that characterize the field about self-understanding about school leadership were generated (cf. chapter 4.2). These categories which comprise of the main activities of school leaders, teaching understanding, relationship and communication, their self-understanding of faith, perceptions about the role of the church and that of society constituted the basis to come out with different qualities. However, these ideas do not seem to have a shared reference point. This therefore shows that the ideas are emerged by experience and not by formal training.

### **Six ideal leadership types emerge and not all are not contributing to quality education**

From this research, six ideal leadership types have emerged regarding the self-understanding principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon have about school leadership (cf. chapter 4.3). These ideal leadership types that were generated through the process of abduction (cf. chapter 3.4.4) show an immense heterogeneity about the qualities of leading understanding. Ideal type 1 which is about call for superiority leadership emphasizes on the vocation of school leader based on superiority and is linked to on obedience and immediacy of divine action as guided by the beliefs of the school leader about the bible (sub chapter 4.3.1). While Type 2 which is state-conformational leadership focuses on the sublimation of society by the state, emphasizing on controlling, punishment and obedience with the strict respect to the state as an institution (sub chapter 4.3.2), type 3 which is ecclesiastical leadership emphasizes on obedience to the church as an institution and ensuring formation of belief (sub chapter

4.3.3). Type 4 relates to community-participatory leadership and shows the specific quality of enhancing social living and cohesion alongside the collaboration and participation of teachers and students ((sub chapter 4.3.4). Type 5 which is about vocation to serve leadership, focuses on teaching and learners' success (sub chapter 4.3.5) while type 6 is diaconal leadership and is inclined towards, care, acceptance and autonomy of learners (sub chapter 4.3.6). As revealed by the description above, not all the six ideal types are contributing to quality.

By deepening on how the ideal types of the self-understanding of Protestant school leadership as explained above look like, the six types can be further regrouped into two categories comprising of authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion and quality-driven leadership on reflected theology (cf. table 5). The authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion groups three ideal leadership types comprising of call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types. These three ideal leadership types all show obedience and religious understanding based on experience meanwhile what differentiates them is what each one of them is obeying to. While the call to superiority type have fundamental perceptions ensuring obedience to what the school leader says about the bible, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types ensure obedience to the state and church as institutions respectively. The other three ideal leadership types made up of community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types are quality driven on reflected theology by focusing on students learning, collaboration and autonomy respectively.

Table 5: Grouping of the six ideal leadership types based on further reflection

Authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion			Quality-driven leadership on reflected theology		
Type 1: Call for superiority leadership	Type 2: State-conformational leadership	Type 3: Ecclesiastical leadership	Type 4: Community-participatory leadership	Type 5: Vocation to serve leadership	Type 6: Diaconal leadership

Source: from author's current study

The materials linked to the six ideal types of leadership as earlier (cf. chapter 4.3) together with the descriptions of the portraits (4.1) further reveal other interesting results. These are connected to fundamentalist leading and normative aspects of discipline, school leading and the promotion of democratic values, and diaconal leading and social justice and described in the net section.

### **There are fundamentalist leaders who have an influence in the school, focusing on normative aspects of discipline**

The findings from the study have not only generated the fundamentalist leading understanding (cf. chapter 4.3.1) but have also shown the influential role of these leaders and their stress on normative aspects of discipline. The emphasis on the call on superiority placed on the leader linked to the immedciacy of divine action and on the obedience to the beliefs of the school leader characterize fundamentalist leading as revealed by the study. These fundamentalist leaders pay attention to normative dimensions of beliefs, attitudes and values on the basis of their own experiences and focusing on punishment (cf. chapters 4.3.1 & 4.3.2). Above all, their pressure on students and teachers is on their individual belief about what they think the bible says. From what the fundamentalist leaders are telling about their experiences, different sanctions with moral pressure from the school leader are meted on students ranging from psychological, through physical violence to exclusion from school. The reflection on the individual needs of students and the learning environment are not visible in what the fundamentalist leaders are saying.

**There are school leaders who are related to democratic values, promoting democracy in a non-democratic environment**

As earlier mentioned in the introduction (cf. chapter 1), the school situation in Cameroon operates in a state system that is described as autocratic and corrupt. In spite of this non-democratic context, the results show that there are school principals connected with the promotion of democratic values. Based on what these principals are telling from their experiences, they enhance enabling and transparent spaces for participation and collaboration (cf. chapter 4.3.4). These school leaders express that the democratic attribute of their leading ensures trust, moral wellbeing and participation of students and teachers in school governance. From their expression, they ensure the values of social living, cohesion and solidarity and see their schools as cohesive units in a socially fragmented state.

**There are school leaders working in a diaconal way, promoting social justice and contributing to education as a public good**

The insights from the introduction (cf. chapter 1.2.2) raised concerns about school leadership as regards their role in widening inequality gaps or reinforcing access. The study gives interesting results of school leaders in Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon, working in a diaconal way (sub chapter 4.3.6). By their diaconal leading perception, these school leaders are promoting social justice based on what they are saying from their leading experiences. They ensure care, acceptance and autonomy of individual students and not based on performance or background. These school leaders have expressed that they pay more attention to poor and weak students as well as show empathy and give support to students with different forms of challenges. These acts are promoting social justice and above all, the reflections of the school leaders are contributing to education as a public good. This perception is about giving education to the socially and economically disadvantaged learners even if the state of Cameroon does not seem to fulfil its obligation on financing faith-based schools as earlier analysed (cf. chapter 1.2.1 and 4.3). Conversely, these principals working in a diaconal way have the challenge that both the

church and the state does not have a shared understanding about the social function of the school (cf. chapter 4.3.6).

**Different styles of faith are more important than the affiliation to specific type of denomination but rather linked with different styles of leadership**

As already mentioned in the introduction (cf. chapter 1.2.2), the different religious denominations and movements in Cameroon enhance different forms of faith. On the other hand, this study reveals an important finding that as far as school leadership in Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon is concerned, the different styles of faith are more connected to the leadership styles (cf. chapter 4.3). Therefore, coming from the material of the study, the style of faith is more important than the affiliation to specific type of denomination to which the school belongs. From the findings, six styles of self-understanding of faith are distinguished and align to the six ideal leadership styles generated from the material of the study. While the call for superiority leadership type links faith to the immediacy of divine action based on individual word interpretation of the bible by the school leader, state conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types place the state and church as institution at the centre respectively. On the other hand, faith perception by the community-participatory leadership type is linked to solidary and community feeling while the inner drive for education quality improvement is the faith focus for the vocation to serve leadership type. As far as the diaconal leadership type is concerned, faith understanding emphasizes on the infinite love and acceptance for every individual.

**The action of school principals is limited to institutional and national frames: There is little awareness of belonging to the church as a global institution**

Even though the debate regarding the role of the church and school leadership on questions connected to the wider global society is mentioned in the introduction (cf. chapter 1.2.2), the consciousness from the understanding of school leaders on this aspect is less visible. The results of the study show Five out of the six ideal leadership types are national focus

comprising of call to superiority, state-conformational, ecclesiastical, community-participatory and vocation to service while diaconal leadership type shows perceptions beyond national limits. School principals by their leading experiences focus on the sublimation of society by the state (cf. chapter 4.3.2). Also, principals limit themselves to the formalization of the traditions of individual church bureaucracies and traditions (cf. chapter 4.3.3). Further more, the understanding of the social function of the school as well as enhancing networks for exchanges and learning purposes is not shared by both the church and the state (cf. chapter 4.3.6). These results therefore show that the awareness of belonging to a church as a global institution is less visible.

### **Difficulties of financing education in Protestant schools affects school leadership**

On the basis of the previous description about the non-financing of faith-based schools in Cameroon by the state (cf. chapter 1.2.1), results of the study show that the financing of these schools mainly depend on tuition fee paid by students. Following what the school leaders are saying, the tuition fee is low fee for which parents still find difficulties to pay rendering difficulties in running the school and paying teachers' salaries (cf. chapter 4.3). How this difficulty affect school leadership is understood differently by the different leadership types. The call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types mainly perceive that the accrued unpaid teachers' salaries weakens their authoritarian grip over the teachers (cf. chapters 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). On the other hand, the community participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types link the effect of the difficult financial situation to sustaining teacher professional development and retention, and care for students (cf. chapters 4.3.4, 4.3.5 and 4.3.6). In spite of the difficult situation, the latter group of the three ideal leadership types still find moral possibilities by what they are telling to sustain teaching and harmony in teachers as well as source for financial resources through projects to support students learning.

The descriptions above capture main findings of the study in a broad view. As the study was guided by the research focus on the self-understanding of school principals about school leadership in Protestant schools, the section that follows offer the the answers to the research questions.

### **5.1.2 Answer of the research questions and conclusion**

In this section, the answer of the research question is summarized. As earlier mentioned (cf. chapter 1.3) this study through the main research question sought to find out the perceptions of the principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon about their school leadership. This research question is operationalized under three sub-questions as follows: (1) How do Protestant school principals describe their school leadership? (2) What is the understanding of the Protestant school principals about the Protestant school profile? (3) What are the challenges principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon perceive in their leadership? Based on the findings already presented (cf. chapter 5.1.1), the answers to the sub-research questions are presented.

#### **How do Protestant school principals describe their school leadership?**

Principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon have individual ideas of school leading and described under six ideal leadership types that emerged from the study of which not all are contributing to quality education (cf. chapter 4.3).

On the one hand, the call for superiority leadership (ideal type 1) understands school leadership as a vocation that gives superiority to the leader, guided by obedience and based on beliefs of the school leader about the bible. The state-conformational leadership (ideal type 2) ecclesiastical leadership (ideal type 3) describe leadership as obedience to the state administration and to the church as institutions respectively. On the other hand, community-participatory leadership (ideal type 4) relates solidarity and harmonious living for teachers and students while vocation to serve leadership (ideal type 5) focuses on teaching and learners' success.

Subsequently, diaconal leadership (ideal type 6) emphasizes on care, acceptance and autonomy of learners.

While the call for superiority leadership type, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types understand leadership as authoritarian and experience-based religion, the other three ideal leadership types made up of community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal describe leadership as quality driven on reflected theology.

### **What is the understanding of the Protestant school principals about the Protestant school profile?**

The principals have different experiences of how they understand the Protestant school profile based on each ideal leadership type (cf. chapter 4.4). These understandings are connected by the criteria that emerged from the study in relation to the Protestant profile even if the principals have different experiences. These five criteria shape the Protestant profile understanding and are comprised of understanding teaching, relationship and communication, self-understanding of faith, the role of the church and the role of society (cf. chapter 4.2). Each ideal leadership type understands each aspect of the protestant school profile differently as summarized (cf. table 4) and analyzed below.

#### **Teaching understanding**

With respect to teaching understanding, call to serve superiority leadership type ensures moral pressure and links schools subjects to faith, while state conformational leadership type focuses on controlling, punishishment and obedience in strict respect of state guidelines. Meanwhile Ecclesiastical leadership type focuses on the formation of belief. While community-participatory leadership understand teaching by ensuring democracy, peace, and participation, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types focus on learners' success and acceptance respectively.

### **Relationship and communication understanding**

As far as relationship and communication understanding are concerned, call to superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastic leadership types are perceived as hierarchical, meanwhile what differentiates the three is obedience and punishment linked to the moral guidelines from the leader, ensuring punishment with reference to state instructions and ensuring loyalty to church as institution respectively. On the part of communication-participatory leadership types, relationship and communication focuses on trust and the moral wellbeing while vocation to serve and diaconal respectively ensure delegating responsibilities towards learners' success and focusing on social justice.

### **Self-understanding of faith**

While the self-understanding of faith by the call to superiority leadership type is linked to the immediacy of divine action, the state-conformational combines the state and the church. For ecclesiastical leadership type, the self-understanding of faith is placing the church as an institution at the centre. The self-understanding of faith for community-participatory leadership type centres on solidarity while for vocation to serve leadership type is linked to the inner drive for quality and diaconal leadership is linked to God's infinite love to every individual.

### **Understanding the role of the church**

Considering the understanding of the role of the church, call to superiority leadership type perceives the church as faith-related authority while the state-conformational focuses the role of the church on the affiliation of the school. The role of the church is understood for ecclesiastical leadership as ensuring supervisory function for both the school and personnel. For community-participatory leadership style, the church enhances ecumenism and social cohesion while vocation to serve leadership type perceives the role of the church as ensuring the professional development of teachers. The role of the church is understood by diaconal leadership style as ensuring tolerance to individual freedom of worship and prayer.

### **Understanding the role of society**

The results of the study show that there is little awareness of belonging to a church as a global institution. Five of the six ideal leadership types are national focus comprising of call to superiority, state-conformational, ecclesiastical and community-participatory and vocation to service while diaconal leadership types shows perceptions beyond national limits. School principals by their leading experiences focus on the sublimation of society by the state and strengthening ties within the national configurations of the state from the understanding of state-conformational leadership type. On the other hand, call to superiority leadership type limits the perception to enhancing social feedback and discipline while the ecclesiastical leadership focuses on church growth within the church and national limits, community-participatory leadership type connects to social living and cohesion within the school and local communities, while vocation to serve leadership type is concerned with competency development for learners. On the other hand, the diaconal leadership type engages networks beyond the church and national limits, engaging in international encounters as the perception for the role of the society.

That notwithstanding, the understanding of the principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon about the Protestant school profile does not have a shared reference point. This rather reveals that the ideas are emerged by experience and not by formal training.

### **What are the challenges principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon perceive in their leadership?**

The challenge as perceived by school leaders in the study is the constraint linked to the financing of education (cf. chapter 4.3 and 4.4). School principals from what they are telling indicate that the financing of the schools mainly depend on low fee paid by the parents or guardians of students who find difficulties to accomplish the payments. How this difficulty affect school leadership is understood differently by the different ideal leadership types that emerged in the study. While the call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types mainly perceive that the accrued unpaid teachers' salaries weakens their authoritarian grip

over the teachers, the community participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types link the difficulty of financing education to sustaining teacher professional development and retention as well as the care for students. In spite of the difficult situation of financing education, the state-conformational leadership type keeps the link with the state even when the state does not take its responsibility to finance.

## **Conclusion**

As presented above, the responses to the research question of the study concerned with the perception of principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon about their school leadership are summarized and show three aspects. First, there is varied understanding of school principals in Cameroon about their leadership in protestand schools and this understanding is shaped by six ideal leadership types that emerged from the study. Also, not all the ideal leadership types are enhancing quality education. Secondly, concerning the Protestant school profile understanding, the six ideal leadership types understand differently with the understanding not having a shared reference point but mainly based on their experiences, with little awareness of belonging to a church as a global institution. Subsequently, as far as challenges are concerned, the constraint in financing education is perceived as a common difficulty by all the six ideal leadership types. In the next section, these results are discussed in the light of literature.

## **5.2 Discussion of results**

In the following section, the empirical findings of this study earlier presented (cf. chapter 4) and summarized (cf. chapter 5.1) are analysed for further theory development by linking with the theoretical background of the study (cf. chapter 2). Specifically, a contribution to research on the Protestant ethos of schools and principals' self-understanding of their leadership function is expanciated. The argumentations thereof build on theories of school leadership and Protestant theology in the light of school quality and society development. The discussion at hand is organized in five parts as follows: In the first dimension, based on the findings of the

study which show that different styles of faith are linked with different leadership types, school leadership in the light of Protestant theology is discussed (cf. chapter 5.2.1). This is followed by the argumentation of theological leadership perceptions of school principals and the implications for educational quality (cf. chapter 5.2.2). As the findings from the study show that five out of the six ideal leadership types by their leading experiences focus on strengthening ties within the national configurations, having no awareness about the church as a global institution, leadership in protestant schools and the development of the global and glocal society is analysed (cf. chapter 5.2.3). Given the perception of leadership challenge due to the non-financing of faith-based schools by the state, state marginalization of faith-based school sector as a challenge for school leadership in the developing context is discussed (cf. chapter 5.2.4). This section ends with the conclusion that summarizes the discussion (cf. chapter 5.2.5)

### **5.2.1 School leadership in the light of the Protestant theology in a post-colonial context**

The findings of this study as summarized above (cf. chapter 5.1) reveal that different styles of faith understanding by school principals in Cameroon are more important than the type of denomination to which the school belongs but are rather linked with different styles of leadership. This gets the pertinence of inserting the narratives of the school principals in the discourses linked to the protestant theology and school leadership quality as the research was conducted in Protestant schools. Two broad dimensions of faith understanding comprising of quality driven leadership on reflected theology and authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion and how they each shape the discourses of the Protestant school profile from the theological underpinning are respectively analysed.

#### **Quality driven leadership and implications for the Protestant theology**

The findings of the study reveal three ideal leadership types comprising of community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership

types that are quality driven on reflected theology. The community-participatory leadership shows the specific quality of enhancing collaboration and participation of teachers and students while vocation to serve leading understanding is linked to enhancing teaching quality and learners' success. On the other hand, diaconal leadership focuses on care, acceptance and autonomy of learners.

The three ideal leadership types described above are oriented in Christian theology that emphasizes on reasoned discourse concerning God and considers the systematic reflection of the faith of an individual (Swain, 2020, p. 1-2; EKD; 2017, p. 10-13). Moreover, the theological emphasis of the Protestant school profile is anchored both in the reformed and public theology. While reformed theology considers the holy scriptures as the central source and norm, conceptualized in the solas that are shaping reformers conviction about Christian teachings (Swain, 2020, p. 2; Bender, 2019; p. 109, Luther, 2012, 15-30; Canale, 2012, p. 179-195; Soulen, 2004, p. 251), the argument for public theology holds that theology must publicly maintain the universal concern of God's kingdom. The emphasis on the public character is based on the premise that there is no Christian identity without public relevance and no public relevance without the theology of Christian identity (Kim, 2013, p. 7; Moltmann, 1999, p. 5). The three types of leadership perceptions align with afore-mentioned arguments about reflected theology in spite of the fact that the school leaders are from the context of study in Cameroon where in education is rooted in colonial and missionary past (Njobati, 2021, p. 2-4; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 1- 4; Ndille, 2018, p. 91-93) and operates in a fragile state system that is very hierarchical, corrupt and discriminates against faith-based schools (Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p. 2; Ngalim, 2017, p. 841; Lange, 2014, p. 590; Konings & Nyamnjuh, 2003, p. 133). No doubt, Miedema (2016, p. 10) argues that theological understanding of the profile of Protestant schools in a continuing reformation process within a rapidly changing secular world is complex as protestant schools function in context in regards to geographical locations and the state systems. The argumentations of the ideal leadership types on reflected theology can be pulled from

various angles of literature that analyses their specific qualities from theoretical settings. In the following paragraph, I first analyse the theological basis of community-participatory leadership understanding.

Leadership experiences by community-participatory leadership type in Cameroon emphasizes on collaboration and participation of teachers, yet the richness that this brings to the building of socio-emotional resilience which is an additional theological aspect (Barber et al, 2020, p. 3) is not perceived. However, as participation is emphasized for all teachers, the dimension of public theology that seeks to support Christian values for the common good to all human beings without preference is upheld (Kim, 2013, p. 16). This is suggested to shape the broader theological understanding of autonomy that is upheld in the Protestant school profile wherein freedom is backed by the responsibility for self and for others (Barber et al., 2020, p. 5; Sandler-Koschel, 2016, p. 41; Simojoki, 2016, p. 189). Like community-participatory leadership type, vocation to serve leadership type is also quality-driven and its inclination in theological discourses is analysed.

The theological perspective of the Protestant school profile from the understanding of sola scriptura by reformers like Luther, Melanchthon and Calvin contend that the church's authority is derived from scripture which alone points to the saving grace of Jesus Christ (Anderson, 2005, p. 80-81). By this, embarking on the translation of the bible and building reading competences for the wider public to gain insights of the bible directly by self is argued to usher the development of self-concept, autonomy, reading competences and critical minds and thus a catalyst for quality teaching (Griffis, 2017, p. 1-3; EKD, 2015, p. 18). It is on this pillar that vocation to serve leadership understanding that is linked to enhancing teaching quality and learners' competences hinges. The Protestant theological argumentation, does not only show the understanding that individuals have equal opportunities and autonomy to come before God, but also suggests open access and support for building competences in education (Painter, 1889, p. 56-59). On the other hand, vocation to serve perception of school leading is striving in a context of Cameroon that is characterized by low-levels of educational quality in a centralized

and incomprehensive structure (Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187; Lauwerier & Akkari, 2015, p. 1-2, UNESCO, 2015, p. 1). In spite of the precarious schooling context in Cameroon, vocation to serve leadership perception inserts into the discourse on school leadership understanding that is enhancing better learning outcomes (Anderson et al., 2013, p. 57). While vocation to serve leadership understanding is emphasizing the development of quality, diaconal leadership perception, argues the uniqueness of accepting and supporting individuals without pre-conditions.

The diaconal leadership perception is shaping quality by ensuring care, happiness and autonomy of learners. It is rooted in the diaconal practical theology that combines spiritual support with the practice of caring, acceptance, giving assistance and counselling (Zippert, 2018, p. 138). Despite the fact that in the context of Cameroon and other African countries, there exist pneuma-diaconal services from Pentecostal movements whose diaconal actions are mainly based on the holy spirit (White, 2020, p. 467-468), the diaconal leadership perception by school principals in this study, seem to reflect diaconal practical theology. The understanding of diaconal leadership type has a theological foundation in the Reformers justification by faith and priesthood of all believers (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-5; Lindsley, 2013, p. 1; Anderson, 2005, p. 77-78). Buttressed by the Reformers' theological convictions about the essentials of Christianity, *sola fide* (faith alone) and *sola gratia* (grace alone) which explains that people are served by grace through faith alone (Anderson, 2005, p. 77-78), suggests the imperfect nature of human beings yet qualified to receive God's unconditional love (EKD, 2017, p. 11). The pedagogical implication of justification by faith in the diaconal function of Protestant schools ensures that learners are given respect and dignity just for whom they are and not based on their background or what they are capable of doing. On the other hand, the diaconal leadership understanding from the Protestant theological positioning of the priesthood of all believers builds on the justification by faith with important implications in spiritual and public life reflected through *sola Scriptura* (scripture alone), *sola fide* and *sola gratia* (Lindsley, 2013, p. 1). The universal priesthood of all believers, imply that by faith, all Christians have a direct access to God; and do not

need another human being to intervene for them. This argument has an overarching understanding of ensuring autonomy and fair opportunities to all individuals not only as an important standard of faith, but much more as an obligation (Simojoki, 2016, p. 18; Painter, 1889, p. 56-59). A presumption for the Protestant understanding of schools is the diaconal dimension emphasizes on the education of everyone to develop their competencies regardless of cultural, religious, social and financial background (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17, Painter, 1889, p. 65-68). Diaconal function of school leading from the angle of public theology suggests a pivotal understanding of the Protestant school profile which emphasizes on autonomy and giving priority towards care and support to the vulnerable, powerless, poor, marginalized and suppressed, with the goal of restoring happiness and justice from the prophetic position of the bible (Kim, 2013, p. 16). The pedagogical understanding therefore sees the centrality for the acceptance and support of human dignity as a crucial responsibility for schools which seeks to translate the theological approval of individuals as being created in the image of God (Gellel, 2013, p. 27). The concept of the image of God, “*Imago Dei*”, could serve as a broad symbol indicating inclusion as well as the dignity of every person and human community but also as a symbol against any form of discrimination (Szczerba, 2020, p. 13). Therefore, in the light of diaconal leadership understanding, even if the perceptions by principals in secondary schools in Cameroon is limited to care and support to students, a broader understanding of diaconal responsibility could include the shaping of the Protestant school profile. Protestant school leaders could see themselves in shaping schools that strive as safe spaces of hope to ensure meaningful relationships and encounters of happiness by developing and recognizing the personalities of individual students regardless of performance (EKD, 2017, p. 14). In the paragraph that follows, I synthesize the theoretical analysis of one of the findings of the study which highlights the perception of quality driven leadership on reflected theology by Protestant secondary school principals in Cameroon.

As already mentioned, the analysis described above is connected to the findings from the study which show three ideal leadership types,

namely community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership that are quality driven on reflected theology. From the argumentations, these three leadership understandings are rooted in the theological perspective of the Protestant school profile as well as inserting into the discourse that is not only limited to the development of school quality, but as well to the development of the society from a reflected Christian theological perspective. As current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in Western countries (Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 13; de Wall, 2012, p. 173, Becker & Wößmann, 2010, 224-228, Dronkers & Avram, 2009, p. 895-909; Dronkers & Hemsing, 2005, p. 73-74) which are relatively more stable with better educational quality levels, the argumentation about quality driven leadership on reflected theology, contributes to discourse at two levels. First, from the context in Cameroon where protestant schools function in a fragile, hierarchical and corrupt state system and in which faith-based-schools are marginalized (Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, Kpughe, 2017, p. 1; Ngalim, 2017, p. 841; p.2; Lange, 2014, p. 590; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 133) the discourse on school leadership perceptions still emerge with qualities of ensuring collaboration, participation, better teaching, student achievement and diaconal responsibility, all rooted in reflected theology. In the second dimension, the discourse about Protestant school profile explains that Protestant schools exist and function in context (Barber et al., 2020, p. 2; Miedema, 2016, p. 10), of very difficult conditions, dealing with students from poor economic backgrounds and with limited leadership professional capital (Njobati, 2021, p. 80-83, Ebot-Ashu & Bisschoff, 2015, p. 82), school leadership perception in such a context still profiles to discourse, the diaconal leadership understanding of care and support to the poor and less privileged learners.

### **Authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion and the Protestant theology**

As shown from the findings of the study, three ideal leadership types in Protestant schools in Cameroon namely; call to superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types constitute the authoritarian

leadership on experience-based religion and emphasize on obedience and religious understanding based on experience. What differentiates the three types is what each of them is obeying to. While the call to superiority type ensures obedience to what the school leader says about the bible, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types ensure obedience to the state and church as institutions respectively. These faith understandings are more important than the denomination to which the school belongs. Even though the above mentioned leadership styles perceive leadership by upholding obedience and authority, discourses suggest that quality of education and leadership is improved by ensuring the autonomy, critical spirit and self-concept of learners in a participatory, democratic and safe environment (Bellibas et al., 2022, p. 812; Martin-Sanchez & Flores-Rodriguez, 2018, p. 55; Lavery, 2013, p. 147). On the contrary, obedience and enforcement of authority is observed to be counter-productive to quality development as it offers structural and cognitive rigidity to learning and rather reinforces the ideology of the more powerful person (Martin-Sanchez & Flores-Rodriguez, 2018, p. 55). As the perception of reinforcing obedience is based on individual school principal's experience, it seems to oppose the Protestant theology that stresses on the freedom of a Christian (Luther, 2016, p. 467-468, Simojoki; 2016, p. 189; Sandler-Koschel, 2016, p. 41) and based on sola scriptura from reflected theology (Swain, 2020, p. 1-2). With the opposing understandings between obedience and freedom in school development, international discourse has been concerned on the question as to whether none-state faith-based schools are widening inequality gaps or not (Scheunpflug & Wenz, p. 4, 2015; UNESCO, 2015, p.12; Dronkers & Avram, 2009, p. 895-896, Dronkers & Hemsing, 2005, p. 73-75) given that the functioning of faith-based schools can be ambivalent. In the following section, the leadership perception about what the principal is obeying to is further analysed for each ideal typed of authoritarian leadership.

As shown by the findings of the study, call to superiority leadership perception based of principals experiences in Cameroon does not only emphasize the strict respect and obedience to hierarchy but also enforces normative forms of discipline. The discourse about the school context in

Cameroon show that faith-based schooling is unstable due to the advent of both Islamic fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements that are changing the landscape (International Crisis Group, 2015, p. i-ii, Kpughe, 2017, p. 1). Little is known about fundamentalist leadership perceptions by school leaders based on their own experiences and personal ideologies of what they say about the bible as shown by the results of the study. Such leadership understanding where the school leader seems to dictate monopoly of biblical interpretation and connect with power asymmetric interplay can be seen to oppose liberal Protestant theological understanding that highlights reflection, access of everyone to bible reading and rational autonomy (Gellel, 2013, p.27-28). However, following the Protestant school profile, school principals are hoped to open up for dialogue, empower teachers and students, and foster quality and social justice towards the positive transformation of society (Gellel, 2013, p.21-22).

As fundamentalism is suggested to be aggressively patriarchal with normative aspects of discipline and widening the social gap (Trollinger, 2004, p. 344), the perception of call to superiority school leadership by principals could have a negative effect on learners in the context like Cameroon that is very fragile, hierarchical and centralized (Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187; Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Agha-ah, 2014; Echu, 2004, p. 1; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208). This seems possible as there is much enforcement of obedience to hierarchy and pulls away from the Protestant understanding of human beings created in the image of God. Case-Winters (2004, p. 813) drawing from the Christian theological positioning, highlights that students are not just social individuals but much more persons created in the image and in communion with God thus deserving their autonomy and respect for who they are. Therefore, the emergence of fundamentalist ideologies in faith-based schools in Cameroon gets more attention in research. In the argument supporting the thesis that religious schools are offering education as common good and working towards narrowing social gaps, Kollontai (2013, p. 67-70) does not seem to be aware that there could be fundamentalist perceptions based on the experiences of the school principal but not on the theological rooting of the school as shown

from the findings of the study. This shows that the debate about the widening of gaps in faith-based schools gets more complex (UNESCO, 2021, p. 1) especially as revealed in this study contextualized in Cameroon about the perception of school principals based on their personal ideological experiences, thus pointing to new narratives in the discourse. However, Scheupflug and Wenz (2015, p. 4) argue that the contextual understanding about faith-based schools could not be generalized as a good number in sub-Saharan Africa are offering a response to access and social justice. As obedience encompasses the response people give to orders or commands from a more powerful person to do things they may not want to do (Burger, 2018, p. 246), it is seen to disrupt the processes of quality education on autonomy and activation for better competence development. The fundamentalist school leadership perception towards obedience and discipline does not therefore seem to conform with leadership understanding from the liberal Protestant theology that suggests the organization of schools as safe places and ensuring quality learning for a better society (Barber et al, 2020, p. 3; EKD, 2017, p. 14; Luther, 2016, p. 467-468, Gauthier et al., 2004, p. 5-9). While the discourse to analyse the implication of fundamentalism in school leadership and school quality development is critical, the issue of obedience to the state in faith-based schooling equally suggests a serious challenge in school development.

As one of the findings from the study shows, State-conformational school leadership perception is emphasizing obedience to the state as an institution even when the state does not fulfil its obligation to support the school. This seems to emphasize on the persistence of the French colonial context of Cameroon in matters of education where faith-based schooling was restricted and marginalized, and ensuring that all aspects of education were unquestionably bound to the dictates of the centralized state (Dupraz, 2019, p. 632; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 59; Ndille, 2018, p. 91-93, Su, 2001). Matemba (2021, p. 33) argues that persistent colonial mentality in the post-colonial independent sub-Saharan Africa necessitates decolonization by African education stakeholders. Meanwhile the process of decolonization has not brought an end to oppression and insistence on obe-

dience to state hierarchy (Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2). Some observers have argued that leadership problems have remained the root causes of Africa's multifaceted challenges in the post-colonial era (West & Gemechu, 2019, p. 1). The central elements of the state-conformational school leadership type in Cameroon highlights obedience and conformity to the state. We know from discourse that conformity has to do with changing one's attitude to match a perceived social form and it gets complicated from the normative influence about of the concern not to deviate from the dictates of the society but just to go along with the crowd (Burger, 2018, p. 243-245). Burger (2018, p. 252) further argues that, by combining conformity with obedience which is just the acceptance to an order or command from a person in authority without reflection has a great psychological implication for learning. This calls for an argumentation from discourse about the relation between faith-based schools and the state system and what this means for school leadership perception. Even though, a great proportion of faith-based schools are found in sub-Saharan Africa (Barber et al., 2020, p. 2), most of the studies about church-state relationship are conducted in countries of the Global North (Kalkandjieva, 201, p. 587; Brugger, 2012, p. 265; Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 1 &10; Sandberg, 2008, p. 330). Three of these models are analysed and argued against obedience to the state in the next section.

In the laicity model wherein the state and church are separated, religions are accorded a private status and do not have a public space (Francis, 2019, p. 778 – 790; Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 10-11) . In this regard, religion is viewed as an individual and personal matter from the enlightenment liberal background, yet the model seems to have open spaces for dialogue by the state and church without emphasizing on strict obedience even though the schools in this model do not receive financing by the state (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 10-11). The second model, which is the established church model as practiced in England, places the state and the church in partnership as two structures on which society rests (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 11). As this model recognizes and supports education under a particular denomination, it is argued to discriminate against other non-state organisational structures (Brugger, 2012, p. 265), yet it does not

seem to emphasize on strict obedience. In the public sphere for religion and state cooperation model as practiced in Germany, Netherlands and the USA, religion is seen as a public entity with the state and non-state relationship guided by democratic dialogue that uphold religion and faith-based schooling as a contribution to human rights (Monsma & Soper, 2009, p. 12; Sandberg, 2008, p. 330). Given that a critical look in the categories of church-state relation is rooted in history and traditions (Sandberg, 2008 p. 329, 331 & 350), the forms of relationship in development cooperation needs to pay attention to individual school system specificity and the country context (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 53). In Cameroon, despite the fact that models of the operation for non-state faith-based schools vary greatly between regions within the same country as rooted in the colonial and missionary past (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 3), the central state continue to enforce discipline and obedience to the centralized hierarchical structure (Ustorf, 2011, p. 235 – 236). By basing on dimensions of quality school leadership development, Bush (2022, p. 533) has argued that school leadership models that are creative, participative, democratic and above all work with teachers to enhance better teacher for better learning is prepared for the changing society. This requires that school principals understand themselves as change agents for the society, school and state system levels as well as reflect on change processes and strategies (Fullan, 2012, p. 1). As the Cameroon state system is corrupt and hierarchical, state-conformational leadership perception may tend to contribute to the reproduction of such a state a system. Jansen et al. (2009, p. 70), have disputed that from the reformation view point, the church has the responsibility to profile Christian ethos of the school without aligning itself to undemocratic state systems.

As revealed by the results of the study, ecclesiastical leadership type is obeying to the church as an institution. The connotation, “Ecclesiastical” is rooted in Christian religious history as the New Testament Greek word, “Ekklesia” and relates to the Christian church or its clergy or assembly of Christians (Adams, 2012, p. 13, Millar, 2012, p. 65). From discourse, the role of the church in educational development in Africa cannot be underestimated in regard to social changes and development, yet the church

requires a balance between its authority in enforcing Christian ethos in school on the one hand, and the Christian reformation paradigm of participation, autonomy and healthy distribution of power on the other (Jansen et al., 2009, p. 68-70). The perception by principals in ecclesiastical leadership type of the study in Cameroon whereby the church is placed at the centre and ensuring strict obedience in its hierarchical structure seems to reinforce or mirror the ancient hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church during the preceding Middle Ages with centralization and unquestioned authority of the Pope (Iordache, 2017, p. 63-69; Becker et al., 2016, p. 2; Jansen et al., 2009, p. 80). The Christian Theological understanding from the lens of Protestant Reformation as rooted in reformers' thinking, highlights the importance of freedom with responsibility as opposed to imposition of authority and obedience (Iordache, 2017, p. 60). This argumentation already suggests conflicting positions between freedom and dealing with instituted authorities. On this subject of freedom, Martin Luther's, summarizes from two paradoxical theses, "a Christian is a perfectly free master over all things, subjected to no one. A Christian is a slave to all things and subjected to all." (Iordache, 2017, p. 69; Luther, 1961, p. 12). Although these two formulations seem to contradict each other, they could serve as a meeting point to deepen the understanding of freedom in the light of the Protestant theology that is perceived as responsible freedom in sociality and towards others. The Thesis suggests the duality of human beings, endowed with freedom which is expected to go with responsibility of showing love and respect to everyone. From this premise, submitting to authorities can be argued as a responsibility not because of fear or compulsion, but as a matter of conscience. Martin Luther, in the statement about the freedom of a Christian, seem to suggest that the only source of freedom is the holy scripture through faith in Christ as explained in the ambits of sola Scriptura, sola Fide, sola Gratia and sola Christus (Williams, 2017, p. 14-17; Simojoki, 2016, p. 17-18; Anderson, 2005, p. 77-78). The implicit understanding for the Protestant school profile is the commitment of Protestant schools to learners' autonomy, diaconal learning and social justice (Barber et al., 2020, p. 5; Scheunflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17-18) and the acceptances of everyone regardless

of performance (Gellel, 2013, p. 27; Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86-87). As school leadership is giving a profile to school, the perception from ecclesiastical leadership type seem to limit the possibilities of autonomy. Given that leadership in Protestant schools hopes and seeks to liberate learners towards the transformation of society (Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 141; Gellel, 2013, p. 22), ecclesiastical leadership type could be observed as not contributing to autonomy and diaconal identity of Protestant schools as suggested in the explicit theological understanding of Protestant school profile (Blount, 2013, p. 19). Discourse emphasize the role of Protestant school leaders as agents of change through the self-understanding of school principals in their role of systemic school transformation (Fullan, 2003, p. xiv-xvi). From this background, it can be argued that the reformatory theology is on constant transformation as the word of God is always reforming, focusing on the bible alone as the highest authority (Hofheinz, 2017, p. 275-278). Nevertheless, the role of the Church as institution may not be underestimated in shaping dialogue spaces and discourses regarding worldviews and the development of the society.

### **5.2.2 Theological leadership perceptions of school principals and the implications for educational quality**

Findings from the study show that while three of the six leadership types, based on reflected theology namely; community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types are quality driven; three other types that are authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion, specifically; call to superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types are suggested to hinder quality, based on the analysis of leader's perceptions. Discourse on educational quality argues that even though the influence of school principals on educational quality is indirect (Bush, 2022, p. 533), they have a central role in shaping the profile of the school and educational change (Buchanan, 2013, p. 1; Siddiqui, 2011, p. 21 & Hallinger, 2003, p. 329). In the following section, the school leadership types that have emerged from this study are first discussed in the light of

educational quality, beginning with the leadership types based on reflected theology. The section ends with the analysis of school leaders' theological and religious perceptions and implications for their professional leadership responsibilities.

### **Leadership types based on reflected theology and implications for quality education**

As revealed by the findings of the study, community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types that emerged and are based on reflected theology. Even though these three types are linked to Christian theology with emphasizes on reasoned discourse concerning God and the systematic reflection of faith (Swain, 2020, p. 1-2; EKD, 2017, p. 10-13), their implications on school quality are analysed separately beginning with community-participatory leadership type.

With regards to Community-participatory leadership type in the context of Protestant schools in Cameroon, secondary school principals perceive their leadership as ensuring solidarity and harmony amongst teachers and students and emphasizing on democracy and justice in teaching. From discourse, the involvement of teachers and students in a participatory and decentralized framework is one of the steps in educational transformation (Anderson, 2017, p. 3-4). Lavery (2013, p. 147) opines that, by letting teachers work together towards students' learning, as perceived by community-participatory leadership type in the study, it does not only instil self-concept in the teachers but also make them see the benefits for their professional development. This type of leadership understanding seem to sustain educational innovations using the bottom-top approach (Asbri et al., 2020, p. 11), meanwhile the principals of this leadership type are functioning from the context of Cameroon whereby educational administration is centralized and hierarchical (Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187; Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Lange 2014, p. 590; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208). Even though community-participatory school leadership type focuses on ensuring teachers' participation, harmony, efficacy and commitment (Ross & Gray, 2006, p. 798 & 804), it can be criticized for not explicitly addressing learners' outcome (Asbri et al.,

2020, p. 11). Nevertheless, from the foregone analysis, this leadership type could be seen as contributing in developing quality education in a context of low levels of quality. There is however room to understand what this perception could mean for the Principals' daily work. Besides community-participatory leadership type that is already discussed, the implication of vocation to serve leadership type to quality education is also analysed.

Vocation to serve leadership as shown by the findings of this study perceives leadership by ensuring quality teaching and learning for better students' performance. Discourse is describing such leadership type concerned with ensuring better classroom instruction as pedagogic and assures that by focusing on teaching strategies, facilitates better outcomes (Bellibas et al., 2022, p. 812; Gauthier et al., 2004, p. 5-9). Based on findings conducted by Goddard et al. (2019, p. 197), leadership with pedagogic tendency as is the case perceived by vocation to serve leadership type in the study, still contributes to better student achievement regardless of the student size and prior student achievement. It is not yet clear from the discourse of school leadership in Cameroon, how the effect of vocation to serve leadership on learners' performance could look like in a context of a fragile state system (The World Bank Group, 2021, p. ix-xi, Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162) where educational system still focuses on administrative functions than on teaching (Lyonga, 2022, p. 35-37). As far as vocation to serve leadership understanding is concerned, Lavery (2013, p. 147) would position this type as a form of leadership contributing to better quality given that the focus of the school leader is on the central school tasks of teaching and learning. Hallinger (2003, p. 329) has argued that focusing only on the circumstance of performance within the classroom may not be adequate for school leadership to address the changing needs of the school as well as that of the society. This is argued in the next paragraph about diaconal leadership type.

In the framework of diaconal leadership type, the findings from the study indicate that the main activity perceived by leaders is caring, acceptance and ensuring the autonomy of individual students and understanding teaching as enforcing the well being of students. This perception goes into the broader argumentation of understanding school leadership

as change agents for individual students, school and system levels as well as challenge unethical policies (Fullan, 2012, p. 1). The diaconal understanding of caring and ensuring acceptance of individual students is a step beyond the basic discourse on quality education that focuses ultimately on learner outcome. Yet ensuring caring and autonomy links the pedagogical position to the theological understanding of the freedom of a Christian (Simojoki, 2016, p. 189). This tends to be an overarching position of the role of Protestant schools and its school leadership at all times to ensure that schools are safe places for children, with preferential support to the vulnerable and poor ones (Barber et al., 2020, p. 4-5). Diaconal school leadership seems to have an added value based on the theological understanding of individuals being created in the image of God, giving the pedagogical comprehension of ensuring acceptance, care of individuals and support of human dignity which is a crucial responsibility, regardless of performance of the student (Wagner et al., 2022, p. v; Gellel, 2013, p. 27, Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86-87). This diaconal school leadership type emerges in the hierarchical context of Cameroon wherein education is observed to be examination-oriented with less support to marginalized groups and less reflection on individual students' circumstances (Matemba, 2021, p. 33; Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Ndille, 2018, p. 97; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 133).

Against this backdrop, diaconal leadership perception suggests the enforcement of quality education even if the comprehensive realization of education quality is complex and shaped by educational leadership that addresses long term impact on the society (Biesta, 2017, p. 15-16). On this basis, the three leadership types emerging from this study; community-participatory leadership, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership are perceived to contribute to quality by respectively ensuring democracy and participation; quality teaching and learning towards learners' achievement; and caring for individual learners and ensuring their autonomy and well being with evidence from discourse. Leadership perception by principals in Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon therefore shows a wide field that contributes to discourse about school leadership. In the

next section, authoritarian leadership types that emerged from the study are discussed in the light of discourses in quality education.

### **Authoritarian leadership and implications for quality education**

Based on the results of the study, three ideal leadership types, namely; call to superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical, constitute authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion of which all the three emphasize on obedience in hierarchical administrative settings. This mirrors the discourse about school leadership in Cameroon which pays more attention to obedience and discipline that have been observed to be a continuation of the colonial educational understanding (Matemba, 2021, p. 33, Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208). The authoritarian context in school leadership confirms the results from a quantitative study by Etomes and Molua (2019, p. 109-111), that sampled 320 teachers on the question about strategies used by principals in state (government) secondary schools in Fako division of the South West region of Cameroon, which show that school principals focus more on administrative and supervisory functions. The results of the study at hand from the perspective of teaching and learning understanding by the three authoritarian leadership types show specificities that could kindle different lines of argumentation in discourse. The call to superiority leadership type perceives teaching as ensuring moral pressure and linking school subjects to faith while state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types respectively perceive teaching by ensuring controlling, punishment, administrative pressure and strict respect of state guidelines; and ensuring the imposition of belief. The pressure and focus on obedience rather show alignments to the colonial education background of Cameroon (Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187; Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Lange 2014, p. 590; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208) and do not seem unveil the tendency towards quality teaching and competence development that are associated with quality education (Bellibas et al., 2022, p. 812; Gauthier et al., 2004, p. 5-9). The perception by school leaders of emphasizing on moral pressure

and combining school subjects to faith by its fundamentalist and normative aspect of discipline suggests a patriarchal tendency oppression and widening the social gap (Trollinger, 2004, p. 344) and seem to downplay on competence development, rational autonomy with responsibility, tolerance and fostering of social justice as emphasized by the Protestant understanding of school quality (Simojoki, 2016, p. 189; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17-18; Gellel, 2013, p. 21-22 & 27-28; Maussen et al., 2012, p. 16-17). The Christian theological understanding that positions respect for students' autonomy and dignity (Case-Winters, 2004, p. 813) is hoped to be part of the Protestant school profile shaped by school leaders and does not therefore align with fundamentalist bearing. Waite and Robbins (2017, P. 29-41) assert that creative and reflective learning is mandatory for the development of the society and insists that the position of being critical on routine school administrative practices that do not adequately reflect the dynamics of quality development needs to be reinforced as well as shaping educational leadership towards the long term impact on the society (Biesta, 2017, p. 15-16). The contrary perception on teaching and learning by the authoritarian school leadership types as revealed by the results of this study suggests an inhibition to quality school development and therefore shows ambivalence in the post-colonial era about leadership in Protestant schools in Cameroon.

As shown from the analysis of the findings, theological leadership perceptions of school principals have implications for educational quality. These implications in the context of Cameroon could be enhancing or impeding school quality. While leadership types on reflected theology shows perceptions of contributing to quality, the leading understanding of the authoritarian leadership types seem to inhibit quality development in different ways. Given that education in Cameroon is rooted in a complex context of missionary and colonial times (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 1-4), the findings of this study insert into the discourse two divergent scenarios. On one hand, there seem to be inertia of change in the decolonization of hierarchical settings and dependence on obedience, yet in the same context and on the other hand, there is leadership perception that resist hier-

archical state and fundamentalist tendencies and work on quality education development. The debate from discourse on how to bring about change in such a context as Cameroon could be argued from the sociological theory in which Maliks (2018, p. 449-450) opens the dialogue on theories of resistance and enlightenment, by contending that complexities of these theories can be better understood by exploring the contrasting views of the role of the state in matters of spiritual welfare and freedom.

### **School leaders' theological and religious perceptions and implications for their professional leadership responsibilities and actions.**

Based on the results of the study, two broad groups of faith understandings emerge from the six ideal leadership types. Three ideal leadership types, namely; call to superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical, constitute authoritarian leadership about faith understanding on experience-based religion while three other types composed of community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal wherein all the three emphasize are quality driven on reflected theology. There seem to be no empirical knowledge in the context of the study of Cameroon or sub-Saharan Africa in a broader field that brings the connection between the school leaders theological or religious perception to their professional school leadership responsibilities. Even though public debate in Western countries seeks to find out the connection between teachers' religious or worldview beliefs and their professional thinking and acting, there is scarce empirical knowledge about the existence or nature of connections (Häusler et al., 2019, p. 24). As the notions of beliefs, worldview, and faith feature in the debate, I first clarify these concepts in order to have a shared understanding in the paragraph that follows.

As far as faith is concerned, Buchak (2014, p. 23) argues that to have faith comprises in stopping one's search for evidence and committing to a given proposition without further evidence and leading to the understanding that a rational individual can only have faith in those propositions that the one does not have sufficient evidence. From this background, even though faith and belief are connected, they do not overlap.

From the perspective of the philosophy of religion, Audi (2008, p. 87) contend that belief is the central focus of inquiry and together with faith, need to be distinguished from acceptance. In a further argument, acceptance of a proposition may not necessarily mean believing it and believing may not also mean acceptance, meanwhile the two notions could help to understand someone's religious position (*ibid.* p. 87). Conversely, faith can be accompanied by belief or not, but when faith is followed by belief, it is considered to be more convincing (Buchack, 2014, p. 23). As far as belief is concerned, it is not only linked to religious standpoint but as well to worldview as argued in the next paragraph.

Here, I distinguish between religious beliefs and worldview beliefs. Religious beliefs could be understood as the doctrinal or ideological content of a religion and englobes aspects linked to religious practices, moral conduct as well as social relations, characterized by some form of sacred or divine reality (Häusler et al., 2019, p. 26). One school of thought argues that religious beliefs shape both the comprehensive view of the world and human life and maintain that to understand a concept, the one must take a position on the issue as rooted in some divinity belief, thus suggesting a religious regulation of concepts as well as the imposition of divinity beliefs on all concepts (Clouser, 2009, p. 21 & 46). On the other hand, another school of thought insist that beliefs associated with the interpretation of the world and human life may or may not be rooted in religious or sacred realities, and thus, the umbrella word, "worldview" (German: "Weltanschauung") is used to cover both religious and non-religious beliefs (Häusler et al., 2019, p. 26. Irzik & Nola, 2007, p. 743-744). The distinction between religious and worldview beliefs as understood in this analysis follow the latter argumentation. Häusler et al., (2019, p. 26) further observe the complexity about religious beliefs as they may not necessarily be connected to a specific religion but may cut across various religions and worldviews thereby presenting somehow vague ideas of the sacred.

Based on the research conducted by Häusler et al., (2019, p.24 & 36) to review empirical studies on possible relations between schoolteachers' personal religious beliefs or worldviews and their professional thinking

and acting, results show that religious or worldview beliefs of teachers is influencing their professional thinking, reflection and acting. These results indicate that religious and worldview beliefs can have not only positive, but equally problematic impacts (ibid, p. 36). It should be noted that as most of the documents for study by Häusler et al., were mainly from the US, the results may not be transferred to the European context with a more secular character. In another study conducted by Penthin, Pirner, Scheunpflug, & Kröner (2022, p. 282) in Europe, on measuring student teachers' beliefs regarding religion in schools, one of the results show that there are relationships between the individual religiosity of teachers, their profession related thinking and acting. Against this background from the studies by Häusler et al. (2019) and Penthin et al. (2022), I analyze the school leaders' theological and religious perceptions and the implications for their professional leadership responsibilities in the context of Protestant schools in Cameroon taking note that the context is different and where they are no existing studies as the case in the Global North.

In the framework of authoritarian leadership about faith understanding on experience-based religion, three types of self-understanding of faith are distinguished based on the related leadership types. In the call for superiority leadership type, faith understanding is linked to the immediacy of divine action and combined with individual word interpretation of the bible with emphasis on discipline. Such faith understanding as perceived by call to superiority school leadership type can be associated with experiential individual religious frame which is characterised by the expression of religious feelings based on individual's thoughts (Huber & Huber, 2012, p. 711). In addition, the specific situation of the call to superiority leadership of combining all school subjects to faith in their perception could have a problematic impact as opposed to reflected Protestant theology that emphasizes on the freedom of a Christian (Weir, 2018, p. 171; Luther, 2016, p. 467). However, the faith-understanding of state-conformational leadership combines the state and the church and ensuring strict obedience to state administration based on the perception of the school principal. This type of faith-understanding could blind the school

leadership from being critical in shaping the school profile as a moral enterprise for systemic transformation (Fullan, 2003, p. xiv-xvi). Leadership in Protestant schools seeks to enhance autonomy, social justice and give the school a specific identity (Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 14; Gellel, 2013, p.27-28; Case-Winters, 2004, p. 813) especially in Cameroon context that is hierarchical and experiences corruption and educational injustice (Matemba, 2021, p. 33, Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997, p. 207-208). It would seem on the one hand that that faith-understanding by state-conformational leadership type which ensures the combination of the church and the state could adversely affect the professional functioning and acting of the school principal. On the other hand, ecclesiastical leadership in its faith understanding that places the church as institution at the centre, seems to contradict the the understanding of the scripture rather than the church as institution being placed at the centre as commended by the liberal Protestant theological understanding (Strauss; 2021, p. 1; Luther, 2016, p. 467-468; Simojoki, 2016, p. 189; Lindsley, 2013, p. 1; Painter, 1889, p. 56-59). From this backdrop, the faith understanding for authoritarian leadership types on the basis theological and religious argumentations could be problematic for the professional leadership responsibilities and acting. In the next paragraph, the analysis of school leaders' theological and religious perceptions by quality driven leadership types are described.

As earlier mentioned (cf chapter 4.4 & 5.1) the findings of the study show that community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal are quality-driven leadership on reflected theology. Based on the perceptions of the school principals, for community participatory leadership type, the faith understanding is linked to solidarity and community feeling while that of that of vocation to serve leadership is linked to the inner drive of quality. These faith understandings on solidarity and quality can be connected to the Christian theological emphasis on the common good to all human beings and the enhancement of autonomy and self-concept alongside the development of competence and critical minds with responsibility (Barber et al., 2020, p. 5; Griffis, 2017, p. 1-3; Sandler-Koschel, 2016,

p. 41; Simojoki, 2016, p. 189; Kim, 2013, p. 16). Meanwhile, faith understanding in diaconal leadership type is linked to God's infinite love for every individual which is amplified by the theological understanding of individuals created in God's image and therefore merit individual development, care, recognition and dignity regardless of performance (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17; Gellel, 2013, p. 27). The school leaders' theological and religious understanding in the three quality driven leadership types by basing on their faith-understanding could be argued from the Christian theology on the systematic reflection of faith (Swain, 2020, p. 1-2) and reformers conviction of Christian teachings that considers reflected knowledge of the scriptures as the central source of actions that are manifested through public theology for the common good (Swain, 2020, p. 2; Bender, 2019; p. 109, Luther, 2012, 15-30; Canale, 2012, p. 179-195; Soulen, 2004, p. 251). As the study at hand was only based on the perception of Principals of Protestant schools about their leadership self-understanding, it is possible to suggest that theological and religious perceptions of quality driven leadership could have relations to school leadership responsibilities and actions.

The analysis of school leaders' theological and religious perceptions in the study at hand have given the argumentation lines from six dimensions of self-understanding of faith from the context of study in Cameroon. While faith understanding by authoritarian leadership types can be problematic to Principals professional responsibilities, faith understanding for quality driven leadership types on reflected theology can have positive implications on the principal's professional responsibilities. As observed from the study of Häusler et al., (2019, p. 24 & 26), the implication of religious or worldview beliefs and professional thinking and acting needs to take the context factor into consideration. The Cameroon educational context that is rooted in missionary and colonial times shows more complexity as the operation of non-state faith-based schools vary greatly between regions of the same country (Scheunpflug et al., 2021, p. 3; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 1-4). From this analysis, the study at hand provides a contribution to discourse from sub-Saharan Africa about the wide field

of the relationship between school leaders' theological and religious perceptions and implications for their professional leadership responsibilities but cannot connect the relationship to principals' actions as the study is relying only on leadership perceptions.

### **5.2.3 Leadership in protestant schools and the development of the global and glocal society**

The results of the study show that school principals by their leading experiences focus sublimation of society by the state or strengthening ties within the national configurations of the state or limit themselves to the formalization of the traditions of individual church bureaucracies and traditions. Findings further reveal that the understanding of the social function of the school and networking of the school are not shared by both the church and the state. From the background of these results, there is little awareness of belonging to a church as a global institution meanwhile discourses about the Protestant school profile give impulses that insert protestant schools worldwide in the debate of globalisation by rooting in the heritage of the Reformation (EKD, 2017, p. 10; Simojoki, 2016, p. 17; Scheunpflug, 2015, P. 38-44; Gellel, 2013, p. 13; Buchanan, 2013, p. 1-2, Klenke, 2007, p. 68 & 88-90). The study on faith-based schooling such as the case at hand for the context of Cameroon, inserts into the global research exigency to improve the quality of education and school leadership in different contexts (Gellel, 2013, p. 16-22). Even though, religious education providers claim to be global, their different perceptions and conceptions further shape the ambiguities and complexities about globalization and the nature of the world (Turner, 2002, p. 9 & 105). This is compounded by the particular situation of Protestant schools which exist and function in context (Miedema, 2016, p. 10), yet aiming at supporting ecumenical learning for global social justice (Penthin et al., 2022, p. 281-282; Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 141; Preez, 2013, p. 63). As the findings of this study about protestant schools are emerging from a specific but complex context of Cameroon, showing little awareness by school leaders of belonging to a church as a global institution; the argumentations on relating local context to the global and global context to the local sets in. Therefore,

the argumentation about the Protestant school profile and the implications for globalisation and glocalization are first discussed in relation to the findings of this study. This is followed by the analysis of leadership in Protestant schools and social justice, and school leadership perception and the question of inclusivity and exclusivity respectively. The section ends with the analysis of Protestant school leadership and the decolonization of education.

### **Protestant school profile and the implications for globalisation, glocalization and global learning**

As indicated in the preceding paragraph about the findings of the study which show that school leaders in Protestant schools in Cameroon do not perceive the church as a global institution, I first analyse the complexities surrounding the comprehension of globalization. The understanding of the concept, “globalisation” seems to be diverse and generate various meanings. There is the tendency to relate globalisation to either focusing attention on macroscopical problems in contrast to local problems or to ensure developments through the pressure of culturally homogenizing forces over all others, the situations which can both be misleading (Robertson, 1995, p. 25). Furthermore, the thrust in the globalisation theory on the relationship between homogenizing and heterogenizing raises another problem as homogenizing is coming from modernity that is imposed by colonization or imperialism (Robertson, 1995, p. 25-27). Against this backdrop, Beyer (2007, p. 98), argues that in globalization, there is the need for a mutual relationship between local and global as global exist from the multiplicity of local. Given that understanding globalization in terms of homogenization can be misleading and excluding, Roberston (1995, p. 31) gives the importance and visibility of “local” in the understanding of Globalization, by subscribing to the term “glocalization”. On the one hand, Glocalization is considered to give a blend between global and local, with the consideration that there can be local in the global and global in the local (ibid, p. 39). On the other hand, Roundmetof (2016, p. 391 & 402), opens another debate that either glocalization is subsumed

under globalization or globalisation is transformed into glocalization or glocalization viewed as an autonomous concept.

Without going further into the semantics about globalisation and glocalization, the analysis of the two terms suggests the necessity to include relationships and challenges that are linked to the interconnectedness of the global and glocal society, how to understand and deal with diversity, local and global context as well as how to seek for solutions that touch the lives of everyone. The argumentation about the relation between local and glocal is additionally important for the discussion of the findings of this study about school leadership and the Protestant school profile given that the theological perspective for ecumenical learning requires the interplay of both global and local realities (Dessi, 2022, p. 138). The main problem with regards to globalisation is that people need knowledge and skills to enable them live in a globalized society and manage challenges and uncertainties and above all, bring about change possibilities by empathizing with people they do not know (Scheunpflug, 2008, p. 18-19). This calls for a focus on global education and learning which is about educational response to the development towards a world society (Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 1) and with rationale for people to be engaged in addressing the challenges of an interconnected world with responsibility towards global solidarity and social justice (Bourn, 2014, p.4; Scheunpflug, 2008, p. 19). Scheunpflug positions that the understanding of the global interconnectedness of spaces which is the constitution of the world society is about learning abstract social relations (Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 10-11). Three leadership types from the study, namely, community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal show the potential towards global learning by their perception at the local level. The perception of Community-participatory on ensuring solidarity with the role of the church perceived at enhancing ecumenism and social cohesion shows the foundation at the local level towards global solidarity (Bourn, 2014, p.4; Scheunpflug, 2008, p. 19) as well as ecumenical learning that Protestant schools aim at (Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 141). As shown in the local context of Cameroon wherein the curriculum by the state is more nationalistic and based on colonial content and methods (Foaleng, 2015, p. 11), vocation to serve

leadership perceives a shift towards better competence development for teachers and students, ensuring aspects of reflection, critical thinking and quality drive that are essential for global learning by approaching from learners' perspectives and competence development (Andreotti, 2008, p. 45). The Diaconal leadership type, by ensuring social justice, tolerance, empathy, autonomy and care for individual students and teachers with an inner drive of quality in the face of local challenges and realities is revealing a potential in aspects of justice, equity, and human rights that are connected to the dimensions in the Maastricht Global Education Declaration (2002, p. 2) and even more. On the other hand, authoritarian leadership types as revealed by the findings of the study seem to be problematic in building the basis for global learning as they are paternalistic by their perceptions. The call for superiority leadership type by ensuring moral pressure and discipline with enforcement of obedience to the faith understanding of the principal, could already be a problematic dimension of homogenization at the local level (Robertson, 1995, p. 31). On the other hand, the state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types in their perception of the role of the society focuses respectively on strengthening ties within the state authorities and strengthening the growth of the local church. Therefore, the awareness of the church as a global institution to enhance ecumenical learning for global justice as hoped for in the Protestant profile understanding (Penthin et al., 2022, p. 281-282; Simojoki, 2016, p. 17; Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 141; Preez, 2013, p. 63) does not seem to be visible in the perceptions of the school leaders. Given the centrality of global social justice in global learning discourse, the next paragraph further analyses leadership in Protestant schools and the implication for global social justice.

### **Leadership in Protestant schools and global social justice**

The findings of the study show that the three leadership types on reflected theology (community participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal) perceive social justice while the authoritarian leadership types (call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical) do not show perceptions linked to justice. Based on the perceptions of the diaconal leadership type,

the understanding of the social function of the school is not shared by both the Church and the state. Discourse on global learning emphasizes that the development of the world society needs the enforcement of global social justice and overcoming of paternalism (Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 1) which is also buttressed by literature on the Protestant school understanding in regards to ecumenical learning for global social justice (Simojoki, 2016, p. 17; Fullan, 2003, p. xiv-xvi). On the other hand, the globalisation of reformed Protestantism in the context of some parts of Africa such as South Africa, on one part have been a bi-product of European expansion for commerce and conquest, and on the other hand, the missionary movement for the evangelisation of the indigenous population and could be argued from the perspective of modernity rooted in European-based church life and Western civilization (Hart, 2020, p. 173). From this background, it could be possible that the non-adaptation of the local realities by some leaders in Cameroon schools rooted in missionary and colonial context (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 1-4) could be a challenge towards abstract social understanding. However, the theological understanding for shaping the Protestant school profile combines spiritual support with the practice of caring, giving assistance and counselling and is explicit about global social justice, dealing with diversity, autonomy and tolerance in a reflected and responsible way (Wagner et al., 2022, p. v; Zippert, 2018, p. 138; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4-6 & 17-18; Gellel, 2013, p. 27, Klenke, 2007, p. 68, Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 86-87). Therefore, Protestant theology upholds global and ecumenical aspects in education from a wider perspective that includes social justice and care for nature (EKD, 2017, p. 11).

As leadership is shaping the quality and profile of schools (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Buchanan, 2013, p. 1; Hattie, 2012, Siddiqui, 2011, p. 21; Fullan, 2010; Hallinger, 2003, p. 329), diaconal leadership type in Cameroon by their perception of enhancing social justice, autonomy and tolerance to religious diversity could have the impulse for global social justice and leadership potential for the understanding of world society (Biesta, 2017, p. 15-16). 24-25). From the perceptions of community-participatory and vocation to serve leadership type that perceive qualities of

solidarity and democracy, and critical thinking, align with dimensions of the pedagogy of development education for global social justice (Bourn, 2014, p. 5), even if the perception is at the local context of the school. On the other hand, the paternalistic perceptions of call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types coupled with the none-understanding of the social function of the school by the state and church is problematic towards the development of social justice as well the Protestant school leadership understanding in finding a good balance and overcome dichotomies that hinder justice and inclusion in a pluralistic society (Preez, 2013, p. 63). The specific perception of the call for superiority school leadership type of enforcing moral pressure, normative discipline and obedience that are based on the leader's personal experience of faith understanding seem to work against the development framework of global social justice which calls for tolerance, the address of power inequality and the enhancement of critical reflection (Bourn, 2014, p. 5).

The analysis above on the leadership types in Protestant schools in Cameroon and implication to global social justice adds to the discourse from the Global South with a variety of leadership perceptions in regards to social justice from the local context even if the awareness of the abstract global reality is not visible. It also shows the potential of reflecting the local realities in the light of the world society and vice versa. Above all, the argumentations also contribute to discourse about the leadership aspect of resilience and the possibility of enhancing social justice in a precarious context where the state and church (school proprietor) do not seem to have an understanding about the social function of the school.

### **Protestant school leadership perception and implications for inclusivity and exclusivity**

As revealed by the findings from the study, on the one hand there are school leadership types that with fundamentalist perceptions (cf. chapter 4.3 & 5.1) enforcing obedience to the beliefs of school principals such as call to superiority leadership type while on the other hand, there are school leaders who support individual students with more attention to those

from socio-economically weak backgrounds and ensuring tolerance to individual freedom of worship and prayer as the case with diaconal leadership type (cf. chapter 4.3 & 5.1). These findings are connected to the debate at international level on the role of non-state schools in dealing with issues of inclusivity and exclusivity (UNESCO, 2021, p. 1) and the question as to whether the role of school principals is contributing to enlightenment or fundamentalism and how principals respond to issues of cultural and religious diversity (Maussen et al., 2012, p. 6). From the theological argumentation, the concept of “Imago Dei” (image of God) serves as a symbol that emphasizes the dignity of every individual and human community as well serves to resist different forms of discrimination such as racism and nationalism (Szczerba, 2020, p. 13). This theological basis of individuals created in the image of God translates into the pedagogical understanding to ensure acceptance, participation, support, care and development of individuals and human dignity as right, regardless of performance (EKD, 2017, p. 14; Gellel, 2013, p. 27). This reflected theological perspective on inclusion is challenged by the charismatic-pentecostal Christian movements that are fast growing in Africa including Cameroon with high tendencies of prosperity ideologies that go with moral pressure and discipline on the followers (Maluleke, 2005, p. 21).

From the background analysed, the diaconal leadership type regarding its perception on care, acceptance and development of individual students can be viewed in the light of contributing to inclusivity in spite of the perceived changing context of faith-based schooling in Cameroon characterized by the advent of Islamic fundamentalist and Pentecostal movements with ideologies and acts of exclusivity (Kpughe, 2017, p. 1; International Crisis Group, 2015, p. i-ii). The situation gets worse as the Cameroon state itself is observed to discriminate against faith-based schooling by not fulfilling its responsibility in financing them even when these schools offer education as a public utility (Scheunpflug et al, 2021, p. 17 -18; Barber et al., 2020, p. 2&7; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 59-60). Like diaconal leadership type, community-participatory and vocation to serve leadership types through their perceptions of ensuring solidarity and par-

ticipation, and critical thinking and success of individual students, are respectively adding value to the development of inclusion (Mason, 2018, p. 204; Painter, 1889, p. 56-59). Kurian (2019, p. 120) opines that in development education, inclusivity and empathy are inevitable and require self-reflexivity and critical thinking. On the other hand, the fundamentalist leadership type from the perception of ensuring obedience to the faith understanding of what the school principal says about the bible and based on superiority-ased vocation seems to show non-tolerance to other faith understandings and cultural diversities, all of which are aspects of exclusivity. This could be problematic for the development of inclusivity in a fragile system of education in Cameroon that is very hierarchical with emphasis on obedience and compounded with corruption (Transparency International, 2021; Ngwa & Mekolle, 2020, p. 187; Konings & Nyamnjuh, 2003, p1-3). In addition, both state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types by their respective perceptions of ensuring administrative pressure and obedience to the state, and formalization of belief, seem to pay less attention to the care of individuals as well as may not offer dialogue spaces to address questions of diversity which are seen to be important in the discourse on inclusion and how education should be organized (Bertram-Toost et al., 2018, p. 1; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17-18).

The analysis above inserts into discourse, the ambivalent role of Protestant school leadership perception in shaping the understanding of inclusivity wherein different styles of faith which are associated to different styles of leadership are more important than the type of denomination. It also introduces into discourse that even if the local context of a country like Cameroon is fragile and experiencing the advent of fundamentalist movements, the resilience in developing inclusion is possible through diaconal leadership type. In spite of the fundamentalist perception of some school leadership types, and based on the discussions, it would seem that religious dimensions in education can provide a good foundation for building inclusive globalized societies that offer spaces to enhance religious diversities and worldviews (Bertram-Toost et al., 2018, p. 1).

### **Protestant school leadership and decolonization of education**

Results of the study show that the authoritarian leadership types that emerged comprising of the call to superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastic are rather hierarchical with emphasis on obedience and discipline which align with the attributes of the educational system of Cameroon in the colonial and missionary times (Njobati, 2021, p. 2-4, Dupraz, 2019, p. 632; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 22; Ndille, 2018, p. 97; Ustorf, 2011, p. 235 – 236). Also, as earlier described (cf. chapter 2.1). Even though current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in Western countries (Bader & Maussen, 2012, p. 13; de Wall, 2012, p. 173, Becker & Wößmann, 2010, 224-228, Dronkers & Avram, 2009, p. 895-909; Dronkers & Hemsing, 2005, p. 73-74), Christian schools are more prominent in sub-Saharan Africa and other low-income countries (Barber et al., p.3) and thus the insertion of converstaions from the Global South into discourse can be helpful. From this background, I find it important to add to discourse the dimension of decolonizing education from the take off point of the Protestant education profile with narratives from voices in the Global South. This has the possibility to add value and balance argumentation from sub-Saharan Africa. As Adichie (2009, p. 8), in her article titled, “the Danger of a Single Story”, has argued, “The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.” thus working towards power symmetry to shape narratives could be helpful. I differentiate the argumentation into two dimensions. First I analyse school leadership and the inertia of colonization and end with the professionalization of school leadership as a decolonizing process.

### **School leaders and the inertia of colonization rooted in history**

The prevalence of authoritarian school leadership perception in Cameroon in the postcolonial era that seems to reinforce hierarchical structures with schooling processes shaped by obedience and discipline goes down memory lane to the colonial times (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 22; Ustorf, 2011, p. 235 – 236) as earlier explained in the context of this study (cf. chapter 1.1.1). This together with the state system of Cameroon that is described

as having increasing hierarchical oppression and manifesting legal, social and educational injustices (Pratt & Morris-Chapman, 2019, p.2; Konings & Nyamnjoh, 2003, p. 162) suggests the reinforcement of colonial approach in spite of the exigencies towards global social justice. It is based on this that I caption the argumentation as school leaders and the inertia of colonization. This understanding seems to be confirmed by (Foleng, 2015, p. 18) who claims that postcolonial education in Cameroon is still the repetition of the colonial regime, producing scholars who are hesitant to bring about change. The historical context of Cameroon therefore shows complexity as the colonial footprints of reinforcing discipline and obedience may not be separated from the Christian missionary education efforts given that both the colonial powers and missionaries operated almost together and neglected the local context (Hart, 2020, p. 171-173; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 20). However, a strong argument maintains that missionaries had good intentions to enhance literacy, enlightenment and care and also protested against the abuse of human dignity (Ustorf, 2011, p. 235 – 236). The leadership inertia also seems to be reinforced by the restructuring ideology of neoliberalism in a complex political field that is enhancing an oppressive market society towards individual self-interest than for the common good (Au & Ferrare, 2015, p. 3). School leaders as change agents are crucial and could be a contribution to stop the inertia of leadership to colonization in a context like Cameroon where the post-colonial regime seems to neglect the local realities and problems (Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 20). Such leadership change in a faith-based school as argued by Buchanan (2013, p. 127 & 141) needs to give the school a specific identity that enhances both issues of care and justice alongside the spiritual life of the individuals.

Given that the change process on leadership inertia as in the complex context of Cameroon can be challenging, change agents need courage as perceived by quality driven leadership types of the study (community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal) to shift towards development education that is enforcing autonomy, respect, dialogical and self-awareness about diversity (Kurian, 2019, p. 120). The quality driven leadership

types that emerge from the study have based their leadership on their experiences and within the confines of their institutions or within national limits. On the one hand, they do not seem to have evidenced-based narratives or those from their own context and on the other hand, they are not aware of international debates on faith-based schooling on the question of global social justice given that current research highlights Protestant school profile mainly in Western countries (cf. chapter 2.1). Therefore, arguments on the decolonization of knowledge production with narratives from the Global South alongside the professionalization of school leadership is essential and analysed in the next section.

### **Professionalization of school leadership as a decolonizing process**

As shown by the findings of the study, school leadership in Protestant schools in Cameroon is not aware of the church as a global institution but focuses on strengthening ties within the national configurations. Yet the Protestant school profile supports ecumenical learning for global social justice (Simojoki, 2016, p. 17; Buchanan, 2013, p. 127 & 141; Klenke, 2007, p. 68) reinforced by school leadership understanding that strengthens diaconal learning, social justice and education for the common good (Blount, 2013, p. 19; Gellel, 2013, p.28; Duignan, 2007, p. 7). Narratives about the local context in education development and the insertion of the debates on global learning to school leadership professionalization could enhance an inclusive way of religious socialization (Engebretson, 2013, p. 165; v; Duignan, 2007, p. 11-12) and contribute to systemic school transformation (Fullan, 2003, p. xiv-xvi). Kurian (2019, p. 120) contends that reductive narratives about developing regions does not only give an incomplete representation but also limits empathy, given that empathy enriches human relations and enhance development education. This calls for education leadership professionalization and the contextualization of narratives in a post-colonial setting like Cameroon whose educational and leadership structure seem to be immersed in the inertia of colonization.

Andreotti (2011, p. 1-2) claims that post-colonial theory in education is necessary to challenge structures that reproduce global injustice as it upholds a critique on the Western hegemony of Eurocentric modernity

and rethinking through education issues of historical imbalances and cultural inequalities that were created through the colonial encounters. From this backdrop, global social justice can gain shared perspectives by including into the global debate, knowledge production about the non-Western parts of the world as it will not only create awareness but also overlook the epistemological superiority of the North (Andreotti, 2011, p. 3-6 & 8). This would need to be reflected in school leadership role given the global shift in economic and social policy with the implications for education especially considering that global economic policies are increasing social inequalities (Anderson, Mungal, Pini, Scott, & Thomson, 2013, p. 43-44). Given the complexities associated with globalization, Anderson et al., (2013, p. 45) argue the analysis of social and educational policy need to go beyond the limits of nation states. The decolonizing process seems to be analogous to class analysis of the “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” by Paulo Freire that questions class domination of the oppressed groups in aspects of material, financial and power, rooted in colonial times (Freire, 2020, p. 14-15). Wulf (2003, p. 108-110), within the framework of the critical theory of education, while elaborating on the concept of enlightenment, argues that to overcome oppression would require freedom gotten from self-determination, with the understanding that the emancipation of reason requires courage. In the next paragraph, the perceptions of the leadership types from the study are confronted with the preceding decolonization narrative.

School leadership that is gripped by the inertia of colonization and religious fundamentalism as the authoritarian types that emerged from the study need dialogue spaces on dealing with diversity, yet such a change process is demanding as it requires a balance between the commitment to their own beliefs and openness to others (Preez, p. 65, 2013). This demands for leadership professionalization that is diagnostic, evidence-based as well as contextualized (Huber, 2009, p. 326 & 329). Therefore, narratives that analyse faith-based schooling in the developing context and school leadership implications could contribute to a better understanding of education leadership professionalization and the development of society. Also, in as much as the results of the study at hand reveal

different leadership quality perceptions in regard to the question of global social justice even if they are limited to a local setting, they still provide an open field to deepen discourse and develop conversations for a post-colonial education setting. Such narratives could also have the potential to reinforce the contribution of faith-based schools to the discourse on sustainable development. Wagner et al., (2022, p. v & 1) submits that faith-based schooling by their profile which includes inclusion, equity and quality education, in addition to the care for the vulnerable and marginalized children, have greater possibilities of responding to the fourth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4). Above all, given that Christian schools are more prominent in sub-Saharan African countries (Barber et al., p.3), the development of global social justice through decolonization processes in education and its leadership can enhance the discourse about change, on the grounds that schools have become central spaces for developing religious and cultural diversity in democratic societies (Martínez-Ariño & Teinturier, 2019, p. 147-148; Maussen et al, 2012, p. 13-15).

#### **5.2.4 State marginalization of faith-based school sector as a challenge for school leadership in the developing context**

Findings of the study show that all the school leadership types that emerged from the study are challenged in their leadership by the non-financing of education in faith-based schools by the Cameroon state. As earlier explained in the context of the study (cf. chapter 1.1), the state of Cameroon does not fulfil its responsibility in financing low-fee faith-based schools causing schools to depend on tuition fee charged on learners (Barber et al., 2020, p. 7, Dupraz, 2019, p. 634, Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 59-60). Scheunpflug et al., (2021, p. 17-18) have argued that it is the responsibility for the state to offer education as a public good to all children regardless of faith. I therefore consider the non-funding of faith-based non-state schools in Cameroon as marginalization by the state with implications for the discourse on school leadership. Even though, all the six leadership types have expressed leadership challenge resulting from poor education financing, their perceptions about the implications differ. I proceed by analysing the leadership type and implications for financing faith-

based schools and end with the argumentation for the state to fund faith-based non-state low fee schools.

### **Perceptions of school leadership types on school financing and implications of what it is serving for**

While authoritarian leadership types perceive the financing of schools as a response to stabilize school leader's powers over teachers and cover administrative costs (cf. chapter 4.3.1, 4.3.2 & 4.3.3), quality driven leadership on the other hand understand school financing to facilitate the teaching and learning situations (cf. chapter 4.3.4, 4.3.5 & 4.3.6). This divergent understanding about the purpose of funding education and who should be responsible for it is problematic as the discourse on Protestant school profile see low-fee faith-based schools as schools that offer education as a public utility to enhance social justice, quality and care (Buchanan, 2013, p. 1-2, Klenke, 2007, p. 68 & 88-90). Authoritarian leadership types seem to associate school financing challenge to various pre-occupations. Even if fundamentalist leadership type explains that limited funds for the school lead to irregular payment of teachers, they perceive leadership challenge as losing the power grip over teachers. For the state-conformational leadership type, leadership perception regarding school financing gives priority to paying taxes that the state levies on the schools. This situation is pre-occupying as the state rather requests taxes from non-state faith-based schools, a situation that seems to contradicts the Dakar framework for action (UNESCO, 2000, p. 12) which emphasizes on the right to education as an obligation for states to take responsibility in financing and ensuring that all citizens meet the learning needs. Concerning ecclesiastical leadership type, the perception of the principal about funding gives priority to the church infrastructural development. All the three authoritarian leadership types do not therefore seem to relate leadership concern of school financing to the offer of education as a public good by enhancing teaching and learning, which are considered to be the concern of religious schools (Gellel, 2013, p. 13). On the other hand, all the quality driven leadership types perceive the priority of school financing to respond to the payment of teachers' salary, care for teaching and learning needs and for

the support of students in difficulties. In addition, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types in their perceptions respectively complain of non-financing by the state and observe that both the state and the church see the school as a source for their financial needs. This suggests a paradoxical perception about the church and state which do not seem to have a shared understanding about the social function of the school nor an agenda towards educational justice. From this background, the diverse perceptions by the school leadership types does not also seem to have a shared understanding about why the state should finance their schools and what this is serving for. These varied leadership perceptions do not seem to show a shared understanding of the offer of education by faith-based schools as public good. Meanwhile the perceptions by quality driven leadership add to discourse, the contribution of school leadership resilience in giving financial priority towards educational quality and justice in a hierarchical context of Cameroon wherein both the state and the church do not have the same shared understanding. Cameroon, a low-income country characterized by a fragile state system with rapid population growth (United Nations, 2022, p. 1-2), will need narratives that control the widening of social gaps by the non-financing of faith-based schools and how the state and church perceive the function of faith-based schools. The next section addresses the public function understanding of faith-based schools and implications for state financing.

### **Public function of non-state faith-based low-fee schools and implications for state financing**

The problem of financial constraints to run schools as perceived by Protestant school school leaders in Cameroon is not only a challenge for their individual schools but arguably a serious limiting factor in the innovation and expansion of an education system in the developing context (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 21). Even though the debate at the international level is concerned as to whether non-state schools are widening or narrowing inequality gaps (UNESCO, 2021, p. 1), it could be important to suggest a similar debate in international discourse on education ad-

dressed to states as to whether the states are widening or narrowing inequality gaps by their non—financing of non-state faith-based schools. Given that the Protestant schools in the context of the study are low-fee and offer education to everyone, regardless of cultural, religious, social and economic background of learners, emphasize their offer as a public utility (Barber et al., 2020, p. 2; Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 17, Painter, 1889, p. 65-68), and thus would merit financing by the state. Such financing by the state could be argued as a right given that the state is responsible to ensure the education of all its citizens using public funds (UNESCO, 2000, p. 12).

The different school leadership types do not seem to perceive state-financing of non-state faith-based low-fee schools as a right. Oslen (2012, p. 65) clarifies that securing the rights of education and religion is not private but public. The appellation of non-state faith-based schools in Cameroon by the state as “private schools” as earlier mentioned (cf. chapter 1.1) is misleading and requires clarification in terms of access, sources of funding and legal status (Scheunpflug & Wenz, 2015, p. 4; Fox & Vidra, 2012, p. 74) and may also have implications for state financing. Paradoxically, it is not also visible from the results of the study whether the school leaders explicitly perceive their schools as public in terms of access and non-state with regards to the provider. Scheunpflug and Wenz (2015, p. 19) contend that the provision of education through non-state faith-based landscapes is essential for school quality development given that the more civil society is involved in schools, the more its quality is raised. This is claimed to have an added value if the churches in their education provision are committed to enhancing responsible freedom and the inclusive function of schools (Scheunpflug 2015, p. 38).

As earlier remarked, (cf. chapter 2.1.3) the models of the operation of non-state faith-based schools in Cameroon vary greatly between regions within the same country as a function of the colonial and missionary past. It could therefore be important for school leaders to have an understanding of their school identity and the context, what it is serving for and what this means for the development of society. Such profile definition and ownership is important as entry points for the debate on the discourse of

church-state relation as far as the question of school financing and recognition by the state is concerned especially in a fragile and complex context of Cameroon where the status is not clear. Therefore, the shaping of school identity by Protestant school leaders in Cameroon in the offer of education as a common good may not only attract state funding as a right but much more ensures educational justice especially in low-income countries with low levels of quality and usher new narratives into the discourse.

### 5.2.5 Conclusion

My research has shown that to understand school leading in Protestant schools in Cameroon, there is the need for the understanding of the styles of faith perceptions by principals as the Protestant school profile understanding by school leaders may not be taken for granted. It is primordial and is very often not mentioned because the debate and discourse about the Protestant school profile and the development of the global society is inherited from the Global North where a lot of these aspects have been researched on. However, in the context for which this study was conducted, this concept of the church as a global institution is not very present. First, the research shows how important it is, to accompany the perception of the leadership role in Protestant schools, by the theological understanding that articulates on freedom with responsibility towards ecumenical and global learning. And for this, the local context of education and school leadership rooted in missionary and colonial times needs to be inserted through the discourse about the process of decolonization. This needs to be shaped through the ownership of knowledge production and professionalization of leadership analysed from the theological and pedagogical perspectives. The theological approach dimension is very important to analyse and develop the global society when faith-based schools gain a shared understanding and commitment towards the offer of education as a public utility which in the context of the study is not explicit by school leaders perceptions. The explicit self-understanding of protestant schools

as public and not private in regards to access by school leaders is important in enhancing global social justice from the broad diaconal approach and needs visibility in discourse from voices in the Global South.

In the context of the study that is complex on the fragile state system of Cameroon, leadership perceptions are divergent. While there is leadership that reinforces obedience to hierarchy and paternalism, there is in the same context school leadership that resists fundamentalism and is enhancing quality, care and social justice, all of which take place with little or no financial support for faith-based schooling by the state. Reflected theology that is contextualized to the realities of the Global South and open dialogue spaces that promote narratives on the respect of individuals, human dignity and cultural and religious diversities can play an important role in contributing to the development of educational quality at both the local and global society.

## 6 Implications of the study

This final chapter provides the implications that can be drawn from the study on the self-understanding of principals of Protestant secondary schools in Cameroon about their school leadership. Firstly, recommendations are given for further research from the empirical results with the hope that the study expands the existing knowledge on school leadership understanding within the Protestant school ethos and in the developing context (cf. chapter 6.1). This is followed by the implications for practice of school leadership with the goal of quality professional school leadership implementation from a theological understanding and towards the development of a global society (cf. chapter 6.2).

### 6.1 Implications for research

In this section, suggestions are given for further research on school leadership in Protestant schools in the context rooted in colonial and missionary times.

#### **Empirical research: Quantitative research on the distribution of school leadership types in Protestant schools in Cameroon**

Findings of the study show that the principals of Protestant schools in Cameroon have experiences to different forms of school leadership types which through the abduction process are summarized into six ideal leadership types. Three of these types namely; call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types constitute the authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion while the other three which comprise of community-participatory, vocation to serve and diaconal leadership types are quality driven on reflected theology (cf. chapter 4.3 & 4.4). The aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of secondary school principals regarding their school leadership understanding in Protestant schools by means of semi-structured interviews for data collection. Therefore, the six ideal leadership types have only revealed the qualities of the field. Seeing how these different types of school leadership affect ecumen-

ical learning, educational quality development as well as the overall development of the global society (see chapter 5.2), it would be striking to conduct a quantitative study to explore how these different types are distributed, verify which ones of them are dominant and thus use the findings for further reflections on the school leadership development in faith-based schools in Cameroon and related implications for the development of faith-based schools, education system and the global society.

### **Qualitative research on school leadership in Cameroon and preparation for a global society**

The results of the study show that school principals by their leading experiences focus on strengthening ties within the national configurations of the state or limit themselves to the formalization of the traditions of individual church bureaucracies and traditions. Findings further reveal that the understanding of the social function of the school and networking of the school are not shared by both the church and the state (cf. chapter 5.1.1). From these results, there is little awareness in Protestant school principals in Cameroon of belonging to a church as a global institution. On the hand, the Protestant school ethos by rooting in the heritage of the Reformation is enhancing ecumenical and global learning, ensuring Protestant schools as safe places for the development of global social justice (Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 1; Bertram-Toost et al., 2018, p. 1; EKD, 2017, p. 10; Simojoki, 2016, p. 17; Scheunpflug, 2015, P. 38-44; Gellel, 2013, p. 13; Buchanan, 2013, p. 1-2, Klenke, 2007, p. 68 & 88-90). In the main time, debate and discourse about the Protestant school profile and the development of the global society is inherited from the Global North where a lot of these aspects have been researched. Given that religious and theological dimensions in education can provide a good foundation for building inclusive globalized societies (Bertram-Toost et al., 2018, p. 1) and given that sub-Saharan Africa is one of the regions with a majority of Protestant schools, it will be interesting to carry out a qualitative research about the school leaders' perceptions on religious diversities, world views and global

social justice in the framework of faith based schools in Cameroon. Conducting such a research with principals is important as leadership is responsible for shaping both the education system and the school profile.

### **Historical research: Decolonization of education and the society through school leadership professionalization in faith-based schools in Cameroon**

Results of the study show that the authoritarian leadership types that emerged comprising of the call for superiority, state-conformational and ecclesiastic are rather hierarchical with emphasis on obedience and discipline. These attributes are similar to those earlier explained (cf. chapter 1) that are rooted in the educational system of Cameroon during the colonial and missionary times (Njobati, 2021, p. 2-4, Dupraz, 2019, p. 632; Gwanfogbe, 2018, p. 22; Ndille, 2018, p. 97; Ustorf, 2011, p. 235 – 236) as well as reflect the current hierarchical and oppressive state system of Cameroon. In the same challenging context of Cameroon, findings also reveal school leadership types on quality driven and reflected theology who try to bring change by enhancing solidarity, inner quality development, care, social justice and resist the pressure from hierarchy. A good number of schools in Cameroon and even some of those in the study were created by missionaries are still functioning. These schools have been providing leadership training not only for the schools but for the Cameroon society at large. From this background, it would be salient to conduct historical research on school leadership in faith-based schools in Cameroon, to learn about the past, how this has led to the present. This will deepen the understanding of the context of the Cameroonian society in regards to the Protestant ethos, education and school leadership in Protestant schools, thus contributing to decisions of how to argue and bring about change through school leadership professionalization. Such form of historical research could make use of documentary research and or oral history.

### **Quantitative research on school leadership actions and implications for teaching in Protestant schools in Cameroon**

The findings of this study described earlier (cf. chapter 5.1) reveal that different styles of faith understanding by Protestant school principals in Cameroon are more important than the type of denomination to which the school belongs but are rather linked with different styles of leadership. Two broad dimensions of faith understanding comprising of quality driven leadership on reflected theology and authoritarian leadership on experience-based religion emerged. Even though all the ideal authoritarian leadership types emphasize on obedience, what differentiates each types are what each of them is obeying to. While the fundamentalist type ensures obedience to what the school leader says about the bible, state-conformational and ecclesiastical leadership types ensure obedience to the state and church as institutions respectively. The results of this study so far show what the school leaders perceive, but what their leading actions are and how teaching under their leadership look like is not evident. Given that the context of Cameroon is very hierarchical with high level of power asymmetry (cf. chapter 1) and rooted in the colonial and missionary past, it would be important to carryout quantitative research on school leadership actions and implications for teaching. Such a study could make use of school and class observation for data collection. The findings can be used to find relationships between school leaders theological perceptions to their actions and to teaching as well as connect the argumentations of school leaders' theological positions and implications for students' learning in the Cameroon context.

### **Comparative research: Qualitative research on the self-understanding of school leadership in non-state faith-based, non-state non-faith-based and state secondary schools compared**

The findings of the current study show six ideal leadership types in the context in the context of Protestant schools in Cameroon. The Cameroon society and educational context is complex, and there is the possibility to have differences in school leadership perceptions between different non-state faith-based schools under different proprietorships (Protestant,

Catholic, Islam), as well as between non-state non-faith-based and state schools. Considering the multidimensionality, varied interests and power play pertaining to issues of educational and social justices as well as dealing with religious and cultural diversities, it could make sense to explore and get voices from the Global South of varied experiences. As Maussen et al., (2012, p. 18) puts it, there is the need to explore flexible possibilities of finding solutions in the global society than issuing “one-size-fits-all” solution. Based on this background, it would be interesting to conduct a qualitative comparative research on the self-understanding of school leadership in all other non-Protestant school settings and compare with the results already obtained for the study in Protestant schools. This will give an overview of school leadership qualities in the whole country, indicate where there are similarities or difference as well as show leadership patterns for a deeper understanding of the context and provide argumentation lines of shaping educational development, how to deal with inequalities, social injustice and social change.

## 6.2 Implications for practice

The results of this study can contribute to the successful implementation of leadership in faith-based schools operating in a fragile and developing context.

**School leaders: Undertake professional school leadership training based on the protestant profile to bring change towards the development of school quality and the society**

The study at hand has revealed that school leaders have different understandings about school leadership with some experiences working towards learners’ individual care and school quality development while others by their perceptions are hindering this process by their focus on obedience and normative discipline (cf. chapters 4.3, 4.4 & 5.1). All these actions are based on individual experiences and are operationalized in the Cameroon context characterized by a fragile, precarious and hierarchical state and church system rooted in colonial and missionary times. Above all, the perception of school leadership is limited to individual church and

national frameworks without any understanding of the church as a global institution. In order to develop competences and bring about change both for the school and society, it is recommended that the school leaders develop an urge for continuous in-service training and get trained on main aspects of the Protestant school ethos, school quality development, leadership for change and the role of faith-based schools in the development of the global society.

The trainings earmarked for the school leaders should take into consideration the qualities of the field represented by the six ideal leadership types emerged from the study. As far as participants are concerned, they should comprise of school principals, vice principals, chaplains, school discipline teachers and heads of departments as they all constitute the school leadership team and the potential group from which school leaders are appointed. Such a training needs to consider content that simultaneously address but not limited to the link between reflected theological and pedagogical understanding of the Protestant profile, anchoring on the freedom with responsibility, the creation of persons in God's image, care respect and support for students' welfare and dignity regardless of performance, the role of leadership in protestant schools to enhance quality education, global social justice ecumenical learning and strategies to bring about change. Besides the content, the training needs to ensure that the conditions and processes enhance contextualization, decolonizing of thought patterns, learning for change as well as ensure that aspects of impact and sustainability should be taken into consideration.

As leadership in faith-based schools is expected to be conversant and take responsibility in regards to topics related to global social justice with added value of faith community, such leadership is not a function of positional authority nor a personal quality but has to be learned (Maxwell, 2020, p. 175). Therefore, the training of school leadership in faith-based schools needs to be regarded as an investment for the present and future.

**Church leaders comprising of heads of churches and education secretaries: Gain awareness and ensure the implementation of the Protestant school profile and support the social function of the schools towards the development of quality, the local and global society**

The findings of the study at hand show that the Protestant churches in Cameroon based on the perception of the school principals are not aware of the social function of their schools and in some cases, they see schools as sources from where to get financial needs (cf. chapter 4.3 & 5.1). Given the important role of the church in shaping education in precarious context like sub-Saharan African countries and developing the society (cf. chapter 1 & 2), Protestant church leaders in Cameroon are recommended to gain awareness, contextualize and ensure the implementation of the Protestant school profile as rooted in the Reformation. This includes, taking ownership of the social function of the schools as well the role of the church as a global institution. The church leaders described here comprise of heads of the various Protestant denominations who are proprietors of the Protestant schools and education secretaries who are responsible for the education departments of the various Protestant churches and responsible for the follow-up of the implementation of education decisions by the school principals.

Given the complexities connected to the local and global context of education as well as to international debate on the role of non-state schools regarding inclusivity and exclusivity, and how to deal with diversities related to religious and worldview beliefs, the Protestant church leaders in Cameroon also need to be trained in these aspects. Such a training needs to take into consideration the local context and international discourses as well as address the conceptual perception of Protestant schools as non-state low-fee public schools with respect to access. Such capacity development needs to be impact-oriented to ensure competences and strategies for change and shaping school leadership towards better quality development of the school and the society.

As one of the challenges of school leadership that has emerged from the study is related to the non-financing of faith-based schools in Cameroon by the state, the church leaders need to have a shared understanding

of their school profile and publicly and officially indicate the public function and detest the appellation of their schools by the state as “private”. This needs to be followed by the church leaders ensuring the social function of the schools, emphasize on solidarity towards the vulnerable, marginalized and less privileged persons, and schools as safe places for ecumenical learning and social justice to deserve financing from public funds.

With respect to the church as a global institution, the church leaders in Cameroon should take active part in national, transnational and international networks of Protestant and ecumenical frameworks and contribute the voices from the Global South in the open dialogue spaces to profile and advocate for the support and development of faith-based schools towards the local and global development of the society. The church leaders should also make use of such networks to dialogue in an informed and systematic way with the state of Cameroon towards the recognition and financing of faith-based schools.

**National offices of Protestant churches and schools in Cameroon: Create a dialogue space, develop, contextualize, publish the Protestant school profile and use it to advocate for the state recognition of the public function of Protestant schools**

As indicated in the theoretical background of the study (cf. chapter 2) Protestant schools exist in context with the case of Cameroon showing variation between regions based on the colonial history of the country (cf. chapter 1). Also given that the state is not aware of the social function of the faith-based schools and seems to mount pressure on obedience to state hierarchy as revealed by the results of the study (cf. chapter 4.3 and 5.1), the national offices of Protestant churches and schools in Cameroon are recommended to develop and contextualize the Protestant school profile and use it to ensure through advocacy, a shared understanding of the function of Protestant schools by state, education stakeholders in Cameroon and parents. The national offices of the Protestant churches and schools are the legal channels of the Protestant churches and institutions that have liaison with the state of Cameroon. These offices comprise of

the Council of Protestant Churches of Cameroon (CEPCA) led by the CEPCA president and the National Office of Protestant Private Education Agency (PPEA) led by the national education secretary for Protestant schools. These structure relate respectively with the ministry of territorial administration and the ministries of education.

**Ministries of Education: Endorse the offer of education by faith-based non-state schools in Cameroon as public good and take responsibility for their financing**

As already mentioned, one of the challenges of leadership in Protestant schools is the non-financing of schools by the state (cf. chapter 4.3 & 5.1). This is observed as the non-fulfilment of state responsibility (Barber et al., 2020, p. 7) in spite of the Dakar framework for action (UNESCO, 2000, p. 12) which emphasizes on the right to education as an obligation for states to take responsibility. Furthermore, the state does not have a shared understanding of the social function of Protestant schools as revealed by the findings of the study (cf. chapter 5,1). Therefore, the ministries of education represented by the ministers, national, regional and divisional delegates and inspectors of education are recommended to review their understanding of the role of faith-based schools in Cameroon, consider the public function of faith-based schools and fulfil the state responsibility in their financing. Even though the study at hand was conducted in the context of secondary schools, the ministers of education at all system levels in Cameroon (basic education, secondary education, higher education and vocational training) are considered in this recommendation as secondary schools depend on primary education for students and depend on higher education for teachers, at the same time responsible for providing students for vocational and higher education. The state should also be aware of the fact that through the trans-national church framework, the churches have been at the embryonic stage of educational development in Cameroon and is still continuing with added value of professional capital and financial resources from their partners as an important contribution to the quality development of education in the county. Therefore, the ministries of National education in Cameroon need understand that the

church is a global institution and should therefore find non-hierarchical platforms of sharing and developing experiences with the school leaders of Protestant schools to ensure the development of the society which depends much more on education.

**Teacher training institutions and universities: Ensure that the education of school leaders and teachers emphasize on quality dimensions, decolonization of education, leadership and change, global social justice and enhance follow-up measures**

Results reveal that authoritarian leadership types emphasize on obedience and normative discipline (cf. chapter 4.3, 4.4 & 5.1) which reflects education in Cameroon during colonial times. The theoretical background of the study has also shown that current school leadership in Cameroon mostly focuses on administrative routines (cf. chapter 1.1 & 2.3) and is not aware of global imperatives for school leadership. Meanwhile, in Cameroon, school leaders in Protestant schools are appointed from amongst teachers and pastors who are trained in pre-service and in-service teacher training institutions as well as universities and seminaries. In order to ensure school leadership for change, these training institutions and universities should emphasize their training on thematic aspects that cover quality understanding of education, decolonization of education and thinking, school leadership and how to bring about change, various aspects connected to global social justice and inclusion with the insertion of argumentations from theological discourses. The training conditions and processes should be contextualized and include solidarity, strategies for bringing change in precarious and fragile state systems, experiencing and ensuring follow-up strategies, impact and sustainability. The universities on their part should also ensure training on knowledge production that makes use of the Cameroon voices and context about faith-based schools rooted in missionary and colonial times and what this means for change and developing the world society.

**Funding organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Give priority to educational development in Cameroon and, advocate, lobby and financing faith-based schooling based on its public function and added value towards the development of both the local and global societies**

From the local background of the study about faith-based schooling (cf. chapter 1), the richness of faith-based education based on the Protestant school profile (cf. chapter 2) and the important role as well as challenges of faith-based schools, are shaping education in a fragile and unstable context of Cameroon (cf. chapter 4.3 & 5.1). Based on this background, the following recommendation is made to funding organizations and NGOs as they are key actors in the development of education and society. First, funding organizations and NGOs are requested to note that faith-based schools in Cameroon are low-fee non-state schools offering education as a public good, yet marginalized by the state by its non-financing. From this understanding, funding organizations and NGOs should do advocacy and lobbying towards international communities to cause the Cameroon government ensure the financing of non-state faith-based schools as a state responsibility. Secondly, funding organizations and NGOs should deal directly with faith-based institutions in matters concerning the financing and support of education in Cameroon especially given the corrupt and hierarchical nature of the state. As revealed by the findings of the study which show that both the state and the church do not have a shared understanding about the social function of faith-based schools, funding organizations and NGOs should place education as priority for Cameroon. In this way, they should ensure not only the development process of quality but also the strategies for improvement of school leadership in faith-based schools towards the development of both the local and world societies with focus on global social justice.

**School leadership for quality and global social justice matters**

“Inclusive, good-quality education is a foundation for dynamic and equitable societies.”

Desmond Tutu

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. Think anew!”

Albert Einstein

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Guide for semi-structured interviews

#### English version

#### Background questionnaire

##### A/ Interview reference

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Place of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Starting time \_\_\_\_ End time \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewee: Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

##### B/ General introduction

Dear Principal, thank you for accepting that I have a conversation with you. I really wanted to meet you because I am very interested in questions that are linked to leadership in Protestant secondary schools for which I know you are a specialist in that domain.

I therefore approach you in the position of one who wants to learn and benefit from your experience about your experiences as a school principal. For me, I will appreciate if you tell me as much information as possible. This information shall not be judged as right or wrong but rather to be used to learn from your expertise.

I would be grateful if you allow that I make an audio recording of our conversation as I may not be able to write down all the details of what you will be telling me. All the information collected from you shall be used only for the purpose of my learning and with your privacy well protected. I will also ensure confidentiality by removing from the records elements that could portray your identity or that of your school.

**Interview guide**

Stimulations (open questions excluding follow-up or prompts)

1. I will like to learn from your experiences as a principal of a protestant secondary school. Tell me about your everyday work in school.
2. You are in charge of leadership in your school, how do you do this? Tell me!
3. Can you tell me more about your school! what makes your school different?
4. From your experience, how would you describe school leadership in a protestant school? (Or from your experience, can you further tell what leadership means in a protestant school like yours?)
5. From your experience as a principal of a Protestant secondary school, tell me the challenges (difficulties) you face.
6. Tell me, what are the most important things from your experience of leading a Protestant school like yours?
7. As a Principal of this Protestant college, what plans do you have for the future? Tell me.
8. Are there other things you would like me to know concerning your experience as principal of a protestant secondary school?

Thank you very much

### Additional information

#### Personal information

	<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Response(s)</i>
1	Age	
2	Sex	
3	Telephone Number	
4	Academic qualification	
5	Professional qualification	
6	Other Professional training	
7	Vocation : (Pastor or Lay)	
8	Teaching experience	
9	Experience as principal	
10	Experience as principal in same school	

#### School related information

	<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Response(s)</i>
11	Year founded	
12	Name of Denomination (Proprietorship))	
13	Location (rural or urban)	
14	Type in regards to boarding (boarding, or day or both)	
15	Type in regards to option of education (general, technical, vocational or mixed)	
16	Type in regards to gender (single sex or mixed sexes)	
17	Number of students	
18	Number of teachers	
19	School profile/ reputation (e.g ranking with respect to end of course examinations compared to other schools in region or nation)	
20	Cultural context (Anglophone or Franco-phone)	

**French version** (*Version française*)**Background questionnaire****A/ Référence de l'entretien**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Lieu de l'entretien \_\_\_\_\_

Heure de début \_ Heure de fin \_ Personne interrogée - Code : \_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

***B/ Introduction générale***

Cher Principal, je vous remercie d'avoir accepté que je m'entretienne avec vous. Je souhaitais vraiment vous rencontrer car je suis très intéressé par les questions liées au leadership dans les écoles secondaires protestantes pour lesquelles je sais que vous êtes un spécialiste dans ce domaine.

Je m'adresse donc à vous dans la position de quelqu'un qui veut apprendre et bénéficier de votre expérience en tant que directeur d'école. En ce qui me concerne, j'apprécierai que vous me donniez le plus d'informations possible. Ces informations ne seront pas considérées comme justes ou fausses, mais plutôt comme un moyen de tirer profit de votre expertise.

Je vous serais reconnaissant de m'autoriser à faire un enregistrement audio de notre conversation, car j'ai peut-être que je ne sois pas en mesure d'écrire tous les détails de ce que vous me direz. Toutes les informations recueillies auprès de vous ne seront utilisées qu'à des fins d'apprentissage et dans le respect de votre vie privée. Je garantirai également la confidentialité en supprimant des dossiers et les éléments susceptibles de révéler votre identité ou celle de votre école.

## Guide d'entretien

Stimulations (questions ouvertes sans les questions de suivi)

1. J'aimerais connaître votre expérience en tant que directeur d'une école secondaire protestante. Parlez-moi de votre travail quotidien à l'école.
2. Vous êtes responsable de la direction de votre école, comment faites-vous? Racontez-moi!
3. Pouvez-vous m'en dire plus sur votre école? Qu'est-ce qui rend votre école différente?
4. D'après votre expérience, comment décririez-vous la direction d'une école protestante? (Ou d'après votre expérience, pouvez-vous préciser ce que signifie la direction d'une école protestante comme la vôtre?)
5. D'après votre expérience en tant que directeur d'une école secondaire protestante, dites-moi les défis (difficultés) auxquels vous êtes confronté(e).
6. Dites-moi, quelles sont les choses les plus importantes de votre expérience de direction d'une école protestante comme la vôtre?
7. En tant que directeur de ce collège protestant, quels sont vos projets pour l'avenir? Dites-les-moi.
8. Y a-t-il d'autres choses que vous aimeriez que je sache concernant votre expérience en tant que principal d'une école secondaire protestante?

Je vous remercie de votre attention.

## Informations complémentaires

### Informations personnelles

	<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Réponse(s)</i>
1	Age	
2	Sexe	
3	Numéro de téléphone	
4	Diplôme	
5	Qualification professionnelle	
6	Autre formation professionnelle	
7	Vocation: (pasteur ou laïc)	
8	Expérience dans l'enseignement	
9	Expérience en tant que directeur d'école	
10	Expérience en tant que directeur dans la même école	

### School related information

	<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Réponse(s)</i>
11	Année de fondation	
12	Nom de la dénomination (circonscription)	
13	Localisation (rurale ou urbaine)	
14	Type d'internat (internat, externat ou les deux)	
15	Type d'enseignement (général, technique, professionnel ou mixte)	
16	Type en ce qui concerne le sexe (unisexe ou mixte)	
17	Nombre d'élèves	
18	Nombre d'enseignants	
19	Profil/ réputation de l'école (par exemple, classement aux examens de fin d'études par rapport à d'autres écoles de la région ou du pays)	
20	Contexte culturel (anglophone ou francophone)	

**Appendix 2: Anonymized interviewees**

SN	Name of Interviewee (anonymized)	Sex
1	Cat	Male
2	Rabbit	Male
3	Badger	Male
4	Giraffe	Female
5	Degu	Male
6	Cow	Male
7	Magpie	Male
8	Donkey	Male
9	Gorilla	Male
10	Elephant	Male
11	Possum	Male
12	Hippopotamus	Male
13	Skylark	Male
14	Duck	Male
15	Bison	Male
16	Chickaree	Female
17	Butterfly	Male
18	Ratel	Male
19	Peccary	Male
20	Axolotl	Female
21	Fish	Male
22	Horse	Male
23	Raccoon	Male
24	Zebra	Male
25	Groundhog	Male
26	Lemmings	Female

Source: Primary data, 2019

### Appendix 3: Information on interviewees

The following table shows the criteria with which the saturation of the study was controlled. To ensure anonymization, the detailed information for each case is deleted.

Respondents	Sample representability																					
	Age	Gender	Profession	Professional experience (years)		Denomination of school																
				Teacher	Principal	Longevity (years)	Others	Rural	Urban	Boarding	Day	School Type	School size	Staff size	Academic profile	Cultural background						
Young (<30)	Male	Teacher	Principal	More experience (>10)	PCC	CBC	ECC	UEBC	Lutheran	EPC	Adventists	Others	Small (<100 students)	Big (>500)	Small (<30 teachers)	Classifying (2-4 stars)	Statutory (50-99 stars)	Not classifying (>100 stars)	Francophone	Anglophone		
1	Cat																					
2	Rabbit																					
3	Badger																					
4	Giraffe																					
5	Degu																					
6	Cow																					
7	Magpie																					
8	Donkey																					
9	Gonilla																					
10	Elephant																					
11	Possum																					
12	Hippopotamus																					
13	Skylark																					
14	Duck																					
15	Bison																					
16	Chickaree																					
17	Butterfly																					
18	Rael																					
19	Pecary																					
20	Acrobat																					
21	Fish																					
22	Horse																					
23	Raccoon																					
24	Zebra																					
25	Groundhog																					
26	Lemmings																					

Source: Primary data, 2019

## Appendix 4: Code book generated from MAXQDA

### Deductive and inductive categories

#### Explicit protestant theology

##### Diaconal

- Extend education to everyone of all social backgrounds
- Promotes self confidence
- Protects human dignity
- Cherishes differences amongst students
- Study and protect the natural environmental
- Accepts everyone as child of God
- Care for the underprivileged in the community

##### Reading the bible

- Open schools for both boys and girls
- Inclusion of singing and music in school program
- Develop literacy skills in everyone
- Bible serving as moral, religious and literacy book
- Independent reading and interpretation of the bible
  - Reading of bible in group
  - Personal reading of bible by principal

##### Autonomy

- Enhance Social development
- Enhance Cultural development
- Enhance Emotional development
- Offer Physical development
- Offer Intellectual development
- Offer Moral development
- Offer Spiritual development
- Offer extra-curricular activities
- Demonstrate respect for children and young persons
- Demonstrate unconditional love for each other
- Freedom of thinking and expression
- Freedom to participate in religious activities

##### Bible as authority

- Offer opportunity to study bible in own language
- Personally decide on faith not through others
- Use of bible as the only source of religious truth
- Use scriptures as standard to shape human action
- Priesthood of all believer
  - Everyone having the right to read and study the bible
  - Pray for one another
  - Pray for self
  - Education on all aspects of life not only religion
  - Liberty to question and make own contributions
  - Freedom to say prayers

### **Implicit protestant understanding of school**

#### Caring

##### Globally

- Offer global and inclusive learning
- Offer peace and human right education
- Promotes peace and reconciliation
- Reach out to everyone (ecumenical)
- Networking at local and global level
- Speaks out on injustice
- Supports the poor, weak and oppressed
- Support schools in difficulties
- Sacrifice time and self for school development
- Promotes, honesty, ethical values (integrity)

##### Environment

- Offer environmental education
- Offer care to nature protection

##### For individuals

- Offer bursaries for access to education
- Offer low fees
- Admission favours children from poor economic background
- Admission favours children with weak social background
- offer admission to different cultural backgrounds and nationality

- Support education from poor economic background
- Support education from weak social background
- Support education of students with low academic performance
- Support education with special needs
- Care for staff and students
- Care for child upbringing
- Care for children's welfare, security & health
- Offer additional classes to students
- Care for everyone in the school community
- Offer additional classes to students

#### High Quality teaching

- Supplementary education and learning space
  - Participate in international school partnership and cooperation
  - Cooperation with other system levels of education
  - Cooperation with youth work to offer social need education
  - Baptism offered as additional classes by the Parish
  - Confirmation offered as additional classes by the Parish
  - Supplementary education offered by Peers
  - Supplementary education offered by Community members
  - Supplementary education offered by Youth organization
  - Supplementary education offered by Parishes
  - Supplementary education offered by Parents
  - Supplementary education by school clubs
  - Supplementary teaching by ex-students
  - Integration of the principal in community activities
  - Integration of Principal in Parish and church groups

#### Elite students

- Promote harmonious living
- Ensure students have fun in learning and be joyful
- Supports the development of each student's
- Promote inquiry and problem solving in learners
- Promote high expectations for students
- Enhance competency development in learners

#### Good teachers

Promote fun & joy in learning  
 Opened to discovery and surprise  
 Give room for learners to explore their talents  
 Critical to aspects of perfection / pedagogy of success  
 Competency development  
 Give room for students to learn from mistakes  
 Give and receive constructive feedback to learning  
 Reflective Classroom management  
 Clear school rules  
 Teachers ensure effective time use for learning  
 Teachers ensure good learning climate  
 Education providers ensure proper payment of teachers  
 Education providers support teachers' health  
 Education providers support teachers' professional development  
 Teachers engaged in continuous learning  
 Teachers act as role models  
 Train teachers on modern science and nature  
 Train teachers on activating and value-based  
 Train teachers on Learner-centred participatory  
 Support training of youths as teachers

#### Autonomy

Learner-centred / active and participatory learning  
 Create opportunities to children to speak and take stance  
 Create non-violent climate  
 Promote cooperation amongst learners  
 Create opportunities for children to participate in learning  
 Create room for children to learn relevant things  
 Create room for children to discover new things  
 Enhance respect, empathy and self-regulation  
 Develop self-concept in learners  
 Learner-centred teaching / training

#### Peace education

Promote peace and non-violence education  
 School as place of trust & reconciliation

- Speak out on injustice
- Value freedom of speech
- Challenges social injustice
- Ensures self-confidence & human dignity
- Inclusive with respect to sex
- Inclusive with respect to religious & ethnic groups
- Inclusive with respect to social background
- Cherishes differences

#### Critical thinking

- Enhance investigations and discoveries
- Enhance problem-solving skills
- Respect individual's freedom to faith & life orientation
- Hope instilled in students for unique potentials & personality
- Develop act of empathy and action of solidarity
- Develop individual reflections and creativity
- Students take responsibility for self, others & future
- Strengthen capacity of students in decision taking

#### Spiritual offer of the school

- Gives room for inter-religious dialogue
- Takes into consideration pluralism of denominations
- Include Chaplaincy & pastoral care
- Live spirituality with services, songs & prayers
- Promote singing
- Teach religious education
- Conduct devotions for whole school
- Conduct devotion and prayer for self
- Conduct devotion for classes or small groups
- Conduct devotion for staff
- Celebrate Christian feasts & respect Christian public holidays
- Individual follow-up of spiritual life

#### Understanding Theology

- Reflected theology
  - Enhance the independent study of other subjects
  - Give room for problem solving

- Enhance the development of spirituality
- Decentralized school system
- Un-reflected theology
  - Integration of faith and leadership role
  - Integration of faith and knowledge
  - Put Christian symbols in school and classrooms
  - Say prayers during all lessons
  - Compel all students to take part in religious activities
  - Punish students who do not pass in religious study
  - Cause students to memorize
  - Morning devotion as administrative duty
  - Make religious study compulsory
  - Church as authority
    - Ensure strict discipline in schools
      - Ensure strict discipline for both teachers and students
      - Ensure strict discipline for students
      - Ensure strict discipline for teachers
      - Use violence to discipline students
    - Enhance culture of the church
    - Make faithful obedient member of the church
  - Centralized school system
  - Strict rule regarding teacher's religious background

### **Leading understanding**

#### **Instructional**

- Promotes positive learning climate
- Visits classrooms to monitor teaching and learning
- Gives constructive feedback to teaching
- Monitors teaching from outside of classroom
- Plans systematic monitoring of teaching
- Protects effective instructional time use
- Main activity of principal centred on students learning
- Principal-teacher relationship is professional
- Positive oriented delegation of power

Decision making on teacher professionalism  
 Follow-up children's learning  
 Individual follow-up of students learning  
 Focusing on learners' performance / achievement  
 attaches importance to teacher professional development  
 Ask teachers to observe his/her lesson  
 Brings in pedagogic resource persons to follow-up teaching  
 Focus on entrepreneurship & skill training  
 Adapt curricula to learner's needs  
 Recruitment considers teaching quality and effective presence

#### Transformational

Offer individualized support to teachers  
 Inspire teachers to be more committed  
 Principal mainly reflects on teachers' situation  
 Principal-teacher relation void of criticisms  
 Decisions on moral values of community-fostering participation  
 Focusing on teachers' harmony  
 Participatory or shared leadership  
 Plan to learn from best practices

#### Administrative

Principals' reflection centred on administration  
 Relationship between teacher and principal being hierarchical  
 Decisions based on administrative issues  
 Focus on administrative guidelines and policies from hierarchy  
 Tasks given by instructing  
 Supervises  
 Follow-up teaching for control and administrative purposes  
 Check effective presence of teachers and students  
 Ensure the respect of hierarchy and policies

#### Other forms of leading

showing good example  
 Leading by supervision or coordination  
 Decisions by principal  
 Leading by promoting competition

Leading focusing on exams  
 Involvement of parents in decision making  
 Parents involvement in pedagogy  
 Leading by active involvement of students  
 Leading based of competences of staff  
 Breaks hierarchical stereotypes  
 Biblical leadership  
 Leading based on transparency and trust  
 Leading focusing on communication and feedback
 

- Giving individual feedback
- Giving criterion feedback
- Giving social feedback

 Leading by communicating with parents, teachers and students
 

- Leading by communication with teachers
- Leading by communication with students

 Leading by care, service, sacrifice, commitment  
 Humility and trust leadership  
 Leading from in-service training experience
 

- Leadership experience from in-service teacher training

 Leading by consultation  
 Leading by example  
 Being pro-active in leadership  
 Leading focusing on creativity  
 leading in social crisis situation

### **Professional capital**

Decisional capital

Social capital

- Connect to different groups of persons in the community
- Attend to parents of students at any time they come
- Network with parents, church, ex-students, NGOs, experts
- Network with international partners

Resource management

- Human resource management

Clear regulations and job description

Follow-up the implementation of job description/regulations

Establish and share job descriptions/regulations to workers

balance professional and personal needs

Ensure respect of human rights

Attention to objective of institution

Celebrate milestones

Empathetic with workers

Empathetic with students

Time management

Make plan for each year, term, month, week and day

Plan weekly, monthly terminal and annual activities

Plan activities of the day

Plan and leave sometime for unforeseen

Ensure adequate learning time for students

Focus on important tasks

Carryout urgent task

Develop and follow calendar of activities

Delegate effectively

Respect of time allocation for activities

Punctuality

Plan time to rest

Evaluate level of accomplishment of planned activities

Material management

Financial management

Alternative source of income

Prioritize teachers' salaries

Infrastructural management

Reflects infrastructural development to enhance learning

Ensures maintenance of infrastructure

### **Vision of the school**

Vision developed by school proprietor

Vision developed only by the principal

Vision shared by principal, teachers and students

Vision focus

Development of vision

    Vision developed by principal and teachers

    Vision developed by Principal

    Vision developed by hierarchy

Vision Communicated

Implementation of vision

Work organization

    Organization of meetings

    Follow-up of activities

    Setting priorities

    Share responsibilities amongst staff

Private and public understanding of schools

    Confessional school understanding

    Public school understanding

    Private school understanding

    relationship with state officials

    State as authority

## Challenges

    Delegation of duties challenge

    Challenge connected to teaching and learning

    Financial difficulties to pay salaries and run school

    No subvention from the state

    Challenges at state and church system levels

        Challenges from administration staff

        Challenges from teachers

        Challenges from students

    Challenges from church hierarchy

    Fighting fraud and corruption in school

    Challenge of lodging teachers

    School infrastructural challenges

    Limited space for development

Transport means for children  
 Challenge of dirty campus  
 Planning challenge  
 Poor school climate  
 Resistance to change by old teachers  
 Managing part time teachers  
 Staff retention and instability  
 Inadequate staff  
 Additional duties  
 Teacher recruitment challenges  
 Challenges from teachers ` attitudes  
 lack of trained teachers  
 In-service training for specialized subjects  
 Challenge to complete the syllabus  
 Dealing with children from different backgrounds  
 Student enrolment / recruitment  
 Poor students' results / performance  
 Dealing with deviant behaviour  
 Challenges from insecurity  
 Challenge connected to socio-political crisis  
 Challenge of maintaining set standards  
 Multiple functions  
 Challenges from parents  
 Challenges from the Alumni  
 Non patronizing of school by pastors and Christians  
 Expansion potential  
 Others  
   Daily work  
     Ensure discipline  
     work on admin documents and mails  
     serve students, parents and public

### **What makes the school different**

Academic results outstanding  
 Care, humility  
 Presence of gospel, bible, chaplaincy, prayers ...  
 Having God-fearing teachers –  
 Job satisfaction, commitment, work with joy  
 Leadership style  
 Offer sporting & extra-curricular facilities  
 Good water supply  
 Clean campus  
 Non-congested classrooms  
 Solar electricity supply  
 Allow use of phones by students  
 Sees difference with Catholic schools  
 Offer obligatory religious study  
 Add doctrine to religious study teaching  
 Combines Islam experiences

### **Plans for the future**

Instill ethical culture & competences  
 Strategy for salary security  
 Strategy to improve teachers' attitude  
 Enrolment improvement strategy  
 Infrastructural development  
 Open bilingual section  
 Offer science subjects with practicals  
 Leave legacy on leadership  
 No plans, no hope due to crisis  
 Role of family in leadership of principal  
   Indirect support of role as principal by family  
   Direct support of role as principal by family  
   Family life as source of challenge  
 Belief in God's control of everything  
 Gives room for change /enthusiastic

Working with guilt or fear

Extra-professional activities

    Family and friends-oriented extra activities

    Community-oriented extra activities

    Church oriented extra activities

Celebrate milestones

View Anglophone Protestant schools as good examples



The study is concerned with the self-understanding of Protestant secondary school principals about their school leadership in the context of Cameroon where education is rooted in missionary and colonial times. The debate at international level on whether or not non-state schools are widening inequality gaps and whether school leadership is contributing to enlightenment or to fundamentalism matter in researching about the Protestant school profile and leadership. The study therefore seeks to answer the research question, “What are the perceptions of secondary school principals of Protestant schools about their school leadership?”

The research was conceptualized as exploratory and hypothesis-generating within the qualitative approach. It used semi-structured interviews to collect data from 26 theoretically sampled secondary school principals. The data was analyzed by qualitative content analysis using the grounded theory in an iterative deductive-inductive way. Through the generalization process of abduction and by a deep analysis of the empirical data, the criteria which constitute the categories of quality first emerged. Thereafter, six ideal types of leading understanding were generated and consists of (1) call for superiority leadership, (2) state-conformational leadership, (3) ecclesiastical leadership, (4) community-participatory leadership, (5) vocation to serve leadership and (6) diaconal leadership. Further analysis revealed a multi-dimensional self-understanding by principals on the Protestant ethos of schools and their leadership function. Thus, not all the six ideal leadership types are contributing to quality education. On the one hand, there are fundamentalist leaders focusing on normative aspects of discipline while on the other hand, there are leaders promoting democratic values or working in a diaconal way, promoting social justice. Furthermore, principals show little awareness of belonging to the church as a global institution.



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