

# Principals' Encouragement of Teacher Collaboration and Support for Peer Coaching in Government Secondary Schools, South West Region, of Cameroon

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## ABSTRACT

Within an education culture striving for continuous improvement, there is a constant need to ensure the appropriate skills, knowledge and actions of staff match the changing needs of the system. Coaching can assist in this process of 'upskilling'. There is great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to the school and student outcomes. There is also increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners. Schools need trained and committed teachers but they, in turn, need the leadership of highly effective principals and support from other senior and middle managers. The purpose of this study was to provide answers to the following questions: Do principals encourage a collaborative work place culture among teachers?; Do principals provide release time to enable teachers to work with each other as coaches? Do principals ensure that teachers have the needed material and financial support for peer coaching? A descriptive survey research design was used. Data was collected from 288 teachers in 8 schools and 4 divisions of the South West Region using a questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 12.0 for windows and reported using frequencies, percentages and means. The results of the data analysis revealed as follows: Principals of government secondary school in Cameroon do not encourage teacher collaboration. Of the 12 questionnaire items designed to answer this question, none of the items had a mean of 3.2 which is the cut-off mean. It is recommended that Principals of government secondary schools in Cameroon should take up courses in Educational Administration in the area of Educational Leadership at University level in order to update their knowledge, skills and attitudes in this area. Principals should work in collaboration with the Faculty of Education of the University of Buea and organize seminars to acquaint teachers with the practice of peer coaching. Principals should invest in buying relevant books in educational leadership (peer coaching) and create time to read them in order to keep abreast with current school leadership practices.

**KEYWORDS:** Principals' Encouragement, Teacher Collaboration and Support, Peer Coaching, Government Secondary Schools

## INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have found many benefits of peer coaching. These include being able to give something back, providing encouragement and support, and learning from each other, which are well documented in the peer coaching literature as being consistent benefits of peer coaching (Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005; Donegan et al., 2000; Swafford, 1998). Further to these, Rice (2012) found in her study with a group of higher education faculty members that those who participated in peer coaching using "formative dialogue". Since then, there has been substantial growth in the use of a more defined peer coaching model in certain areas of the education sector (O'Bree, 2008). Teachers in some early childhood settings, primary and secondary classrooms use this model of collaborative support to enhance their practice and student learning outcomes (BuzbeeLittle, 2005;

Donegan et al., 2000; Gathercole & Ruston, 2009; Swafford, 1998) through to tertiary institutions where peer coaching (or a comparable model) is used with pre-service teachers and postgraduate students (Baron & Carr, 2008; Britton & Anderson, 2010; Jenkins & Veal, 2002; Ladyshevsky, 2006). There is significant documentation regarding the use of peer coaching in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors (particularly post-graduate); however there is less evidence of the practice of peer coaching in the early childhood education sector.

One of the main benefits of peer coaching, as such studies purport, is its effect on collaborative teacher learning and teaching (Buzbee-Little, 2005; Zwart et al., 2009). These collaborative models of teaching could link to enhancing

student success as teachers work together to find innovative and interesting ways of promoting learning (Rice, 2012; Showers & Joyce, 1996; Swafford, 1998; Zwart et al., 2009).

The job of a school principal, according to (Archer, 2004) has become more complex and difficult because it is continuously expanding. In addition to their traditional administrative functions, they must, serve as instructional leaders (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom, 2004). As a consequence, most principals are unable to satisfactorily perform all their responsibilities, especially in the area of continuous professional development of teachers. These demands have created shoes too large for any one person to fill (Elmore, 19997).

Barth (2002) states that schools of the 21st Century require a new kind of principal, one who fulfills a variety of functions. That is being an instructional, a community and a visionary leader. Instructional leadership is focused on strengthening teaching and learning, professional development and accountability. Since principals cannot single handily fulfill all of their obligations (Elmore, 1997), they are bound to share some of their responsibilities with teachers. There are many ways this can be done, and peer coaching is one of them. Elmore (2000) have observed that the days of the principal as the lone instructional leader are over.

#### **TRACING DYNAMICS OF TEACHER COLLABORATION AND SUPPORT OF PEER COACHING**

The concept of shared leadership is not new to humanity it has biblical antecedents. When Jethro visited his son-in-law Moses and noticed the huge workload of Moses as leader of the Israelites, Jethro advised him to share his task of leadership. According to Jethro, this would lessen Moses' burden, energize him, and the people who stand before him all day long and provide satisfaction to all. This clearly outlines some of the benefits of shared leadership according to the scheme suggested by Jethro to Moses (Genesis 18: 13-20).

Mbua (2003) insinuates that shared leadership also originated from the human relations movement which grew out of the limitations of the scientific management approaches. The scientific management school of thought ignored or underestimated the human factor in administration by paying little or no attention to the welfare of workers. In 1913, John Franklin Bobbitt applied Taylor's scientific management to educational management and leadership. Bobbitt believed that schools must be more efficient by creating a centralized authority with top-down control of all operations. Authoritarian leadership by school administrators was considered an absolute necessity to ensure that schools were to be business-like and efficient (Callahan & Button, 1964). This gave rise to the human relations movement, which conceptualized administration as a shared responsibility, asserting that organizational structures should permit a free interplay of ideas in order to minimize the rigidity of hierarchical structures. It can be argued that concepts such as school climate and culture are the brainchild of the human relation movement. This movement has profound implications on research on what principals do to build and nurture collaboration among teachers.

Studies in education like in other social sciences cannot be complete without being rooted in some theoretical standpoints (Amin, 2005). The theory used in this study is systems theory propounded in the 1940s by a biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in reaction against reductionism and as an attempt to review the unity of science (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2004). This theory assumes that systems are open to and interact with their environments. Mbua (2003) opines that a system is a collection of parts unified to accomplish an overall goal. If one part is removed, the nature of the system is changed as well. Systems theory can be used to explain organizational processes and outcomes. Schools are formal organizations composed of many parts for example teachers, students, support staff, appointed administrators, and parents, among others. These parts work together in a division of labor relations for the realization of the clearly defined goals. These parts are inter-related and interdependent in such a way that the removal of one part or its inadequate contribution will hurt the system's functioning. Systems theory provides a framework for principals to view schools as being made up of inter-dependent and inter-related parts (Copland, 2003). Teachers work or are expected to work in ways that complement and strengthen each other. Peer coaching is widely acknowledged as a strategy to reduce teacher isolation and replace it with norms of collegiality.

Peer coaching is a nonevaluative, nonthreatening, and confidence-building training method for educators. This method is highly effective in positively impacting teachers (Bowman & McCormick, 2001; Brandt, 1987; Page, 2000; Showers & Joyce, 1996; Slater & Simmons, 2001; Sparks & Bruder, 1987; Swafford, 1998). Robbins defined peer coaching as " a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another Teachers may also develop a lasting collegial relationship with their peer coach. (Bowman & McCormick, 2001; Brandt, 1987; Page, 2000; Showers & Joyce, 1996; Slater & Simmons; Sparks & Bruder, 1987; Swafford, 1998). This type of professional development can be intimidating to teachers at times because they are accustomed to being isolated in their classrooms (Brandt); however, the positive outcomes of the peer coaching experience outweigh all initial hesitation

However, the encouragement of teacher collaboration and mutual support in professional development is not new. For example, peer coaching has been a feature of teacher professional development in the United States for many years, and has been seen as a means to effect and embed lasting improvements in professional practice (Shalaway, 1985; Swafford et al, 1997; Swafford, 1998). Coaches provide educators with procedural, affective, and reflective support which broadly involves: answering questions, highlighting educators' strengths, suggesting alternative strategies, facilitating problem solving, encouraging risk taking, assisting during implementation challenges, and encouraging reflective practice (Buly et al., 2006; Swafford, 1998; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). Furthermore, educators indicated that the support that coaches provided affected the teacher change process and promoted self-reflection (Buly et al., 2006; Swafford, 1998; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). A more recent trend in coaching literature involves the role of experts or other professionals in the

school system to support educators working with students who have exceptionalities (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich, 2012; Scheeler, Congdon, & Stansbery 2010; Sharma et al., 2010; Strieker, 2012)

### PEER COACHING:

This concept has been identified by educational researchers as an important strategy that can be used by schools to enhance instructional practices to improve students' academic achievement (Joyce and Showers, 1982). According to Glickman and Gordon (1998) the practice of peer coaching necessitates meaningful teacher collaboration, which entails the rigorous, mature examination of teaching and learning. This is further described by these authors as "a cause beyond oneself" and constitutes a radical departure from the tradition of teachers working alone that have for long deprived them of the joys and benefits of collaborative behaviour. Peer coaching accrues the following benefits: To teachers increase in their motivation and retention, as well as greater opportunities for professional growth (Glickman and Gordon, 1998). For students, teacher collaboration in peer coaching leads to improvement in academic achievement and student behaviour as well as improvement in student learning as teachers develop high expectations for students' performance, and translate them into teaching behaviours (Joyce and Showers, 1982). These scholars, posit that in schools where peer coaching is practiced as a form of collaboration among teachers, there is increase possibility to effectively implement change and strengthen the school culture and climate. It has also been linked to increased employee morale, commitment, job satisfaction and school improvement (Griffin, 2005).

### LEADERSHIP

To define leadership is a task which has caught the attention of both practitioners and academics over the years. According to Bass (1985) leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Bass (1990) adds that leadership is about transforming followers, creating a vision of the goals that may be attained as well as related strategies to attain them. It is important to observe that in his definition, Bass (1985) talks about a person who influences others. He does not talk about a person who has been appointed into a formal position. The implication here is that the ability to influence others does not necessarily come from appointed officials but can also result from the possession of what it takes to influence others. Peer coaching is about having teachers influence the professional development of each other. By doing so, teachers can be described as exerting leadership within a school.

### SHARED LEADERSHIP

Shared leadership can be defined as leadership that involves moving from having power over others to sharing power with others (Blase & Blasé 2000). Shared leadership has many names including partnership-as-leadership, distributed leadership (Harris, 2003), and community of leaders (Barth, 1990). Under the shared leadership model, the vision of a school is shared and all actors or stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and principals among others) become school leaders in various ways rather than having one person claiming to be the leader all the time (Barth, 1990). According to Blasé and Blase, (2000) the idea of

leadership as partnership suggests the basic concept of two or more people sharing power and joining forces to move towards the accomplishment of a shared goal. The main job of the administrator in distributed leadership is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the people in the organization, use those knowledge, skills and attitudes to create a common structure of expectations, holding the parts of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contribution to the collective result (Elmore, 2000).

Sintz (2005) maintain that shared leadership involves people, fosters a belief in democratic principles and processes. Furthermore, she asserts that shared leadership is based on three essential interwoven components: ownership, learning and sharing. Ownership means that problems and issues need to become a responsibility of all stakeholders with adequate structures for participation. An emphasis on learning and development is necessary so that people can share understanding and can improve what is going on. While on the other hand sharing has to do with open, honest, respectful and informed conversation.

Barth (1990), talking about shared leadership in education in particular, points out that, principals can develop a community of leaders by openly articulating the goal, relinquishing decision-making authority to teachers and involving teachers before decisions are made. According to Barth when others are involved in the decision making process ahead of time, they are more likely to implement needed improvements. For example when teachers are included in making vital decisions their morale, commitment and performance are likely to increase. Through peer coaching, a community of leaders can be developed.

### TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Katzenmeyer and Muller (2001) define teacher leadership as the leadership offered by a teacher within and beyond the classroom. For Rutherford (2006) teacher leadership is when teachers intentionally transfer knowledge that influences ones' ability to meet educational objectives. According to Sintz (2005) teacher leadership is defined to mean the leadership offered by a teacher outside the classroom, either in addition or in place of his or her regular duties to assume a leadership role. The main responsibilities of teacher leaders can be grouped into four main categories (Lord, & Miller, 2000):

- Working with individual teachers to support classroom practices
- Training groups of teachers in a professional development setting.
- Working with various school actors (administration, teachers, parents, community members or students) on issues that affect or support learning.
- Working on the "task du jour" or daily assignments as they emerge.

These dimensions of teacher leadership concern areas such as being mentors and coaches of new or less experienced staff, co-teaching and demonstrating appropriate teaching behaviours (Joyce and Showers, 1982).

In Cameroon, as stated in the Hand Book of Heads of Secondary and High Schools (MINEDUC, 1996), the functions of the principal are pedagogic, administrative, financial and

social. A school principal in Cameroon is obliged to perform all of his or her responsibilities effectively in order to accomplish the objectives of the school. These functions are often difficult for the principal to carry out effectively alone (Archer, 2004). This strongly suggests that the principal must share his or her responsibilities with others within the school, especially teachers.

The trend in governance in Cameroon, as in other parts of the world, is towards participatory leadership and good governance (Cameroon's Good Governance Policy, 2004). Cameroon's good governance document among other things makes provision for decentralization, aimed at building local capacities and involving the population in the management of their own affairs. Principals in Cameroon cannot afford to remain indifferent to the demands of this legislation for leadership at all levels to be shared.

One of the major educational problems in Cameroon is that of 'too many unqualified teachers' (MINEDUC, 1995). The Cameroon Sector Wide Approach/ Education (2005) draft document stresses the need to ameliorate "efficiency and quality of educational services" (P. 74)

Law No 98/004 of April 14 1998 laying down guidelines for education in Cameroon, in its section two, states that education shall be a top priority of the nation, and shall be provided by the state and private sector partners. More importantly, the law recognizes the fact that teachers are "guarantors of quality education." Furthermore inadequate teacher quality has been widely identified as one of the problems facing the secondary education sub-sector (for example, The Report of the National Education Forum of 1995; The Report of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education, 2005). Strengthening teacher quality therefore constitutes a strategic objective of the government in this area.

The Draft Document of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (2005) acknowledges the importance of teachers in efforts aimed at improving the quality of educational services. Peer coaching has the potential to contribute towards the solution of these problems and to the problem of too many unqualified teachers.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many educational researchers have long acknowledged the importance of peer coaching as one of the strategies for capacity building among teachers. According to Glickman and Gordon (1998) the practice of peer coaching necessitates meaningful teacher collaboration, to depart from the loneliness that has been said to characterize the teaching profession, and has deprived teachers of the joys and benefits of collaborative professional behaviours. The problem is that in spite of the benefits of peer coaching to teachers as individuals, students as well as secondary schools as organizations, peer coaching may not be encouraged as a teacher capacity building practice. As a consequence, this study seeks to empirically investigate whether principals of government secondary schools create and nurture conditions that support peer coaching.

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate whether principals encourage collaborative workplace cultures in secondary school and support peer coaching

through the provision of release time and necessary resources.

### Specific Objectives:

- To find out if principals encourage a collaborative workplace culture among teachers.
- To investigate if they provide release time to enable teachers to take part in peer coaching activities.
- To investigate whether principals ensure that teachers have the needed human and material resource support for peer coaching.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is an attempt to empirically answer the following research questions:

- Do principals encourage a collaborative work place cultures among teachers?
- Do principals provide release time to enable teachers to work with each other as coaches?
- Do principals ensure that teachers have the needed human and material resource support for peer coaching?

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design and related themes

The survey research design was used for this study. Data was collected using a two section closed-ended item questionnaire. Section one dealt with the demographic profile (gender, highest academic qualification, subjects taught and longevity). The second had eighteen (18) items, with Likert-type response options ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" (weighted on a four (4) point Likert Scale as follows: strongly agree (SA) = 4; agree (A) = 3; disagree (D) = 2, and strongly disagree (SD) = 1. A questionnaire was preferred in the collection of data because it enables the collection of data from many people within a limited period of time and it saves time (Amin, 2005).

#### Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The validity and reliability of the instrument was ensured by the researcher through a pilot test with teachers not included in the study. These teachers who were used to pilot test the appropriateness of the questionnaire and make suggestions for improvement with particular attention to the clarity, and alignment with research questions. The subjects were also informed that they were free to refuse completing the questionnaire and the responses of those who did were going to be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

#### Method of data collection and analysis

Three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to teachers. Out of this number, 288 copies were appropriately completed and returned to the researcher giving a response rate of 96%. Data collected was analyzed using the statistical package for the Social Sciences (S.P.S.S.) version 12.0 for windows to obtain descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentages, and means.

### FINDINGS

#### Demographic Data

The demographic data were collected for the following variables: gender, highest academic qualification, subject(s) taught by respondents and years of teaching experience. The data was analyzed and presented using frequencies and percentages.

Gender of respondents was presented as follow:

- 288 respondents 147 (51%) were females while 141(49%) were males.
- Highest Academic Qualification: were as follows: DIPES 1, 93 32.3%), Bachelor's degree, 60 (20.0%), DIPES II, 57 (19.8%), Master's degree 42 (14.5%), G.C.E A/Level, 18 (6.3%), missing 18 (6.3%). The missing row represents the number of subjects who did not provide the information required.

#### Subjects Taught By Respondents:

The distribution of subjects stratified based on academic subject taught was done using descending frequencies and percentages as shown below. English Literature 66 (22.9%), Geography 59 (20.3%), Biology 50 (17.4%), Chemistry 50 (17.4%), History 24 (8.3%), French/French Literature 21 (7.3%), Economics 12 (4.2%), French/English Language 3 (1.0%). 3 teachers (1.0%) did not respond to this item.

#### Teaching Experience:

This item sought to know how long the subjects have been teachers. The frequencies and percentages are presented

below. According to this item 102 (35.4%) teachers have been teaching for more than 10 years; 75 (26.0%) have had teaching experiences ranging from 5-8 years; 51 (17.7%) between 3-5 years; 39 (13.5%) between 8-10 years and 21 (6.3%) between 0-3 years.

#### Analysis of Items Related to the Various Research Questions

The study had three research questions to reflect the selected areas or strategies, which principals can use to encourage peer coaching in schools. The three strategies of interest are: the creation and sustenance of collaborative work place cultures; the provision of release time for teachers to work with each other, and the provision of material and financial support. The frequencies and percentages of strongly disagree/Disagree and Strongly Agree/Agree as well as means of responses related to each research question were combined as follows: Combined Frequencies, Percentages and means of strongly disagree/Disagree and Strongly Agree/Agree responses related to Research Question one.

#### Do principals encourage a collaborative work place culture among teachers?

**Table 1: Table of combined Frequencies and Percentages of Strongly disagree/Disagree and strongly agree/Agree responses related to Research Question one.**

Questionnaire items	Strongly disagree/ Disagree		Strongly agree/agree	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
My principal ensures that teachers are adequately involved in decision making	33	11.45	255	88.55
My principal takes staff opinion seriously	39	13.55	249	86.45
My principal encourages group problem-solving approaches	51	17.08	237	82.92
My principal encourages teamwork among teachers	66	22.92	222	77.08
My principal sends short notes of congratulation, appreciation or thanks to teachers who participate in peer coaching	75	26.05	213	73.95
My principal organizes regular meetings with teachers involved in peer coaching in order to evaluate the progress of the exercise	111	38.55	77	61.45
My principal discusses work-related problems with teachers	123	42.70	165	57.30
My principal assigns beginning teachers to more experienced teachers for coaching	135	46.37	153	53.13
My principal is always at hand to give assistance to peer coaching teams whenever necessary.	159	55.21	129	44.79
My principal ensures that teachers are exposed to training (seminars and workshops) in peer coaching activities	165	57.30	123	42.70
My principal has set up teams of teachers to carry out coaching in our school on regular basis	198	68.75	90	31.25

As indicated in the introduction frequencies, percentages and means were used in analysing data. Table 2 below presents the results of the analysis using means. In order to interpret the analysis, a mean of 3.2, on a scale of 1-4, was taken as the cut-off point. This means that averages below the cut-off point (3.2) reflect the fact that principals do not adequately support collaboration in the form reflected by the item.

**Table 2: Table of means of items related to research question one**

SN	Questionnaire items	Mean
01	My principal discusses work related problems with teachers	3.18
02	The principal of my school encourages team work among teachers	3.16
03	My principal encourages group problem solving approaches	3.11
04	My principal takes staff opinion seriously	3.02
05	My principal ensures that teachers are exposed to training in peer coaching strategies and approaches	2.90
06	My principal ensures that teachers are adequately involved in decision making	2.75
07	My principal sends short notes of congratulation appreciation or thanks to teachers who participate in peer coaching	2.52
08	My principal tries but does not compel teachers in our school to participate in peer coaching activities	2.51

09	My principal assigns beginning teachers to more experienced teachers for coaching	2.50
10	My principal is always at hand to give assistance to peer teams whenever necessary	2.48
11	My principal organizes regular meetings with teachers involved in peer coaching activities in order to evaluate the progress of the exercise	2.41
12	My principal has set up teams of teachers to carry out coaching in our school on a regular basis	2.2

Table 2 above reveals means ranging from 2.20 to 3.18, all below the adopted cut-off mean of 3.2. In fact four of the items have means above 3. These mean values indicate that even though significant numbers of the teachers are of the opinion that principals do create a collaborative work culture among teachers, a majority do not share this view. It should be noted that a cut-off point or mean of 3.2 represents 80%.

### Research Question Two: Do principals provide release time to enable teachers to work with each other in peer coaching situations?

Three items on the questionnaire (items 6, 7, 8) were designed to answer this research question. A combination of positive (SA/A) and negative (SD/D) responses, followed by Table 3 which presents the analysis of the items designed to answer research question two using means. Questionnaire items related to research question two are analysed in table 3 below by combining the strongly agree/Agree response options as well as those for Strongly Disagree/ Disagree Responses.

**Table 3: Table of a combination of Strongly agree/Agree response options as well as those for Strongly Disagree/ Disagree Responses on items related to research question two.**

Statement	Strongly disagree/ Disagree		Strongly agree/ Agree	
	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	Percentage
My principal creates time for teachers to work\ help each other	144	50	144	50
My principal encourages peer coaching by providing time for teachers to observe and help each other	154	54.17	132	45.83
My principal sometimes personally occupies the classes of teachers who are working with each other	228	79.17	60	20.83

All the negative responses had frequencies ranging from 144-228 and percentages of 50-79.17. On the other hand, Strongly Agree and Agree responses range from a frequency and percentage of 60 (20.83) to 144 (50). This result of the data analysis therefore reveals that most teachers are of the opinion that principals do not provide release time for them to be involved in peer coaching situations.

**Table 4: Table of combined analysis of items related to research question two using descending means.**

S/N	Statement	Mean
1	My principal creates time for teachers to work/help each other	2.55
2	My principal encourages peer coaching by providing time for teachers to observe help each other	2.47
3	My principal sometimes occupies the classes of teachers who are working with each other	2.03

The table above shows that all the three items had means below 3.2 (the cut-off mean), ranging from 2.03 - 2.55. This means that though some of them either strongly agreed or agreed that principals do provide release time, the majority did not share this opinion.

### Research Question Three: Do principals ensure that teachers have the needed material and financial support for peer coaching?

Three items (9, 10, and 11) were designed to capture the opinion of the teachers. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 5 using descending frequencies and percentages and thereafter using descending means in Table 6.

**Table 5: Table of combined Frequencies of Strongly Agree/Agree response options as well as those for strongly Disagree/ Disagree Responses. Related to research question three**

Statement	Strongly disagree/ disagree		Strongly agree/ agree	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
My principal ensures that teachers involved in peer coaching have needed support in the form of material resources e.g. books, tapes and films on peer coaching	150	52.09	138	47.91
My principal makes budgetary provision to provide financial incentive to teachers involved in coaching activities	159	55.21	129	44.79
My principal recruits and pays substitute teachers to sit in for teachers involved in peer coaching	204	70.83	84	29.17

Here the table shows that all the positive items had frequencies ranging from 138 to 84 while the negative items range from 204 to 150 This shows that some of the teachers strongly agree or simply agree that principals provide material and financial support to teachers engaged in peer coaching activities in their schools while a majority of the teachers strongly disagree or simply disagree that principals provide material and financial support to teachers for peer coaching in their schools.

**Table 6: Table of break-down of items related to research question three using combined means**

S/N	Statement	Mean
1	My principal makes budgetary prevision to provide a financial incentive to teachers involved in coaching activities	2.40
2	My principal ensures that teachers involved in peer coaching have needed support in the form of material resources e.g. books, tapes and films on peer coaching	2.39
3	My principal recruits and pays substitute teachers to sit in for teachers involved in peer coaching.	2.20

In this area none of the 3 items of the questionnaire had a mean of 3.2, which is the cut-off-mean. The means here range from 2.20 - 2.40. This means that all the teachers are of the opinion that principals do not provide the needed material and financial support to teachers for peer coaching. Alma Harris (2003) holds that financial resources are a fundamental prerequisite for peer coaching. In this way, the means of below 4.3.6 show that budgetary allocations for peer coaching is far below expectation. If this item was taken seriously we should have been dealing with a mean of 3.2 – 3.75.

### Recommendations

Based on the limitations in this study both conceptually and geographically recommendations could not be made to Educational policymakers. However, the following recommendations were made to practicing principals and researchers.

- Principals of secondary schools in Cameroon should not fold their arms for everything to be chewed and given to them they should take up courses in Educational Administration at the university level in order to update their knowledge, skills and attitudes in Educational leadership in particular. If they cannot do this they should invest their money in buying relevant books and create time to read them to keep abreast with current school leadership practices. Principals should collaborate with the Faculty of Education of the University of Buea and organize seminars in their schools in the area of peer coaching.

### WAY FORWARD

Following the limitation of this study the following proposals for further research are made.

Separate studies of a similar nature could be carried out in Mission and Lay - Private schools to come out with a broader picture of what obtains in Cameroon secondary schools in shared leadership especially peer coaching.

- A study could be carried out using the co-relational research design where principals' views could be sought alongside those of teachers.
- Students could in another research be brought into the scene. By getting the views of students on principal's leadership practices a brighter ray of light could shine on this issue.
- Finally, a study could be carried out in other regions of Cameroon to throw more light on the leadership practices of principals in Cameroon.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study entitled principals' encouragement of teacher collaboration and support of peer coaching in government secondary schools in the South West Region, of Cameroon was aimed at investigating whether principals encourage teacher collaboration as well as peer coaching.

From the findings it was realized that principals do not support enough teacher collaboration. Of the twelve items

designed to answer this question, none of the items had means of 3.2 (80%) which was adopted as the cut-off mean or point. In the same way none of the questionnaire items on released time, materials as well as financial support had means of 3.2 which is a clear indication that principals do not support peer coaching in the form of release time, material and financial support.

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