

## The Image of Public Secondary Schools in South West Cameroon: School-Community Relationship

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**Abstract:** Although significant research exist in the field of corporate image, fairly less image research has been conducted in the field of education especially in public secondary schools. The purpose of this study is to assess the image of public secondary schools in South West Cameroon base on stakeholders' perception about the behaviour of the school. It made use of the concurrent procedures of mixed methods in which the researcher converge quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. 12 public secondary schools were randomly selected from six divisions of the SW Region of Cameroon, 2 from each division representing the rural/urban setting. 20 school administrators were interviewed using open-ended questionnaires. 48 teachers, 55 parents and 1094 students were also interviewed for the study. Findings reveal that students were satisfied with the teaching and learning process by 80.5% and they believed that their teachers were well trained, always ready to face academic challenges and to provide relevant learning materials like notes. The study further revealed that schools have neglected their relationship with the community in terms of supporting the underprivileged, community hygiene, adult literacy and other such assignments necessary to promote family life and enhancing patriotism as stipulated under the objectives of education (Law N° 98/004 of 14 April 1998). Therefore, schools need to enhance their relationship with the community in order to understand and perpetuate the values of the society.

**Keywords:** Public Secondary Schools, School Image, School – Community Relationship, School Behaviour, Cameroon

### INTRODUCTION

The image of a society is the reflection of the education of the young which transcends from one generation to another. School is one of the social institutions that children engage with that needs to reflect the image of the society. Durkheim [1] was one of the first sociologists to appreciate the relationship between education and society. He saw education as a social phenomenon through which a society assumes its own continuity by socialising the young in its own image. The components of the educational system that constitute perfectly defined facts and which have the same reality as another social fact are inter-related. They are inter-related internally, so that a given education system has unity and consistency, and also externally so that the education system reflects a society's moral and intellectual values [1].

Every school and every home aims at seeing its products grow into interesting effective people who will make good friends, husbands, wives, parents, neighbours and good citizens [2]. Chamberlin [3] suggests that school norms need to fit into the broad principles of behaviour that is valued by the society. Okumbe [4] acknowledges that discipline is the action by management to enforce organisational standards. In order to successfully achieve the objectives of a school, all members are required to adhere to various behaviour

patterns for maximum performance and better image projection.

Undermining the perception stakeholders or the school community have about public secondary schools in Cameroon could be detrimental not only for the image of the schools but also for the standard of the societal values. Mac Ojong [5] asserts that before the advent of the European explorers, traders and missionaries, Cameroonians were educated in their culture either by their parents, other family members or the society as a whole. Hence, parents, family members and members of the society were seen as the main stakeholders in the education of the child [5]. The norms, values, customs, beliefs and religions of the Cameroon indigenes constituted the basis for actual behaviour within and out of a community. The traditional Cameroon child is taught honesty, humility and moral rectitude. Moral education constitutes important aspects of the education of the Cameroonian child as they are taught love, affection, obedience, respect, gratitude, submission, particularly insofar as fathers, mothers and the elderly are concerned [5]. Sexuality and stealing were not tolerated; on the other hand, respect of elders, peers, those in authority, and relatives were heavily approved. In fine, different tribes in Cameroon have different images which could be

inferred from their aesthetics, visual identity system, communication or behaviour system [5].

Teachers serve a predominant role in the education of children. Public secondary schools in Cameroon can boast about the only trained teachers in the country. The combination of good education and professional training raises the hopes of many schools and their students that they are getting the best teachers available in the country [6]. Jones [7] highlights that parents, students and new staff can be attracted to a school which is open about its achievements and honest in its communication. She reiterates that it is possible to use public relations to change internal attitudes. A positive reputation can stimulate both students and staff alike, creating a sense of pride and commitment. This pride can also extend into the wider community, encouraging members to take ownership of the school as a representative pillar of the community. Best [8] also states that schools with good internal morale find it easier to project a positive image. To him, schools that feel good about themselves can easily build a positive image in the community.

In many countries and especially in Cameroon, there exists some sort of dissatisfaction in the way public secondary schools are perceived by the public. Many public school administrators, some quite renowned, consider them a superfluous and worthless expense and do not see the need of creating a Public Relations Office to cater for the image of the school. According to Carlsmith and Railsback [9], Agyapong, Dankwa, Agyemang [10], school public relations is about establishing and promoting partnerships within the community, providing value to parents, employees, students and the public. Public relations therefore exist as an essential middleman between the corporation and its public, with a basic function to perform [11]. They distribute newsletters containing information about campus events, and build and maintain ties with alumni, lecturers, staff and students [10].

Discouragingly, parents and especially those who send their children to public secondary schools, community, and alumni of these schools are somewhat detached from the activities and projects carried out by them. Jones [7] laments that, whereas parents were involved in their children's education at the primary level, perhaps helping out in class, listening to readers, supporting art projects, assisting at fund raising events, with the school gate a daily conduit for the transmission of information from parents to teachers and vice versa, when children reach secondary school, they acquire a sudden independence as parents are no longer welcomed, either by the staff or by the students themselves who regard parental presence as an embarrassment. Contact with the school becomes

confined to the formality of parents' evenings and report cards [7]. This detachment has a negative impact not only on the child's education but on the impressions parents sometimes have about public secondary schools.

Furthermore, there is an outcry by Cameroonian educators, administrators and parents about the increasing rate of indiscipline in Cameroon secondary schools [12]. This is evident in the percentage of school dropouts in the urban and rural areas which is on an increase [12]. Denga [13] identified acts of indiscipline such as stealing, truancy, sexual offence, vandalism and cheating as destructive practices which sway students from achieving their potentials. This observation unsettles the mind of patriotic Cameroonians since children are considered the future leaders of the country [12].

Students-based causes of indiscipline in Cameroonian schools are low self-concept, abuse of seniority, poor study habits and restlessness and inattention by some students. School-based causes of students' indiscipline include teachers' lateness and absenteeism, overcrowded classrooms, unconducive school environment, harsh school rules and regulations, poor teaching by some teachers and poor leadership of some school administrators [12]. According to Fako News Centre [6] although most teachers of public secondary schools in Cameroon are sent into schools as professionals, the training available does not always equate competence; as some teachers just cannot seem to teach to acceptable standards, especially where there is no monitoring system in place to point out shortcomings and suggest ways to improve. Many incompetent teachers are not held accountable even when results are glaringly inadequate. Also, absenteeism is one of the biggest problems as principals have been known to make radio announcements on many occasions asking some teachers who have a very poor attendance record to turn up for work [6]. One way of resolving this problem is to make it compulsory that teachers live within a certain radius, say, 20 miles, from their school and preferably within the same town or locality. This would avoid the scenario of someone still living in Limbe after having been transferred to Muyuka because of business interests in Limbe. Moreover, teacher should choose between teaching and business while government could also extend the housing scheme that operates in a limited number of cases [6]. Igwe [14]; Obanya [15] and Wirba [16] have observed that inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, irregular payment of teachers' salaries, and teachers' dissatisfaction with their conditions of service are obstacles to principals' administrative efficiency, especially in public secondary schools. This situation is

made all the worse by the unusually high number of schools managed by government.

Ngwokabuenui [12] further highlighted that the identified society-based causes of indiscipline in Cameroon secondary schools are parental over protection of children, poor value system, injustice in the society revealed by the practice of favouritism, nepotism and corruption, unwholesome mass media and unsatisfactory home condition in some homes. The possible solutions to the problem of indiscipline in Cameroon secondary schools are the provision of moral leadership and moral education in the schools, value re-orientation in the society, provision of adequate facilities for teaching, games and sports, reduction of class size, establishment of functional and effective parents-teachers association in schools, emphasis on extracurricular activities, positive teacher-student relationship, provision of information communication technologies and internet facilities, high parental and school supervision, counselling and enforceable school rules and regulations, and involvement of students in decision-making and in formulating school rules and regulations [12].

Wirba [16] laments that many constraints affect the work of principals in Cameroonian schools; constraints such as lack of formal training in leadership and management, lack of financial resources, lack of qualified teachers, poor salaries, lack of computers to computerise records, over-centralisation, poor quality buildings, little funding for professional development, no school transport, no telephones in schools to contact parents, lack of reading materials, bookshops and libraries in schools, and untrained librarians where libraries do exist. It is clear that a leader cannot function well with such limitations. This means that a principal may have the desire to carry out his or her functions well, but these constraints will prevent him or her from achieving his or her aims. The complex and fragile nature of the job is testified by the following comments:

There is over-centralisation and if you have a problem, it has to be solved from Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon very far from the Regional or Divisional locale. At a certain level, you have problems and if you go to the Regional or Divisional authorities, they will send you to hierarchy. Thus, it takes time to solve such problems, especially when it comes to disciplining a recalcitrant teacher; it is always very difficult. Also, some teachers are posted to schools without being paid. For example, newly graduated teachers who are posted without salaries move up and down chasing their documents in the ministries so that they can get paid. This is demotivating for the staff concerned and the school the teacher

is posted to and which cannot do anything [16].

To summarise, the principal's vision serves as the foundation in image projection; hence principals who have a clear vision informed by the mission of the school create a culture of respect, learning, collaboration and success. An effective principal therefore builds loyalty, trust and confidence and leads with an emphasis on the concerns of its stakeholders.

In view of Cameroon becoming an emergent nation by 2035, there is need to develop human capacity, which is possible through the quality of education [17] which can basically be reflected by the image the public holds about schools be it via symbolic, communicational or behavioural means. The Government attaches much importance to education as a priority sector [18]. During the school year 2008/2009 (fiscal year 2009), the State allocated, only for the education sector, nearly 15.5% of its total budget, that is to say, an amount of 357.609 billions of CFA francs, an increase of almost 1.4% compared to the school year 2007/2008 [fiscal year 2008] [18]. Although the government has prioritised this sector, Cameroon's allocation has been far below the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) recommended budget allocation of 26% for education [19]. This is an indication that public schools may be inadequately funded [20] and hence need to derive techniques to better enhance not only school infrastructure but other services that might hurt the image of public schools. Pistiolis [20] further asserts that the impact of fundraising in public schools is significant. Fundraising in schools has become the norm in attempting to meet growing educational demands (Rich, as cited in McCarthy, 2005, para. 9). These pressures make fundraising implicitly mandatory for schools as they seek to provide high quality education [20].

According to the NIS report [18], most Cameroon education service beneficiaries on a general scale are very unsatisfied with the educational services provided to them. Indeed, the beneficiary population is made up of 41% of those who are unsatisfied with education services, 39% of those who are neither satisfied nor unsatisfied and 20% of those who are satisfied. Beneficiaries attending public establishments are the most unsatisfied with the education services received; indeed, 48% of the beneficiaries of this order of education are unsatisfied. In private education, catholic schools bring most satisfaction. Regional disparities are also observed as the East Region (48.7%) has the greatest proportion of unsatisfied beneficiaries, with the South-West region the highest proportion (24.8%) of satisfied beneficiaries. Excepting the North

Region (34.7%), the other northern regions have very high levels of dissatisfaction. Rural area beneficiaries are more unsatisfied (45%) than urban areas (40%). Inefficiency of the recruitment, evaluation and orientation system, insufficiency of teachers, especially qualified teachers, payment of non-statutory fees during registration, insufficiency of seats obliging students to sit on the ground, and spread of corruption and embezzlement in school establishments are some of the reasons for the dissatisfaction among public school beneficiaries [18]. Customer satisfaction has been widely accepted as an important issue for many managers as it is generally believed that a satisfied customer is more likely to display loyalty; that is, repeat purchase and willingness to give positive word of mouth [21-23].

Nevertheless, the organisational chart of public secondary schools can explain the gap in communication between the schools' stakeholders and the school which has an adverse effect on its image. The communications or public relations office is absent in the organisational chart of public secondary schools, which underrates communication as a major element in binding the three major systems of a school; namely, the community system, the management system and the technical system. According to Mbua [24], this kind of bureaucratic organisational approach leaves little room for staff participation in policy decisions and does not encourage free flow of communication. He adds that it places excessive emphasis on the chain of command which increases the social distance between superiors and subordinates [25] and the internal and external stakeholders of the school.

Cameroon students have been characterised of demonstrating deviant behaviours [12, 13] which affect the image of their schools. This study therefore seeks to understand the perception of students, teachers and parents of public secondary schools about the image of the school by relating to the following hypothesis:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Students of public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region are dissatisfied with the teaching/learning process of the school.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: There exists an insignificant relationship between public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region and their community.

Ho<sub>3</sub>: there exists a significant relationship between the image of public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region and the behaviour of students.

## **BEHAVIOUR AND IMAGE PROJECTION**

Cornellissen [26] defines corporate image as the image of an organisation in the eyes of its stakeholders. Image can also be defined as the feelings and beliefs an individual holds about the organisation

[27] [28] and is mainly characterised by the current perception of the organisation as employer [29]. Kandampully and Hu [30] state that corporate image consists of two main components; the first is functional, such as the tangible characteristics that can be measured and evaluated easily. Gronroos [31] further consider the functional quality as employees' actions or the human interaction that takes place during the service encounter; it is the "how" a service is delivered or provided [31]. The second is emotional, such as feelings, attitudes and beliefs one has towards the organisation. These emotional components are consequences from accumulative experiences the customer has with the organisation.

Behaviour on the other hand denotes the ways that organisations convey personalities through actions as well as through non-verbal behaviour, which can be planned or unplanned [32]. Students and their parents need to be assured that conditions in school guarantee physical safety and psychological security. The wellbeing of the general community depends upon its young people accepting consensual values and acting accordingly [2]. Jones [33], Docking [34] note that discipline is an orderly system that creates the conditions in which serious learning takes place and that allows the objectives of the school to be achieved.

Osighembe [35] shares this view when he points out that discipline has a direct relation to academic standards with both moving in sympathy, discipline taking the lead. Cohen and Manoin [36] state that discipline is essentially based on conformity to norms or rules of conduct that govern the behaviour of members of a group. They further point out that norms lay down the agreed forms of behaviour within a particular culture, society or group and this kind of prescription brings order to the social environment.

Public schools need to realise that building a positive relationship with their stakeholders is a leeway to building a positive image for their schools. Relationship building entails building a conducive climate for employees who transcend such climates to the external environment. This idea is supported by many public relations scholars [37-40] who acknowledge that among the different strategic publics that organisations are facing, employees are no doubt the ones with whom organisations have the closest connection. Employees are spokespersons and ambassadors who represent organisations in the face of strategic publics [39].

Akporehe [41] considers the human environment as the relationship between colleagues, administrators or school and staff of the Ministry of Education who are the supervisors. Most of the time,

school supervisors look down on the teacher on the field and they do not work in co-operative effort to achieve the goals of the education industry. Teachers need to be encouraged to have self-esteem and prestige in carrying out their duties. The society generally looks down on the teachers as inferior government workers because of the position given them by virtue of their poor work environment [41]. Akporehe [41] in his review further posits that the community in which the school is located expects much from the teachers. They become hostile to teachers or school administrators who are not committed to their work and they are friendly to hardworking ones. However, the kind of relationship that exists between teachers and colleagues can affect their level of commitment as well as their attitude towards the job. For example, in an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation, teachers are happy with themselves and their jobs [41]. According to Ukeje [42], organisational climate is related to job satisfaction in terms of interpersonal relationship, group cohesiveness and task involvement. Workers' general perception of work environment has a great influence on the level of satisfaction and productivity [42] as well as the manner in which they project the image of the institution to stakeholders.

Agbenyega [43] retains that decent discipline is one of the key attributes of effective schools and most schools which experienced frequent deviant students' behaviour have blamed it on lack of effective implementation of school rules and regulations. One can say that discipline comes through effective management of an organisation. Indiscipline on the other hand is any act that diverges from the acceptable societal norms and values. It is a violation of school rules and regulations capable of obstructing the smooth and orderly functioning of the school system [44]. An undisciplined child is an uncontrollable child and can do any damage in school when he does not get what he wants [45].

There are many reasons for developing school, family and community partnerships. They can improve school programmes and school climate, provide family services and support and increase parents' skills and leadership, and connect families with others in the school and in the community and help teachers with their work. However, the main reason to create such partnerships is to help youngsters succeed in school and in later life [46]. Some schools have taken special steps to ensure that parents are brought to the schools early in the academic year, before students develop problems, so that their first communication with them may be positive in nature. School must employ a variety of techniques for communicating with parents about their children's progress, decisions affecting their children, and school programmes in general. These include

parent-teacher conferences, phone contact, report cards. Some schools sign contracts with parents in which expectations for students, teachers, and parents are clearly delineated [47].

Outcomes associated with communication activities include students' improved awareness of their own academic progress, more informed decisions about courses, and an understanding of school policies related to their conduct. Parents are likely to grow in their understanding of school programs and policies. They will develop familiarity in interacting with teachers and a greater capacity for monitoring their children's progress and responding to their problems. Teachers are expected to develop diverse mechanisms for communicating with parents and an ability to tap the parent network to elicit family views on children's progress [46]

Schools enhance their connection to families by encouraging them to volunteer in school activities and attend school events. Families who volunteer grow more familiar and more comfortable with their children's schools and teachers. Volunteering efforts that tap parental talents enrich school programmes and, particularly in upper grades, facilitate individualised learning. The use of a volunteer coordinator is advised, especially at secondary school levels, where coordination of volunteer talents and time with teacher and student needs becomes increasingly complex. Schools are challenged to define the term 'volunteer' broadly enough to accommodate a wide range of parental talents and schedules. They are also challenged to encourage students to volunteer in their community as part of the learning process [47].

Section 33 of Law No 004/98 of 14 April 1998 [48] articulates for the educational community therefore made up of citizens has as their responsibility to contribute towards the functioning, development and prestige of the school. This could be done only through effective participation in the running of the school. Hence, schools should design their goals with due recognition of their stakeholders because the stakeholders have a great role to play in the advancement of the school. In the case of secondary schools in Cameroon, the strategic constituencies are clearly defined by law. Section 32 of Law No 004/98 of 14 April 1998 [48] states that the educational community shall comprise all individuals and corporate bodies that contribute towards the functioning, development and prestige of a school. It shall comprise the following members: the authorities, the administrative and support staff, teachers, parents, students, persons from socio-professional circles, regional and local authorities.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Research Design**

There is not one fixed manner to define or measure the concepts of corporate image in organisations [49]. This research contains a mixed method design; a mix or combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methods and concepts within a single study [50-52]. A mixed method design can be highly valuable in comparison to a single method as it can address complex research questions and enables researchers to gather a richer and stronger set of evidence [52]. This research makes use of the concurrent procedures of mixed methods in which the researcher converges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. In this design, the investigator collects both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results. Also, the researcher nests one form of data within another and larger data collection procedure in order to analyse different questions or levels of units in an organisation [51]. Data was gathered quantitatively in the form of a cross-sectional survey using questionnaires, and qualitatively in the form of an open-ended questionnaire. According to Babbie [53], surveys include cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection, with the intent of generalising from a sample to a population.

**Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

Public secondary schools under the general section in the South West Region were stratified into groups according to divisions (6 groups). Each group was then divided into two according to rural and urban settings (12 groups). Urban and rural schools were recognised in terms of their development and age. A simple random sampling method was then used in selecting 12 schools using the lottery method from the 12 groups; 6 rural and 6 urban schools, one per category from each division. Based on the lottery method, the names of rural and urban schools from each division were written on paper and folded. The folded papers were then put in 12 boxes representing the 12 groups and well stirred. A tag was then drawn from each box until we arrived at 6 rural and 6 urban schools according to division as represented in table 2. The gender breakdown was also based on proportion. Students were randomly selected from Forms, 4, 5 to Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth classes of each school. These classes were purposively sampled owing to their duration in that school which gives them knowledge about the activities of the school.

The researcher conveniently sampled 2 school administrators, 5 teachers and 5 parents per school within the 6 divisions (2x12schools; 5x12 schools;

10x12 schools) giving a sample size of 24 school administrators, 60 teachers and 60 parents for the study. The sample size for students was estimated using sample calculation for one proportion with the support of EpiInfo 6.04d [54 as explained by Nana [55].

$$n = \frac{NZ^2P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1)+Z^2P(1-P)}$$

Where N=total population, Z= Z value corresponding to the confidence level, d= absolute precision, P=expected proportion in the population, n effective=n\*design effect. The prospected prevalence is 50% for an optimal sample size.

The precision considered is 5%, a design effect (marginal error) of 1 given that simple random sampling was used to select the schools. For a total study population of public grammar secondary students in the South West Region of 49115 (Regional Delegation of the South West, 2012/2013), the sample size at 95% CI estimated as explained above is 1162. This sample size is shared proportionately to size, to the divisions and schools.

**Table-1: Distribution of sample by sub-division**

Sub-division	Total number of students	Sample size
Fako	7536	178
Manyu	9578	227
Kupe		
Manengouba	6831	162
Ndian	520	12
Lebiam	6573	156
Meme	18077	428
Total	49115	1162

At the end of the data collection procedure, a code guide was designed and questionnaires were coded by 6 coders in order to ensure inter-coder and intra-coder reliability. 1094 students, 20 school administrators, 48 teachers and 55 parents completed the survey. Data were made essentially categorical variables and they were analysed using frequencies and proportions and Multiple Response Analysis to aggregate responses within conceptual components. To ensure the validity of the tools, the researchers submitted the questionnaires to research experts. This involved assessing the consistency of the questionnaire to the research objectives. Reliability of research instrument was assured by carrying a pilots study as well as applying Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis. Chi-Square test was used to compare proportions for significant difference and to measure the association between categorical variables. The collected data were analysed quantitatively using Statistical Package for

Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0) and qualitatively using thematic analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**  
**Teaching and Learning Process**

**Table-2: Students’ view of the teaching and learning process in schools**

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
My school has well trained teachers	82.4%(904)	10.1%(111)	7.4%(81)	1094
My teachers are always ready to provide solutions to lessons/academic challenges	79.0%(864)	13.7%(150)	7.3%(80)	1094
My teacher provides us with relevant teaching materials so that I do not beg notes from students from other schools.	80.1%(876)	10.7%(117)	9.2%(101)	1094
MRS	80.5%(2642)	11.5%(378)	8.0%(262)	3282

$\chi^2$ -test:  $\chi^2=1164.84$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $P=0.000$

On aggregate, 80.5% of the students expressed satisfaction with the teaching and the learning process in their schools. 82.4% (904) of the students agreed that their schools have well trained teachers, followed by 80.1% (876) who also see their teachers as providing them with relevant teaching materials as they do not beg for notes from students from other schools and

79.0%(864) who believe that their teachers are always ready to provide solutions to academic challenges. On the other hand, the percentage for those who neither agreed nor disagreed was higher than those who disagreed completely, with the three indicators measuring the teaching and learning process in schools.

**Table-3: Students’ view of the teaching and learning process in schools by background indicators**

Indicator	Categories	Satisfied with the teaching and learning process			N <sub>responses</sub>	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Rural	86.0%(601)	7.7%(54)	6.3%(44)	699	$\chi^2=5.48$ $P=0.019$
	Urban	79.0%(2041)	12.5%(324)	8.4%(218)	2583	
Cycle	First cycle	80.0%(1559)	11.2%(217)	7.9%(153)	1929	$\chi^2=0.10$ $P=0.752$
	Second cycle (lower sixth and upper sixth)	80.8%(1083)	11.9%(161)	8.1%(109)	1353	

Students were more satisfied with the teaching and learning process in rural areas, with a proportion of 86.0% as compared to 79.0% for those in urban areas ( $P<0.05$ ). Between the two cycles, the difference was not significant ( $P>0.05$ ).

Generally, students were satisfied with the teaching and learning process, with a proportion of 80.5% as compared to 8.0% for those who were not satisfied and this difference was significant ( $P<0.05$ ), therefore rejecting the null hypothesis hereby stated.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>: Students of public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region are dissatisfied with the teaching/learning process of the school.**

**School-Community Relationship (Stakeholders)**

**Table-4: School- community relationship based on school administrators’ perspective**

What relationship does the school have with the community?			
Code	Code Description	Grounding	Quotation
Very Good	The school has a very cordial and cooperative relationship with the community	5	“a very cordial relationship, the community even goes the extra mile to support the school financially”
Good	The school has a cordial and cooperative relationship with the community	8	“Mutual assistance. They provide sometimes the need of the school and the school gives assistance to the community human investment”

School administrators believe that PSS have a good relationship with the community; that is a cordial and cooperative relationship as they characterise the relationship as a one of (“Mutual assistance. They

*sometimes provide the needs of the school and the school gives assistance to the community human investment”).*

**Table-5: School –community relationship as perceived by students**

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
My school invites people of different walks of life as guest speakers for carrier orientation	75.0%(820)	47.9%(23)	15.4%(168)	1094
Members of my school visit underprivileged homes to support the underprivileged	19.8%(217)	12.5%(6)	59.7%(653)	1094
My school organises cleaning-up programmes in the community	47.5%(520)	79.2%(38)	35.4%(387)	1094
My school organises adult literacy programmes to help reduce the rate of adult illiteracy in the community	16.8%(184)	6.3%(3)	67.4%(737)	1094
Local residents or community members have access to school facilities and services	27.1%(296)	16.7%(8)	53.6%(586)	1094
My school organises talent shows and cultural events encouraging participation from community members both as participants and spectators	65.6%(718)	43.8%(21)	21.8%(238)	1094
My school has open days where parents visit the school to interact with their children	17.0%(186)	29.2%(14)	74.9%(819)	1094
My school encourages home visits by the principal and teachers to encourage parents to follow up their children’s education	36.7%(401)	33.3%(16)	45.5%(498)	1094
MRS	52.2%(4565)	12.3%(1074)	35.5%(3113)	8752

$\chi^2$ -test:  $\chi^2=3.21$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $P=0.056$ .

On aggregate, 52.2% of the students expressed satisfaction with the relationship that exists between schools and the community, with 12.3% of the students neither agreeing nor disagreeing. However, majority of the students, 75.0% (820), agreed that schools invite people of different walks of life as guest speakers for carrier orientation, followed by 65.6% (718) who also confirm that schools organise talent shows and cultural events that encourage participation by community members both as participants and spectators. 47.5% (520) of the students also accepted that schools organise cleaning-up programmes in the community and encourage home visits (36.7%) (401), and that local

residents or community members have access to school facilities and services (27.1%) (296). Finally, only a few students approved the outreach capacity of the school, that members of their school visit underprivileged homes to provide support; schools have open days during which parents can visit and interact with their children, and organise adult literacy programmes to help reduce the rate of adult illiteracy in the community, with a proportion of 19.8% (217), 17.0% (186) and 16.8% (184) respectively. It was not statistically obvious that the majority of students were satisfied ( $P>0.05$ ).

**Table-6: School-community relationship as perceived by students by background indicators**

Indicator	Categories	Satisfied with the school-community relationship			N <sub>responses</sub>	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Rural	44.2%(824)	10.8%(201)	45.0%(839)	1864	$\chi^2=7.57$ $P=0.006$
	Urban	54.3%(3741)	12.7%(873)	33.0%(2274)	6888	
Cycle	First cycle	46.5%(2393)	13.5%(697)	39.9%(2054)	5144	$\chi^2=2.05$ $P=0.152$
	Second cycle (lower sixth and upper sixth)	46.9%(1693)	17.4%(627)	35.7%(1288)	3608	

Students in urban areas, with proportion of 54.3%, were significantly ( $P<0.05$ ) more satisfied than those in rural areas (44.2%) regarding the relationship

between the school and the community. As for cycles, the difference was not significant and they were not really satisfied in both cycles, with proportions of

satisfaction of 46.5% and 46.9% for first and second cycles respectively.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>: There exists an insignificant relationship between public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region and their community.**

Based on students' perspective, there was statistically enough evidence that not a significant

majority was satisfied with the relationship between PSS and the community ( $P > 0.05$ ), therefore accepting the null hypothesis hereby stated.

**Image Perception of Public Secondary School Stakeholders' Based on Students' Perspective**

**Table-7: Students' view of the behaviour of school community**

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
Students of this school are respectful and welcoming	50.2%(549)	25.4%(278)	24.4%(267)	1094
Students/teachers are punctual and hardworking	65.2%(713)	22.6%(247)	12.2%(134)	1094
The management of my school is cheerful, pleasant, open, concerned, reassuring, supportive, agreeable, honest, sincere, trustworthy and socially responsible	60.2%(659)	23.9%(261)	15.9%(174)	1094
This school treats me fairly and justly	59.4%(650)	19.8%(217)	20.7%(227)	1094
MRS	58.8%(2571)	22.9%(1003)	18.3%(803)	4376

$\chi^2$ -test:  $\chi^2=68.80$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $P=0.000$ .

In summary, 58.8% of the students viewed the behaviour of their school community as positive while 22.9% neither agreed nor disagreed which is greater than the percentage of those that disagreed (18.3%). However, majority of the students 65.2% (713) were of the opinion that teachers are punctual and hardworking, followed by

the assertion that the school management is cheerful, pleasant, open, concerned, reassuring, supportive, agreeable, honest, sincere, trustworthy and socially responsible 60.2%(659), treat students fairly and justly 59.4% (650) and that students in schools are respectful and welcoming 50.2%(549).

**Table-8: Students' view of the behaviour of school community by background indicators**

Indicator	Categories	Satisfied with the behaviour of the school community			N <sub>responses</sub>	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Rural	63.8%(595)	17.9%(167)	18.2%(170)	932	$\chi^2=3.27$ $P=0.070$
	Urban	57.4%(1976)	24.3%(836)	18.4%(632)	3444	
Cycle	First cycle	58.5%(1505)	22.2%(572)	19.2%(495)	2572	$\chi^2=0.06$ $P=0.810$
	Second cycle (lower sixth and upper sixth)	59.1%(1066)	23.9%(431)	17.0%(307)	1804	

Students' characterisation of the behaviour of the school community was not dependent on any background indicators ( $P > 0.05$ ).

**Employee Relationship Based on School Administrators' Perspective**

**Table-9: Employees relationship based on school administrators' perspective**

What is the relationship between the employees of the school?			
Code	Code Description	Grounding	Quotation
Very Good	The employees have a very cordial and cooperative work relationship	2	"very cordial relationship as they are each other's keeper"
Good	The employees have a cordial and cooperative work relationship	12	"cordial"

School administrators believe that the relationship between employees of the school was cordial.

**Teachers' perspective**

**Table-10: Teachers' view of their relationship with the school**

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
Students of this school are respectful and welcoming	64.6%(31)	12.9%(6)	22.9%(11)	48
Students/teachers are punctual and hardworking	77.1%(37)	12.5%(6)	10.4%(5)	48
The management of my school is cheerful, pleasant, open, concerned, reassuring, supportive, agreeable, honest, Sincere, trustworthy and socially responsible	81.3%(39)	10.4%(5)	8.3%(4)	48
This school treats me fairly and justly	75.0%(36)	20.8%(10)	4.2%(2)	48
MRS	74.5%(143)	14.1%(27)	11.5%(22)	192

$\chi^2$ -test:  $\chi^2=24.00$ ;  $df=1$ ;  $P=0.000$ .

On aggregate, teachers by a significant majority ( $P<0.05$ ) with proportion of 74.5% were satisfied with their relationship with the school community.

**Parent's perspective**

**Table-11: Parents' view of school internal stakeholders' behaviour**

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
Students of this school are respectful and welcoming	0.0%(0)	54.5%(30)	45.5%(25)	55
Students/teachers are punctual and hardworking	0.0%(0)	63.6%(35)	36.4%(20)	55
The management of this school is cheerful, pleasant, open, concerned, reassuring, supportive, agreeable, honest, Sincere, trustworthy and socially responsible	0.0%(0)	61.8%(34)	38.2%(21)	55
This school treats me fairly and justly	0.0%(0)	60.0%(33)	40.0%(22)	55
MRS	0.0%(0)	60.0%(264)	40.0%(176)	440

On aggregate, none of the parents who took part in the study were satisfied with the indicators that actually measured school behaviour. 60.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 63.6% (35) of them neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that students and teachers are punctual and hardworking. 61.8%(34) of them thought that the management of the school is

cheerful, pleasant, open, concerned, reassuring, supportive, agreeable, honest, sincere, trustworthy and socially responsible; and 60.0%(33) thought that the school treated them fairly. Finally, 54.5% (30) of the parents were neutral as far as respect by students and their welcoming attitudes were concerned.

**Table-12: Parents' view of students' attitude by background indicators**

Indicators	Categories	Satisfied with students attitude			N <sub>responses</sub>	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Urban	0.0%(0)	77.6%(180)	22.4%(52)	232	$\chi^2=7.95$ $p=0.005$
	Rural	0.0%(0)	40.4%(84)	59.6%(124)	208	
Where are the children schooling?	Public	0.0%(0)	59.0%(222)	41.0%(154)	376	$\chi^2=0.03$ $p=0.853$
	Private	0.0%(0)	65.6%(42)	34.4%(22)	64	

Regarding parents' characterisation of students' attitudes, parents in rural settings were significantly ( $P<0.05$ ) more dissatisfied (59.6%) than their urban counterparts (22.4%). 77.6% of the latter even refused to take a in the matter. 41.0% of the parents were dissatisfied with students' attitude in public schools and (34.4%) with the situation in private schools, but the difference was not significant ( $P>0.05$ ).

**H<sub>03</sub>: there exists a significant relationship between the image of public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region and the behaviour of students.**

There was enough statistical evidence that a significant majority was satisfied with the behaviour of the school community ( $P<0.05$ ). Teachers in a

significant majority ( $P < 0.05$ ) with proportion of 74.5% were satisfied with the relationship between them and the school community. Going by the perspective of students and teachers, the null hypothesis is rejected;

but not for parents as they were all dissatisfied with the behaviour of PSS internal stakeholders towards them. However, the majority took a neutral stance.

**Table-13: Parents’ view of the relationship between schools and parents**

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
This school has a very good relationship with parents	0.0%(0)	58.2%(32)	41.8%(23)	55
This school organises adult literacy programmes to help reduce the rate of adult illiteracy in the community	0.0%(0)	10.9%(6)	89.1%(49)	55
Local residents and parents have access to school facilities and services like pipe-borne water and school halls	0.0%(0)	36.4%(20)	63.6%(35)	55
This school invites parents to teach children local cultures such as traditional dances during cultural weeks	0.0%(0)	30.9%(17)	69.1%(38)	55
This school has open days where parents visit the school to interact with their children	0.0%(0)	29.1%(16)	70.9%(39)	55
This school encourages home visits by the principal and teachers to encourage parents to follow up their children’s education	0.0%(0)	32.7%(18)	67.3%(37)	55
MRS	0.0%(0)	33.0%(254)	67.0%(516)	770

In summary, none of the parents expressed satisfaction with the indicators that measured the relationship between schools and parents. 67.0% of them expressed dissatisfaction and 33.0% neither agreed nor disagreed. Majority of them, 89.1% (49), 70.9% (39), and 69.1% (38) respectively disagreed that schools organise adult literacy programmes to help reduce the rate of adult illiteracy in the community, have open days where parents visit the school to interact with their children, and invite parents to teach children local cultures such as traditional dances during

cultural weeks. 67.3% (37) of the parents also disagreed with the statement that schools encourage home visits by the principal and teachers to encourage parents to follow up their children’s education; and 63.6% that local residents and parents have access to school facilities and services like pipe-borne water and school halls. 41.8% (23) disagreed that schools have good relationships with parents, and more than half the proportion 58.2% (32) neither agreed nor disagreed. The null hypothesis hereby stated is accepted based on this analysis, as none of the parents were satisfied.

**Table-14: Parents’ view of the relationship between schools and parents by background indicators**

Indicators	Categories	Satisfied on how schools relates with parents			N <sub>responses</sub>	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Urban	42.4%(172)	0.0% (0)	57.6%(234)	406	$\chi^2=2.09$ p=0.149
	Rural	22.5%(82)	0.0% (0)	77.5%(282)	254	
Where are the children schooling?	Public	31.9%(210)	0.0% (0)	68.1%(448)	658	$\chi^2=0.02$ p=0.886
	Private	39.3%(44)	0.0% (0)	60.7%(68)	112	

Parents’ characterisation of the relationship between schools and parents was not dependent on any of the background indicators.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>: Students of public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region are dissatisfied with the teaching/learning process of the school.**

Generally, students were satisfied with the teaching and learning process by 80.5% and they believed that their teachers were well trained, always ready to face academic challenges and to provide relevant teaching materials. Based on this result, the study concludes that teaching and learning are key factors that enhance the image of PSS in the SW

Region. Students are at the centre of teaching and learning. Based on this analysis, it is evident that PSS have qualified teachers who can project a positive image of these schools as purported by [6]. However, the problem arises when such qualified teachers are few in the schools. Results further reveal from the school administrators’ perspective that more competent teachers should be transferred to their schools since some schools depend essentially on PTA teachers. The community in which schools are located expect much from the teachers [41] and are known to become hostile to teachers and school administrators who are not committed to their work [41]. Teachers are the drivers of academic excellence and so exercise a direct influence on the image of the school.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>: There exists an insignificant relationship between public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region and their community.**

School administrators believed that the schools have good relationships with the community as they sometimes enjoy financial benefits from the community. However, students were not satisfied with this relationship ( $P > 0.05$ ). This finding can lead us to conclude that school administrators' perception of School-community relationship is not reflective as students and parents believe that PSS have neglected their relationships with the community and believe they can benefit more from the community if they improve on their relationship with it. Schools have neglected their relationship with the community in terms of supporting the underprivileged, community hygiene, adult literacy and other such assignments necessary to promote family life and enhancing patriotism as stipulated under the objectives of education [48]. School administrators need to project some of these values in order to build an identity for the school that reflects the mission of Cameroon education. By neglecting this relationship, schools fail to harness their stakeholders to support the necessary school projects essential for learning and neglect the interest of some of its stakeholders. The stakeholder management model recognises the mutual dependencies between organisations and various stakeholding groups [26]

**Ho<sub>3</sub>: There exists a significant relationship between the image of public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region and the behaviour of students.**

Students 58.8 % (2571) and teachers 74.5 % (143) were satisfied with their relationship with school internal stakeholders ( $P < 0.05$ ), while parents were not 40.0% (176), with the majority taking a neutral stance 60.0% (264). This finding can lead us to conclude that the school internal stakeholders – students and teachers – are more comfortable with the behaviour they encounter within their campuses, while parents who do not interact directly with the school administrators, staff, students and teachers on a day to day basis perceive this behaviour negatively. Such high rates of neutrality of parents' characterisation of the behaviour of school internal stakeholders (students, teachers school management-staff, administrators) result from the fact that parents are not engaged with PSS activities [7]. None of the parents expressed satisfaction with the indicators that measured the relationship between schools and parents. 67.0% expressed dissatisfaction and 33.0% neither agreed nor disagreed. Involvement of parents in the education of a child is essential as they are one of the key stakeholders who can evaluate the image of schools. Parents, family members, and members of the society were noted as the main stakeholders involved in the education of the child and apprenticeship as a key method of learning skills

necessary for the continuity of not only the cultural but social aspects of the society [5]. Neglecting the role of parents in the education of the child is a critical factor that must be analysed since it affects not only the transmission of necessary social and cultural values but also the image of the school and that of Cameroon at large.

The internal stakeholders of a school (students and teachers) are the base in the projection of the image of their institution [37-40]; hence the positive image of PSS as revealed by the study is a reflection of the perception of these groups of their relationship with the school.

This study recommends that educators should study the interest and influence of the various stakeholder groups of the school in order to understand how they could be involved in the development of the school. This will give these stakeholders a sense of belonging and influence their perception of the school and the challenges involved in running an educational system such as a school.

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