



## Co-curricular activities and students' adaptation in large secondary school environment in the South West region of Cameroon

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### Abstract

This study was designed to examine co-curricular activities on students' adaptation to secondary school environment in the South West Region, Cameroon. The study sought to examine the influence of co-curricular activities on students' adaptation to secondary school environment. The concurrent triangulation design was used in the study. The population of the study comprised of all secondary school students and principals in all private, public and confessional schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The target population comprised of all students and principals of private, public and confessional secondary schools in the South West Region with a population of over a thousand. The accessible population comprised of form four students and principals of 21 schools with a population of over a thousand. The purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the schools and principals. The sample population was made up of 375 students and 21 principals from 21 secondary schools with a population of over a thousand. The purposive sampling technique was used to select schools as well as to sample principals. An interview was used to collect data from principals while questionnaire was used for students. Content and face validity for both questionnaire and interview were ensured. To ensure that the questionnaire was reliable, a pilot study was conducted and was calculated using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, while to ensure reliability of the interview, a tape recorder was used. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to school environment with a value of ( $R=0.949$ ) co-curricular activities have both positive and negative influence on students' adaptation to school environment. Co-curricular activities have a significant positive influence on students' adaptation to school environment. Therefore, it was recommended that: co-curricular activities should appear on the curricular giving it adequate time and providing enough space to accommodate all the students in each school.

**Keywords:** Large school, adaptation, school environment, co-curricular activities and students.

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## Introduction

Students' adaptation to the school environment is crucial for students' performance and behaviour. The government spends huge amount of money in secondary education because it is the level that students develop. Equally, youths remain the workforce of any society. Thus, the government of Cameroon spends huge amounts of money on this sector of schooling in order to develop the human capital that will enhance national development. If they are not well trained, they may become nuisance in the environment in which they live and the society as a whole.

Adaptation is important in that, it helps students to become committed to studies, hence, indicating adjustment to emotional/behavioural problems and reduction of various crimes plaguing our schools today (Molindo, 2014). Adaptation helps students to exhibit positive attitude towards the school such as attending classes, participating in school activities and use of time positively hence avoiding delinquent behaviours (Aypay&Demirhan, 2009). Students' adaptation is therefore binding on several factors, and one of which is co-curricular activities.

Presently in Cameroon, most secondary school students in large schools do not take part in co-curricular activities. Sport activities, cultural activities, religious activities and club activities are usually neglected which are essential for learning. Moreover, there are inadequate resources needed for these activities such as fields, halls, balls etc. This is linked to large schools where resources are not enough to accommodate students. The average size of a secondary school in Cameroon may have a population of 500-900 students, while schools that are considered large are those with a population of over one thousand students (Fonkeng and Tamajong, 2009). An increase in birth rate has led to an increase in the population demanding for education, making schools to become large. In the South West Region of Cameroon, the increasing student population in secondary schools has led to the emergence of large school. This growth has stretched the resources and management capacities of schools, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teacher to student ratios, students' ability to adapt effectively to secondary school environments, potentially affecting their academic performance, social integration and emotional well-being (World Bank, 2022). Left unaddressed, these challenges can undermine the quality of education and students' holistic development.

Existing research has extensively explored issues such as students' adaptation and co-curricular activities in isolation. However, there is limited empirical evidence co-curricular activities specifically influences students' adaptation to secondary school environment, especially within the Cameroonian context. The gap in knowledge necessitated a study that examines the interplay between these two variables, focusing on the unique challenges and opportunities present in the South West Region. This study is therefore focused in filling this gap by providing empirical evidence on co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to school environment.

The focus of this study is to come up with strategies that will boost students' adaptation in large secondary school environments in the South West Region of Cameroon through involvement of students in co-curricular activities.

### **Conceptualizing Co-Curricular Activities and Students' Adaptation in Large Secondary School Environment**

It is a reality that teachers today face the challenges of teaching large and overcrowded classes which is becoming a phenomenon in many countries. The results from the 1990 Jomtien conference of Education for All and the follow up in the World Education Forum which took place in Dakar in the year 2000 emphasized general access to school by all children. These conferences have led to an increase in school population with both positive and negative outcomes. This high enrolment is not well managed such recruiting more teachers, provision of more physical space, provision of more pedagogic materials.

In Cameroon, there is a growing trend in enrolment in secondary schools due to an increase in birth rate and a high demand for education. With the introduction of free and compulsory education in the primary school's educational law 10/02/2000, has made many people to enrol their children in school where upon completion, they have to enrol into the secondary levels of education bringing about large school size. Again, with the automatic promotion that was introduced in the year 2006 has made the number of students demanding for education in the secondary schools to increase hence bringing about large school size.

With respect to how co-curricular activities influence students' adaptation. Johnson (2014) opines that sports and game vary as one moves from one school to another which have been an integral part of schools, these support the academic of the school and therefore these programs are educational and help produce productive citizens and foster students' success in life. Trudel et al (2009) writes that participation in games and sports provides a sense of belonging and being part of the group, you learn to consider the interest of your teammates and practice mutual respect and cooperation. Brosh (2002) opines that when students take active part in club activities, they get to know each other well leading to socialization which is an aspect of student's adaptation to school environment Sports and games help students to build up skills that will help them in the future as they are oriented towards different sporting careers, skills like interpersonal and time management, problem-solving, self-motivation, teamwork, creativity, leadership, organisation and conduct are gained Bingol& Demir (2011).

Fredricks and Eccles (2005) says that participation in co-curricular activities leads to more positive outcomes in students' academic performance because it facilitates membership in a pre-social peer group. This can be achieved only if students fully take part in co-curricular activities. Students' participation in co-curricular activities make them to become integrated members of the school environment.

Playing grounds, religious, club and cultural halls and materials are co-curricular aspects that have been realized by educators to be of great importance to students in that, it influences the behaviour and performance of students (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). In this case, it can be said that co-curricular activities are wide-ranging with several aspects involved. Steven and Schaben (2002) mentioned that the Education Department of the United Nation of America

conducted research and found out that students who actively participate or contribute in co-curricular activities are more likely to perform well with high grades while students who do not participate in these activities are likely to have poor performance in their examination.

When students do not actively take part in co-curricular activities, it affects or maul their adaptation to the school environment. Based on this, the government should provide a spacious environment for these activities and in collaboration with each school provide materials needed for these activities to be effective.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is observed in most secondary schools cases of violence, petit crimes, poor performance and dropout are common. All of these can actually consider as related to problems of poor adaptation of students to school environment. In-adaptation is a serious psychological issue which usually affects the personality of the students in terms of integration within the school environment: performance is negatively affected due to poor self-esteem including other acts of indiscipline which can cost a lot to the individual and the state. Violence can lead to death or serious damages or injuries with implications on the training process. When students do not take part in co-curricular activities it becomes difficult for them to easily socialize and the absence of this creates difficulties of integration. The problem of in-adaptation if unaddressed may undermine the overall quality of education and students' holistic development.

### **Research Question**

What is the link between co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to secondary school environment in the South West Region of Cameroon?

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to secondary school environment in the South West Region.

H<sub>a1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to secondary school environment in the South West Region.

### **Rationale**

Adaptation has been and is still a problem in schools especially large secondary schools in Cameroon manifested through aspects such as violence, failure, repetition, noise making, poor language and breaking of bounds. From radio commentaries, newspapers, news from television, social media, report of education from the south west region, we have heard about violence, fighting, stealing, students leaving school before closing time, late coming, and absenteeism. Other international publications indicate the prevalence of violence in large school settings.

All these are indicators of poor adaptation of students to large school environments. Key examples are the incidents that occurred from December 2019 to 2023 as reported by EQUINOX TV and CRTV radio stations where students killed mates, stabbed teachers to

death as well as uncountable incidents of fighting in schools. These are also related factors to students' in-adaptation to large school environments.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### ***Co-Curricular Activities and Students' Adaptation in Large School Environment***

Psychologically, adaptation is considered as the process by which individuals or groups make necessary or desired changes which could be cognitive, affective and behavioural in response to new environmental conditions or demands in order to meet basic need's function and maintain a good quality of life. The concept of adaptability has been expanded to consider adaptability in terms of appropriate cognitive, behavioural and affective adjustments in the face of uncertainty and novelty (Martin et al., 2012). Cognitive adjustments refer to modifications in thinking to deal with uncertain demands or adapting to thoughts (thinking of a new approach). Behavioural adjustments refer to modifications in the nature, degree and level of attitude to deal with new, uncertain conditions and situations or adapting action (changing the way one approaches a task), (Heckhausen et al., 2010). Affective or emotional adjustments refer to applying modulated respond to environmental uncertainty and newness (managing/minimizing negative emotions). The concept of adaptability has been expanded to consider adaptability in terms of appropriate cognitive, affective and behavioural adjustments in the face of uncertainty (Martin et al., 2012).

Student adaptability is the adjustments and modifications to situations, circumstances and conditions that are new and uncertain (VandenBos, 2007). When students adapt to the school environment, they become committed to studies, hence, indicating adjustment to emotional, behavioural and cognitive problems and reduction of various crimes plaguing our schools today (Molindo, 2014). Again, students show positive attitude towards the school such as attending classes, participating in school activities and use of time positively hence avoiding delinquent behaviours (Aypay and Demirhan, 2009). Co-curricular activities may be defined as those activities undertaken to strengthen the classroom learning as well as other activities both inside and outside the classroom to develop the personality of the child (Bhatia, 1996) as cited in Yarriswami (2018). Co-curricular activities have been realized by educators to be of great importance to students in that, it influences the behaviour and performance of students (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002).

Mwisukha et al (2003) states that co-curricular activities program offers activities of interest to students as they encourage them to fully take part in the activities of the school as they also make new friends and develop talents, interest and are career oriented. Therefore, these activities are crucial for effecting learning thus affecting the academic performance of students. Steven and Schaben (2002) mention that the Education Department of the United Nation of America conducted research and found out that students who activity participate or contribute in co-curricular activities are more likely to perform well with high grades while students who do not participate in these activities are likely to have poor performance in their examination.

There are different ways and activities which when students take part in them during their free hours or periods will have either a negative or positive influence depending on their

choice of activity that they have decided to engage into. These activities include, sport activities, club activities, religious activities and cultural activities.

sport activities are made up of athletics, football, handball, volleyball, basketball, long and short tennis and so on. Studies have found out that sport activities have an impact on the performance and behaviour of students who participate in them. Sitkowski (2008) states that students who took part in athletics had lower dropout rates and were less likely to consume alcohol. He went further to say that participation in athletic leads to greater confidence, self-discipline and responsibility among the athletics than the non-athletics. Yancy (2007) as cited in the Department of Health and Human Service that reported that students who do not spend time in co-curricular activities are 57% more likely to drop-out of school. He also confirmed that students who do not participate in these activities are likely to engage in risky behaviours pertaining to health. Stevens and Schaben (2002) carried out a study on the relationship between co-curricular athletic and students' achievements at the middle school age. It was found out that athletics performed better than non-athletics. Hall and Charmaraman (2011) also carried out a study on how to help boys who participated in co-curricular activities to avoid behaviours that are not good. The result was positive as it helped in changing the attitudes of students in school who participated in athletics as well as their relationship with their peers

*Religious activities* have over the years from researchers shown it influences students' performance and behaviour. Jeynes (2003) writes that commitment in this activity can positively impact the academic achievement of students. Students in urban areas reporting higher levels of religiosity were those who had higher performance than students in non-urban areas. Personal religious commitments have a strong relationship with higher level of academic performance. According to Regnerus and Elder (2003) students who are active in religious activities have a good and positive relationship with learning engagements. When these students take active part in their own learning, the results begin to manifest in their academic performance and behaviour. Their performance increases while they stay away from risky behaviours such as fighting, breaking of bound and absenteeism. Jeynes (2010) is of the opinion that students who constantly attend religious classes and gain knowledge in that subject are associated with higher level of academic performance and exhibit patterns of positive behaviours in schools. students' who attend religious classes are taught morals that helps them to avoid or limit behaviours that are not good in schools hence bringing about good academic performance.

Club activities are important to students because they help them to express themselves and learn things that are connected to the classroom. Yan et al (2021) states that club activities enable the students to increase the ability of unity, students' growth and make it easy to express themselves freely through debates and music. when students take active part in club activities, they get to know each other well leading to socialization which is an aspect of student's adaptation to school environment (Brosh, 2002). Cultural activities are also important in improving students' success in academic. According to Makarova and Birman (2015) students who succeed the most are those who adjust to their culture and are able to, maintain their culture. Therefore, students who have master their culture and practice it do better in school than students who do not know.

*Empirically, Kashif et al (2018) carried out a study on the role of co-curricular activities and exam performance of students at different levels of class attendance. Secondary data (co-curricular participation data, attendance of 10<sup>th</sup> class and grades in 10<sup>th</sup> class board exams) of 636 students through multistage purposive sampling was collected from thirty high schools in Lahore. Multiple regression analysis demonstrated that co-curricular activities have positive impact on students' exams performance. Sobel test of mediation showed that attendance partially mediated the association of involvement in co-curricular activities with exam performance. Participation in co-curricular activities improves class attendance of students which then play an important role in achieving high grades in exams. Independent sample test showed that students who were involved in co-curricular activities had better grades than those who were not part of these activities.*

*Bibi et al (2023), carried out a study on the effects of co-curricular activities upon students' achievements. The objectives of this study were to know the awareness, trends and effects of stakeholders regarding co-curricular activities at the secondary school level. The simple random sampling technique was used to select suitable sample size. The study was descriptive and the sampled was made up of government girls' secondary school. Questionnaire was used to collect data of a 5-point likert scale. Collected data was statistically analysed over SPSS by using the percentages, means, standard deviation and correlation. Findings of the study revealed that co-curricular activities have positive effects on students' academic achievements.*

*Ahmad et al (2015), examined the relation between student's participation in co-curricular activities in college campus and academic performance. This cross-sectional study was conducted at Armed Forces Medical College, Dhaka from February 2015 to October 2015. A total of 475 students belonged to four different phase groups were selected as research sample. The dependant variable was fixed at overall improvement in examination results whereas independent variables were gender, participation and non-participation in all extra academic activities performed at college campus. Research Data were collected from records of training section of the college. Data were analysed in terms of percentage and Pearson Chi-Square test using SPSS-20 version of software. Total participant students were 475 and Male female student ratio was 168(35.36%): 307 (64.64%). In outdoor games and sports, males showed better participation than female 121(72.02%): 89(28.99%). Pearson Chi-Square test result showed significance in all the above aspects. It was concluded that Students participating in co-curricular activities generally benefit from having better examination results, higher self-concept, higher standardized test scores and educational attainment. Students often learned skills such as teamwork and leadership from college club activities*

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinning of this study was informed by the stakeholder theory. It is the theory of organizational management and business ethics of (Freeman of 1963), that addresses issues related to interest, benefit, morals and values in managing an organization. This theory identifies and models groups which are stakeholders of a corporation. It also

describes and recommends methods by which management can give due consideration to the interest of those groups otherwise called stakeholders. In short, it attempts to address the principles of whom and what counts in organizational set up like the school. The stakeholder theory is an instrumental theory of the formal organization integrating the resource-based, market-base and socio-political views of stakeholders who have vested interest in an organization. This holds well in a school as a formal organization context.

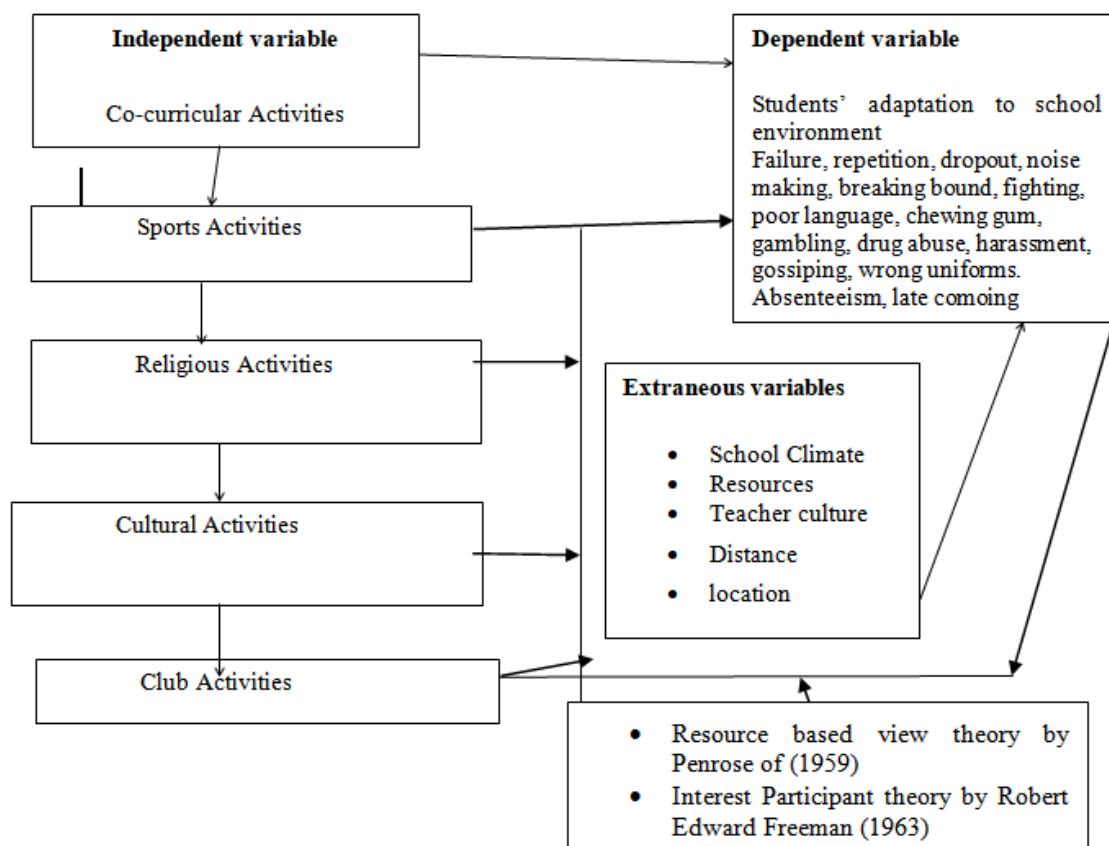
This theory is relevant in this study in that, since students are the once involved, their interest should be taken into consideration. Teachers should be able to use the best methods in teaching that will bring about student's positive performance. The treated provided for and reserved to stakeholders determines their participation and involvement in school affairs as evident in school culture and climate put in place by the school administration. The school head should provide favourable, friendly and conducive school environment for other external stakeholders. This will motivate them to be an integral part of the school system. This theory's approach to management can assist school heads by instilling and nurturing the notion of how school organization fits into a larger school context, how standard administrative procedures influence stakeholders within and without the school boundary to avoid conflict, conflict of authority and transaction within and without the school boundary such as between teachers and school authorities, teachers and parents, school authorities and the school community. All stakeholders should take part in school affairs for the accomplishment of school goals. Students as stakeholders should take part in school governance through representative of the school government. The resource-based view theory (Penrose, 1959) holds that organizational achievements are truly based on the internal properties of an organization. These assets could be classified as tangible and in-tangible, internal knowledge and competencies. This theory also considers that an organization has different resources which enhance organizational performance on the bases of competitive advantage.

This theory is relevance in this study in that, with the availability of these resources, learning will be effective hence students will be able to perform well in their examination both formative and summative examinations. Schools can bring tremendous influence through administrative decisions to acquire resources and then effectively direct and summarise them to bring high service quality in large schools which are mostly located in urban areas. Schools can outperform their rivals if they apply the resource base theory. Schools that are capable of identifying and managing their resources effectively and efficiently to enhance their quality of service have a long competitive advantage over their rivals. Every school strive for service quality excellence which is regarded to be a crucial aspect in students' academic performance which depends on combining service quality to compete with other schools. Schools need large and sophisticated infrastructures to provide excellence service. A shortage of these resources hinders students' good academic performance and behaviour of students



**Figure 1**

*Co-curricular activities in relation to students' adaptation to school environment*



**Source: The Researcher (2025)**

The diagram above shows the relationship that exists between co-curricular activities and student's adaptation to school environment. The diagram also shows the impact of the intervening variables on co-curricular activities as well as students' adaptation to school environment.

## Methodology

The study made use of the concurrent mixed method specifically the concurrent triangulation research design. The total population was made up of all students and principals of all secondary schools both private, lay-private and confessional schools in the South West Region. The target population was made up of all students and principals of all secondary schools with a population of over one thousand. The total population was made up of all students and principals of all secondary schools. The accessible population was made up of form four (4) students and principals gotten from 21 secondary schools with a population of over one thousand in both private, lay-private and confessional schools. The accessible population was made up of 21 principals and 6,022 students. The sample was drawn from the accessible population using the formula of Yamane (1967) with a margin error of 0.5. Sample was made up of 375 form four students and 21 principals in schools with a population of over one thousand. The sampling size was made of 375 students and 21 principals gotten from 21

secondary school having a population of over a thousand in the South West Region of Cameroon.

The instruments used to collect data were questionnaire (closed and open-ended questions) for students, an interview guide for principals and an observation check guide. The purposive sampling technique was used to select both the school and the respondents.

To establish the reliability of this study, a pilot test was conducted using 30 students and 1 principal in Government High school Buea. The Cronbach Alpha was used to calculate the reliability. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.84. In administering the questionnaire, a self-delivery method was used with the assistance of two colleagues and one field assistant. The researcher took the questionnaires to the various schools that made up the sample of the study. The data package (close-ended questions) was analysed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23.0 with the help of descriptive and inferential statistics while open-ended questions and interviews were analysed thematically. To test the hypothesis, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used in the study.

## Findings

*This section presents the finding on the co-curricular activities and students' adaptation in large secondary school environment in the South West Region of Cameroon. The findings of this study were presented and supported with literature and the works of other researchers. Quantitative data will first be presented followed by qualitative data*

**Table 1:**

*Demographic Data of respondents*

Indicators	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	174	47.8
	Female	177	48.6
	No response	13	3.6
Total		364	100
Age	10-13 years	34	9.3
	14-17 years	233	64.0
	18-21 years	77	21.2
	No response	20	5.5
Total		364	100
Religion	Christian	323	88.7
	Muslim	15	4.1
	African Traditional Religion	7	1.9
	No response	19	5.2
Total		364	100
Marital status	Single	322	88.5
	married	18	4.9
	No response	24	6.6
Total		364	100

**Source: Field Work (2025)**

Findings on table 1 above revealed the demographic data of respondents. With respect to gender (47.8%) respondents were male and on the other hand, (48.6%) respondents were female. From the statistics, it is seen that majority of the respondents were female because majority of students in our secondary schools are female, which follows the trend in our country where majority of the population is made up of female. With respect to age (9.3%) respondents were within the ages of 10-13 years, (64%) respondents were within the ages of 14-17 years and (21.2%) respondents were 18-21 years. From the statistics, it is seen that majority of the respondents were within the ages of 14-17 years because this study took into consideration mainly form four students of secondary schools. In the case of religion, (88.7%) respondents were Christians, (4.1%) respondents were Muslims. From the statistics, it is seen that majority of the respondents were Christians because this study was carried out in the southern part of Cameroon where majority are Christians. With respect to marital status, (88.5%) respondents were single and (4.9%) respondents were married. From the statistics, it is seen that majority of the respondents were single which is normal because marriage in Cameroon is usually from the age of 18 and above, particularly in the Christian community.

The table below depicts the opinion of students on the effect of co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to Secondary School environments in the South West Region of Cameroon.

**Table 2:**

*Opinion of students on the effect of co-curricular activities on students' adaptation*

Item	SD		D		A		SA		D & SD		A & SA	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. Club activities are obligatory on the time-table	116	31.9	163	44.8	70	19.2	15	4.1	279	76.7	85	23.3
2. Manual labour activities are on the time-table	108	29.7	167	45.9	70	19.2	19	5.2	275	75.6	89	24.4
3. Cultural activities are on the time-table	163	44.8	131	36	49	13.5	21	5.8	294	80.8	70	19.3
4. Religious activities are compulsory	132	28.2	114	31.3	82	22.5	36	9.9	246	59.5	118	32.4
5. Time allocated for laboratory activities is sufficient	121	33.2	126	34.6	81	22.3	36	9.9	247	67.8	117	32.2
6. Sports activities feature prominently on the time-table	117	32.1	105	28.8	99	21.2	43	9.2	222	60.9	142	30.4
7. My school allows students to exhibit projects	104	28.6	112	30.8	102	28	46	12.6	216	59.4	148	40.6
8. Co-curricular activities are mandatory	91	25	151	41.5	94	25.8	28	7.7	242	66.5	122	33.5
9. Library activities are on the time table	186	51.1	130	35.7	29	8	19	5.2	316	86.8	48	13.2
MRS	116	31	122	34	87	23	38	10	239	65	125	34

**Source: Field Work (2025)**

The findings on table 2 above showed that majority (76.7%) of respondents disagreed that Club activities are obligatory on the time-table while (23.3%) of respondents accepted that Club activities are obligatory on the time-table. With respect to manual labour (75.6%) respondents were against the fact that manual labour feature on the curricular while (24.4%) of respondents accepted it. In case of time-table, (80.8%) were against the fact that cultural activities are not on the time-table while (19.2) of respondents were for the fact that cultural activities on the time-table. With respect to religious activities, (59.5%) of respondents disagreed that religious activities are compulsory while (32.4) of respondents were for it. Majority (67.8%) of respondents disagreed that sports activities do not feature on the curricular whereas (32.2%) of respondents agreed. In the case of recreational activities, (60.9%) of disagreed that my school provides time for recreational activities while (30.1%) of respondents accepted. Most (59.4%) of respondents disagreed that my school allows students to exhibit projects while (40.6) of respondents agreed. With respect to co-curricular activities, (66.5%) disagreed that Co-curricular activities are mandatory whereas (33.5%) of respondents agreed. (86.6%) of the respondents disagreed that Library activities are on the time table while (13.2%) of the respondents accepted that Library activities are on the time table. Therefore, 65% of respondents agreed that co-curricular activities do not impact students' adaptation while 35% agreed that co-curricular activities have a positive impact on students' adaptation to school environment.

**Table 3:**

*Principals' opinion on activities that help students to adapt to their school environment*

<b>Emergent themes</b>	<b>Grounding</b>	<b>Direct Quotations</b>
Socialization	8	<i>"By interacting, they socialize with their friends and also relax hence adapting to the school environment"</i> <i>"Through active participation in sports, they socialize with each other."</i> <i>"When they are distracted, they have fun with friends and mates making them to adapt"</i>
Bonding	5	<i>"They interact with peers from other classes"</i> <i>"During these activities, students are brought together"</i> <i>"Interacting with new friends and mates makes them to love their environment."</i>
Skills Acquisition	5	<i>"It helps them to develop their talents".</i> <i>"It widens their scope"</i>

Learning	7	<p><i>"When they are involved, they excel by learning new things from mates"</i></p> <p><i>"Clubs such as moral and bible club instils in student's moral habits and also tells them why they are in school. When they go back to their classrooms, they study hard hence improving on their performance"</i></p> <p><i>"They interact with students from other classes which will make them to learn and compete with each other"</i></p> <p><i>"Students make friends and form study groups where they discuss academic issues, it enhances learning"</i></p> <p><i>"it relaxes their mind giving them better comprehension"</i></p>
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The findings on table 4 above showed the opinion of principals on co-curricular activities that help students to adapt to their school environment. One theme that emerged was socialization. Respondents with respect to socialization said that there has been an increase in socialisation of students. To support this theme, respondent A reported that *"students adapt to the school environment by interacting, they socialise with friends and also relax hence adaptation to the school environment"*. To support this view, respondent C reported that *"when students are distracted, they have fun with friends and mates making them to adapt"*.

Another theme that emerged was bonding. Respondents with respect to bonding said that bonding helps students to adapt to their school environment. To support his theme, respondent B reported that *"during these activities, students are brought together"*. To support this theme, respondent B reported that *"for students to adapt to their school environment, interacting with friends and mates make them to love their environment"*.

Skill acquisition also emerged. Respondents with respect to skill acquisition reported that skill acquisition help students to adapt to the school environment. To support this theme, participant A reported that *"it helps them to develop their talents"*. To support this view, participant B reported that *"it widens their scope"*.

Another theme that emerged was an increase in learning. Participants with regards to learning remarked co-curricular activities bring about increase learning. To support this theme, participant I reported that *"Clubs such as moral and bible club instils in students' moral habits and also tells them why they are in school. When they go back to their classrooms, they study hard hence improving on their performance"*. Participant II reported that *"students make friends and form study groups where they discuss academic issues, it enhances learning"*. To re-enforce this view, participant III s reported that *"when they are involved, they excel by learning new things"*.

**Table 4:**

*Correlation between Co-curricular Activities and students' adaptation*

		Co-curricular activities	Students' adaptation
Co-curricular activities	Pearson Correlation	1	.949**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	364	364
Students' adaptation	Pearson Correlation	.949**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	364	364

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From table 6 above, it is seen that there is a significant positive correlation between co-curricular activities and student's adaptation ( $r=0.949^{**}$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) indicating that co-curricular activities are important for students' adaptation to the school environment.

Verification of hypothesis one (Ho1) a two tailed correlation Metrix (Person) was done to match the correlation indices of the effect variable (co-curricular activities) with the cause variable (students' adaptation to secondary school environment). It showed that Pearson coefficient ( $p=0.000>0.05$ ) indicating that co-curricular activities are important for students' adaptation to the school environment. The R-value ( $0.949^{**}$ ) showed that a high and significant relationship exists between co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to secondary school environments. This implied that students will adapt well when they participate in co-curricular activities.

**Table 5:**

*Coefficients*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.095	.035		-2.732	.007
	Co-curricular activities	.092	.085	.083	1.078	.282

a. Dependent Variable: Students' adaptation

From the table above, the model can be presented thus;

$$Y = -.095 + 0.092X_1 + 0.649X_2 + 0.209X_3 + 0.117X_4$$

From the equation above, it is seen that a unit change in co-curricular activities will lead to a 0.092 change in student's adaptation and keeping other variables constant.

**Table 6:**  
*Students' Adaptation*

Item	SD		D		A		SA		D & SD		A & SA	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. I love my school environment	136	37.4	119	32.6	68	18.7	41	11.3	25	70.5	10	30.9
2. I relate easily with the rules of my school	119	32.7	129	35.4	83	22.8	33	9.1	24	68.8	11	31.1
3. I am capable of managing most difficulties in my school	117	32.1	118	32.4	100	27.5	29	8	23	64.5	12	35.5
4. I am confident asking help from teachers when needed	110	30.2	95	26.1	91	25	68	18.7	20	56.5	15	43.5
5. I feel supported by school staff when faced with challenges	122	33.5	128	35.2	79	21.7	35	9.6	25	68.0	11	31.4
6. I form a positive relationship with my teachers	92	25.3	110	30.2	11	30.5	51	14	20	55.2	16	44.5
7. I make use of all physical resources available in school	96	26.4	130	35.7	93	25.5	45	12.4	22	62.6	13	37.8
8. I feel valued by my teachers	99	27.2	111	30.5	105	28.8	49	13.5	21	57.0	15	42.7
9. Co-curricular activities make me to explore my talents/interest	99	27.2	112	30.8	95	26.1	58	15.9	21	58.1	15	42.3
10. My school promotes a culture of diversity	107	29.4	131	36	85	23.4	41	11.3	23	65.8	12	34.6
11. I feel free to voice my opinion in classroom discussion	137	37.6	100	27.5	66	18.1	61	16.8	23	65.7	12	34.7

**Source: Field Work (2025)**

The findings on table 8 above indicated that (70%) of respondents disagreed while (30%) respondents said I love my school environment. Other respondents (68.1%) disagreed while (31.9%) agreed that I relate easily with the rules of my school. (64.5%) respondents disagreed while (35.3%) said that i am capable of managing most difficulties in my school. Some

respondents (56.3%) respondents disagreed while (43.7%) said that i am confident asking help from teachers when needed. Moreover, (68.7%) respondents disagreed while (31.3%) respondents said i feel supported by school staff when faced with challenges. (55.5%) respondents while (44.5%) respondents agreed that i form a positive relationship with my teachers. (62.1%) respondents disagreed while (37.9%) respondents agreed that i make use of all physical resources available in school. Again, (47.2%) respondents disagreed while (52.8%) said that i have a positive feeling of the knowledge i have acquired. (47.3%) respondents disagreed while (52.3%) respondents said that I feel valued by my teachers. Also, (58%) respondents disagreed while (42%) respondents said Co-curricular activities make them to explore their talents/interest. (65.4%) respondents agreed while (34.6%) agreed that my school promotes a culture of diversity. (65.1%) respondents disagreed while (34.9%) accepted that they feel free to voice my opinion in classroom discussion.

## Discussion

It was observed that co-curricular activities are not clearly apparent. Majority of these schools do not involve students in these activities. During observation, most schools were not seen doing sports, manual labour, attending clubs as well as taking part in cultural activities. (See quantitative analysis).

The findings of this study revealed that co-curricular activities have an effect on students' adaptation to secondary school environments in the South West Region of Cameroon. Most of the respondents opined that, co-curricular activities such as sports/games, club activities, manual labour, library activities, laboratory activities and project exhibition boost students' adaptation to school environment. Co-curricular activities help students to socialize in such a way that they will be able to express themselves freely, socialise, bond, relax, have fun and become united with other school mates. Findings revealed that most students do not take part in co-curricular activities hence affecting their performance. Most schools do not allow students to take part in co-curricular activities and if they do, there is limited time for it bringing about in-adaptation.

This is in line to the views of Mwisukha et al (2003) who stated that co-curricular activities program offers activities of interest to students as they encourage them to fully take part in the activities of the school as they also make new friends and develop talents, interest and are career oriented. Therefore, co-curricular activities are crucial for effecting students' learning thus affecting the academic performance of students indicating inadaptation.

Steven and Schaben (2002) carried out a study on the relationship between co-curricular athletic and students' achievements at the middle school age. It was found out that students who take part in athletics out performed non-athletics which is in line with the present findings. This is true because students who do not take part in co-curricular activities are likely to have poor performances indicating inadaptation while students who fully participate in co-curricular activities produce better results.



Sports or games do have a positive influence on the adaptation of students to the school environment. Students who take part in games do socialise with each other, have fun, relax their minds and have a healthy body. It was found out that, games do not influence students' adaptation because very few students take part in these activities. Students who do not take part find themselves leaving school when it is not yet time, loitering and fighting. This is in line with the findings of Trudel et al (2009) who mentioned that participation in games and sports provides a sense of belonging and being part of the group, you learn to consider the interest of your teammates and practice mutual respect and cooperation. To re-enforce this view, Bingol& Demir (2011) mentioned that Sports and games help students to build up skills that will help them in the future as they are oriented towards different sporting careers, skills like interpersonal and time management, problem-solving, self-motivation, teamwork, creativity, leadership, organisation and conduct is gained.

Students who take part in religious activities usually exhibit good behaviour as well as adapting easily to their school environment. When students attain religious studies classes, religious clubs and morning devotion, it positively influences their behaviour and their performance hence adaptation is not a problem. It was found out that only few students take part in religious activities, some do not totally participate making adaptation difficult hence affecting their performances negatively. This tied with the findings of Jeynes (2010) said that students who constantly attend religious classes and gain knowledge in that subject are associated with higher level of academic performance and exhibit patterns of positive behaviours in schools. Students who attend religious classes are taught moral that helps them to avoid or limit behaviours that are not good in schools hence bringing about good academic performance. Majority of the students do not take part in religious activities where affects their performance whereas, if they took part in religious activities, they would have performed better. Interview we got from the field revealed that a majority of the principals accepted that their students engage in co-curricular activities while many people accept that these activities are important for students' adaptation to the school environment. But students clearly refused that they do not engage in these activities. The observation check list indicated that co-curricular actives were not clearly apparent.

Also, interview from the field we got narratives related to this finding as respondents said it led to socialization. To support this theme, respondent A reported that it helps students "to socialize with their friends and also relax hence adapting to the school environment". To support this view, respondent B reported that it helps students to "develop their talents". Respondent C reported that co-curricular activities improve our grade. One respondent opined that "bond students as they interact with peers from other classes".

When students participate in these activities in helps to improve performance and reduce risky behaviour. To support this theme, respondent A reported that "they prefer to remain on campus rather than jumping the fence. Doing things at the right time improves performance". To support this view, respondent B reported that "students relax and when they go back to class, they concentrate on their study and at the end their performance will be improved upon". Moreover, Students indicated that co-curricular activities are important in the adaptation of students to the school environment through socialization. To support this theme,

respondent I reported that it “helps students to interact with fellow peers”. To support this view, respondent II reported that it “helps to develop talents while another respondent said that it increases academic performance”.

According to the resource-based view theory (Penrose, 1959), it reveals that with the availability of these resources needed for co-curricular activities to be effective should be provided thus making learning effective. Schools can bring tremendous influence through administrative decisions to acquire resources and then effectively direct and summarise them to bring high service quality in large schools which are mostly located in urban areas. Schools can outperform their rivals if they apply the resource base theory. Every school strives for service quality excellence which is regarded to be a crucial aspect in students' academic performance which depends on combining service quality to compete with other schools. Schools need large and sophisticated infrastructures to provide excellence service not taking part in of co-curricular activities will make students not to adapt to the school environment.

## **Conclusion**

It was found out that there is a strong positive relationship between co-curricular activities and students' adaptation to school environment. Co-curricular activities are very important as it boosts students' adaptation to the school environment. When students are not involved in co-curricular activities, they tend to involve in crimes that will lead to poor performances. Apart from co-curricular activities, there are other variables that influence students' adaptation to school environment such as school climate, resources, distance, teacher culture and location of the school. School climate influences students' adaptation to school environment. Positive school climate is prime in improving students' academic performance, reducing dropout rate and limiting risky behaviour in students (Wang and Degol, 2015).

Resources are important for students' adaptation to school environment as it increases students' performance, it leads to a reduction in students involving themselves in risky behaviours, helps students to expand their independent skill in research as well as independent learning, it leads to effective teaching and learning and leads to an increase in enrolment in colleges. But when resources are inadequate or unavailable, performance will be poor, enrolment will reduce and students will exhibit bad attitudes leading to poor adaptation in schools. Omolo (2020) said that inadequate infrastructure in schools brings about low learning achievements. Students from schools with well-equipped infrastructure such as laboratories, libraries, media centres and good environment will obtain higher academic performance than students from schools with inadequate facilities. Lyons (2012) holds the view that availability of resources therefore enhances effective teaching and learning as they are principal resources that bring about good performance in students.

Teacher culture also influences students' adaptation to school environment. When teacher culture is good and positive, it influences students' adaptation to their school environment. Whereas when the culture of teachers is poor, students' adaptation to their school environment becomes a problem. Aduda (2005) said that teacher culture enhances student's adaptation to the school environment. Moreover, the location of a school may influence

students' adaptation to school environment. According to Akpan (2001) school location is fundamental for students' academic success. A school located in a rural area suffers from shortage of resources which directly affects the performance of students. Also, distance has an influence on students' adaptation to school environment. Faremi et al (2023) carried out a study on the assessment of school distance and academic performance of geography students and found out that students who travel for long distance to and fro from school produce poor results and have difficulties with adaptation.

## **Recommendations**

From the findings, the following recommendations were made:

It was recommended that more avenues should be created to enable all students take part in co-curricular activities. Students should be allowed to choose that which is best for them. co-curricular activities should be made compulsory and given enough time and space, providing the needed resources for this exercise. Co- curricular activities should not only be for students who are in the school team or for junior classes. All students are supposed to take part in these activities. The school environment should be friendly to enable students want to stay longer in school.

Specifically, it was recommended that;

- Sports activities should be imposed and made compulsory in all secondary schools. Sport activities are good they that, they help the students to relieve stress and maintain a healthy body. Students socialise with students in other classes. Games and sports help the students to keep fit and be energetic. It also contributes to a range of positive outcomes specifically physical and mental health, social wellbeing and academic performance (Bailey et al, 2013).
- Cultural activities should be promoted in secondary schools
- Religious activities need to be part of the school program. Religious activities are important as they help students to crime rates such as fighting, breaking of bounds and vulgar language. Jeynes (2010) is of the opinion that students who constantly attend religious classes and gain knowledge in that subject are associated with higher level of academic performance and exhibit patterns of positive behaviours in schools. students' who attend religious classes are taught morals that helps them to avoid or limit behaviours that are not good in schools hence bringing about good academic performance.
- Secondary schools must impose club activities. Club activities are important to students because they help them to express themselves and learn things that are connected to the classroom. Yan et al (2021) stated that club activities enable the students to increase the ability of unity, students' growth and make it easy to express themselves freely through debates and music. when students take active part in club activities, they get to know each other well leading to socialization which is an aspect of student's adaptation to school environment (Brosh, 2002).

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