



Social Environment and its Effects on the Implementation of the  
Curriculum for History in Secondary Schools in Mezam Division,  
North West Region of Cameroon

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to investigate social environment and its effects on the implementation of the curriculum for History in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon. Three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. More specifically, the study sought to ascertain the extent to which, the social environment of a school affect curriculum implementation in history. The study employed the survey research design with a mix of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire while a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from a sample of 305 respondents. Questionnaires were completed by 300 history teachers and students while 05 history pedagogic inspectors were interviewed. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study. Data were analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, mean scores and standard deviation, and inferential statistics notably the Pearson Correlation test was used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis with the support of ATLAS.ti software version 8.0. The findings revealed that the social environment ( $r=0.895$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), have a positive correlation with curriculum implementation. These findings are in consonance with the postulates of scholars such as Cheryan et al (2014), Alvior (2014), and Maxwell et al (2017). Based on the findings, recommendations were made to students, teachers, and school authorities and to optimize the use of social environmental factors to enhance the implementation of the curriculum of history and other subjects in secondary schools in Mezam and beyond. Suggestions for further studies were made.

**Keywords:** Environmental Factors, Social Environment and Curriculum Implementation.

## Introduction

The curriculum remains the central element in the teaching-learning transaction. According to Wiggins & McTighe (2006), the curriculum is a standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. Curriculum is the central guide for all teachers as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every student has access to rigorous academic experiences. Curriculum must include the necessary goals, methods, materials and assessments to effectively support instruction and learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006).

According to Kulatunga et al (2013), curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. The process involves helping the

learner acquire knowledge or experience. It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process.

According to Endeley & Zama (2022), curriculum implementation is the task of translating the curriculum documents into the operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers and others concerned. It also entails all that it takes to put into practice the official prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects in a school

Stenhouse (1995) identifies the teacher as the agent in the curriculum implementation process. She argues that implementation is the manner in which the teacher selects and mixes the various aspects of knowledge contained in a curriculum document or syllabus.

According to Wiggins & McTighe (2006), curriculum implementation is influenced by a multitude of factors, one of them being environmental factors. To Ellis & Todd (2018), this concerns the particular circumstances of each school. Schools located in rich socio-economic environments and those that have adequate human and material resources can implement the curriculum to an extent that would be difficult or impossible for schools in poor economic environments. Mould (2020) argues that the learning environment dramatically affects the learning outcomes of students. Schools' open space and noise, inappropriate temperature, insufficient light, overcrowded classes, misplaced boards and inappropriate classroom layout all make up factors that could be confounding variables distracting students in class.

This study focuses its attention on the implementation of the history curriculum and investigates how environmental factors affect the implementation of the history curriculum in some selected secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **The Concept of the Social Environment**

According to Ellis & Todd (2018), a person's social environment is their society and all surroundings influenced in some way by humans. It includes all relationships, culture, group dynamics and social structures among others. In this study, social environment refers to social environment of a school otherwise referred to as the school climate which includes relationships and group dynamics on campus that enhance curriculum implementation in history.

With respect to the social environment, Maxwell et al, (2017) affirm that the school climate construct is complex and multi-dimensional. It has been described as the unwritten personality and atmosphere of a school, including its norms, values, and expectations (Brookover et al., 1978; Haynes et al., 1997; Petrie, 2014). Further, it has been described as the "quality and character of school life" (Cohen et al., 2009, p. 182). Importantly, rather than concerning administrative or physical attributes of the school (for example, teachers' salary or schools' physical resources), school climate research focuses on the psychosocial school atmosphere, and the inter-group interactions that affect student learning and school functioning (Johnson and Stevens, 2006; Lubienski et al., 2008; Reyes et al., 2012).

According to Maxwell et al (2017), the social environment or the school climate is a leading predictor of students' emotional and behavioral outcomes. It affects students' adaptive psychosocial adjustment (Brand et al., 2008), mental health outcomes (Roeser et al., 2000; Brand et al., 2003) and self-esteem (Way et al., 2007). School climate also influences students' behaviour, such as rates of bullying and aggression (Espelage et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2014), student delinquency (Gottfredson et al., 2005), and alcohol and drug use (Brand et al., 2003). Finally, and of particular relevance to this research, school climate perception has also been found to affect the implementation of the curriculum in academic subjects with history inclusive (Brookover et al., 1978; Brand et al., 2008). It is for this reason that the present study also seeks to assess whether the

socio-emotional environment of a school affects the implementation of the curriculum of history in secondary schools in Mezam of the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

The curriculum seeks to satisfy the developmental and educational needs of the children it serves in the context of the contemporary society in which they live (Stephens, 2007). It provides for children's immediate learning needs and interests, and at the same time prepares them to benefit from further education. It enables children to function effectively in a changing society and helps them to cope successfully with the demands of modern life. The relationship between education and society is dynamic and interactive. According to Akhtar (2004), education not only reflects a society but is an influence in shaping its development. It helps to equip children to share in the benefits of the society in which they live and to contribute effectively to that society's sustenance and evolution. The curriculum takes cognizance of the changing nature of knowledge and society and caters for the needs of individual children in adjusting to such change hence making social influence an important factor in the curriculum developmental process (Akhtar, 2004). Society has its own expectations about the aims and objectives that should be considered when designing the curriculum. It also has a perception of what the product of the school system should look like. Social themes such as drug addiction, delinquency, sex and crime and other prevalent issues are always incorporated into the curriculum and when these expectations are not met, the curriculum becomes irrelevant. Other themes such as human resources of the nation, population growth, pattern of migration and urban drift play a major part in shaping students' knowledge and these accounts for their infusion into the curriculum (Stephens, 2007).

The expectation and aspiration of a changing society are reflected through the educational system of a country and its curriculum implementation (Chantal et al, 2013). "The school" according to John Dewey, "must become the child's habitant to be a miniature community, and embryonic society". Education is process that takes place in society for society and by society. The changing nature of society has its impact on curriculum implementation. Teaching of history and other subjects has to adjust itself to the changing situations or else it will be isolated from life; in short, it will remain unrealistic, useless and meaningless. Society by dynamic, it grows and changes and social changes must not only be reflected in education but also be influenced by it. Changes occur in the cultural sphere and every sector of natural life. Curriculum is relevant, should take out of these changes and promote desirable changes in the learners during implementation (Stephens, 2007).

School climate refers to internal conditions of a school that creates a conducive atmosphere for learning that is safe and secure (Nsa et al, 2014). Research shows that students' perceptions of school climate significantly explain writing and numeracy achievement and this effect is mediated by students' psychological identification with the school (Usaini & Bakar, 2015). In addition, staff perceptions of school climate explain students' achievement in numeracy, writing and reading tests as well as assessments in history and other subjects. Odeh, et al, (2015) also indicated that school climate and discipline, in general, have a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students.

Peer disorder, such as bullying, is negatively related to school safety and achievement and is also associated with more serious school violence (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). In fact, these seemingly less serious issues were recorded to be stronger predictors of feelings of safety at school than violent crimes or personal experiences of crime (Masoumeh & Muhammad, 2016). According to the analysis done by Egbo (2015) in a study; students, staff, and administrators agree on issues of safety concerns and its influence on learning, hence academic performance of history and other subjects.

Safety issues in a school encompass the everyday activities that make up the learning environment, and that making schools safe is a joint responsibility that requires a broad-based team approach. This is because a safer school leads to better curriculum implementation in the school in subjects such a history. Masoumeh & Muhammad (2016)) further argued that school safety and school order are fundamental to studies of the achievement gap, teacher attrition, and student engagement. Ojukwu (2017) equally revealed that insecurity in the school environment significantly affects the academic performance of secondary school students. Using detailed student-level data and a school and classroom fixed effects approach, Gottfried finds that attendance and achievement are positively

related. Therefore, a school where students feel that their safety is not guaranteed leads to absenteeism hence poor performance.

Gilman (2016) reports similar findings. Jinot (2018) examined the effects of the role of peer and social interaction in adolescent academic achievement through a review of existing literature. It was observed that adolescents have an increased social motivation that is followed by a decrease in academic motivation; this consequence causes the demonstrations of the inability in academic areas in school. Mosha (2017) investigated the influence of peer group on adolescent students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tanzania and established that peers' relationship, socialization, environment, globalization, and drug use had a great influence in determining students' academic performance. School climate is definitely significant in affording learners with a conducive, supportive and secure environment for effective learning. Therefore, greater curriculum implementation in history would be enhanced by greater social interaction among students and history teachers on campus.

The present study therefore seeks to ascertain the effects of the social environment of a school on the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural and historical theory views human development as a socially mediated process in which children acquire their cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society. Vygotsky's (1978) theory stresses the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978), as he believed strongly that community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning." Unlike Piaget's notion that children's development must necessarily precede their learning, Vygotsky (1978) argues that, social learning tends to precede (that is, come before) development. This theory relates to the present study in that it highlights the important of cultural, contextual and environmental factors in child and adolescent development, which should be taken into consideration by teachers when implementing the curriculum of a subject such as history in secondary schools.

Bandura's (1977) Social learning theory suggests that social behaviour is learned by observing and imitating the behaviour of others. Psychologist Albert Bandura developed the social learning theory as an alternative to the earlier work of fellow psychologist B.F. Skinner, known for his influence on behaviourism. The theory is a useful tool for the present study in that it is essential for teachers of a subject such as history to employ its precepts when implementing the curriculum in secondary schools. This is because the students learn by observing and imitating the behaviour of the history teacher in the classroom and so the history teacher must use the environmental factors at his disposal in a school to enhance the implementation of the curriculum.

According to Maxwell et al (2017), the social environment or the school climate is a leading predictor of students' emotional and behavioral outcomes. It affects students' adaptive psychosocial adjustment (Brand et al., 2008), mental health outcomes (Roeser et al., 2000; Brand et al., 2003) and self-esteem (Way et al., 2007). School climate also influences students' behaviour, such as rates of bullying and aggression (Espelage et al., 2014; Turner et al., 2014), student delinquency (Gottfredson et al., 2005), and alcohol and drug use (Brand et al., 2003). Finally, and of particular relevance to this research, school climate perception has also been found to affect the implementation of the curriculum in academic subjects with history inclusive (Brookover et al., 1978; Brand et al., 2008). It is for this reason that the present study also seeks to assess whether the socio-emotional environment of a school affects the implementation of the curriculum of history in secondary schools in Mezam of the Northwest Region of Cameroon

### **The Concept of Curriculum**

What is implied in the term "curriculum"? The answer to the question is hardly conclusive. There are a variety of definitions in relation to the term "curriculum." The indecisive nature of the term is owing to divided perceptions of stakeholders, e.g. students, educators, researchers, administrators, evaluators with their own agenda of emphasis in educational discourse. According to Pratt (1994,

p.5) and Barrow and Milburn (1990, p.84) as well as Margaret Endeley & Martha Zama (2022)p.1, the word “curriculum” is derived from the Latin verb *currere*, “to run.” “*Currere*” became a diminutive noun and meant a “racing chariot” or “race track.” An extension was made by Cicero who associated the term with *curriculum vitae* that means “the course of one’s life.” He also associated it with *curricula mentis* that metaphorically refers to “the (educational) course of the mind.” It was not until the nineteenth century that the term was commonly used in the educational field. A great number of researchers or educators (e.g. Barrow & Milburn, 1990; Beauchamp, 1977; Goodson, 1994; Longstreet & Shane, 1993; Marsh, 1997; Wood & Davis, 1978) have shed light on what curriculum is through their reviews of or critical comments on, this term. An example is what Goodson (1994) describes of curriculum “as a multifaceted concept, constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas” (p. 111). This view reflects the complex and interactive nature of curriculum. Longstreet and Shane (1993) reveal another side of curriculum which requires decision making:

A curriculum can be called a plan for learning, which contains assumptions about the purpose of education in our society. It also has a definite structure through which the vision of the planners can be translated into learning experiences for the learner. Hence any curriculum comprises two major dimensions: a vision and a structure (Wiles & Bondi, 1988). The Latin meaning of the term 'curriculum' is a racecourse used by chariots. Hence, it is any path or course of study to be undertaken by an educational institution, to be covered in a specified timeframe. The course of events can take place inside the school and also outside it: a curriculum would consist of several events like plan for learning, study periods, sports activities and cultural events, among others. Hence defining curriculum as 'course of events' would be a very simplistic understanding of the term. One would need to elaborate, 'which course of events'.

Good (2022) describes curriculum as "a systematic group of courses or sequences of subjects required for graduation or certification in a major field of study, for example, social studies curriculum, and physical education curriculum. According to Wiles & Bondi (1988), "a curriculum can be called a plan for learning, which contains assumptions about the purpose of education in our society. It also has a definite structure through which the vision of the planners can be translated into learning experiences for the learner. Hence any curriculum comprises two major dimensions: a vision and a structure.

But, Tanner & Tanner (1980) define, "Curriculum is the reconstruction of knowledge and experience systematically developed under the auspices of the school (or university), to enable the learner to increase his or her control of knowledge and experience". Doll (1986), defines the curriculum of a school as the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes, appreciations, and values under the auspices of that school. Dewal (2004), has explained the term to mean the sequence of course of study including the content and its processes. According to Dewal (2004), 'pathyakram encompasses the content, its processes, a sequence of study pertinent to the stage of education'. The Sanskrit meaning of the term curriculum in Dewal's opinion would imply the following: i) a course of study ii) a sequence of the course depending on the stage of education. iii) The content and processes arranged in a definite hierarchy iv) the sequence of study begins with process of understanding, to acquire and to think or to reflect.

Beane et al. (1986) have grouped- most of these definitions under the following four categories: (1) Curriculum as a product (2) Curriculum as a programme (3) Curriculum as intended learning outcomes (4) Curriculum as planned learner experiences. The development of aesthetic sensibility, attitudes and skills essential for work through the study of arts and crafts need to be stressed upon. During this period, emphasis must also be given on physical development through sports activities.

For his part, Hasan (1988) submits that the curriculum concept can be evaluated in four dimensions, that is:

1. Curriculum as an idea; yielded pass or through research and theory's, especially in the field of education and curriculum

2. Curriculum as plan written, as materialization of curriculum as an idea; what in it load about target, materials, activity, appliances, and time
3. Curriculum as an activity, representing execution of curriculum as a plan written; in the form of study practice
4. Curriculum as a result of representing consequence of curriculum as an activity, in the form of got of curriculum target namely reaching of change of certain ability or behavior from all educative participants.

The present study pays attention to the history curriculum within the English subsystem of education in Cameroon.

### **The Concept of Curriculum Implementation**

According to Kulatunga et al, (2013), curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. The process involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society (Kulatunga et al, 2013).

Nevenglosky et al, (2018) argue that curriculum implementation refers to how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum. Curriculum designs generally provide instructional suggestions, scripts, lesson plans, and assessment options related to a set of objectives. Such designs focus on consistency to help teachers successfully implement and maintain the curricular structure in order to meet various objectives (Wiles & Bondi, 2014).

Causarano (2015) specifically found this to be true through a study evaluating the quality of math instruction in an urban school and the impact on student-teacher relationships. The findings from their study supported the need for teachers to know the curriculum well to strengthen instructional practices. Content instruction depends on the quality of the explanations the teachers offer (MacDonald et al., 2016). MacDonald et al. (2016) reinforce the need for quality instruction and commitment through their recommendation that professional development should help teachers deliver the prescribed curriculum.

Sometimes the problem with implementation results from a problem with the curriculum itself (Caropreso et al, 2016). Bell (2015) analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of an English grammar curriculum; specifically, the guidance and directives provided to support teachers. Though Bell found the curriculum to be accurate overall, he found that the materials lacked pedagogical guidance to help teachers understand the lessons accurately enough to teach them. Bell pointed out another necessary component when considering the implementation of a curriculum as he reinforced how proper training played into implementing the curriculum with confidence (Caropreso et al., 2016; McNeill et al., 2016). Bell found that a lack of training or guidance for curriculum hindered accurate delivery to students. Once again, this type of barrier has been found to influence student growth and learning (Causarano, 2015) even with the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Cameroon. The present study focuses on the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Cameroon, precisely in Mezam.

### **Theoretical Review**

#### **Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural and Historical theory**

This theory was propounded by Lev Vygotsky in 1978. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural and historical theory views human development as a socially mediated process in which children acquire their cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society. Vygotsky's (1978) theory is comprised of concepts such as culture-specific tools, private speech, and the Zone of Proximal Development. Vygotsky's theories

stress the fundamental role of social interaction in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978), as he believed strongly that community plays a central role in the process of "making meaning."

Vygotsky (1978) places more emphasis on culture affecting cognitive development. Vygotsky also places considerably more emphasis on social factors contributing to cognitive development. Also, Vygotsky states the importance of cultural and social context for learning. Cognitive development stems from social interactions from guided learning within the zone of proximal development as children and their partner's co-construct knowledge. In contrast, Piaget maintains that cognitive development stems largely from independent explorations in which children construct knowledge of their own. In addition, Vygotsky said the environment in which children grow up will influence how they think and what they think about. To add, Vygotsky places more (and different) emphasis on the role of language in cognitive development. For Vygotsky, thought and language are initially separate systems from the beginning of life, merging at around three years of age, producing verbal thought (inner speech). To him, cognitive development results from an internalization of language. Vygotsky equally postulate that adults are an important source of cognitive development. Adults transmit their culture's tools of intellectual adaptation that children internalize.

In line with the effects of culture on cognitive development, Vygotsky (1978), claimed that infants are born with the basic abilities for intellectual development called 'elementary mental functions' (Piaget focuses on motor reflexes and sensory abilities). Elementary mental functions include – Attention, sensation, perception and memory, and eventually, through interaction within the sociocultural environment, these are developed into more sophisticated and effective mental processes which Vygotsky (1978) refers to as 'higher mental functions.' Each culture provides its children tools of intellectual adaptation that allow them to use the basic mental functions more effectively/adaptively. Tools of intellectual adaptation are Vygotsky's term for methods of thinking and problem-solving strategies that children internalize through social interactions with the more knowledgeable members of society.

Vygotsky (1978) sees the Zone of Proximal Development as the area where the most sensitive instruction or guidance should be given - allowing the child to develop skills they will then use on their own - developing higher mental functions. Vygotsky also views interaction with peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. He suggests that teachers use cooperative learning exercises where less competent children develop with help from more skillful peers within the zone of proximal development. Also, Vygotsky believed that language develops from social interactions, for communication purposes. He viewed language as man's greatest tool, a means for communicating with the outside world.

This theory is relevant to that study in that Vygotsky's (1936) approach to child and adolescent development is a form of social constructivism, based on the idea that cognitive functions are the products of social interactions. He emphasized the collaborative nature of learning by the construction of knowledge through social negotiation and this is the new approach that teachers of history should adopt with respect to the teaching of the subject in secondary schools; by constructing knowledge together with the students and not having monopoly over historical facts and analysis. This can be encouraged through classroom discussions, debates on key historical facts and events, providing room for students' feedback at the end of lessons through question and answer sessions among others. This would go a long way to enhance learning among the students during curriculum implementation on the subject of history in secondary schools in the country.

### **Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory**

The Social learning theory, propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977, emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behaviour.

In social learning theory, Bandura (1977) agrees with the behaviorist learning theories of classical conditioning and operant conditioning. However, he adds two important ideas:

- Mediating processes occur between stimuli & responses.
- Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning.

Concerning observational learning, Bandura (1977) submits that children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. Individuals that are observed are called models. In society, children are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents within the family, characters on children's TV, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate, for example, masculine and feminine, pro and anti-social, among others. According to Bandura (1977), children pay attention to some of these people (models) and encode their behaviour. At a later time, they may imitate (that is, copy) the behaviour they have observed. They may do this regardless of whether the behavior is 'gender appropriate' or not, but there are a number of processes that make it more likely that a child will reproduce the behaviour that its society deems appropriate for its gender.

First, the child is more likely to attend to and imitate those people it perceives as similar to itself. Consequently, it is more likely to imitate behaviour modeled by people of the same gender. Second, the people around the child will respond to the behavior it imitates with either reinforcement or punishment. If a child imitates a model's behavior and the consequences are rewarding, the child is likely to continue performing the behavior, Bandura (1977) submits.

The child will also take into account of what happens to other people when deciding whether or not to copy someone's actions. A person learns by observing the consequences of another person's (that is., models) behavior, for example, a younger sister observing an older sister being rewarded for a particular behaviour is more likely to repeat that behavior herself. This is known as vicarious reinforcement.

According to Bandura (1977), identification occurs with another person (the model) and involves taking on (or adopting) observed behaviours, values, beliefs and attitudes of the person with whom you are identifying. Identification is different to imitation as it may involve a number of behaviors being adopted, whereas imitation usually involves copying a single behavior.

In terms of mediational processes, this theory is often described as the 'bridge' between traditional learning theory (that is, behaviorism) and the cognitive approach. This is because it focuses on how mental (cognitive) factors are involved in learning. Unlike Skinner, Bandura (1977) believes that humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behavior and its consequences. Observational learning could not occur unless cognitive processes were at work. These mental factors mediate (intervene) in the learning process to determine whether a new response is acquired. Therefore, individuals do not automatically observe the behavior of a model and imitate it.

Bandura (1977) submits that there are four mediational processes:

- **Attention:** The individual needs to pay attention to the behavior and its consequences and forms a mental representation of the behaviour. For a behavior to be imitated, it has to grab the child's attention.
- **Retention:** The behavior may be noticed but is it not always remembered which obviously prevents imitation. It is important therefore that a memory of the behaviour is formed to be performed later by the observer since much of social learning is not immediate.
- **Reproduction:** This is the ability to perform the behaviour that the model has just demonstrated. The individual may be limited by his/her physical ability and for that reason, even if they wish to reproduce the behavior, they may not be able. This influences our decisions whether to try and imitate it or not.
- **Motivation:** this is the will to perform the behavior. The rewards and punishment that follows behaviour will be considered by the observer. If the perceived rewards outweigh the perceived costs (if there are any), then the behavior will be more likely to be imitated by the observer. If the



vicarious reinforcement is not seen to be important enough to the observer, then they will not imitate the behaviour.

McLeod (2016) maintains that the social learning approach takes thought processes into account and acknowledges the role that they play in deciding if a behaviour is to be imitated or not. As such, it provides a more comprehensive explanation of human learning by recognizing the role of meditational processes. However, although it can explain some quite complex behaviour, it cannot adequately account for how we develop a whole range of behaviours including thoughts and feelings. Individuals have a lot of cognitive control over our behaviour and just because they have had experiences of violence does not mean they have to reproduce such behaviour. Some criticisms of social learning theory arise from the commitment to the environment as the chief influence on behavior. It is limiting to describe behaviour solely in terms of either nature or nurture and attempts to do this underestimate the complexity of human behaviour. It is more likely that behavior is due to an interaction between nature (biology) and nurture (environment).

The social learning theory is relevant to this study in that the theory talks of observational learning as a precursor to imitation which leads to behaviour formation, and depending on whether the behaviour is reinforced or punished, the behaviour would be learnt. This aspect must be taken into consideration by teachers of history and other subjects when implementing the curriculum of history and other subjects in secondary schools for the students. Teachers should exhibit appropriate behaviour and showcase executive mastery of historical facts, events and issues. This can be done through the use examples drawn from the school environment so that key historical concepts and events can be effectively mastered by the learners through observation of the teacher in class during lessons. The learning behaviors of the students of history in secondary schools must be encouraged by the history teachers through motivation, incentives, reinforcements and approval to enhance imitation and repetition.

Again, curriculum implementers or teachers of history and other subjects in secondary schools in the country should take into account that the students have a short attention span and should therefore organize classroom and co-curricular activities that capture the attention of the children and adolescents such as learning through playing, storytelling, song and dance, and drama and these activities should be terminated immediately signs if boredom and exhaustion are noticed on the students. Also, negative behaviours such as violence, absenteeism, disturbance during lessons, fidgeting in class among others should be immediately pinpointed and reprimanded by the history teachers. This should be done through negative reinforcement and punishment in order to prevent recurrence during curriculum implementation in history at the secondary school level.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Effective curriculum implementation occurs when teachers of subjects teach their subjects well in a school. However, from observation and interaction with colleagues, history teachers in secondary schools in Cameroon sometimes do not teach history very well. About 500 of them through seminars organized by the subject association in the two regions that I have worked (North West and South West). This is seen in their inability to effectively impart knowledge on the subject area to the students. This is usually due to failure of the teachers to come to class regularly, presentation of boring lectures that lack enthusiasm, lack of adequate knowledge about the subject area, poor or none use of current textbooks in the discipline, lack of question and answer sessions that stimulate classroom debates and feedback from students, absence of visual and teaching aids that enhance comprehension among others (NOWEHCTA Seminars). This unfortunate situation usually ends up affecting the effective delivery of the subject in the classroom thereby negatively affecting their students' motivation and interest, class attendance and participation, and consequently their academic performance and career aspirations in the discipline. However, the social environment has the potential to enhance or limit the implementation of the history curriculum at this level of study. It was based on this premise that the researcher sought to investigate the effects of social environmental factors on the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

## Main Research Hypothesis

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between social factors and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.

## Specific Research Hypotheses

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.

$H_{02}$ : There is a significant relationship between social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.

## Methodology

The study made use of a cross-sectional survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approach. The area of study was Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon. The population of the study comprises of secondary school history teachers, students and pedagogic inspectors of public, private and confessional (mission) secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon for the academic year 2021/2022. The accessible population was defined in terms of those elements in the target population within the reach of the researcher.

**Table 1:** Study Population

Schools	Target population	Accessible population
History teachers	314	188
History students	3,497	439
History pedagogic inspectors	15	08
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,828</b>	<b>635</b>

*Source: School Statistics, Researcher's survey, 2022.*

## Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample consisted of 305 participants drawn from Mezam Divisions made up of 150 history teachers and 150 history students as well as 5 history pedagogic inspectors drawn from the Mezam school community. The sample was judged appropriately based on sampling guidelines by the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table.

**Table 2:** Study Sample

Schools	Accessible population	Sample
History teachers	188	150
History students	439	150
History pedagogic inspectors	08	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>305</b>

*Source: Researcher's survey, 2022.*

The purposive and snowball sampling techniques were adopted in selecting the 300 secondary school teachers and 150 History students and 5 History Pedagogic Inspectors. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools and the teachers and the students that constituted the target and accessible population respectively. Two instruments were used for data collection. The instruments are a questionnaire and an interview guide. A questionnaire was used to obtain information from 150 history teachers, 150 history students from 5 history pedagogic inspectors with an interview guide. A pilot study was carried out in 10 Secondary who were not part of the study. The reliability was calculated using internal consistency reliability, which is a measure of the consistency between different items of the same construct. Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency reliability designed by Lee Cronbach in (1951) was used to test the reliability of the instrument. This was done construct by construct according to how the variables were conceptualized using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) computer software version 23.0. social environment as a sub variable had a reliability of 0.87. When this coefficient is greater than 0.7 we can conclude that the questionnaire was reliable. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23.0

was used to analyze the quantitative data collected, particularly the close-ended questionnaire items. The Pearson correlation coefficient denoted by the letter “r” was utilized to test the hypotheses of this study.

### Presentation of Findings

**Table 3:** Teachers’ Social Environment and History Curriculum Implementation

Items	Alternatives %				N	Mean	St. d	Rank
	SD	D	A	SA				
I have a great working relationship with my students	5.3	7.2	53.8	33.7	150	4.19	.70	4
My relationship with the school administration is cordial	1.4	10.5	42.9	45.1	150	4.33	.69	1
I enjoy a collaborative working relationship with my colleagues	4.2	5.5	55.4	34.8	150	4.24	.63	3
The relationship among students in my classes is usually convivial or cordial	10.0	3.6	38.0	48.4	150	4.32	.74	2
My students are disciplined and exhibit nonviolent behaviour in class	5.3	7.2	50.0	27.2	150	4.02	.75	5
<b>Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>5.24</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>.70</b>	

SD-strongly Disagree; D-Disagree; A-Agree; SA-Strongly Agree

*Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2022.*

Table 24 shows the distribution of the responses according to the social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum with respect to teachers. The majority of the respondents agreed (87.6%) that the social environment affected the implementation of the history curriculum as opposed to those that disagreed (12.4%). This therefore revealed that schools’ social environment affected the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam. The result was in this series: Agreed >Disagreed.

**Table 4:** Students’ Social Environment and History Curriculum Implementation

Items	Alternatives %				N	Mean	St. d	Rank
	SD	D	A	SA				
My history teacher has a great working relationship with students	12.5	14.7	39.7	33.2	150	4.03	.82	1
My history teacher has a cordial relationship with the school administration	14.8	15.6	42.4	27.2	150	3.94	.81	2
My history teacher enjoys a collaborative working relationship with other colleagues	10.0	22.1	40.8	27.2	150	3.92	.79	3
There is a cordial relationship among us in class	30.5	8.6	40.8	20.1	150	3.78	.80	4
Students exhibit nonviolent behaviour in class	20.5	12.1	39.7	27.7	150	3.64	.79	5
<b>Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>17.7</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>4.10</b>	<b>.63</b>	

SD-strongly Disagree; D-Disagree; A-Agree; SA-Strongly Agree

*Source: Researcher’s field survey, 2022*

Table 25 shows the distribution of the responses according to the social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum with respect to students. The majority of the respondents agreed (67.7%) that the social environment affected the implementation of the history curriculum as opposed to those that disagreed (32.3%). This therefore revealed that schools’ social environment

affected the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam. The result was in this series: Agreed >Disagreed.

This section pays particular attention to the social environment of a school and curriculum implementation in history. It takes on the Qual-quant paradigm in presenting the interview findings. The Qual-quant analytics approach was employed to illustrate a qualitative dominance of the data collected.

**Table 5:** Interview Responses on Social Environment and History Curriculum Implementation (Seahci)

Primary Document	g	Seahci7	Seahci8	words/pd
p 1: case 1	m	y	Y	270
p 2: case 2	m	y	Y	301
p 3: case 3	m	y	Y	215
p 4: case 4	f	y	Y	103
p 5: case 5	m	y	Y	198
accum.wc	m=4 f=1	y=05 n=00	y=05 n=00	

*Note: Because ALL quotations are word counted separately and completely, accumulated word counts may not exceed the total word count of a primary document*

An overwhelming majority of the cases expressed dominant positive views on the relationship between the social environment and curriculum implementation of history as can be seen on Table 24 above. Case 4 was selected for thematic illustration because she was a female history pedagogic inspector who expressed a particularly strong positive view on the topic by quoting:

*“...The social environment of a school is very important in the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools. This is because when the school environment is calm, serene and clean, it makes it very conducive for education in general and for the teaching and learning of history most especially. When the history teachers enjoy good working relationships with other teachers, the school administration and the students, there bound to be a productive school environment where social climate encourages the implementation of the history curriculum...”*

Case 4’s explanatory excerpt illuminates the fact that the social environment of a school is an important issue that encourages the adequate implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools. History teachers need to devote time and energy to create for themselves a good working environment and social climate where they can succeed and teach effectively. Against this backdrop, the social environment of schools is seen as an essential issue that affects the implementation of the history curriculum in Mezam Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon.

### Verification of Hypothesis Three

**Ho3:** There is no significant relationship between social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.

**Table 6:** Correlation between Social Environment and Curriculum Implementation in History

Variable		Social environment	Curriculum implementation
Social environment	Pearson Correlation	1	.895**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Curriculum implementation	Pearson Correlation	.895**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**NB:** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant relationship between social environment and curriculum implementation in history ( $r=.895$ ,  $df=98$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Based on the fact that the significance level of the hypothesis is above 0, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between social environment and curriculum implementation in history was rejected while the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between social environment and curriculum implementation in history was retained. This provided supportive inferential evidence to conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam. This means that a unit improvement in the social environment leads to a corresponding unit increase in the implementation of the history curriculum.

### Summary of the Findings

**Table 7:** Summary of Findings

Hypotheses	Statistics			Decision
	Alpha	R	P	
<b>Ho3:</b> There is no significant relationship between social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.	<b>0.05</b>	<b>.895</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>Ha3:</b> There is a significant relationship between social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.

Summarily, as seen in the summary table above, the social environment of a school have significant impact on the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools. Therefore, the social environmental factors of a school play a fundamental role in the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon.

### Discussion

#### Social Environmental factors and History Curriculum Implementation

Hypothesis 3 intended to examine whether there is a significant relationship between the social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division of the Northwest region of Cameroon. The findings presented in Chapter Four for this hypothesis indicated the  $r$  value is the correlation coefficient and it is at 0.895, which implies there is a positive correlation between the mental environment and the implementation of the history curriculum. As a result of this, the null hypothesis Ho3 was rejected and the alternative Ha3 was retained, meaning there is a significant correlation between the social environment and the implementation of the history curriculum.

The finding agrees with Maxwell et al, (2017) who affirmed that the school social environment or school climate construct is complex and multi-dimensional. It has been described as the unwritten personality and atmosphere of a school, including its norms, values, and expectations. Furthermore, it has been described as the “quality and character of school life”. Importantly, Maxwell et al. (2017) noted that rather than focusing on the administrative or physical attributes of the school (for example, teachers' salary or schools' physical resources), school climate focuses on the psychosocial school atmosphere, and the inter-group interactions that affect student learning and school functioning. All these affect the implementation of the school curriculum.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that there is a significant link between the social environments with respect to the implementation of the history curriculum in secondary schools in Mezam Division. The study supports the notion that teachers of history in Mezam Division and beyond should develop and enhance their knowledge and competencies on mechanisms to implicate environmental factors in the teaching of the subject in order to improve the motivation, attention and performance of the learners.

With regards to the social environment and curriculum implementation, teachers of history and other

subjects in secondary schools should create a positive social climate for themselves, their colleagues and the students. This could be done by collaborating positively and constructively with other teachers, the students and the school administration in formulating and implementing better ways of imparting knowledge to the learners in their subject areas. This would go a long way to improve the teaching learning transaction in schools.

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