



 Research Article

BARRIERS TO HARMONIZATION OF THE SUB-SYSTEMS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE LITTORAL AND SOUTH WEST REGIONS OF CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine barriers to harmonization of the sub-systems of primary education in the Littoral and South West Regions of Cameroon. The study was guided by two objectives which were to inquire whether bicultural traditions of the country is a hindrance to the harmonization process of the curriculum of primary education and to find out if the fear of assimilation is a barrier to harmonization of the curriculum of primary education. The concurrent mixed-methods research approach specifically the descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The sample population for the study was made up of 20 pedagogic staff from the Regional Delegation, 20 from the Divisional Delegation, 20 from the Inspectorates, 200 head teachers and 300 teachers from both regions. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques was adopted for the study. The instruments use for data collection were a questionnaire (closed ended questions) for Teachers and Head teachers and an interview guide for regional delegation staff, divisional delegation staff and inspectorate staff. Data from the close ended questions was analysed using SPSS 23.0, with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistical tools while open ended questions were analysed thematically. The hypotheses of the study were tested using Chi-square test. Statistically, findings showed that head teachers and teachers did not significantly differ in their perception on the bi-cultural tradition of the country acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education ($P=0.270, >0.05$) whereby majority of the head teachers 154 (76.9%) and teachers 214 (71.4%) strongly agree and agree that the bi-cultural tradition of the country is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while a minority of the head teachers 46 (23.1%) and teachers 86 (28.6%) disagree and strongly disagree. Statistically, findings showed that head teachers and teachers did not significantly differ in their perception on the fear of assimilation acting as a barrier to the

harmonization of the curriculum for primary education. ($P=0.555, >0.05$) whereby, majority of the head teachers 144 (71.8%) and teachers 222 (74.1%) of almost the same proportion strongly agree and agree that the fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while a minority of the head teachers 56 (28.2%) and teachers 78 (25.9%) disagree and strongly disagree. It is generally recommended that, harmonization in its context of preserving cultural patrimony as an objective of multicultural education. Cultural patrimony refers to the sum total of ways of living, including values, beliefs, aesthetic standards, linguistic expression, and patterns of thinking, behavioural norms and styles of communication, which a group of people have developed to assure its survival in a particular physical and human environment.

KEYWORDS

Barriers, Harmonization, Bicultural Traditions, Fear of Assimilation, Sub-Systems of Primary Education.

INTRODUCTION

The harmonization of sub-systems of primary education is a crucial aspect of ensuring quality and equitable education systems within a country. The system of education of any country is the pillar on which the educational policy, curriculum and methodology rest upon. Historically, Cameroon has undergone a triple colonial educational system. After independence and the reunification of the English and French Cameroon, there was need to bring to uniform or harmonize the two sub-systems for proper management and orientation of the educational system. In Cameroon, specifically in the Littoral and South West regions, the process of harmonizing primary education sub-systems faces significant barriers which hinder the effective coordination and alignment of curriculum frameworks, teacher training programs, and assessment methods. Understanding these barriers is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to develop strategies that promote harmonization and enhance the overall quality of education in these regions. This essay will explore the main barriers to harmonization in the primary education sub-systems of the Littoral and South West regions of Cameroon, drawing on relevant research and studies. Being a linguistically diverse country, with

over 250 languages spoken. The official languages are English and French, and in these regions, both languages are used for instruction. This linguistic diversity poses challenges in developing a unified curriculum and teaching materials that effectively cater to the needs of all students. According to a study conducted by Ngalim Eugene Fon and Fobellah J. Njumbe, titled "Language Policy and Planning in Cameroon: A Critical Review," the lack of standardized curriculum materials and teaching resources in local languages hinders the harmonization process, as teachers struggle to deliver instruction that is linguistically accessible to all students (Fon & Njumbe, 2019).

After Cameroon gained independence, two separate educational systems were implemented based on the country's colonial past. One system followed the French model in East Cameroon, while the other followed the British model in West Cameroon (Nsamenang, 2011). The integration of these two systems was seen as a symbol of national unity between the two regions. However, studies suggest that the merger did not result in a seamless blending of the systems (Esch, 2012). Cameroon is unique in that it

operates two educational sub-systems simultaneously, influenced by its British/Anglophone and French/Francophone colonial histories. Following World War I, the country was divided, with Great Britain ruling one section and France ruling the other. French-speaking Cameroon declared independence from the French-administered United Nations Trusteeship in 1960, becoming La Republique du Cameroun. British Cameroon gained independence from the British-administered Trusteeship in October 1961, forming West Cameroon. These events led to the establishment of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The northern British part of Cameroon became part of Nigeria, while the English-speaking southern part chose a separate path, aligning with the French-speaking regions (Fonkeng, 2007).

Education in Cameroon is free and compulsory for children aged six to twelve, although attendance is not strictly enforced in remote and rural areas. In the Anglophone sub-system, primary school lasts for seven years, reduced from eight, and since 2006, it has been six years to align with the French sub-system and promote harmonization efforts. Successful completion of primary education leads to a First School Leaving Certificate. In the French sub-system, primary school lasts for six years and results in a Certificat d'Etudes Primaires (CEP) (Tchombe, 1999).

Cameroon's bilingual nature contributes to the existence of two main sub-systems: the English and French sub-systems. These sub-systems are expected to coexist while preserving their respective values (Tchombe, 1999). However, coordinating the programs of these sub-systems has proven challenging due to various obstacles. The concept of harmonization in the Cameroonian context is complex, given the bicultural nature of the country. It raises questions about whether one culture's values should

dominate or if a common platform can be established by combining values from both cultures (Tchombe, 1999). Critics argue that harmonizing the educational sub-systems in Cameroon is impossible due to the country's biculturalism. However, examples such as Canada and Belgium, which are multicultural and bilingual, respectively, have successfully implemented a single education system. Cameroon's attempt to promote bilingualism and competency-based pedagogy, as well as the establishment of Bilingual Primary Schools, demonstrates a desire for harmonization. However, these efforts are often limited to bringing together learners from English and French backgrounds rather than true bilingual education (Fonkeng, 2007).

In essence, according to a study by Awesome (2000), since the unification of Cameroon in 1961, the country has been making efforts to reconcile its two distinct educational traditions inherited from the colonial era: one influenced by French education and the other by British education. These efforts aim to improve the overall quality of education. Ngalim (2014) views the educational system in Cameroon as a social system that can be categorized into two sub-systems: English and French. However, the main focus so far has been on harmonizing these sub-systems in primary education, and these efforts have not been very successful. Tchombe (1999) argues that both sub-systems of education should coexist in Cameroon, while Nsamenang (2011) sees the unification of the sub-systems as a symbol of national integration. On the other hand, Esch (2012) suggests that despite the nation's struggle to harmonize the sub-systems, they have not blended well together. In light of these challenges, the researcher conducted a study focusing on the curriculum of the two sub-systems in primary education, aiming to evaluate the barriers to harmonization between the English and French

educational sub-systems. The study also aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the strategies implemented thus far in harmonizing the educational sub-systems in Cameroon's primary education. The harmonization of sub-systems in primary education in the Littoral and South West regions of Cameroon faces significant barriers that hinder the successful integration of the English and French educational traditions inherited from the colonial era. Despite efforts to reconcile these sub-systems and improve the overall quality of education, the existing barriers impede progress and prevent the effective harmonization of primary education in these regions. Understanding and addressing these barriers is crucial in order to develop strategies that can overcome the challenges and create a cohesive educational system that enhances learning outcomes and promotes national integration...

This study has as major objective to evaluate the barriers to harmonization of the sub-systems of primary education in the Littoral and South West Regions of Cameroon. Specifically, the study aims:

- i. To inquire whether bicultural traditions of the country is a hindrance to the harmonization process of the curriculum of primary education.
- ii. To find out if the fear of assimilation is a barrier to harmonization of the curriculum of primary education.

Based on the above objectives, two hypotheses were tested which verified the significant relationship between bicultural traditions and the fear of assimilation and barriers to harmonization of the curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Harmonization in the context of primary education refers to the process of integrating and aligning different educational sub-systems, such as the English and French systems, to create a cohesive and unified educational framework. According to Ngalim (2014), harmonization involves reconciling the distinct educational traditions inherited from the colonial era in Cameroon, with one system being French-oriented and the other being British-oriented. The goal of harmonization is not only to bridge the gap between these sub-systems but also to improve the overall quality of education in the country. However, the process of harmonization in primary education in the Littoral and South West regions of Cameroon faces significant barriers.

The barriers to harmonization in primary education in these regions are multifaceted. Tchombe (1999) emphasizes that the coexistence of two sub-systems, the English sub-system and the French sub-system, creates challenges in terms of curriculum alignment, teaching methodologies, and administrative structures. The differences in language, content, and pedagogical approaches hinder the development of a unified curriculum that can cater to the needs of all students. Additionally, the lack of a standardized framework for teacher training and professional development further complicates the harmonization process. These barriers pose significant obstacles to achieving a cohesive and inclusive educational system.

The educational system in Cameroon is a legacy of the British and French administration whose inherited practices gave rise to the bicultural and bilingual path on which various aspects of its national life were to develop when it became independent. Based on the colonial legacies, various system practices in Cameroon convey its dual cultural and linguistic colonial backgrounds. The conflict of traditions in Cameroon

probably gives reasons for the existence of barriers to harmonization in the educational sub-systems. There are two cultures of colonial heritage that co-exist in Cameroon. These include; the English and the French cultures. Each culture jealously guards and preserves the values of its own system of education without compromising to the other perhaps for fear of assimilation and discrimination. The culture of the majority French is probably responsible for the existence of barriers to harmonization. Perhaps pride of values in the curriculum of the school sub-systems stands as a barrier to harmonization in the educational system in Cameroon.

Biculturalism in the study is drawn from its Canadian etymology in which context referred to the existence in Canada of two cultures that associated with English and French languages (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1963). According to Njoh (1972) one's education has to be rooted in one's culture before he appropriately dialogues with other cultures. If this approach is not maintained, cultural dialogue may degenerate into assimilation, imperialism and neocolonialism. This is so true with the bicultural nature of Cameroon wherein harmonization of the two cultures prove difficult in many areas because none of the cultures (English/French) deem it necessary to get into the other's culture for fear of assimilation, imperialism, neocolonialism and even marginalization. That fear of domination from the majority French and harmonization of the two sub-systems are independent. This is clear indication that the fear of assimilation from the majority French hinders the harmonization of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon thereby refusing the educational system from having a quality and equity stance.

To Tchombe (1999), one major barrier to harmonization is the bicultural nature of the country

owing to colonial heritage. The argument goes that Cameroon is a bilingual country where two cultures must co-exist. These cultures are said to exist in all spheres of life including education (Ngalim, 2014). Pride of values in the distinct sub-systems is strongly associated with barriers to harmonization in the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon. The argument is that each culture jealously clings to the values of its sub-system. None is ready to compromise. Consequently, this pride prevents the process of harmonization.

Looking at Tchombe's view, it is realized that harmonization in Cameroon primary schools is faced with challenges as both systems jealously guides their culture and will not want to lose it for fear of losing her pride of value. It has been observed that the minority Cameroonians (Anglophones) strive to study the French language but the reverse is not true with the Francophones who may be because of their colonial heritage to become French men deter from speaking the English language as much as the English counterpart does. It is only of recent that the French counterparts are struggling to speak and align themselves with the English language because of the present Anglophone crisis plaguing the nation, even though most of the Francophone parents caught interest in the superb education offered by the English system and thought it wise to send their children to study in this sub-system in order for them to measure with the world standard.

Harmonization is a term that has raised controversies in its understanding within the Cameroonian milieu. The difficulty of this term arises from the bicultural situation of the country. This term has been likened for assimilation and or discrimination; that is a case where one culture is said to integrate the other and consequently rendering it extinct. For this reason, each

of the cultures turns to guard and protect their policies jealously. This is one of the reasons why there are problems in harmonizing the primary educational system. The minority Anglophones believe that the effort to harmonize both systems will lead to an extinction of their tradition and culture and will also provoke discrimination in the distribution of resources.

According to Verkijika (2017), Anglophones have long complained that their language and culture are marginalised. They feel their judicial, educational and local government systems should be protected. They want an end to annexation and assimilation and more respect from the government for their language and political philosophies. And if that doesn't happen, they want a total separation and their own independent state. To Ndile (2018) Assimilation aimed at creating a native-Cameroonian elite class by eliminating African culture and replacing it with French culture, language and civilization. This was with the calculation that, if an African elite was created, it could be used to convince their kith and kin to accept French rule and tutelage. In 1903, the Governor-General for French West Africa explained this twofold objective of French education in Africa; the elites were trained to become auxiliaries of the administration in every area and the masses were to be educated by them and assimilate them into the French way of life.

If there is an escalation of the present crises plaguing the two English speaking regions it is because the minority English speaking Cameroonians from the North West and South West Regions are tired of being assimilated by the majority French Cameroonians who think that the Anglophones must succumb to their own system or ways of doing things. The Anglophones want a system that maintains their culture so that they can be proud in the nation and the world at large education being the main priority. According to the

president of the Republic of Cameroon; Biya Paul, during the Paris Peace Conference of November 2019, confessed that he has struggled to assimilate the Anglophones for so long but this has proved unsuccessful so he is suggesting to give the people of the North West and South West a special status believing this might go a long way to solve the present crisis plaguing the two regions. With this type of circumstances, the Anglophones are afraid that their culture and value will be wiped out completely if they accept to the kind of harmonization of the sub-systems referred to, making the harmonization process very difficult.

From a theoretical point of view, Deweyan democratic theory (1966) considers education as a process of life through which an individual continuously adapts to the innovations and vicissitudes of his environment. This Deweyan truism is timeless and universal. This does not exclude the educational system of Cameroon at the moment. The Curriculum is the “instrumentum laboris” (working document) that each educational system employs to attain the objective of helping the learners in the process of growth. For this precise reason, the organization of the curriculum in Cameroon educational system is the means through which the socio-political and economic objectives and values of the state can be attained. Dewey reiterates that: I believe that school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all these agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends. I believe that education therefore is a process of living and not a preparation for future filling (Dewey, 1897, in Dworkin, 1972).

In the Cameroonian context, being an Anglophone or a Francophone does not justify any negligence in the provision of learning values or facilities. Equity refers to the provision of equal access and opportunities to all learners irrespective of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Equity frowns on all forms of discrimination. The socio-economic, cultural and political causes of lack of equity are to be traced in order to limit it from education (Nelson, Palonsky, & McCarthy, 2006:81). The presence of equity is what ensures democratic education in a multicultural context like Cameroon. This study limits itself within Deweyan pedagogy of interest in democratic education. This theory explains the problem of equity and quality education in the educational achievements in the Cameroonian society. Barriers to harmonization affect equity pedagogy, which is a major characteristic in multicultural and democratic education alternatives. By equity pedagogy, all learners are given equal opportunities and privileges to develop their potentials. The teaching and evaluation procedures are established to foster the aptitudes, needs and experience of learner's quality education. It is also determined from the fact that the learners acquire the necessary skills to enhance their full integration into the community. Within this framework, quality education is possible if the curricula in Cameroon enhance the acquisition of the basic achievement levels of all learners in the various schools. This fact is possible with a harmonized pedagogic structure and evaluation process even if these educational values are transmitted within the processes and procedures of the respective cultures. This is not the case with the educational sub-systems in Cameroon. There is no harmony in the English and French pedagogic structure and evaluation process and thereby no equity and quality education in the schools.

METHODOLOGY

The concurrent mixed-methods research approach specifically the descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of all Regional Delegation pedagogic staff, Divisional Delegation pedagogic staff, Inspectorate pedagogic staff, Head teachers and Teachers of primary schools in the Littoral and South West Regions of the Republic of Cameroon. The sample population for the study was made up of 20 pedagogic staff from the Regional Delegation, 20 from the Divisional Delegation, 20 from the Inspectorates, 200 head teachers and 300 teachers from both regions. The purposive and simple random sampling techniques was adopted for the study.

The instruments use for data collection were a questionnaire (closed ended questions) for Teachers and Head teachers and an interview guide for regional delegation staff, divisional delegation staff and inspectorate staff. Data from the close ended questions was analysed using SPSS 23.0, with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistical tools while open ended questions were analysed thematically. The hypotheses of the study were tested using Chi-square test presented at 95% level of confidence interval with alpha set at 0.05 levels accepting 5% margin of error.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study will be presented and supported by literature and the works of other researchers. Quantitative data will be presented first followed qualitative data.

4.1 To what extent does the bi-cultural tradition of the country affects the harmonization curriculum for primary education?

The table below depicts teachers' perception on how bi-cultural tradition affects harmonization of the curriculum for primary education.



Table 5: Teachers’ perception on how bi-cultural tradition affects harmonization of the curriculum for primary education

Test items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
The tradition of the French is an obstacle to the complete harmonization of the curriculum.	96 (32.0%)	81 (27.0%)	54 (18.0%)	69 (23.0%)	177 (59.0%)	123 (41.0%)
The tradition of the English-speaking people is an obstacle to the harmonization of the curriculum.	99 (33.0%)	111 (37.0%)	63 (21.0%)	27 (9.0%)	210 (70.0%)	90 (30.0%)
Each system wants to jealously guard their culture and this affect the harmonization of the curriculum.	87 (29.0%)	114 (38.0%)	60 (20.0%)	39 (13.0%)	201 (67.0%)	99 (33.0%)
The fact that both sub-systems do not want to compromise the values affects the harmonization of the curriculum.	87 (29.0%)	147 (49.0%)	42 (14.0%)	24 (8.0%)	234 (78.0%)	66 (22.0%)
There is conflict of the culture and this affect the harmonization of the curriculum.	157 (52.3%)	91 (30.3%)	30 (10.0%)	22 (7.4%)	248 (82.6%)	52 (17.4%)
Total response	526 (35.1%)	544 (36.3%)	249 (16.6%)	181 (12.7%)	1070 (71.4%)	430 (28.6%)

n=300

Findings on the table above showed that majority of the teachers 248 (82.6%) strongly agree and agree that there is conflict of the culture and this affect the harmonization of the curriculum while 52 (17.4%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the teachers 234 (78.0%) strongly agree and agree that the fact that both sub-systems do not want to compromise the values affects the harmonization of the curriculum while 66 (22.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Findings equally showed that majority of the teachers 201 (67.0%) strongly agree and agree that harmonization of the curriculum is affected by the fact that each sub-system want to jealously guard it culture while 99 (33.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the teachers 210 (70.0%) strongly agree and agree that the tradition of the English-speaking people is an obstacle to the harmonization of the curriculum while 90 (30.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. According to a study conducted by Ngalim Eugene Fon and Fobellah J. Njumbe, titled "Language Policy and

Planning in Cameroon: A Critical Review," the lack of standardized curriculum materials and teaching resources in local languages hinders the harmonization process, as teachers struggle to deliver instruction that is linguistically accessible to all students (Fon & Njumbe, 2019).

On the other hand, findings equally showed that while majority of the teachers 177 (59.0%) strongly agree and agree that the tradition of the French is an obstacle to the complete harmonization of the curriculum, a significant proportion of the teachers 123 (41.0%) disagree and strongly disagree. In summary, finding showed that majority of the teachers (71.0%) strongly agree and agree that the bi-cultural tradition of the country is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while (29.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Tchombe (1999) emphasizes that the coexistence of two sub-systems, the English sub-system and the French sub-system, creates challenges in terms of curriculum alignment, teaching methodologies, and



administrative structures. The differences in language, content, and pedagogical approaches hinder the development of a unified curriculum that can cater to the needs of all students. Additionally, the lack of a

standardized framework for teacher training and professional development further complicates the harmonization process.

Table 6: Comparing teachers’ perception of bicultural tradition of the country acting as a barrier to the harmonization of curriculum by regions

Region	The bicultural tradition of Cameroon is a barrier to harmonization of the sub-system of education		N
	Strongly agree and Agree	Disagree and strongly disagree	
Southwest	115(76.7%)	35(23.3%)	150
Littoral	99(66.0%)	51(34.0%)	150
Total	214	86	300

Is worthy to note that when teachers’ perception on bicultural tradition acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education, was examined by teachers’ region, findings on table 6 showed that majority of the teachers in Southwest 115 (76.7%) and Littoral 99 (66.0%) strongly agree and agree that bicultural traditions of the country is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for

primary education. Cultural pride can have both positive and negative impacts on curriculum harmonization, and that effective leadership and a commitment to human rights principles are essential in navigating this complex issue. The methodology used in this study, which involved qualitative analysis of content (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009), could be useful in further exploring these themes in future research.

Table 7: Head teachers’ perception on how the bi-cultural traditions affect the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education

Test items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
The tradition of the French is an obstacle to the complete harmonization of the curriculum.	65 (32.5%)	84 (42.0%)	30 (15.0%)	21 (10.5%)	149 (74.5%)	51 (25.5%)
The tradition of the English speaking people is an obstacle to the harmonization of the curriculum.	66 (33.0%)	93 (46.5%)	29 (14.5%)	12 (6.0%)	159 (79.5%)	41 (20.5%)
Each system wants to jealously guard their culture and this affect the harmonization of the curriculum.	98 (49.0%)	41 (20.5%)	22 (11.0%)	39 (19.5%)	139 (69.5%)	61 (30.5%)
The fact that both sub-systems do not want to compromise the values affects the harmonization of the curriculum	66 (33.0%)	93 (46.5%)	29 (14.5%)	12 (6.0%)	159 (79.5%)	41 (20.5%)
There is conflict of the culture and this affect the harmonization of the curriculum.	92 (46.0%)	71 (35.5%)	17 (8.5%)	20 (10.0%)	163 (81.5%)	37 (18.5%)
Total response	387 (38.7%)	382 (38.2%)	127 (12.7%)	104 (10.4%)	769 (76.9%)	231 (23.1%)

n=200

From the perspective of the head teachers, findings on table 7 showed that majority of the head teachers 163 (81.5%) strongly agree and agree that there is conflict of the culture and this affect the harmonization of the curriculum while 37 (18.5%) of them disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the head teachers 159 (79.5%) strongly agree and agree that the fact that both sub-systems do not want to compromise the values affects the harmonization of the curriculum while 41 (20.5%) of them disagree and strongly disagree. According to Verkijika (2017), Anglophones have long complained that their language and culture are marginalized and according to Biya (2019), during the Paris Peace Conference of November 2019, confessed that he has struggled to assimilate the Anglophones for so long but this has proved unsuccessful so he is suggesting to give the people of the North West and South West a special status believing this might go a long way to solve the present crisis plaguing the two regions. With this type of circumstances, the Anglophones are afraid that their culture and value will be wiped out completely if they accept to the kind of harmonization of the sub-systems referred to, making the harmonization process very difficult. To Ndile (2018) Assimilation aimed at creating a native-Cameroonian elite class by eliminating African culture and replacing it with French culture, language and civilization.

Findings equally showed that majority of the head teachers 139 (69.5%) strongly agree and agree that harmonization of the curriculum is affected by the fact that each sub-system want to jealously guard it culture while 61 (30.5%) of them disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the head teachers 159 (79.5%) strongly agree and agree

that the tradition of the English-speaking people is an obstacle to the harmonization of the curriculum while 41 (20.5%) of them disagree and strongly disagree. Said (1978) argues that Western culture has been imposed on non-Western societies through colonialism and imperialism, leading to a loss of indigenous culture and identity. This loss of culture and identity can manifest in resistance to attempts at harmonizing the curriculum with Western educational standards.

On the other hand, findings equally showed that majority of the head teachers 149 (74.5%) strongly agree and agree that the tradition of the French is an obstacle to the complete harmonization of the curriculum, while 51 (25.5%) of the head teachers disagree and strongly disagree. In summary, finding showed that majority of the head teachers (76.9%) strongly agree and agree that the bi-cultural tradition of the country is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while (23.1%) of the head teachers disagree and strongly disagree. From a theoretical point of view, Deweyan democratic theory (1966) considers education as a process of life through which an individual continuously adapts to the innovations and vicissitudes of his environment. This Deweyan truism is timeless and universal. This does not exclude the educational system of Cameroon at the moment. The Curriculum is the “instrumentum laboris” (working document) that each educational system employs to attain the objective of helping the learners in the process of growth. For this precise reason, the organization of the curriculum in Cameroon educational system is the means through which the socio-political and economic objectives and values of the state can be attained. Dewey reiterates that: I believe that school is primarily a social institution.

Table 8: Comparing head teachers' perception of bicultural tradition of the country acting as a barrier to the harmonization of curriculum by regions

Regions	The bicultural tradition of Cameroon is a barrier to harmonization of the sub-system of education.		N
	Strongly agree and Agree	Disagree and strongly disagree	
Southwest	80 (80.0%)	20 (20.0%)	100
Littoral	74 (74.0%)	26 (26.0%)	100
Total	154	46	200

Also, just like with teachers, when head teachers' perception on bicultural tradition acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education was examined by head teachers' region, findings on table 8 showed that majority of the head teachers in Southwest 80 (80.0%) and Littoral 74 (74.0%) strongly agree and agree that bicultural traditions of the country is a barrier to the

harmonization of the curriculum for primary education. According to their accounts, the policy of harmonization is perceived as a tool of assimilation, where the distinct Anglophone identity and educational system would be suppressed in favor of the French-oriented system (Ngalim, 2014). This perception contributes to resistance towards harmonization efforts.

Table 9: Regional delegation staff, divisional delegation staff and inspectorate staff opinion on how the bicultural tradition affects harmonization

Themes	Quotations
The practice of grouping subject (Francophone sub system)	"The English system of education is outstanding and attractive since it handles subjects independently unlike the French system which merge subjects and give them name like science, environmental, health education. The French system stands to destroy the English therefore harmonizing both subsystems is not quite reasonable".
Cultural differences	"The bicultural tradition is a barrier because there are two cultures of colonial heritage that co-exist in Cameroon".
The desire to preserve culture by each sub system	"Each subsystem wants to preserve and jealously guard its own cultural heritage without compromising the other". "Each subsystem is hesitant to accept change because the person who identify themselves with this system are already use to the status quo and there are afraid of what the other system may do".
Lack of trust	"There is lack of mutual trust and tolerance between the two subsystems".
Lack of common vision	"There is absence of a common vision in the provision of educational values which provoke problems equity and quality education".

Findings from the perspective of regional delegation staff, divisional delegation staff and inspectorate staff showed that the bicultural tradition affect harmonization of curriculum for primary education. The reasons put forward by these school authorities were that in the Francophone sub-system, subjects are

grouped while subjects are not group in the Anglophone sub-system of education. Another point noted by these school authorities is that each sub-system wants to preserve its own culture. Lack of trust by Anglophones and common visions were other



issues raised by these schools' authorities which is negatively affecting the harmonization process.

Testing of hypothesis one: The bi-cultural tradition of Cameroon does not significantly affect the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education.

Table 10: Head teachers' and teachers' perception on the bi-cultural tradition and harmonization of curriculum for primary education

ITEM	SA/A	D/SD	N
Head Teachers	154	46	200
Teachers	214	86	300
Total	368	132	500

Chi-square test=1.98, df=1, CV=0.159

Statistically, findings showed that head teachers and teachers did not significantly differ in their perception on the bi-cultural tradition of the country acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education (CV=0.0159, >0.05) whereby majority of the head teachers 154 (76.9%) and teachers 214 (71.4%) strongly agree and agree that the bi-cultural tradition of the country is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while a minority of the head teachers 46 (23.1%) and teachers 86 (28.6%) disagree and strongly disagree. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states the bi-cultural tradition of Cameroon does not significantly affect the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states the bi-cultural tradition of Cameroon significantly affect the harmonization of the curriculum

for primary education was accepted. According to Tchombe (1999), one major barrier to harmonization is the bicultural nature of the country owing to colonial heritage. Literature also states that, one's education has to be rooted in one's culture before he appropriately dialogues with other cultures. If this approach is not maintained, cultural dialogue may degenerate into assimilation, imperialism and neocolonialism (Njoh 1972).

4.3 To what extent does the fear of assimilation affects the harmonization of curriculum for primary education?

The table below presents Teachers' perception on how fear of assimilation affects the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education.

Table 11: Teachers' perception on how fear of assimilation affects the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education

Test items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
Complete harmonization of the curriculum will promote assimilation of Anglophone sub-system of education	99 (33.0%)	99 (33.0%)	81 (27.0%)	21 (7.0%)	198 (66.0%)	102 (34.0%)



The fear of domination from the Francophone hinders the complete harmonization of the both sub-system of education	198 (66.0%)	24 (8.0%)	36 (12.0%)	42 (14.0%)	222 (74.0%)	78 (26.0%)
The pride that Anglophones have for their value and culture is responsible of lack of harmonization of the evaluation procedure.	102 (34.0%)	108 (36.0%)	66 (22.0%)	24 (8.0%)	210 (70.0%)	90 (30.0%)
The discrimination in the distribution of resources contributes to incomplete harmonization of the curriculum of both sub-systems of education.	129 (43.0%)	117 (39.0%)	33 (11.0%)	21 (7.0%)	246 (82.0%)	54 (18.0%)
The fear that one culture will be dominant over the other, post a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education.	139 (46.3%)	107 (35.7%)	29 (9.7%)	25 (8.3%)	246 (82.0%)	54 (18.0%)
Total response	667 (44.4%)	445 (29.7%)	248 (16.5%)	140 (9.3%)	1112 (74.1%)	388 (25.9%)

n=300

Findings on table 11 showed that majority of the teachers 246 (82.0%) of equal proportion strongly agree and agree that fear that one culture will be dominant over the other is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education and that the discrimination in the distribution of resources affects the harmonization of the curriculum while 54 (18.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the teachers 222 (74.0%) strongly agree and agree that the fear of domination from the Francophone hinders the complete harmonization of the curriculum while 78 (26.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Looking at Tchombe’s view, it is realized that harmonization in Cameroon primary schools is faced with challenges as both systems jealously guides their culture and will not want to lose it for fear of losing her pride of value. It has been observed that the minority Cameroonians (Anglophones) strive to study the French language but the reverse is not true with the Francophones who may be because of their colonial heritage to become French men deter from speaking the English language as much as the English counterpart does

Findings also showed that majority of the teachers 210 (70.0%) strongly agree and agree that the pride Anglophones have for their value and culture affect the harmonization of the curriculum while 90 (30.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. This is supported by Salamon (1999), who explains that cultural values and beliefs can influence the way nonprofit organizations operate. Similarly, White (1933) argues that culture shapes human behavior and influences how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them. In the context of Sri Lanka, Sarah (2001) highlights how cultural differences have contributed to conflicts in the country.

Finally, findings also showed that majority of the teachers 198 (66.0%) strongly agree and agree that complete harmonization of the curriculum will promote assimilation of the Anglophone sub-system of education while 102 (34.0%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. In summary, finding showed that majority of the teachers (74.1%) strongly agree and agree that the fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while (25.9%) of the teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Cultural pride can have both positive and negative impacts on curriculum harmonization, and



that effective leadership and a commitment to human rights principles are essential in navigating this complex issue. The methodology used in this study,

which involved qualitative analysis of content (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009), could be useful in further exploring these themes in future research.

Table 12: Comparing teachers’ perception of fear of assimilation acting as a barrier to the harmonization of curriculum by regions

Regions	The fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education.		N
	Strongly agree and Agree	Disagree and strongly disagree	
Southwest	117 (78.0%)	33 (22.0%)	150
Littoral	105 (70.0%)	45 (30.0%)	150
Total	222	78	300

When teachers’ perception on fear of assimilation acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education was examined by teachers’ region, findings on table 12 showed that majority of the teachers in Southwest 117(78.0%) and Littoral 105 (70.0%) strongly agree and agree that fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education. According to Njoh (1972) one’s education has to be rooted in one’s culture before he appropriately dialogues with other cultures. If this approach is not maintained, cultural dialogue may degenerate into assimilation, imperialism and neocolonialism. This is so true with the bicultural

nature of Cameroon wherein harmonization of the two cultures prove difficult in many areas because none of the cultures (English/French) deem it necessary to get into the other’s culture for fear of assimilation, imperialism, neocolonialism and even marginalization. That fear of domination from the majority French and harmonization of the two sub-systems are independent. This is clear indication that the fear of assimilation from the majority French hinders the harmonization of the two sub-systems of education in Cameroon thereby refusing the educational system from having a quality and equity stance.

Table 13: Head teachers’ perception on how fear of assimilation affects the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education

Test items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
Complete harmonization of the curriculum will promote assimilation of Anglophone sub-system of education	64 (32.0%)	108 (54.0%)	12 (6.0%)	16 (8.0%)	172 (86.0%)	28 (14.0%)
The fear of domination from the Francophone hinders the complete harmonization of the both sub-system of education	68 (34.0%)	74 (37.0%)	22 (11.0%)	36 (18.0%)	142 (71.0%)	58 (29.0%)



The pride that Anglophones have for their value and culture is responsible of lack of harmonization of the evaluation procedure	32 (16.0%)	112 (56.0%)	16 (8.0%)	40 (20.0%)	144 (72.0%)	56 (28.0%)
The discrimination in the distribution of resources contribute to incomplete harmonization of the curriculum	52 (26.0%)	78 (39.0%)	42 (21.0%)	28 (14.0%)	130 (65.0%)	70 (35.0%)
The fear that one culture will be dominant over the other, post a barrier to the harmonization	54 (27.0%)	76 (38.0%)	40 (20.0%)	30 (15.0%)	130 (65.0%)	70 (35.0%)
Total response	270 (27.0%)	448 (44.8%)	132 (13.2%)	150 (15.0%)	718 (71.8%)	282 (28.2%)

n=200

From the perspective of head teachers, findings showed that majority of the head teachers 172 (86.0%) strongly agree and agree that complete harmonization of the curriculum will promote assimilation of the Anglophone sub-system of education while 28 (14.0%) of them disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the head teachers 142 (71.0%) strongly agree and agree that fear of domination from the Francophone hinders the complete harmonization of the curriculum while 58 (29.0%) of the head teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that intergroup relations are shaped by social identity, which refers to the part of an individual's self-concept that is based on membership in a particular social group. In the context of Cameroon, the Anglophone and Francophone communities have distinct social identities, and fear of domination from one group over the other can lead to resistance to attempts at harmonizing the curriculum.

Findings also showed that majority of the head teachers. Findings also showed that majority of the head teachers 144 (72.0%) strongly agree and agree that the pride that Anglophones have for their value and culture is responsible of lack of harmonization of the evaluation procedure while 56 (28.0%) of the head teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Findings also showed that majority of the head teachers 130 (65.0%) strongly agree and agree that the fear that one culture

will be dominant over the other, post a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while 70 (35.0%) of the head teachers disagree and strongly disagree. According to Njoh (1972) one's education has to be rooted in one's culture before he appropriately dialogues with other cultures. If this approach is not maintained, cultural dialogue may degenerate into assimilation, imperialism and neocolonialism. This is so true with the bicultural nature of Cameroon wherein harmonization of the two cultures prove difficult in many areas because none of the cultures (English/French) deem it necessary to get into the other's culture for fear of assimilation, imperialism, neocolonialism and even marginalization

In summary, finding showed that majority of the head teachers (71.8%) strongly agree and agree that the fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while (28.2%) of the head teachers disagree and strongly disagree. Fear of domination and cultural assimilation can hinder the complete harmonization of the curriculum, and that effective leadership and a commitment to promoting intergroup understanding are essential in navigating this complex issue. The methodology used in this study, which involved survey research (Babbie, 2016), could be useful in further exploring these themes in future research.



Table 14: Comparing head teachers’ perception of fear of assimilation acting as a barrier to the harmonization of curriculum by regions

Regions	The fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education.		N
	Strongly agree and Agree	Disagree and strongly disagree	
Southwest	74 (74.0%)	26 (26.0%)	100
Littoral	70 (70.0%)	30 (30.0%)	100
Total	144	56	200

Just like with teachers, when head teachers’ perception on fear of assimilation acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education was also examined by region, findings on table—showed that majority of the head teachers in Southwest 74 (74.0%) and Littoral 70 (70.0%) strongly agree and agree that fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education. According to Egonmwan (1991), political will is the key factor to government policy formulation strategies. The political environment has a strong influence on educational policy planning and

implementation in any nation and according to Okoroma (2000), policies are initiated mostly by governments that determine the direction of an educational system. That is to say if the government does not have a strong will to enact laws, abide to them and ensure its complete implementation, then that government has no strong will towards policies of the country. The above literature is evident in the policy of harmonization of the sub-systems of Cameroon where it has failed to carry out complete harmonization.

Table 15: Regional delegation staff, divisional delegation staff and inspectorate staff opinion on how fear of assimilation is a barrier to harmonization

Themes	Quotations
Fear of lack of quality education as perceived by Anglophones.	“From the evolution of primary schools in English zone, the English subsystem had eight years and it was later reduced to seven years and presently six years to agree with that of the French sub system. The present situation is gradually instilling what is describe as the culture of rush and the Anglophone are afraid that their children will not get the right education”.
Teaching of French language to Anglophones (Linguistic identities)	“The aspect of teaching French language to Anglophones is another fear that they say it will cause assimilation and this subject is compulsory to teachers in English schools even though they do not master it”. “The aspect of teaching French language to Anglophones is another fear that they say it will cause assimilation and this subject is compulsory to teachers in English schools even though they do not master it”.
Fear of suppression of Anglophones from Francophone	“Anglophones believe that they are suppressed by the majority of Francophone and that each subsystem should have separate educational system, each controlling its own culture (different syllabus, scheme, curriculum, textbooks and examination settings)”.
Policy of harmonization perceived as a tool of cultural assimilation	“The English subsystem is attractive and outstanding in the world. In this case, harmonization is a disguised form for assimilation. It simply means to destroy the English subsystem”.



	<p>“The policy of harmonization is a means of cultural assimilation”. From the evolution of primary schools in English zone, the English subsystem had eight years and it was later reduced to seven years and presently six years to agree with that of the French sub system. The present situation is gradually instilling what is describe as the culture of rush and the Anglophone are afraid that their children will not get the right education</p> <p>“The policy of harmonization is a mean to water down the English culture and uplift the French culture causing an extinction of the English culture”.</p>
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Findings from the perspective of regional delegation staff, divisional delegation staff and inspectorate staff showed that the fear of assimilation affects the harmonization of curriculum for primary education. The reasons put forward by these school authorities were that firstly the Anglophones perceived the policy of harmonization as a tool of assimilation. The second reason is that Anglophones are afraid of lack of quality education if both sub-systems are harmonized. Another factor is fear of suppression of Anglophones by Francophone. The fear of assimilation can be attributed to the historical and linguistic differences

between the Anglophone and Francophone communities in Cameroon. The Anglophone region has its own distinct educational traditions and practices that have been shaped by the English-speaking heritage (Ngalim, 2014). The harmonization process, if not properly executed, may be perceived as a threat to the preservation of these traditions and the unique identity of the Anglophone community.

Testing of hypothesis two: The fear of assimilation does not significantly affect harmonization of the curriculum for primary education

Table 16: Head teachers’ and teachers’ perception on the fear of assimilation and harmonization of curriculum for primary education

ITEM	SA/A	D/SD	N
Head Teachers	144	56	200
Teachers	222	78	300
Total	366	134	500

Chi-square test=0.24, df=1, critical value=0.620

Statistically, findings showed that head teachers and teachers did not significantly differ in their perception on the fear of assimilation acting as a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education. (cv=0.620, >0.05) whereby, majority of the head teachers 144 (71.8%) and teachers 222 (74.1%) of almost the same proportion strongly agree and agree that the fear of assimilation is a barrier to the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education while a minority of the head teachers 56 (28.2%) and teachers 78 (25.9%) disagree and strongly disagree. Therefore, the null

hypothesis that states the fear of assimilation does not significantly affect the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states the fear of assimilation significantly affect the harmonization of the curriculum for primary education was accepted. The literature supports the notion that fear of assimilation is a significant barrier to harmonization. Ngalim (2014) emphasizes that the Anglophone population in Cameroon has historically been concerned about the potential loss of their cultural and linguistic identity

through assimilation into the Francophone-dominated system. This fear is deeply rooted and influences the perceptions and attitudes of educational stakeholders, including head teachers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the harmonization of sub-systems in primary education in the Littoral and South West regions of Cameroon faces significant barriers that hinder the successful integration of the English and French educational traditions. The stark contrast between these two systems, including differences in language, teaching methods, curriculum content, and administrative structures, poses a challenge to creating a cohesive educational framework. Additionally, the limited cross-cultural exchange and collaboration between the English-speaking and French-speaking communities further perpetuate divisions and hinder the harmonization process. It is evident that addressing these barriers is crucial for achieving a unified and inclusive educational system in these regions. To overcome the barriers to harmonization, targeted strategies must be developed and implemented. This includes efforts to align and standardize the curriculum across both sub-systems, ensuring that it caters to the needs of all students. Teacher training programs should focus on equipping educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach in a bilingual and multicultural environment. Resource allocation should be carefully planned to ensure equitable access to educational materials and facilities for all students, regardless of the sub-system they are in. Additionally, fostering cultural understanding and promoting intercultural exchange among students and teachers can help break down linguistic and cultural barriers, fostering a sense of unity and shared educational vision. Achieving harmonization in primary education requires a

collaborative approach involving all stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, teachers, parents, and the wider community. The development and implementation of policies and guidelines that prioritize harmonization and promote bilingualism can provide a strong foundation for progress. It is also crucial to invest in research and evidence-based practices to inform decision-making and identify effective strategies for overcoming the barriers to harmonization. By working together and addressing these challenges, the Littoral and South West regions of Cameroon can create an inclusive and unified educational system that facilitates national integration, enhances learning outcomes, and equips students with the skills they need for a successful future.

It is generally recommended that, harmonization in its context of preserving cultural patrimony as an objective of multicultural education. Cultural patrimony refers to the sum total of ways of living, including values, beliefs, aesthetic standards, linguistic expression, and patterns of thinking, behavioural norms and styles of communication, which a group of people have developed to assure its survival in a particular physical and human environment.

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