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# SCHOOL SAFETY AND TEACHERS' EFFECTIVENESS IN GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MANYU DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

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## Abstract

This study investigated the effect of school Safety on Teachers' Effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon. The study sought to find out the extent to which School Safety affect Teachers' Effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division. The methodology used in this study was the descriptive survey research design. The area of the study was Manyu Division, South West region of Cameroon. The target population of the study was all the teachers in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division. The accessible population was teachers in 22 Government Primary Schools in Mamfe Central, Eyumojock and Upper Bayang Sub Divisions. The sample population was 114 teachers (22 head teachers and 92 teachers). Purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques were used in the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data for teachers and constructed in a 4 responds likert scale. Interview guide was used for head teachers. Data was analysed using SPSS software and presented on tables. The hypothesis were tested using Pearson product moment correlation. The validity focused on face, content and construct. The reliability of the instrument was conducted using a pilot test of 15 teachers who were not part of the study. Findings revealed that school safety to a greater extent affects teachers' effectiveness in government primary schools in Manyu Division. Finally, it was concluded that school safety has an effect on teachers' effectiveness in government primary schools in Manyu Division. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government and educational managers should encourage a school environment that is physically, cognitively and emotionally safe so that teachers can be effective.

**Keywords** School Safety; School Violence; Work Environment; Primary Education; and Teachers' Effectiveness.

## INTRODUCTION

Challenges of school safety in the English-speaking Regions of Cameroon (North West and South West) have been enormous since the beginning of

the Anglophone crisis in 2016. The Anglophone crisis has greatly affected school safety and teachers' effectiveness in all schools in these regions. There was increased rate of violence and

aggression in schools. These include killing, torture, threat, abduction of pupils and teachers and damage of educational facilities which impacts greatly on teachers' effectiveness. In the Anglophone region many teachers, students and pupils were abducted and some were killed during the crisis that started in 2016. There has been several lockdowns in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon which is a big problem concerning teachers' effectiveness (Moki, 2019). As a result, many schools especially in the rural areas have shut down. Many teachers and pupils have relocated to urban areas thereby causing an increase in population for schools in these areas. Teachers in the affected areas have been re-deployed to different schools. This has also affected teachers' effectiveness because absenteeism and irregularity are the order of the day. This has raised a concerned to investigate the effect of school safety and teachers effectiveness in government primary schools particularly in Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2011), school safety refers to the process of establishing and maintaining a school that is a physically, cognitively and emotionally safe place for pupils and staff to carry out learning activities. A safe learning environment is defined as a place where structured learning is free from environmental, internal and external threats to learners and personnel's safety and wellbeing, where the infrastructure of a learning environment is deemed safe (USAID, 2016). According to Orpinas et al. (2003), safe schools implement effective instructional approaches, are aware of genuine student problems, and have a culture of respect and adequate physical equipment. Thus, school safety is related to teachers effectiveness.

Oliver and Reschly (2007) cited Berliner that

teachers who have problems in classroom discipline are ineffective. Also, teachers who always go to school late or not regular are ineffective because they are wasting instructional time. An effective teacher should always maximize instructional time and make good use of it. (Strong, Ward & Grant, 2011). This is can be achieved if there is safety in the school environment.

## **LITERATURE**

### **School Safety and Teachers' Effectiveness**

Campbell, et al (2004) defined teacher effectiveness as the impact that classroom factors, such as teaching methods, teacher expectations, classroom organization, and use of classroom resources, have on students' performance. Effective teachers should be able to use different types of teaching methods and know when to change from one method to another in lesson (Strong, Ward & Grant, 2011). The responsibility of an effective teacher is maintaining a positive environment for learning. An effective teacher can be distinguished easily from an ineffective teacher by the way they manage the classroom and use diverse methods of teaching. This is possible if there is safety in school for both pupils and teachers.

Stephens (1995) stated that safe schools enabled teachers to teach and pupils to learn in a warm and favourable environment where there is no room for fear and threats. According to Perkins (2006), a report by the National School Board Association noted that a positive school environment was a crucial factor that differentiates between schools with high and low rates of delinquency. Thus, school safety is very important as far as teaching and learning is concerned.

School safety is seen in school health. Health according to MOE, (2008), in Kenya, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well- being of human beings and not merely the absence of

disease. The World Health Organization defines a safe school as one which is healthy (Safety Standards Manual, 2008). According to Thepa et al. (2013) the dimension of safety includes rules and norms, physical safety, and social-emotional safety. Teachers, pupils, and everyone found in the school setting have to feel safe while in school. Therefore, if the physical, mental, social health of teachers is not healthy, teachers will not be able to teach well and pupils will not also learn well.

Njoki, (2018), carried out a study on school safety and its influence on teaching and learning processes in public secondary schools in Nairobi and Nyeri counties, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine the status of school safety and its influence on teaching and learning processes. The objectives were; to assess the status of physical infrastructure safety, to assess the status of social environment safety, to establish the influence of physical infrastructure safety on teaching and learning processes, to establish the influence of social environment safety on teaching and learning processes, and to seek suggestions from respondents on ways school safety can be enhanced to promote teaching and learning. Descriptive survey design was used and targeted all (293) Public Secondary Schools, their Principals and Deputy Principals. Stratified random sampling was used. Students' sample was obtained through proportionate simple random sampling from each stratum. The sample was three hundred and eighty-three (383) form 2 and 3 students, forty-four (44) Principals, and forty-four (44) Deputy Principals. Data collection instruments included school safety questionnaire, interview guide for the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and an observation guide. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Quantitative data was presented using frequency tables, percentages and figures while qualitative data was presented using narratives

and voiced verbatim.

The findings showed school physical infrastructure facilities were not safe as many schools had not adjusted the doors and windows of classrooms and other school facilities as per the requirements of the safety standards manual. The findings further showed that school safety greatly influenced teaching and learning processes in schools. The study recommends that the government, through the ministry of education enforce compliance to safety Manual for schools, re-structure the teacher training curriculum, include emerging issues in the school curriculum and increase allocation of resources to ensure schools adhere to the Ministry of Education Safety guidelines, particularly on physical infrastructure and school social environment, as these influence teaching and learning processes.

Kiptum (2018) carried out a study on the influence of school physical environment on teachers' satisfaction in selected public primary schools in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. The study sought to establish the influence of physical environment on teachers' satisfaction. The study was guided by four objectives: to identify how physical facilities, influence teachers satisfaction, to assess how work environment influence teachers satisfaction, to establish how the classroom arrangement influenced teachers satisfaction and to identify the measures that teachers in Elgeyo Marakwet County use to improve their satisfaction. Teachers, Head Teachers, Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and Assistant County Directors were targeted in the study. The study used stratified, purposive and simple random samplings to select participants. The sample was 140 participants from 11 schools. Questionnaire, interview schedule and observation were used to collect data. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of both descriptive and inferential statistics where multiple regression was used. The inferential

statistics comprised of Pearson product moment and multiple regression.

The findings showed that school physical facilities, work environment, and classroom arrangement positively influenced teachers satisfaction. The study recommended that there is need for school management to ensure that good physical appearance; conducive working environment, adequate facilities such as desks, shelves and classrooms are fully satisfied. Secondly, adequate reading and writing materials, reduced workload and proper cooperation by the school management should be addressed. Finally, proper demarcation of space, proper arrangement of books as well as adequate space for teacher movement in class should be well addressed in order to enhance teacher motivation and satisfaction level.

Matt (2017) carried out a study on an examination of school safety preparedness in Canada. The purpose was to find out respondent beliefs about the prevalence of violence at their schools, their awareness of school safety plans, and strategies used to promote school safety. This study uses an online survey to collect information from school staff across Canada about their preparedness for incidents of school violence. There were 223 respondents. Inferential statistical tests, including chi-square, t-tests, and analysis of variance were used to analyze the results.

The key findings were that respondents working in schools with more than 250 students were more likely to report having a school safety plan in place, have a security or police presence at their schools, report insufficient supervision and a lack of student connection to their schools. Respondents working in smaller schools, by contrast, believed students were more likely to bring weapons to school. Respondents also indicated that high schools were more likely to utilize security cameras and have a security or police presence at their schools compared with elementary or middle

schools. Respondents working in middle schools were more likely to report that students lacked a connection to their schools whereas those working in elementary schools were the least likely to report that cyberbullying occurs.

The results of this research offer school administrators and agencies responsible for ensuring community safety, such as the police, information about future training needs. The results suggest that school safety plans may exist but it is imperative that staff members be aware of their plans and be prepared to carry them out.

The empirical studies conducted in support of school safety point to determine the status of school safety on teaching and learning. These studies did not measure the degree of effect that school safety has on teachers' effectiveness, which is what this study sought to address.

### **Objective**

To find out the extent to which school safety affects teachers' effectiveness in Government Primary Schools Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon

### **Research Question**

To what extent does school safety affects teachers' effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division?

### **Hypotheses**

Ho1: School safety has no significant effect on teachers' effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon

Ha1: School safety has a significant effect on teachers' effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon

### **METHODS AND PROCEDURE**

The study made use of the descriptive survey

research design. It involved questionnaire and interview guide. Questionnaire was used for teachers while interview guide was used for head

teachers. The accessible population was made up of 23 primary schools (23 head teachers and 118 teachers) as presented on the table 1 below:

**Table 1: Total Number of Head Teachers and Teachers in Manyu Division in 2021/2022AY**

Sub Division	No of Schools	No of Head Teachers	No of Teachers
Mamfe Central	12	12	81
Eyumojock	2	2	8
Upper Bayang	8	8	25
Akwaya	1	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>118</b>

**Source: Regional Delegation of Basic Education South West Region of Cameroon 2021/2022**

The statistics on table 1 above indicates that there are 23 Government Primary Schools that were functional in Manyu Division at the time this study was carried out. Mamfe Central had 12, Eyumojock 2, Upper Bayang 8 and Akwaya 1 School. The total number of teachers were 118.

**Instruments for Data Collection:** The instruments used for data collection was questionnaire for teachers and interview guide for head teachers. The purposive sampling was used in this study to select the schools and the convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. The sample size was 114 teachers (22 head teachers and 92 teachers) selected from 22 schools in Manyu Division.

The reliability of the instruments was established based on pilot test involving 15 teachers and head teacher in Government Primary School Ebinsi (3 teachers), Government Primary School Taboh (4 teachers), Government Primary School Ogomoko (4 teachers) and Government Primary School Afab (4 teachers). After administration of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha test was calculated and a reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. A self-delivery method was used to

administer the questionnaire with the help of three colleagues. The researcher took the questionnaire to the seminar ground that was organized in Mamfe Town by Divisional Delegate of Manyu Division in Collaboration with all the Inspectors of Basic Education of the four Sub Divisions in Manyu. The participants of the seminar were all the teachers and head teachers in Manyu Division. The instrument was administered and collected on the spot. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviation was used to present teachers' personal information and to answer the various research questions and inferential statistics was used to test hypothesis at  $P < 0.05$  level of significance. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to test the research hypotheses formulated in the study.

**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were presented with respect to gender, age, working experience, and level of education.

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Demographic Characteristics**



Indicators		Teachers		Head Teachers	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	29	31.6	15	68.1
	Female	63	68.4	07	31.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>
Age range	18-25 years	15	16.3	00	00
	26-35 years	29	31.5	05	22.7
	36-45 years	25	27.2	10	45.4
	46 and above	23	25.0	07	31.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Working Experience	1-5 years	18	19.5	00	00
	6-10 years	42	45.6	00	00
	11-20 years	05	5.5	17	77.2
	20 years and above	27	29.4	05	22.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>
Level of education	Advanced level	72	78.2	16	72.7
	HND	02	02.2	00	00
	Bachelor degree	18	19.6	06	27.3
	Master	00	00	00	00
	Doctorate	00	00	00	00
<b>Total</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>		<b>114</b>			

**Source: Field Survey 2022**

Table 2 revealed that giving a total of 92 teachers who participated in the study, there were 29 (31.6%) males and 63 (68.4%) females. This shows that majority of the teachers (68.4%) were females. majority (31.5%) of the respondents were between the ages of 26.35 years. with respect to the number of years in the teaching field, majority (45.6%) of the respondents have been working within a period of 6-10 years. Thus majority of the teachers have been working for a long time degree.

Most of the respondents were holders of the GCE advanced level.

In addition, with respect to 22 head teachers who took part in the study, there were 15 (68.1%) males and 7 (31.9%) females. Thus majority (68.1%) were males. With respect to working experience, majority (77.2%) of the respondents have been working within a period of 11-20 years. Most of the respondents are holders of the GCE advanced level certificate.

**Table 3: Distribution of Responses on the Effect of School Safety on Teachers' Effectiveness (N=92)**

ITEMS	Mean Opinion	Standard Deviation (SD)
A secured school environment makes teachers to be effective.	2.82	0.92
The social and mental health of the school is not safe. This makes me not to teach effectively	2.68	1.01
My school is fenced which makes me to teach well without any fear of attack or harassment	2.25	1.04
The school's location ensures that teachers are safe and teach well	2.29	0.91
The pupils are not violent and this makes me teach well	2.43	1.03
The classroom is spacious and that makes me to teach effectively	2.52	0.99

There is no violence or treat of life in my school. This has made me to be more effective in teaching	2.08	1.03
Teachers in my school are secured. This makes teaching to be effective	2.33	1.10
<b>All</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>Critical Mean Opinion</b>		<b>2.50</b>

### Source: Field Survey 2021

The findings on table 3 indicated that the general mean opinion of the respondents 2.53 is greater than the critical mean of 2.50 with a corresponding SD of 1.00. This therefore means that school safety negatively affects teachers' effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division. Many of the teachers attested that teachers are ineffective because the school environment is not secured; they experience violence and threat to life. All these to them make teaching ineffective.

Pertaining to the open ended question posed to the teachers on safety challenges they encounter, many teachers opined that there is insecurity, violence and threat from gun men etc. To crown it teachers opined that the school environment is unsafe.

Furthermore, teachers were asked on how these safety challenges affect their effectiveness in school and the findings showed that majority were unable to deliver their lessons well, absenteeism, latecoming and lack of motivation to go to school due to insecurity. Also, head teachers posited the lack of insecurity leads to fear and poor lesson delivery. All these make teachers ineffective.

Head teachers were further asked how security can be enhanced. their opinion was that measures should be implemtened to ensure teachers and pupils safety. The effect of school safety on teachers' effectiveness was further appreciated by computing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation as indicated on table 4.

Verification of Hypothesis One (Ho1): A two tailed correlation matrix (Pearson) was done to inter-

match the correlation indices of the predictor variables (school safety) with the criterion variable (teachers' effectiveness). It revealed that the Pearson coefficient ( $P\text{-value}=.000<0.05$ ) indicates that school safety to a greater extent affects teachers' effectiveness in government primary schools in Manyu Division. The R-value (.420\*\*) implied a high and positive relationship exists between school safety and teachers effectiveness. By implication, teachers will be effective when the school environment is safe and secured for teaching and learning. The decision rule states that when  $p$  is less than the level of significance ( $p<0.05$ ), we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative. The null hypothesis is also rejected when the calculated table value (in this case 0.420) is greater than critical table value (0.203). From the analysis, the significance or  $p\text{-value} = .000$  is less than predetermined  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Also, the calculated Person correlation value ( $r = 0.420$ ) is greater than the critical table value ( $r = 0.203$ ). This confirms the hypothesis that school safety significantly has an effect on teachers' effectiveness. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho3) stated above was rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that school safety has a significant effect on teachers' effectiveness in government primary schools in Manyu Division was accepted. The positive correlation value indicates a direct effect; both variables move in the same direction. When one increases the other also increases and vice versa. The more the environment is safe and secured, the more effective teachers will become; the more insecure the environment, the less effective teachers will be.

Teachers' Effectiveness

Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division  
are effective in teaching.

The findings here reveal how the teachers in

**Table 5: Distribution of Responses on Teachers' Effectiveness (N=92)**

ITEMS	Mean Opinion	Standard Deviation (SD)
I do not always use different teaching methods to teach which makes pupils not to understand easily	2.28	1.13
I do not always have a mastery of the subject matter in all the lessons before teaching which makes teaching not to be effective	2.53	0.94
I teach most of my lessons without using diverse teaching materials which makes lessons not to be interesting	3.16	0.76
The school environment is not secured which makes me not to teach well	2.48	0.95
The way teachers collaborate in my school makes me not be effective in teaching	2.22	1.06
I can manage my class effectively because of the classroom culture that I have established	2.34	1.01
I do not always deliver all my lessons because the school does not provide all resources needed for teaching	2.27	1.10
I do not cover my syllabus because the school environment is not conducive	2.03	0.80
<b>All</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>0.97</b>
<b>Critical Mean Opinion</b>	<b>2.50</b>	

#### Source: Field Survey 2021

The findings on table 5 indicated that the general mean opinion of the respondents 2.41 is lesser than the critical mean of 2.50 with a corresponding SD of 0.97. This therefore means that teachers in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division are not effective.

#### DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that school safety has a significant effect on teachers' effectiveness in Government Primary Schools in Manyu Division. Majority of the respondents opined that a fenced and secured school environment increases ones' effectiveness at work. Many of the teachers said insecurity and threat of life are major challenges. Most of the teachers posited they experience violence, sounds of gunshots, kidnappings for ransom, lockdowns thus making them ineffective as they tend to stay away from school due to fear.

Teachers' opinions on how safety challenges affects their effectiveness were sought and

majority of them opined that, they were unable to deliver their lessons well, absenteeism and lack of motivation to go to school due to insecurity. Thus when the school environment is safe and secured, teaching will be effective. This is so as teachers will go to school daily and attain their objectives.

Also, the headteachers posited that lack of insecurity leads to fear and poor lesson delivery. Most of them said there is instability in the mind and as a result no concentration in school or in class, absenteeism and irregularity due to the fact that teachers are scared to go to school. These make teachers ineffective as most of them stated: "Low coverage of syllabus", "No effective work done" and "Poor pupils' performance".

School violence was also found to be a serious problem that threatens teachers' effectiveness in Manyu Division. Teachers' lives are at stake in and out of school because of the social unrest that has affected the area. This situation has led to irregularity in schools, which to an extent has affected teachers' effectiveness.



**CONCLUSION / RECOMMENDATIONS**

School safety is very important for teachers' effectiveness in school. When the school life is threatened, teachers and pupils are at risk and school activities are disturbed. In order to boost teachers' productivity, the school environment should be made favourable by ensuring school safety. A safe school environment promotes effective teaching and good pupils' performance. A safe school is where there is physical, emotional, social, and psychological safety. The study therefore concludes that school safety has an effect on teachers' effectiveness in government primary schools in Manyu Division, South West Region of Cameroon. It was recommended that the government and educational managers should encourage a school environment that is physically, cognitively and emotionally safe so that teachers can be effective. Teachers should take their job seriously and ensure that they are regular in school. Safety and security measures should be reinforced in schools. Schools should be fenced to ensure teachers and pupils' security.

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