



The Effect of Teachers' Commitment on School Violence Reduction in Secondary Schools in Cameroon

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Research Article

Abstract

A learning environment that fosters creativity among students, educators, parents, and other stakeholders to overcome obstacles to better decision-making and teamwork. This paper was set forth to examine the effect of teachers' commitment on school violence reduction in secondary schools in Cameroon. This study employed a quantitative research paradigm using a descriptive survey design to gather data through a structured questionnaire comprising 52 closed-ended items. The target population included secondary school students in Cameroon, with a sample size of 301 students selected via simple random sampling from four regions. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, utilizing the Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) estimation technique. The findings revealed that teachers' commitment exerts a significant negative influence on school violence reduction in sampled secondary schools in Cameroon. Specifically, increased teachers' commitment significantly reduces physical and psychological violence among students of secondary schools in the country. Based on the findings, it is observed that educational authorities must prioritize comprehensive teacher training programs focused on violence prevention and intervention strategies, supported by adequate resources, clear guidelines, and a supportive work environment that enhances teacher commitment and effectiveness in addressing school violence.

Keywords: Teachers' Commitment, School Violence, Secondary schools, Seemingly Unrelated Regression, Cameroon

1. Introduction

Violence alleviation in secondary school environments has recently attracted the attention of both scholars and policymakers around the globe as the prevalence of school violence is on the rise. Several aggressive behaviors, including conflict and aggression, are being observed in classrooms. This rise in school violence affects teachers' commitment thus affecting their performance and overall student grades (Espelage et al., 2013; Manla, 2021; Yang et al., 2021; Tarabulus & Yablon, 2023). However, school violence in secondary schools is a pressing issue that affects worldwide educational systems. It poses significant challenges to the educational process, impacting students' well-being, academic performance, and overall school climate (Ngwokabuenui 2015).

According to the Council of Europe (2016), violence in schools violates not only the right to education per se but also other essential human rights, particularly the right to human dignity and personal integrity. According to the Council of Europe (2016), the rising rate of violence affects how well schools are managed, particularly when both students and staff are complicit in violent crimes. Physical violence, such as fighting between

students and corporal punishment; psychological violence, such as verbal abuse, stereotyping, and actions that could cause emotional distress to an individual; sexual violence, such as rape and sexual harassment; various forms of bullying, including cyberbullying; and carrying weapons in school are all included in the category of school violence (Cruikshank, 2024; Sifunda, 2023). According to Henderson (2023), statistics reveal that over 3.2 million children are violated annually, with middle school students having the highest rates, and an estimated 90% of them are victims of violence. According to Henderson (2023), 56% of students witness violence in schools, and 282,000 youngsters report being physically abused by a bully or bullies on school grounds each month. Sexual assault occurs in many different settings, but because young people spend so much time in school, it seems inevitable that it will happen there as well (Rice et al., 2024).

Various forms of school violence exist, and teachers often resort to both physical and emotional aggression toward students (Scharpf et al., 2023). Instances of school violence can be linked to teachers' disengagement, turnover rates, and emotional well-being. However, in many countries, the impact of school violence on the teaching profession remains unclear (Scharpf et al., 2023). Violence manifests in several ways, including verbal, physical, and psychosocial abuse (Sipe, 2021). Factors contributing to teacher violence against students include relationships with colleagues, economic and emotional conditions, and job satisfaction, while student behaviors can also provoke violent reactions from teachers (Sipe, 2021). Research on physical violence has shown that individuals who frequently experience anger and exhibit violent behaviors can suffer significant stress, leading to long-term issues with their cardiovascular and nervous systems (Payne & Gottfredson, 2019). Verbal violence is common in schools with ethnic minority students from disadvantaged backgrounds (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). Globally, middle and high schools are populated by students who have faced violence from peers, educators, or other school staff (Pestaner et al., 2023).

In Cameroon, where education plays a crucial role in national development, addressing factors that contribute to or mitigate school violence is of paramount importance. Being key stakeholders in the educational system, teachers have the potential to significantly influence students' behaviour and school atmosphere (Tchombe 2015). The psychological well-being of teachers is also linked to their commitment to reducing school violence. Research suggests that teachers who experience positive working conditions and psychological support are more likely to engage in proactive measures against violence in schools. The involvement of teachers in collaborative efforts to address school violence is vital. Research indicates that when teachers work together with parents, students, and community members, they can develop comprehensive strategies that effectively reduce violence in schools. This collaborative approach not only enhances the commitment of teachers but also fosters a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders in the educational process (Nelson & Slavitt, 2008).

This study is motivated by the need to explore the often-overlooked connection between teachers' commitment and school violence. While previous research has examined various factors contributing to school violence such as socioeconomic conditions and peer influences (Fonkeng 2018), the role of teachers' commitment in reducing school violence remains unexplored, particularly in Cameroon secondary schools' environment. It has the potential to contribute significantly to the development of effective strategies for the creation of safer learning environments in Cameroon secondary schools. By understanding the role of teachers' commitment in mitigating school violence, educators and policymakers can work towards implementing targeted interventions that support teachers and promote a culture of non-violence within educational institutions.

This present study is timely given the increasing recognition of the importance of quality education in achieving sustainable development goals in Cameroon (Foncha & Abongdia 2016). By addressing school violence through the lens of teachers' commitment, greater efforts to improve educational outcomes and foster a positive school climate that supports students' growth and well-being can be achieved. As a result, this study aims to examine the relationship between teachers' commitment to school violence reduction and the prevalence of school violence in Cameroon secondary schools. In other words, it seeks to understand how

teachers' dedication, engagement, and professional commitment can reduce the occurrence and severity of violent incidents within the school environment. Thus, the primary objective of this paper is to investigate the effect of teachers' commitment on school violence reduction in secondary schools in Cameroon.

2. Literature Review

Numerous studies have highlighted the critical role of teachers' pedagogical commitment in mitigating school violence in the USA. Research has shown that teachers who are dedicated to their instructional responsibilities, continuously strive to improve their teaching strategies, and maintain a strong sense of professional identity are less likely to encounter violent incidents in their classrooms (Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2017, Kraft *et al.* 2020). For instance, a study by Desmond *et al.* (2018) found that schools with teachers who were committed to lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management experienced lower rates of physical fights, vandalism, and disruptive behavior.

The emotional commitment of teachers manifested through their empathy, care, and supportive relationships with students, has also been linked to reduced levels of school violence in the United States. Studies have demonstrated that teachers, who are emotionally invested in their students' well-being, create a nurturing classroom environment, and actively address students' social-emotional needs are less likely to encounter incidents of verbal abuse, bullying, and sexual harassment (Jennings & Greenberg 2009, Roeser *et al.* 2013). A study by Ahn and Trogner (2018) revealed that schools where teachers exhibited high levels of emotional commitment and established strong rapport with students reported lower incidences of violent conflicts among students.

Research has shown that teachers who are deeply committed to the school's goals, actively participate in decision-making processes, and contribute to the overall well-being of the school community are more effective in preventing and responding to violent incidents (Kraft *et al.* 2020, Skaalvik & Skaalvik 2017). For example, a study by Desmond *et al.* (2018) found that schools with teachers who exhibited high levels of organizational commitment experienced lower rates of gang-related violence, vandalism, and student-teacher conflicts.

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Ahn and Trogner (2018) on secondary schools in the United Kingdom revealed that schools where teachers exhibited high levels of emotional commitment and established strong rapport with students reported lower incidences of violent conflicts among students. A study by Gu and Day (2016) on secondary schools in China found that schools with teachers who were committed to lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management experienced lower rates of physical fights, vandalism, and disruptive behavior.

Studies have demonstrated that teachers, who are emotionally invested in their students' well-being, create a nurturing classroom environment, and actively address students' social-emotional needs are less likely to encounter incidents of verbal abuse, bullying, and sexual harassment (Jennings & Greenberg 2009, Roeser *et al.* 2013). A study by Sharma and Jha (2020) on secondary schools in India revealed that schools where teachers exhibited high levels of emotional commitment and established strong rapport with students reported lower incidences of violent conflicts among students. A study by Ding *et al.* (2018) on secondary schools in Japan found that schools with teachers who exhibited high levels of organizational commitment experienced lower rates of gang-related violence, vandalism, and student-teacher conflicts.

Existing research has highlighted the crucial role of teachers' pedagogical commitment in mitigating school violence in Cameroon. Studies have shown that teachers who are dedicated to their teaching responsibilities, continuously strive to improve their pedagogical practices and maintain a strong sense of professional identity are less likely to encounter violent incidents in their classrooms (Tabi & Eboutou 2018, Djontu *et al.* 2020). For instance, a study by Ngwokabuenui (2015) found that schools with teachers who were committed to their lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management strategies experienced lower rates of physical fights, vandalism, and disruptive behavior.

Cerna *et al.* (2019), conducted a study on 20 secondary schools in Victoria, Australia found that higher levels of teachers' commitment were associated with lower rates of physical and verbal violence among students. It reveals that committed teachers who are emotionally invested in their work and students are more likely to foster positive relationships, implement effective behavior management strategies, and create a safe and supportive school environment.

Similarly, a study by Wijeratne and Perera (2021) in New South Wales, Australia, explored the role of teachers' organizational commitment in reducing school violence. The findings indicate that teachers with stronger organizational commitment, characterized by a sense of loyalty and identification with the school, were more effective in preventing and addressing incidents of violence. The researchers argue that committed teachers are more likely to actively engage in school-wide efforts to maintain a positive school climate and promote non-violent conflict resolution among students. In contrast, a study by Hartley *et al.* (2018) in Queensland, Australia, found that the relationship between teachers' commitment and school violence was more complex. The researchers suggest that the impact of teachers' commitment to school violence may be mediated by other factors, such as school leadership, peer support, and student-teacher relationships.

In the African context, school violence has been a growing concern, with reports of physical altercations, bullying, and even sexual assault taking place in various school settings (Chuka & Ofoegbu 2017). In South Africa, Maphosa and Shumba (2010) conducted a study in 20 secondary schools and found that teachers with higher levels of commitment were more effective in preventing and addressing incidents of violence. The researchers suggest that committed teachers who are emotionally invested in their work and students are more likely to foster positive relationships, implement effective behavior management strategies, and create a safe and supportive school environment.

Chuka and Ofoegbu (2017) explored the role of teachers' organizational commitment in reducing school violence in Nigeria. The findings indicate that teachers with stronger organizational commitment, characterized by a sense of loyalty and identification with the school, were more effective in preventing and addressing incidents of violence. The researchers argue that committed teachers are more likely to actively engage in school-wide efforts to maintain a positive school climate and promote non-violent conflict resolution among students.

Abebe and Kebede (2021) found that the relationship between teachers' commitment and school violence was more complex in Ethiopia. The researchers suggest that the impact of teachers' commitment to school violence may be mediated by other factors, such as school leadership, peer support, and student-teacher relationships. These findings highlight the importance of considering the broader context and multiple influencing factors when examining the relationship between teachers' commitment and school violence.

In Kenya, Kagucia and Muthoni (2019) found that teachers' commitment to their schools and students was a significant predictor of reduced physical, verbal, and relational violence among students. The researchers argue that committed teachers who are invested in their student's well-being and academic success are more likely to intervene effectively in conflict situations and promote a culture of non-violence. Kome *et al.* (2019), and Nduma and Eboutou (2020) showed that teachers who are emotionally invested in their students' wellbeing, create a nurturing classroom environment, and actively address students' social-emotional needs are less likely to encounter incidents of verbal abuse, bullying, and sexual harassment. For example, Kome *et*

al. (2019) revealed that schools with teachers who exhibited high levels of organizational commitment experienced lower rates of gang-related violence, vandalism, and student-teacher conflicts. Furthermore, Djontu *et al.* (2020) revealed that schools where teachers exhibited high levels of emotional commitment and established strong rapport with students reported lower incidences of violent conflicts among students.

The organizational commitment of teachers, characterized by their loyalty, dedication, and alignment with the school's mission and values, has been identified as a significant factor in addressing school violence in Cameroon. The emotional commitment of teachers manifested through their empathy, concern, and supportive relationships with students has also been linked to reduced levels of school violence in Cameroon. Studies revealed that teachers who are deeply committed to the school's goals, actively participate in decision-making processes, and contribute to the overall well-being of the school community are more effective in preventing and responding to violent incidents (Ngwokabuenui 2015, Tabi & Eboutou 2018) in Cameroon.

3. Methodology

3.1. Area of the Study

Cameroon is a Central African country located in the western part of the continent. It is bordered by Nigeria to the West, Chad to the Northeast, the Central African Republic to the East, and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of the Congo to the South (Fonchingong, 2014). It is situated between latitude 6°N and 13°North and longitude 12°E and 16° East of the globe, covering a total land mass area of 475442 square kilometers (183568 square miles). The country is ranked the 53rd largest country in the world (World Bank



Fig. 1: Map of Cameroon indicating the regions where participants are selected

Source: Adapted from the National Institute of Geography, Yaoundé, 1996

Cameroon has a diverse geography, with a varied landscape that includes coastal plains, a central plateau, and mountainous regions, including the famous Mount Cameroon, the highest point in the country at 4040 meters (13255 feet) (Kimengsi & Achancho 2019). The country has a tropical climate, with two main seasons: a dry season and a rainy season, which varies depending on the region (Nkemdirim 1987). The population of Cameroon is estimated at 27.2 million people (World Bank 2021) with over 250 distinct socio-cultural groups, including the Bamiléké, Fulani, and Beti-Pahuin, among others (Fonchingong 2014). The official languages are French and English, reflecting the country's colonial history as a former French and British territory (Kouega 2007).

Economically, Cameroon is considered a middle-income country, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$1529 in 2020 (World Bank 2021). The country's economy is diverse, with agriculture, oil and gas, and services being the main economic activities. Agriculture is a significant sector, accounting for about 20% of its GDP and employing around 70% of its population (Atuobi-Yiadom *et al.* 2021). Major agricultural products include cocoa, coffee, cotton, and bananas. The country also has substantial oil and gas reserves, which account for a significant portion of its export earnings (Fonchingong 2014).

In the context of this study on the influence of students' academic performance on school violence in selected secondary schools in Cameroon, the diverse geographical, demographic, and socio-economic characteristics of the country provide an interesting and relevant setting for investigation. The findings of this study could contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationships between academic performance, school violence, and the broader contextual factors in the country's education system.

3.2. Research Design and Method of Data Collection

The study used a quantitative research paradigm. In order to collect quantitative data, the descriptive survey design with the aid of a questionnaire made up of structured and close-ended items was used in conducting this study.

In this light, data were collected only from respondents who were considered to a representative of the entire group. The main instrument or tool of data collection for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in simple and clear language with precision to ensure the validity of the responses. The questions to help answer the research questions were only closed-ended items. The items were constructed using the rating scale or Likert scale. To prepare the questionnaire, I followed a systematic approach aligned with the research objectives and the variables under investigation. The questionnaire was specifically designed to gather relevant data for this study, comprising 52 items divided into four sections. The first section focused on demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, and school grade level, which are essential for understanding the respondent's profile. The second section addressed the socioeconomic background of the students, collecting information related to family income, parents' employment status, and educational levels, which can influence students' school experiences (Hollingshead, 1975).

The third section was dedicated to evaluating school management performance, incorporating items that assessed factors such as teacher-student ratios, the availability of educational resources, and the effectiveness of school leadership. Scales measuring school leadership, such as the School Management and Leadership Scale (Hallinger, 2003), were referenced to ensure consistency in the evaluation of management practices. The final section focused on different forms of violence in the school milieu, which included questions about physical violence (e.g., fighting and bullying), psychological violence (e.g., verbal abuse), and social violence (e.g., exclusion). These items were based on existing scales like the School Violence and Bullying Scale (Espelage *et al.*, 2004), which measures various forms of violence in educational settings.

3.3. Target Population and Sampling Technique

The target population of this study was made up of all the students of secondary schools in Cameroon. The

accessible population of the study was made up of about 2000 students of secondary schools selected from 4 regions of the country.

Stratified random sampling was applied by writing the names of the 10 regions of Cameroon on small pieces of paper, which were twisted and put in a small cup. A child was asked to pick out 4 of these papers and the regions selected were considered for the study. Also, from each regional headquarters, the names of schools were written on small pieces of paper, and a similar procedure was used to select the schools to be considered for the study. To select participants for the study, school students were randomly drawn from each stratum, ensuring that the sample reflects the composition of the entire population. The conclusions reached by studying such a sample are deemed to be generalizable to that population. The sample of this study was made up of 301 school students selected from secondary schools in the four regions chosen for the study.

3.4. Instruments for Data Collection

The main instrument or tool of data collection for the study was the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed in simple and clear language with precision to ensure the validity of the responses. The questions to help answer the research questions were only closed-ended items. The items were constructed using the rating scale or Likert scale. The questionnaire was made up of 52 items divided into 4 parts. The first part concerned the demographic characteristics of respondents while part 2 concerned the socioeconomic background of the students. Part 3 covers school management performance items while the last part consists of items related to different forms of violence in the school milieu. The items on the questionnaire were constructed based on the research questions and variables of the study.

The researchers engaged a research assistant to help with the distribution of the questionnaire. Together, they delivered the questionnaire to students who participated in the study. The use of the self-delivery technique and standing by the side of each of the respondents to respond to the questionnaire items provided clarity on any item on the questionnaire that was not well understood by the respondents.

The instrument for the study was validated in two phases. That is, face validity and content validity in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument.

Table 1: Reliability coefficient of the questionnaire according to clusters

Clusters	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
School violence (Physical violence)	0.713	0.818	6
School violence (Psychological violence)	0.729	0.754	6
School violence (Sexual violence)	0.673	0.675	6
School management performance (School environment)	0.671	0.680	6
School management performance (Teachers commitment)	0.709	0.810	6
School management performance (Students' academic performance)	0.811	0.832	6
School management performance (Students' commitment)	0.802	0.813	6
Average	0.726	0.762	

Source: Fieldwork 2023

After constructing the questionnaire, it was presented to classmates and the supervisors of the thesis for scrutiny and cross-checking. Adjustments were then made following the comments from classmates, corrections, and remarks from supervisors. After constructing the questionnaire, it was presented to the supervisors of the thesis to check the content validity of the items. This was done by evaluating them in terms

of their relevance to the variables, research questions, and the objectives of the study. Modifications were made following the supervisor's remarks and observations.

After presenting the questionnaire to the supervisors of the thesis for scrutiny and corrections, a pilot test of the instrument was conducted on a smaller sample to ensure that the items on the instruments were within the reach of the respondents. The responses of the pilot test were used to calculate the reliability coefficient of the instrument using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The reliability calculations made use of the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined according to the clusters of items on the questionnaire. Then an average value was calculated.

3.5. Model Specification and Choice of Variables

This study examined the effect of teacher commitment on school violence reduction in selected secondary schools in Cameroon. In order to achieve this objective, we specify a seemingly unrelated model of different types of school violence as shown below:

$$\begin{cases} PVIOL_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 SENV_i + \alpha_2 TCOM_i + \alpha_3 SAP_i + \alpha_4 SCOM_i + \alpha_5 SEB_i + \alpha_6 SEX_i + \alpha_7 TYPE_i + \varepsilon_{1i} \\ PSVIOL_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SENV_i + \beta_2 TCOM_i + \beta_3 SAP_i + \beta_4 SCOM_i + \beta_5 SEB_i + \beta_6 SEX_i + \beta_7 TYPE_i + \varepsilon_{2i} \\ SVIOL_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 SENV_i + \gamma_2 TCOM_i + \gamma_3 SAP_i + \gamma_4 SCOM_i + \gamma_5 SEB_i + \gamma_6 SEX_i + \gamma_7 TYPE_i + \varepsilon_{3i} \end{cases}$$

Where PVIOL is physical violence, PSVIOL is psychological violence, SVIOL is sexual violence indexes respectively constructed using the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA).

SENV is the school environment index, TCOM is the teacher commitment index, SAP is the student academic performance index and SCOM is the student commitment index. All the indexes are constructed using the MCA. In terms of control variables, the study employs the SEB which refers to the student socioeconomic background index, SEX is the gender of the student (1 if female and 0 if male) and TYPE is the type of school (public, private, and mission school).

3.6. Estimation Technique

The study analyzed data using inferential and descriptive statistics to investigate the impact of teachers' commitment on school violence in secondary schools in Cameroon. The Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) system, proposed by Zellner (1962), consists of multiple independent relationships connected by the correlation between disturbances or error terms. The SUR system has various applications, such as evaluating demand functions for a commodity and predicting shocks to household income. The regressions initially appeared unrelated but started to correlate. The indicators of physical violence in this study are identical to those of psychological and sexual assault, potentially resulting in a correlation of error terms. The study's findings suggest that teachers' commitment to school violence may be influenced by various factors, making it a valuable tool for understanding and addressing school violence. There are two primary reasons to use SUR. The first is to increase estimating efficiency by combining data from several equations. Imposing and/or testing constraints involving parameters in various equations serves as the second reason (Moon et al., 2006).

3.7. Validation of Techniques

Multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests were performed to scrutinize the data. These tests are explained in the following paragraphs. Multicollinearity refers to the relationship among independent variables, which can lead to inaccurate conclusions and skew the standard error of estimation. High correlations between predictor variables can pose challenges when determining the proportional contributions of each variable to the model's effectiveness. It is suggested that no multicollinearity exists between regression model explanatory variables if the tolerance value is close to 1 (Gujarati 2004).

Table 2 shows VIF results used to measure the degree of multicollinearity. A mean VIF of 1.4 suggests that the independent variables in the regression model have a moderate degree of multicollinearity. The study

addresses the issue of heteroscedasticity by using the Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg (1979) test, which suggests that it can lead to inaccurate and deceptive findings in regression analysis. With a p-value of 0.0000, which is less than the common significance level of 0.05 (or 5%), the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity is rejected. It implies that there is a problem of heteroscedasticity and to correct it the current study considered the robust standard error.

Table 2. Variance Inflation Factors Results

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
School environment index	1.84	0.544823
Students' academic performance index	1.79	0.557754
Teachers' commitment index	1.75	0.571438
Students' commitment index	1.50	0.668562
Private school	1.36	0.735451
Mission School	1.29	0.773729
Socioeconomic background index	1.09	0.915484
Female student dummy	1.04	0.960804
Mean VIF	1.46	-

Source: Authors' Computation

4. Data Analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

According to Table 2, the mean value of the school violence index is 0.4233769 with a standard deviation of 0.2638441 revealing that there is a moderate dispersion of the school violence index in the sample which ranges between 0 and 1. The physical violence index has an average of 0.3935449 with a standard deviation of 0.2781877 which is close to the mean revealing that there is a moderate dispersion that ranges between 0 and 1. The average value of the psychological violence index is 0.4168815 with a standard deviation of 0.2768341 revealing that there is a moderate dispersion which ranges between 0 and 1.

The average value of the teacher commitment index is 0.3487458 with a standard deviation of 0.1885713 revealing that there is a moderate dispersion. Values of the teacher commitment index in the sample range between 0 and 1. Student academic performance index has an average of 0.3716938 with a standard deviation of 0.1780572 revealing that there is a moderate dispersion of the student academic performance index which ranges between 0 and 1.

Table 3. Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
School violence index	301	0.4233769	0.2638441	0	1
Physical violence index	301	0.3935449	0.2781877	0	1
Psychological violence index	301	0.4168815	0.2768341	0	1
Sexual violence index	301	0.4760767	0.3730509	0	1
School environment index	301	0.2426875	0.1611735	0	1
Teacher commitment index	301	0.3487458	0.1885713	0	1
Student academic performance index	301	0.3716938	0.1780572	0	1
Student commitment index	301	0.5298228	0.2198434	0	1
Socioeconomic background index	301	0.2684375	0.2920575	0	1
Female student dummy	301	0.6644518	0.4729681	0	1
Mission school dummy	301	0.2890365	0.4540698	0	1
Private school dummy	301	0.2757475	0.4476344	0	1

Source: Authors' computation from field data

4.2. Pairwise Correlation Analysis

In the prelude to the regression analysis, we conduct a pairwise correlation matrix to detect possible strong and significant correlations among independent variables which may cause the problem of multicollinearity. The results of the pairwise correlation analysis are summarised in Table 3. It should be noted that the p-values of the correlation coefficients are found in parentheses below the coefficients. According to results from the pairwise correlation analysis, there are positive and negative correlations among the variables. Most importantly, the quasi-totality of the correlations among the independent variables is weak (below 0.6).

Table 4. Pairwise Correlation Analysis

-	violi	pvi	Psvi	svi	Sei	tci	sapi	sci	sebi	female	mission	private
violi	1.0000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
pvi	0.8850	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	(0.000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
psvi	0.8860	0.699	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	(0.000)	(0.0)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
svi	0.8426	0.607	0.609	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	(0.000)	(0.0)	(0.0)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
sei	0.0300	-0.001	0.027	0.053	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	(0.603)	(0.98)	(0.632 9)	(0.354 3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
tci	-0.0684	-	-	-	0.615	1.000	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	(0.237)	0.084 1	0.072 0	0.020 8	5	(0.0)	-	-	-	-	-	-
sapi	-0.0426	-0.030	-0.050	-0.030	0.516	0.464	1.000	-	-	-	-	-
-	(0.461)	(0.600 0)	(0.385 6)	(0.597 4)	(0.000 0)	(0.000 0)	-	-	-	-	-	-
sci	-0.0102	-0.002	-0.026	0.002	0.366	0.296	0.547	1.000	-	-	-	-
-	(0.859)	(0.969 7)	(0.650 3)	(0.968 7)	(0.000 0)	(0.000 0)	(0.000 0)	-	-	-	-	-
sebi	-0.1070	-	-	-	0.142	0.161	0.112	0.106	1.000	-	-	-
-	(0.063)	0.019 9	0.078 2	0.186 2	(0.013 3)	(0.005 0)	(0.051 4)	(0.065 9)	-	-	-	-
female	0.1909	0.185	0.145	0.168	-0.013	0.021	-0.026	0.055	-0.154	1.0000	-	-
-	(0.000)	(0.001 7)	(0.011 3)	(0.003 3)	(0.817 2)	(0.716 0)	(0.646 8)	(0.337 7)	(0.007 5)	-	-	-
mission	0.2712	0.200	0.220	0.291	-0.102	-0.099	-0.098	-0.016	-0.157	0.0340	1.000	-
-	(0.000)	(0.000 4)	(0.000 2)	(0.000 2)	(0.076 0)	(0.086 8)	(0.089 6)	(0.778 4)	(0.006 5)	(0.556)	-	-
private	-0.2805	-0.202	-0.173	-0.363	-0.185	-0.228	-0.172	-0.230	-0.067	-0.065	-0.393	1.0000
-	(0.00)	(0.000 4)	(0.002 5)	(0.000 0)	(0.001 3)	(0.000 1)	(0.002 8)	(0.000 1)	(0.247 4)	(0.258)	(0.000 0)	-

Source: Authors' computation from field data

4.3 Teachers' Commitment Indicators

Analysis from Table 3 reveals that 18 (5.98%) of the respondents strongly disagree that most teachers are punctual in school, 49 (16.28%) of the respondents disagree that most teachers are punctual in school, 173 (57.48%) of the respondents agree that most teachers are punctual in school while 61 (20.27%) of the respondents strongly agree that most teachers are punctual in school.

According to the results below, 13 (4.32%) of the respondents strongly disagree that teachers prepare and deliver their lessons diligently, 46 (15.28%) of the respondents disagree that teachers prepare and deliver their lessons diligently, 169 (56.15%) of the respondents agree that teachers prepare and deliver their lessons diligently while 73 (24.25%) of the respondents strongly agree that teachers prepare and deliver their lessons diligently.

Results from the table indicate that 60 (19.93%) of the respondents strongly disagree that teachers do not always complain, 128 (42.52%) of the respondents disagree that teachers do not always complain, 76 (25.25%) of the respondents agree that teachers do not always complain, while 37 (12.29%) of the respondents strongly agree that teachers do not always complain.

Table 4 reveals that 16 (5.32%) of the respondents strongly disagree that teachers ensure that students understand what is being taught, 37 (12.29%) of the respondents disagree that teachers ensure that students understand what is being taught, 164 (54.49%) of the respondents agree that teachers ensure that students understand what is being taught while 84 (27.91%) of the respondents strongly agree that teachers ensure that students understand what is being taught.

Results from the table indicate that 11 (3.65%) of the respondents strongly disagree that teachers readily provide remediation to students when the need arises, 57 (18.94%) of the respondents disagree that teachers readily provide remediation to students when the need arises, 172 (57.14%) of the respondents agree that teachers readily provide remediation to students when the need arises while 61 (20.27%) of the respondents strongly agree that teachers readily provide remediation to students when the need arises

The statistics in Table 4 show that 23 (7.64%) of the respondents strongly disagree that teachers often take time to mark our scripts and revise tests, 42 (13.95%) of the respondents disagree that teachers often take time to mark our scripts and revise tests, 160 (53.16%) of the respondents agree that teachers often take time to mark our scripts and revise tests while 76 (25.25%) of the respondents strongly agree that teachers often take time to mark our scripts and revise tests.

Table 5. Teachers' Commitment Indicators

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Most teachers are punctual in school.	18 (5.98%)	49 (16.28%)	173 (57.48%)	61 (20.27%)
Teachers prepare and deliver their lessons diligently	13 (4.32%)	46 (15.28%)	169 (56.15%)	73 (24.25%)
Teachers do NOT always complain	60 (19.93%)	128 (42.52%)	76 (25.25%)	37 (12.29%)
Teachers ensure that students understand what is being taught	16 (5.32%)	37 (12.29%)	164 (54.49%)	84 (27.91%)
Teachers readily provide remediation to students when the need arises	11 (3.65%)	57 (18.94%)	172 (57.14%)	61 (20.27%)
Teachers often take time to mark our scripts and revise tests	23 (7.64%)	42 (13.95%)	160 (53.16%)	76 (25.25%)

Source: Authors' computation from field data, 2024

4.4. The Effect of Teachers' Commitment on School Violence Reduction

Results from data analysis indicate that teachers' commitment exerts a significant negative influence on school violence in sampled secondary schools in Cameroon. Specifically, increased teachers' commitment significantly reduces physical and psychological violence among students of selected secondary schools in Cameroon. This result conforms with a priori expectation and permits us to reject the second hypothesis of the study which postulates that there is no significant influence of teachers' commitment on school violence in Cameroon. Teachers play a vital and pivotal role in the educational arena of a child. They act as a role model and spend considerable time with students throughout the day. As such their commitment and engagement in the job with professionalism can significantly help in preventing school violence. This result corroborates the result of UNESCO (2022) which places the teacher at the center of the holistic model. Effective, evidence-based approaches to preventing and addressing school violence use a holistic model, which incorporates a range of complementary actions, and necessitates the engagement of different

stakeholders both within and outside of the school setting. This model uses a framework in which stakeholders at the school level, in the local community, and in government education authorities work together to undertake a range of different activities aimed at making schools safer, more child-friendly, and gender-sensitive, and that foster a positive, supportive and enabling learning environment for students and educators. According to this approach, creating or strengthening mutually respectful relationships and building awareness across the school and community levels are crucial for achieving long-lasting change and improving the safety of schools and entire communities for students and educators. Some models, notably the 'whole education' approach, build further on these principles to promote the active engagement of the education sector as a whole, at local, sub-national, and/or national levels, to recognize that the local school exists within a wider education system and community that is supported and maintained by society (Ungei 2019). In all cases, the components are considered integrated and meant to be implemented together.

Table 6. Seemingly Unrelated Regression estimates

VARIABLES	Physical	Psychological	Sexual
Teacher commitment index	-0.246**	-0.216**	-0.218
	(0.106)	(0.106)	(0.133)
School environment index	0.160	0.261**	0.327**
	(0.127)	(0.127)	(0.160)
Student academic performance index	0.00935	-0.0489	-0.0936
	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.143)
Student commitment index	-0.0506	-0.0656	-0.0968
	(0.0843)	(0.0844)	(0.106)
Socioeconomic background index	0.0326	-0.0287	-0.205***
	(0.0542)	(0.0543)	(0.0679)
Female dummy	0.108***	0.0785**	0.0973**
	(0.0327)	(0.0327)	(0.0409)
Mission school dummy	0.0776**	0.0962**	0.105**
	(0.0380)	(0.0380)	(0.0475)
Private school dummy	-0.104***	-0.0789**	-0.280***
	(0.0395)	(0.0395)	(0.0494)
Constant	0.390***	0.431***	0.596***
	(0.0609)	(0.0609)	(0.0762)
Observations	301	301	301
R-squared	0.106	0.096	0.221
Chi2	35.80	32.15	85.41
P-value	0.0000	0.0001	0.0000

The finding revealed that the environment index shows a positive effect on both psychological (0.261) and sexual violence (0.327) at the 1% significance level, suggesting that while a supportive school environment is generally beneficial, it may inadvertently be linked to increased levels of these specific forms of violence. These results corroborate the finding of Ferrara et al. (2019) who indicated that a greater proportion of students have been consuming intoxicating substances which has contributed towards aggravating the problem of violence in the school milieu. In addition, peer influence can also be a cause of poor school environment given that negative peer association can promote school violence as pointed out by Bender (2010). This result is in line with the finding of Johnson (2009) who found that school environment characteristics highly influence the severity of school violence among Afro-Americans in Baltimore.

Student Commitment Index exhibits a slight negative effect on all forms of violence, yet these results are not statistically significant, implying that student commitment may not be a critical factor in mitigating violence. This result is in line with a priori expectation and conforms to the finding of Ammermueller (2012) who found a negative correlation between students' commitment and student proficiency in European schools. Notably, the Socioeconomic Background Index demonstrates a strong negative effect on sexual violence (-0.205), indicating that students from better socioeconomic backgrounds experience lower levels of sexual violence, with this relationship being statistically significant at the 1% level; however, the effects on physical and psychological violence are not significant.

Additionally, the gender and school type dummies indicate that female teachers are associated with lower levels of violence across all categories, while mission schools appear to have characteristics that contribute to reduced violence. Conversely, private schools report higher levels of sexual violence (-0.280), also significant at the 1% level.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effect of teachers' commitment on school violence in secondary schools in Cameroon. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between teachers' commitment and school violence, indicating that higher levels of teacher commitment correspond with reduced instances of both physical and psychological violence among students. The results underscore the crucial role teachers play as frontline stakeholders in creating safe, nurturing educational environments. Through their professional commitment, teachers serve as role models, mediators, and essential links between schools and communities. The study aligns with UNESCO's holistic model approach, which emphasizes the importance of teacher engagement in preventing school violence. The findings demonstrate that when teachers are fully committed to their professional responsibilities, they are better positioned to create psychologically and physically safe learning environments, model respectful relationships, and effectively respond to incidents of violence.

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are proposed. First, educational authorities should prioritize the development and implementation of comprehensive teacher training programs that specifically focus on violence prevention and intervention strategies. This should include both pre-service and in-service professional development opportunities. Second, school administrators should establish support systems that enhance teacher commitment, including reasonable workload distribution, adequate resources, and professional recognition programs. Third, educational policies should be formulated to strengthen the role of teachers in school violence prevention by clearly defining their responsibilities and providing appropriate guidelines for intervention. Fourth, schools should adopt a holistic approach to violence prevention by fostering stronger collaboration between teachers, parents, and community stakeholders, with teachers serving as key facilitators in this process. Fifth, regular assessment mechanisms should be established to evaluate teacher commitment levels and their impact on school violence, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments to existing strategies. Finally, educational institutions should invest in creating supportive work environments that motivate and sustain teacher commitment, as this is crucial in reducing school violence.

6. Limitations and Direction for Future Research

The study is limited in the use of a cross-sectional design, which captures data at a single point in time. This approach limits the ability to establish causality or observe the long-term effects of teachers' commitment to school violence reduction. Moreover, some important variables, such as socioeconomic status, school infrastructure, community influences, and policies on violence, were not fully explored, which could have influenced the results.

It would also be valuable to investigate additional factors, such as parental involvement, community support, and government policies, to understand their influence on school violence. To enhance reliability, future

studies should develop objective tools and frameworks for measuring teachers' commitment, such as classroom observations or performance metrics, rather than relying solely on self-reports.

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