Stakeholders' Assessment of Fundraising as a Factor of Image Building in Public Secondary Schools in South West Region, Cameroon

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This study seeks to assess fund raising as a factor of image building in public secondary schools (PSS) in the South West Region of Cameroon by evaluating whether excellence as well as school alumni is been celebrated in the schools with an overall evaluation of fundraising efforts of PSS in the SW region of Cameroon. The study made use of a cross sectional survey of students, teachers and parents of 12 schools in the rural and urban settings in the six divisions of the South West region of Cameroon. 1094 students, 48 teachers and 55 parents completed the survey. Findings reveal that students were significantly ($P<0.05$) more satisfied with school-alumni relationship in urban areas with a proportion of 44.6% as compared to 24.1% in rural areas. The study further concludes that PSS have not recognised the importance of fundraising for their institutions in both the rural and urban settings as assessed by students ($\chi2$-test: $\chi2=123.53$; df=1; P=0.000) and parents ($\chi2$-test: $\chi2=37.50$; df=1; P=0.000). This finding challenges Pistolis (2012) findings which reveal that schools in affluent neighbourhoods often raise more funds than schools located in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods which expounds as a direct extension of their private life into the public school system. PSS in the SW region of Cameroon therefore need to recognise fundraising as a development mechanism for their schools.

Keywords: fundraising, image building, school community, rural and urban schools, Cameroon

Introduction

The celebration of excellence and support of school projects are some of the basic activities that require external funding. The school community including school authorities, teachers, students, parents, the alumni and local authorities are some of the major stakeholders that either benefit directly or indirectly from activities carried out within the schools. They therefore need to collaborate with each other in order to build successful schools. The funding available to support school projects are often at the minimal hence these stakeholders need to support the schools in order for the schools to achieve their goal of teaching and learning in a conducive environment. The alumni and parents are the key stakeholders that desire not only institutional prestige for these schools but need to see their children and Alma matter achieve the goal of teaching and learning to enhance academic success. This study is relevant as it unveils the value ascribed to fundraising in

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public secondary schools in the South West region of Cameroon and points the need to involve the different stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, alumni) in school activities and projects. The study thereby seeks to appraise stakeholders' perception of fundraising activities as a factor of image building based on the following objectives:

1. To examine if public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region recognise excellence as a factor to foster their images with their stakeholders.
2. To evaluate students and teachers' assessment of school-alumni relationship.
3. To ascertain whether public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region recognise fund-raising as a factor for image enhancement.

Literature Review

Cameroon being a developing country has faced numerous challenges in its educational system especially in the dawn of the 21st century where the global market is increasingly becoming competitive. The question now is if present structures meet the aspirations of institutions that contribute positively in sustainable activities in the country (Tanjong, 2008). The quality of the educational system determines the sustainability of other institutions within the society as there are the main sources of manpower. Despite the high competition in this sector stemming from the liberalisation of secondary education (Law No 2004/022 of 2nd July 2004) with resultant effects, an outrageous number of secondary schools in the country (both private and public), public secondary schools especially, have not realised the essence of communicating and/or publicising their core ideologies to their stakeholders in order to stand the competition demonstrated by their private counterparts, relevant for the production of responsible Cameroonians. This problem emanates from the lukewarm attitude expressed by public school administrators who believe that they do not need to communicate for good image to increase school enrolment, create strong alumni, and cultivate local linkages and partnerships with the community and with businesses since according to Jimenez et al. (1995) and Dronkers and Robert (2003) they are dependent on tax-supported government agencies, administratively dependent and are relatively cheap in terms of fees and therefore harness larger populations of students.

Also, many public school administrators, some quite renowned, consider it a superfluous and worthless expense in creating a Public Relations Office to cater for the image of the school. According to Carlsmith and Railsback (2001), Agyapong et al. (2013), school public relations is about establishing and promoting partnerships within the community, providing value to parents, employees, students and the public. Public relations therefore exist as an essential middleman between the corporation and its public, with a basic function to perform (Moore and Kalupa, 2007). They distribute newsletters containing information about campus events, and build and maintain ties with alumni, lecturers, staff and students (Agyapong et al., 2013). Most private secondary schools in Cameroon are distancing themselves from public secondary schools in terms of the image they

furnish to the public. Coleman et al. (1982) believe that private education can spur public schools to compete for students. Although there are many types of private schools, analysts have argued that they possess general characteristics that differentiate them from public schools. These characteristics include a greater flexibility in operation and funding, a direct accountability to those who use their services and a greater tendency for those in charge of individual schools to make critical educational decisions (Coleman et al., 1982).

Parents and especially those who send their children to public secondary schools, community, and alumni of these schools are somewhat detached from the activities and projects carried out by them (Wantchami, 2017). Jones (2008) laments that whereas parents were involved in their children's education at the primary level, perhaps helping out in class, listening to readers, supporting art projects, assisting at fund raising events, with the school gate a daily conduit for the transmission of information from parents to teachers and vice versa, when children reach secondary school, they acquire a sudden independence as parents are no longer welcomed, either by the staff or by the students themselves who regard parental presence as an embarrassment. Contact with the school becomes confined to the formality of parents' evenings and report cards (Jones, 2008). This detachment has a negative impact not only on the child's education but on the impressions parents sometimes have about public secondary schools (Wantchami, 2017) which dissuade them from supporting schools project.

In view of Cameroon becoming an emergent nation by 2035, there is need to develop human capacity, which is possible through the quality of education (Growth and Employment Strategy Paper – GESP, 2009) which can basically be reflected by the image the public holds about schools be it via symbolic, communicational or behavioural means. The Government attaches much importance to education as a priority sector (National Institute of Statistics, 2010). During the school year 2008/2009 (fiscal year 2009), the State allocated, only for the education sector, nearly 15.5% of its total budget, 357.609 billion CFA francs, an increase of almost 1.4% compared to the school year 2007/2008 [fiscal year 2008] (National Institute of Statistics, 2010). Although the government has prioritised this sector, Cameroon's allocation has been far below the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) recommended budget allocation of 26% for education (Besong, 2013). This is an indication that public schools may be inadequately funded (Pistiolis, 2012) and hence need to derive techniques to better enhance not only school infrastructure but other services that might damage the image of public schools. Pistiolis (2012) further asserts that the impact of fundraising in public schools is significant. Fundraising in schools has become the norm in attempting to meet growing educational demands (Rich, as cited in McCarthy, 2005, para. 9). These pressures make fundraising implicitly mandatory for schools as they seek to provide high quality education (Pistiolis, 2012).

ICTs have remained the backbone through which education is enhanced, but very few public secondary schools in Cameroon have a multimedia centre, not to mention accessible internet connections within their school campuses. Josué (2007) alleges that after the introduction of ICTs into education by President Paul

Biya in 2001, very few multimedia resource centres (MRCs) have been created in public secondary schools. He lamented that these projects rely mainly on external funding, thus calling their sustainability into question. Moreover, public secondary schools have poor purchasing power, and no budget has been allotted to support ICT-related activities in schools. Most computers used in schools are donations (Josué, 2007). Plomp et al. (2007) assert that people have to access knowledge via ICT to keep pace with the latest developments. ICT can be used to remove communication barriers such as that of space and time (Lim and Chai, 2004), and allow for the creation of digital resources like digital libraries where the students, teachers and professionals can access research materials and course materials from any place at any time (Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007; Cholin, 2005). Such facilities allow the networking of academics and researchers and hence sharing of scholarly materials (Josué, 2007)) which helps increase the school's visibility and impacts its image. Public schools need to canvass for sponsorship and donations of ICT tools by creating partners in order to embrace the benefits of this technological innovation.

Also, the insufficiency of teachers in PSS especially in rural areas has been raised as a problem by Anglophone teachers' trade unions in 2017. Schools need the support of their educational community in order to emerge from the challenges they face. The composition of the educational community as stipulated in Section 32 of Law No 004/98 of 14 April 1998 comprise all individuals and corporate bodies that contribute towards the functioning, development and prestige of a school. It shall comprise the following members: the authorities, the administrative and support staff, teachers, parents, students, persons from socio-professional circles, regional and local authorities." Section 33 further stipulates that the members of the educational community shall be involved through their representativeness in the consultative and management bodies set up at the educational level, and at each level of decentralised territorial authorities, or of the national educational setup. The educational community therefore made up of citizens has as their responsibility to contribute towards the functioning, development and prestige of the school. This could be done only through effective participation in the running of the school. Hence, schools should design their goals with due recognition of their stakeholders because the stakeholders have a great role to play in the advancement of the school. Following Shaeffer (1994) definition of participation, the present practices of citizen participation in education include: at school level, the population as citizens intervene in seeing that schools are effectively run. According to the National Anti-corruption Commission, they are expected to report cases of corruption and malpractice in the school milieu. With regards to public contracts, they are expected to act as the eyes of the government and to report cases of abandoned and poorly executed contracts. They are also expected through the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) or as individuals, to contribute money, materials, labour, gifts, donations to help enhance the material and financial wellbeing of the Cameroon educational system. Furthermore, they are expected, through their participation in forums (for example, the National Educational Forum, 1995), in a consultative manner, in debates, and make

suggestions which will help enhance the smooth running of the educational system (circular No. 045/B1/1464/MINESEC/SG/DSAPPS of 13 September 1996).

At the managerial level, citizens, though not directly involved in the day-to-day running of our public schools in particular, could, through their participation in the PTA, and through their representatives in the School Management Boards, exert control and influence on the educational system. The School Management Boards, created by Decree No 2001/04 of 19th February 2004 act as arbitrators and regulatory organs on how schools are managed, and supervise the activities of external actors like the PTA. They have the responsibility of reporting any case of misuse of funds by school authorities or the PTA. The PTA acts as a forum for parents, as citizens, to intervene in the educational sector. Created by Law No. 95/53 of 19/12/1990 on the creation of associations, and modified by circular No. 045/B1/1464/MINESEC/SG/DSAPPS of 13 September 1996, the modalities of the functioning of PTA's in schools have undergone many modifications. However, the most recent circular No. 07/08/MINESEC/CAB of 25 February 2008, states that parents through PTA, could contribute funds which could be used to:

- Pay the wages of temporary teachers, security and maintenance staff;
- Construct and maintain school property: equipment, buildings, and instructional materials movables.
- Promote a healthy environment. Citizens, who are parents, are expected to exercise their citizenship by controlling funds for the development of the institutions harbouring their children or wards.

Part IV, line 2b of the same circular empowers them to "denounce any financial misappropriation that they may observe in the management of PTA funds.

At the investment levels, the recent law on decentralisation, in consonance with Section 32 of Law No. 004/98 line 2(f), recognises and empowers local councils to intervene in our educational sectors. These interventions, however, are not at the managerial level. Rather, local councils could sponsor construction projects, give gifts, and sponsor some school activities. Individuals and alumni on the other hand, could also participate by making donations (books, instructional materials) or sponsoring construction works in schools as part of their citizenship responsibilities, or by virtue of their Alma matter.

Manafo (2006) posits that successful outreach programmes can do wonders for the image of a school and for the quality of life in the community and public schools should cultivate local linkages and partnerships that could help in sponsoring programmes within the school. Manafo (2006) encourages public schools to solicit major gifts and endowments. Major gifts and endowment donations are not the exclusive domain of schools in the private sector. Manafo appeals that if you ask the right person and present a compelling case, those with resources will generally be pleased to assist. A public relations department of a school or organisation may help set up such programmes and then publicise them to the community (Arens and Bovee, 1994).

Manafo (2006) further urges public schools to create a strong alumni base in order to enhance their image. He asserts that there are a dozen good reasons for a school to track its alumni and to stay in regular contact with them. Many public schools are rather lax about following their graduates. Some public schools track graduates merely for the sake of organising traditional five-year class reunions. However, too many public schools abdicate all alumni functions. They simply pass them on to former class leaders and then wash their hands off alumni affairs. Manafo believes this is a golden opportunity wasted. When one considers the successful careers of many public school graduates, it is surprising that public schools generally have little interest in cultivating those who have passed through their portals. He urges the use of the entrepreneurial spirit of the internet to fill in for this shortcoming of public education.

Other research focused on studying the characteristics of alumni donors and non-donors. For instance, one study used data collected from seventy-three large, high-profile universities (Research I universities) from 1977 to 1980. The results showed that institutional prestige (age and quality of the university) tended to be the main predictor of alumni contributions, followed by donor recognition and social ties of alumni with the school (Leslie and Ramey, 1988).

Results of the study carried out by Pistiolis (2012) shows a positive correlation between fundraising amounts and academic achievement. The extra funds raised by affluent schools were used in various ways and provided many benefits. Funds were used for schoolyard revitalisations, sports, academies, transportation, technology, books, musical instruments, sports, equipment, field trips, extracurricular activities; special school guests that help teach the students, professional paid school performances, and other items. Results of this study further revealed that fundraised money frees up the school budget to make certain purchases and all the principals interviewed agreed that many of the items purchased through extra funds do increase student achievement.

Findings support that schools which fundraised large amounts of money overall experienced a higher level of student achievement. Principals provided their professional assessment on how the utilisation of extra funds does support and increase student engagement and learning. Fundraising in schools is a tool used to provide additional resources and experiences to students with the objective of increasing student engagement and achievement. The results of fundraising favoured schools in affluent neighbourhoods because they are able to raise more funds and therefore utilise these funds in more ways to support student engagement and achievement than schools located in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods. For students attending a school in an affluent neighbourhood this often means an extension of their private lifestyle into the public school system (Pistiolis, 2012). "Kids in low socioeconomic schools should derive the same opportunities in a perfect world as kids in middle or high socioeconomic schools. Through school fundraising the rich kids are maintaining a level that they are already getting at home" (Principal #6, interview, July 28, 2011). This inequity suggests that students in low socioeconomic schools need fundraised resources and experiences more so than students in schools in middle or high socioeconomic neighbourhoods (Pistiolis, 2012).

All principals interviewed expressed the view that the results of fundraising impact student achievement positively, and their personal and professional experience in this area is supported by research in the education field (Pistiolis, 2012). For instance, while some people may think music, physical education, extracurricular activities and contact with nature are educational "frills", these opportunities are very important for all students. Lack of extracurricular activities in schools due to low generated funds significantly impacts a student's overall success (People for Education, 2011, p. 3). People for Education reports that "Arts and sports programmes play a key role in engaging students in school, yet the majority of elementary schools have no music teacher, and parent fundraising for the arts and sports continues to create inequities among schools" (People for Education, 2010, p. 3). The students most negatively affected are poor and visible minority students (TDSB Inner City Committee Advisory Committee (Fees and Funding Subcommittee), 2010, December, p. 12). Margaret Atwood insists on reminding people, not only is exercise an antidepressant – especially important for teenagers – but movement improves brain function. Like music training – shown to increase memory – it facilitates more efficient learning. It improves blood flow to the entire mind-body, thus aiding neural connectivity. But our education experts have tossed out not only music, but physical education. Also, the third essential mind-body patterning aid – contact with nature – has been severely cut back as well…Pay attention, taxpayers: music, movement and nature are not frills! (Atwood, 2010, pp. 22-23). Principals also pursue fundraising to ensure field trips take place because they are a very important piece to a student's education (Pistiolis, 2012)

Lack of adequate motivation in a system has negative effects on staff performance. In every organisation, activities and programmes are planned and executed for the purpose of accomplishing the goals and objectives of the organisation. The issue and problem of how to motivate teachers so that they work hard for the interest of the school and also raise their socio-economic status have occupied the attention of educational administrators. It is believed that hard work and commitment on the part of the teachers will bring about good job performance. Teachers will work hard and show high levels of commitment when adequately motivated (Akporehe, 2011). Motivation, according to Odor (1995), is the force or condition within the organisation that compels workers to work willingly for the progress of the organisation. Human beings generally require some sort of internal and external drives, incentives, encouragement and satisfaction of basic needs to get the best from them towards the accomplishment of the group goals and objectives (Odor, 1995).

Motivation according to Nwachukwu (1998) is an energising force that produces or compels and maintains behaviour. A good work environment therefore is that kind of environment where staff is highly motivated for hard job and commitment to bring about good job performance. Salaries and allowances are not as important to most staff as good job environment and job satisfaction. Several teachers leave the teaching profession not because of poor salaries but because of lack of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a function of the general aura of the work environment.

Good work environment is the type of environment that provides job satisfaction to employees. It is a situation where all the necessary conditions and facilities that will assist the teachers and school administrators to do their work well are provided. This includes good and well-furnished air conditioned offices with good communications and information technology network, teaching facilities and materials, good working atmosphere and open organisational climate. In these situations, the teacher will have a good image, high esteem, and will love his job and hence put in his best (Akporehe, 2011).

Akporehe (2011) further describes the moderate work environment as facilities that are in relatively good condition and the working conditions are just fair but not good enough for effective learning. Teachers and administrators under this condition are not very zealous about their performance on the job. The poor work environment is the type we have in most schools today where teachers' offices are either non-existent or very poorly equipped. Many schools lack chairs for teachers and students. Some schools are in such dilapidated conditions that teachers feel ashamed of being associated with them. They have low morale, no job satisfaction and are not willing to put enough efforts to achieve the goals of education because they lack motivation.

In encouraging accountability of funds as purported by Arens and Bovee (1994), Manafo (2006) insists that public schools should define what they are raising money for. Although annual giving and major gift funds often go directly into the general funds or endowments of schools, Manafo (2006), Body (2017) asserts that he favours earmarking funds for specific programmes or projects other than raising funds simply to subsidise the day-to-day operation of any school, public or private. Earmarked projects, endowed chairs, and brick-and-mortar campaigns are much easier to pitch to prospective donors. It is much more difficult to ask an alumnus or a local business for a donation for daily operations. Manafo (2006) suggests that public school alumni would be much more inclined to give to their alma mater if they knew exactly how their donation would be spent.

Once a principal has a school council, he/she needs to invest the time to articulate the needs of the school and to influence, motivate, coach and collaborate with the parents and staff to maximize fundraising efforts by identifying and limiting fundraising activities to goals that will most benefit the school by carrying out adequate background research. The principal's role is to sell "the physical and emotional benefits of what the fundraiser can do for the school" (Mabry, 2005, p. 3; Miller et al., 2020). Various variables are essential for fundraising effectiveness with the absence of scarcity of one or some of them reducing the overall impact of others, including: financial capability of constituency, a clear and strong institutional mission, personal relationship between donors and institution leaders, donors' engagement in institution's activities, institution's reputation, history and tradition, informed and committed constituency, predisposition of donors to give, society's confidence in the value created by the institution economic, political and social situation, tax policy in terms of state laws encouraging or not philanthropy. Academic and administrative staffs need to appreciate these variables in the fundraising efforts. Effective leadership of academics and administrative staffs to man fundraising efforts deals with; the willingness to be involved in the fundraising

process; abilities and skills in fundraising, effective management of the institutions; effort and commitment; moral integrity; fiscal vitality of the institution; effective planning; effective stewardship of resources; donors' confidence, and appropriate gratitude and recognition of donations (Madeo, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

The Charitable Triad Theory by Chapman et al. (2022) is relevant for this study. The theory proposes that giving is triadic because of the characteristics of three actors – donors, beneficiaries and fundraisers – who influence charitable decisions. It further propound that the characteristics of each of the three actors may be necessary but not sufficient to promote giving and that giving is relational because interactive relationships between the triad determine charitable choices. This theory is relevant as it explains the need for schools (via the development office) to relate with the school community and study each of their stakeholders' characteristics to get them involve in fund raising efforts in order to support school activities and projects. The donor characteristics include: sociodemographic (gender, income and wealth, age, religiosity and education), emotions (guilt, compassion, gratitude, happiness, regret), people's identities especially when such an identity supports social norms, cost and benefit (Chapman et al. 2020). Beneficiaries are perceived more worthy when they furnish information in terms of identifiability and number of victims that needs support than in the abstract while fundraisers are characterised based on their legitimacy [trustworthiness, professionalism, accountability and so on] (Chapman et al. 2022).

Material and Methods

Research Design

Data for this study was gathered quantitatively in the form of a cross-sectional survey using questionnaires. According to Babbie (1990), surveys include cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection, with the intent of generalising from a sample to a population. The population of the study is made up of stakeholders of public secondary schools in the SW Region of Cameroon. Respondents were randomly selected from the school population made up of internal and external stakeholders. However, not every stakeholder group that relates with the school was interviewed for the study. The stakeholder groups including teachers, students, and parents were purposely sampled since they are the dominant stakeholders of the school and therefore have a powerful, legitimate and direct relationship with the school and since school decisions affect this relationship as well as their perception about the school.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Public secondary schools under the general section in the South West Region were stratified into 6 groups according to divisions. Each group was then divided into two according to rural and urban settings (12 groups). Urban and rural schools were recognised in terms of their development and age. According to UNICEF (2012), an urban area can be defined by one or more of the following: administrative criteria or political boundaries (area within the jurisdiction of a municipality or town committee), a threshold population size (where the minimum for an urban settlement is typically in the region of 2,000 people, although this varies globally between 2000 and 50,000), population density, economic function (where a significant majority of the population is not primarily engaged in agriculture, or where there is surplus employment) or the presence of urban characteristics (paved streets, electric lighting, sewerage). Rural areas on the other hand are traditional, authoritative, generally not so literate, in most cases poor and tend to be a little more resistant to change (Ndu et al., 1997). A simple random sampling method was then used in selecting 12 schools using the lottery method from the 12 groups; 6 rural and 6 urban schools, one per category from each division. Based on the lottery method, the names of rural and urban schools from each division were written on paper and folded. The folded papers were then put in 12 boxes representing the 12 groups and well stirred. A tag was then drawn from each box until we arrived at 6 rural and 6 urban schools according to division as represented in table 2. The gender breakdown was also based on proportion. Students were randomly selected from Forms, 4, 5 to Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth classes of each school. These classes were purposively sampled owing to their duration in that school which gives them knowledge about the activities of the school.

Sample Size

The researcher conveniently sampled 5 teachers and 5 parents per school within the 6 divisions (5x12 schools; 5x12 schools) giving a sample size of 60 teachers and 60 parents for the study. The sample size for students was estimated using sample calculation for one proportion with the support of EpiInfo 6.04d (CDC, 2001) as explained by Nana (2012).

$$n=\frac{NZ^2P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1)+Z^2P(1-P)}$$

Where N=total population, Z= Z value corresponding to the confidence level, d= absolute precision, P=expected proportion in the population, n effective=n*design effect. The prospected prevalence is 50% for an optimal sample size. The precision considered is 5%, a design effect (marginal error) of 1 given that simple random sampling was used to select the schools. For a total study population of public grammar secondary students in the South West Region of 49115 as seen in table 1 (Regional Delegation of the South West, 2012/2013), the sample size at 95% CI

estimated as explained above is 1163. This sample size is shared proportionately to size, to the divisions and schools.

Table 1. Distribution of Sample by Division

Division	Total number of students	Sample size
Fako	7536	178
Manyu	9578	227
Kupe Muanenguba	6831	162
Ndian	520	12
Lebialem	6573	156
Meme	18077	428
Total	49115	1163

At the end of the data collection procedure, a code guide was designed and questionnaires were coded by 6 coders in order to ensure inter-coder and intra-coder reliability. 1094 students, 48 teachers and 55 parents completed the survey. Data were made essentially categorical variables and they were analysed using frequencies and proportions and Multiple Response Analysis to aggregate responses within conceptual components. To ensure the validity of the tools, the researchers submitted the questionnaires to research experts. This involved assessing the consistency of the questionnaire to the research objectives. Reliability of research instrument was assured by carrying a pilot study as well as applying Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis. Chi-Square test was used to compare proportions for significant difference and to measure the association between categorical variables. The collected data were analysed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0).

Findings and Discussion

Public Secondary Schools (PSS) in the SW Region Recognise Excellence as a Factor to Foster Their Images with Their Stakeholders

Table 2. Students, Teachers and Parents' Appraisal of Schools' Celebration of Excellence

Statements	Students	Teachers	Parents	N
My school gives awards to teachers/staff with outstanding performance in their duties	60.7%(664)	43.8%(21)	26.8%(293)	1094
My school gives awards to students with outstanding performance in their academic performance	77.7%(850)	79.2%(38)	14.0%(153)	1094
My school gives awards to students with outstanding managerial (school prefects) and extracurricular performance	54.3%(594)	47.9%(23)	27.9%(305)	1094
MRS	64.2%(2108)	56.9% (82)	22.9%(751)	3282

χ^2-test: χ^2=37.21; df=2; P=0.000.
Comparing between students and teachers: χ^2-test: χ^2=1.25; df=1; P=0.264.

Results from Table 2 reveal that on aggregate, 64.2% of the students agreed with the indicators that measured how schools celebrate their excellence, with 12.9% of them neither agreeing nor disagreeing. However, majority of the students, that is 77.7% (850), 60.7% (664) and 54.3% (594), agreed with the opinions that schools reward students with outstanding performances, teachers/ staff with outstanding performance in their duties and gives awards to students with outstanding managerial and extracurricular performances respectively. Regarding the three categories of stakeholders, the difference was significant ($P<0.05$), but was insignificant between students and teachers ($P>0.05$). These therefore imply, students and teachers perceived that public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region recognise excellence as a factor to foster their images with their stakeholders while parents do not appreciate the school efforts in the celebration of excellence as a majority of students (64.2%) and teachers (56.9%) have positive views, in significant contrast to the parents (22.9%), marking a significant difference ($P<0.05$).

Table 3. Students' Appraisal of Schools' Celebration of Excellence by Background Indicators

Indicator	Categories	Satisfied with the manner in which schools celebrate excellence			$N_{responses}$	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Rural	48.8%(341)	15.3%(107)	35.9%(251)	699	$\chi 2$=30.30 P=0.000
	Urban	68.4%(1767)	12.2%(316)	19.4%(500)	2583	
Cycle	First cycle	59.3%(1143)	12.1%(233)	28.7%(553)	1929	$\chi 2$=17.02 P=0.000
	Second cycle (lower sixth and upper sixth)	71.3%(965)	14.0%(190)	14.6%(198)	1353	

Excellence was significantly ($P<0.05$) more celebrated in urban (68.4%) than in rural (48.8%) areas, significantly ($P<0.05$) more in second cycle (71.3%) than in the first cycle (59.3%) as seen in Table 3.

Public secondary schools celebrate excellence in their schools based on students' (64.2%) and teachers' (56.9%) perspective with a non-significant difference between them ($P<0.05$). However, parents (22.9%) do not believe PSS celebrate excellence (See Table 2). Results further showed that excellence is celebrated more in the urban (68.4%) than in the rural (48.8%) schools (*See Table 3*). This finding can lead us to conclude that although PSS celebrate excellence as revealed by students and teachers, they hardly involve parents in events geared towards the celebration of excellence. This result is a reflection of schools' capacity to motivate students and teachers since, according to Akporehe (2011), Odor (1995), teachers and students work hard and show high levels of commitment when adequately motivated. Pistiolis (2012) assert that schools which fundraised large amount of money overall experienced higher level of student achievement as extra funds are used by school administrators to increase students' achievement and engagement especially in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods. However, the result stipulating that parents do not believe PSS celebrate excellence is due to the

fact that parents are hardly part of the excellence celebration activity as highlighted by Wantchami (2017) and Jones (2008) who alleged that parents especially those who send their children to public secondary schools are somewhat detached from the activities and projects carryout in the schools. In Cameroon, parents are recognised as a key stakeholder as seen in Circular No. 07/08/MINESEC/CAB of 25 February 2008, which stipulates their contributions in terms of funding school activities through the Parents Teacher Associations (PTA). However, their detachment from school activities and projects require motivating and involving parents to be fully engaged in the running of schools which will therefore affect their perception towards school's efforts in the celebration of excellence.

Students and Teachers Assessment of School-Alumni Relationship

Table 4: Students and Teachers' Appraisal of Schools' Relations with Alumni

Statements	Students	Teachers
My school has a well-structured X-student (alumni) association scheme	55.4%(606)	56.3%(27)
My school has a date scheduled to celebrate with the alumni	34.7%(380)	33.3%(16)
My school has an alumni website page/e-mail group to cater for the alumni network	27.1%(297)	31.3%(15)
My school alumni is proactive in the development of the school (supports school projects)	43.8%(479)	43.8%(21)
MRS	40.3%(1762)	41.1% (192)

$\chi 2$-test: $\chi 2=0.04$; df=1; P=0.851.

In summary, less than half the number of students (P>0.05), that is 40.3%, expressed satisfaction with the relationship that exists between schools and their alumni, with 17.5% of the students neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 55.4% (606) of the students agreed that their schools have well-structured alumni association schemes, with 43.8% (479) who also agreed that their school alumni are proactive in the development of the school and supports school projects. Finally, just 34.7% (380) and 27.1% (297) agreed with the statements that their schools scheduled dates to celebrate with the alumni and had an alumni website page/e-mail group to cater for the alumni network respectively though 20.7%(226) and 19.1% (209) of the students neither agreed nor disagreed as far as alumni website page/ e-mail groups to cater for the alumni network and being proactive were concerned (See Table 4). Public secondary schools in the South West region of Cameroon therefore exhibit poor school – alumni relationship which may affect the fund raising efforts of the alumni as they are somehow detach from the school and its activities (Wantchami, 2017; Jones, 2008) hence demonstrate low social ties with the school, a key predictor for alumni contribution (Leslie and Ramey, 1988). The government of Cameroon recognises the potential of the school alumni in the development and support of school activities (Section 32 of Law No. 004/98; circular No. 07/08/MINESEC/CAB of 25 February 2008), therefore school administrations should mobilise, design, manage and execute strategic programmes and activities that engage the school alumni.

Table 5. Students Appraisal of Schools' Relations with Alumni by Background Indicators

| Indicator | Categories | Satisfied with the school-alumni relationship | | | N$_{response}$ | Chi-Square |
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Rural	24.1%(225)	15.1%(141)	24.1%(225)	932	χ2=32.26 P=0.000
	Urban	44.6%(1537)	18.1%(624)	37.3%(1283)	3444	
Cycle	First cycle	37.9%(975)	15.5%(398)	46.6%(1199)	2572	χ2=3.62 P=0.047
	Second cycle (lower sixth and upper sixth)	43.6%(787)	20.3%(367)	36.0%(650)	1804	

Students were significantly (P<0.05) more satisfied with school alumni in urban areas with a proportion of 44.6% as compared to 24.1% in rural areas. They were also significantly (P<0.05) more satisfied in the second cycle, with a proportion of 43.6% as compared to 37.9% for the first cycle (See Table 5). Manafo (2006) highlights that with due consideration on the successful careers of many public school graduates, it is surprising that public schools generally have little interest in cultivating those who have passed through their portals as reflected in the degree of satisfaction on students' appraisal of school-alumni relationship of rural 24.1% and urban 44.6% schools.

Public Secondary Schools (PSS) in the SW Region Recognise Fund-Raising as a Factor for Image Enhancement

Table 6. Students and Teachers' Appraisal of Fund-Raising in Schools

Statements	Students	Teachers	N
My school has an office in charge of development and advancement affairs (fund-raising and other developmental projects)	34.9%(382)	12.5%(6)	1094
My school raises funds through the sales of crops from the school farm and other products produced by the school	26.0%(284)	22.9%(11)	1094
My school raises funds through voluntary donations from students, teachers, alumni and members of the community	27.5%(301)	25.0%(12)	1094
My school raises funds through the use of school facilities by local community members, such as for marriage ceremonies	16.4%(179)	6.3%(3)	1094
My school requests gifts and endowments from local businesses to donate to students with excellent performance	54.2%(593)	27.1%(13)	1094
MRS	31.8%(1739)	18.7%(45)	5470

Generally, only 31.8% of the students agreed with the indicators that measured fund-raising in schools to support projects that can enhance the image of their schools with the stakeholders, with 17.0% of the students neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 54.2% (593) of the students agreed that their school requests gifts and endowments from local businesses to donate to students with excellent

performance. Although 34.9% (382) of them agreed that their schools have an office in charge of development and advancement affairs, 26.1% (285) were neutral, followed by 27.5% (301) and 26.0% (284) who also agreed that their school raises funds through voluntary donations from students, teachers, alumni and members of the community and through the sales of crops from the school farm and other products produced by the school. Finally, just 16.4% (179) of the students agreed that their school raises funds through the use of school facilities by local community members, such as for marriage ceremonies (See Table 6).

Significantly less than the majority of students (χ2-test: χ2=123.53; df=1; P=0.000) and less than the majority of teachers (χ2-test: χ2=37.50; df=1; P=0.000) approved of the school fund-raising efforts showing that public secondary schools (PSS) in the SW Region do not recognise fund-raising as a factor for image enhancement. These results corroborate the assertion of Jimenez et al. (1995) and Dronkers and Robert (2003) that public schools do not see the need to engage in fund raising since they are dependent on tax-supported government agencies, administratively dependent and are relatively cheap in terms of fees and therefore harness larger populations of students

Table 7. Students Appraisal of Fund-Raising in Schools by Background Indicators

Indicator	Categories	Satisfied with fund-raising			$N_{responses}$	Chi-Square
		Agree	**Neutral**	**Disagree**		
Setting type	Rural	27.3%(318)	15.6%(182)	57.1%(665)	1165	χ2=2.57 P=0.109
	Urban	33.0%(1421)	17.4%(747)	49.6%(2137)	4305	
Cycle	First cycle	30.6%(983)	14.3%(460)	55.1%(1772)	3215	χ2=0.99 P=0.320
	Second cycle (lower sixth and upper sixth)	33.5%(756)	20.8%(469)	45.7%(1030)	2255	

Perception of impact of fund-raising as enhancer of the image of PSS with stakeholders was not satisfactory for both rural and urban schools and for first and second cycles (P>0.05). In all instances, less than the majority was satisfied (See Table 7).

Parents' Perspective

Table 8. Parents Appraisal of Fund-Raising in Schools

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N
The school has an office in charge of development and advancement affairs (fund-raising and other developmental projects)	38.2%(21)	12.7%(7)	49.1%(27)	55
I am interested to support projects in this school if the funding is well articulated	67.3%(37)	10.9%(6)	21.8%(12)	55
This school raises funds by encouraging parents and community members to use school facilities such as school halls for their events	32.7%(18)	14.5%(8)	52.7%(29)	55
MRS	46.1%(76)	12.7%(21)	41.2%(68)	165

χ2-test: χ2=0.15; df=1; P=0.701.

Results from Table 8 reveal an overall, 46.1% of the parents agreed with the indicators that measured fund-raising in schools to support projects that might enhance the image of the school, with 12.7% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Majority of the parents, 67.3% (37), actually agreed that they are interested to support projects in schools if the funding is well articulated, with just 38.2% (21) and 32.7% (18) agreeing that schools have offices in charge of development and advancement affairs (fund-raising and other developmental projects) and schools raise funds by encouraging parents and community members to use school facilities such as school halls for their events. Parents were just averagely satisfied (P>0.05). These results call the need for public school administrators to recognise the role of the different stakeholders especially parents who are willing to support school activities 67.3% (37). Negligence, resorts to lack of necessary funding to support school projects and activities.

Table 9. Parents Appraisal of Fund-Raising in Schools by Background Indicators

Indicators	Categories	Satisfied with funds raising			N$_{responses}$	Chi-Square
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree		
Setting type	Urban	43.7%(38)	13.8%(12)	42.5%(37)	87	χ2=0.15 p=0.701
	Rural	48.7%(38)	11.5%(9)	39.7%(31)	78	
Where are the children schooling?	Public	44.0%(62)	12.1%(17)	44.0%(62)	141	χ2=0.04 p=0.833
	Private	58.3%(14)	16.7%(4)	25.0%(6)	24	

Parents' characterisation of fund-raising in schools to support projects that might enhance the image of the school was not dependent on any of the background indicators (P>0.05); in all instances, less than the majority was satisfied, or roughly half (Table 9). This finding contradicts Pistiolis (2012) findings which reveal that schools in affluent neighbourhoods often raise more funds than schools located in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods which expounds as a direct extension of their private life into the public school system as parents in the rural setting 38 (48.7%) were more satisfied with fund raising efforts than parents in the urban setting 38 (43.7%).

Based on results, this study concludes that PSS have not recognised the importance of fund raising for their institutions in both the urban and rural settings. Significantly less than the majority of students ($\chi2$-test: $\chi2$=123.53; df=1; P=0.000) and less than the majority of parents ($\chi2$-test: $\chi2$=37.50; df=1; P=0.000) approved of the school fund raising efforts. Pistiolis (2012) reveals that there exists a positive correlation between fundraising amounts and academic achievement as funds raised are used to support many school activities. Fund raising is therefore a means through which schools could raise funds to support school projects as Parent Teacher Associations as well as school alumni associations have been known to raise funds to support build classrooms, provide pipe-borne water for the wellbeing of their children as articulated in Law N° 98/004 of 14 April 1998 and circular No 07/08/MINESEC/CAB of 28 Feb 2008. However, only 40.3% (1762) of students and 41.1% (192) of teachers agreed that PSS had a good relationship with their alumni. Also, results reveal that parents are willing to contribute to the development of local schools by contributing funds to enhance school development projects, but they demand transparency in the exercise 37 (67.3%). This implies that schools are not effectively engaging parents in their school development efforts. They should do so by creating an office in charge of development activities.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that although excellence is celebrated in PSS as revealed by students and teachers, parents are mostly side-lined in events, activities geared towards the celebration of excellence. Also, PSS unveil poor school – alumni relationship which definitely affects fund raising efforts in the schools as alumni are seen as potential key donors to support school activities and projects. Findings further lead to the conclusion that PSS in the SW region of Cameroon do not recognise fund-raising as a factor for image enhancement of their schools.

Public secondary schools need to realise that they cannot merely rely on state funds in order to achieve the goals of the school. The study recommends that school administrators should therefore study the interest and influence of various stakeholders in order to understand how they could be involved in the development of their schools. Creating a development office which strategically relates with members of the school community is relevant. This will facilitate not only the linkage between the school and community in order to enhance understanding of both the successes and challenges schools experience but will serve as strength for community engagement. Reluctance to engage the necessary stakeholders hamper on funding initiatives. School administrations should work with their development offices to mobilise, design, manage and execute strategic fund raising programmes and activities that engage their stakeholders especially school alumni and parents.

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