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EFFECT INFORMATION SERVICES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOME SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SUB-DIVISION

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between information services and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Buea Municipality, South-West Region of Cameroon. Specifically, it investigated the availability and provision of educational and career-related information and their relationship with students' academic performance. The study was anchored in Carl Rogers' Person-Centred Theory, which emphasises the importance of supportive interpersonal relationships, self-awareness and individual development. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The study involved 184 participants, comprising 180 students and four school counsellors drawn from four selected secondary schools. Students were selected through simple random sampling, while data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank-order correlation, while qualitative responses were examined thematically. Findings revealed a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between information services and students' academic performance ($\rho = 0.225$, $p = 0.002$). Students generally acknowledged receiving relevant academic guidance and career information from school counsellors. However, the qualitative findings revealed considerable institutional challenges, particularly inadequate internet facilities, limited information dissemination channels and insufficient access to diversified educational resources. The study concluded that information services constitute an important component of school guidance and counselling programmes, although their relationship with academic performance is relatively modest. It was recommended that educational authorities and school administrators strengthen information services through improved technological infrastructure, accessible educational resources, diversified communication channels and continuous professional development of school counsellors. These measures could enhance students' access to relevant educational information, facilitate informed academic decisions and support improved educational outcomes.

Keywords:

Information services; Academic performance; Guidance and counselling; Secondary school students; Educational information; Buea Municipality.

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Résumé

Cette étude a examiné la relation entre les services d'information et les performances scolaires des élèves dans certains établissements d'enseignement secondaire de la municipalité de Buéa, dans la région du Sud-Ouest du Cameroun. Plus précisément, elle visait à analyser la disponibilité et la fourniture d'informations éducatives et professionnelles ainsi que leur relation avec les performances scolaires des élèves. L'étude s'est appuyée sur la théorie de l'approche centrée sur la personne de Carl Rogers, qui met l'accent sur l'importance des relations interpersonnelles positives, de la connaissance de soi et du développement individuel. Une approche méthodologique mixte, combinant des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives, a été adoptée afin de mieux comprendre le phénomène étudié. L'échantillon comprenait 184 participants, dont 180 élèves et quatre conseillers d'orientation issus de quatre établissements secondaires sélectionnés. Les élèves ont été sélectionnés par échantillonnage aléatoire simple, tandis que les données ont été recueillies au moyen de questionnaires structurés et de guides d'entretien. Les données quantitatives ont été analysées à l'aide de statistiques descriptives et du coefficient de corrélation des rangs de Spearman, tandis que les réponses qualitatives ont fait l'objet d'une analyse thématique. Les résultats ont révélé une corrélation positive, faible mais statistiquement significative, entre les services d'information et les performances scolaires des élèves (ρ = 0,225; p = 0,002). Les élèves ont généralement reconnu bénéficier d'informations pertinentes concernant leur orientation scolaire et professionnelle. Toutefois, les résultats qualitatifs ont mis en évidence d'importantes difficultés institutionnelles, notamment l'insuffisance des infrastructures Internet, la faible diversification des canaux de diffusion de l'information et l'accès limité aux ressources éducatives. L'étude a conclu que les services d'information constituent une composante importante des programmes d'orientation et de conseil scolaires, bien que leur relation avec les performances scolaires demeure relativement faible. Elle recommande aux autorités éducatives et aux responsables des établissements scolaires de renforcer ces services par l'amélioration des infrastructures technologiques, la mise à disposition de ressources éducatives accessibles, la diversification des moyens de communication et la formation professionnelle continue des conseillers d'orientation. Ces mesures pourraient favoriser l'accès des élèves à des informations éducatives pertinentes, faciliter des choix scolaires éclairés et contribuer à l'amélioration des résultats scolaires.

Mots-clés: *Services d'information ; Performances scolaires; Orientation et conseil scolaires; Élèves du secondaire ; Information éducative ; Municipalité de Buéa.*

Introduction

Education remains one of the most important instruments for individual development, social transformation and national progress. Beyond the acquisition of knowledge and academic qualifications, education is expected to equip learners with the intellectual, psychological, social and practical competencies necessary to navigate an increasingly complex society. However, the attainment of these educational aspirations depends not exclusively on classroom instruction but also on the availability of institutional support systems that facilitate informed decision-making, academic adjustment and personal development. Among these support systems, guidance and counselling services occupy a strategic position, particularly in secondary schools where learners are confronted with significant educational, psychological and career-related decisions. Information services,

as an essential component of school guidance and counselling programmes, provide students with relevant knowledge and resources that enable them to understand educational opportunities, make appropriate academic choices, develop effective learning habits and prepare for future professional engagements.

Information services in educational institutions encompass the systematic collection, organisation, interpretation and dissemination of information relevant to students' educational, vocational and personal-social development. These services are intended to reduce uncertainty, promote informed decision-making and enhance students' capacity to respond meaningfully to educational opportunities and challenges. According to Borrow (1983), students require adequate information concerning employment opportunities, training programmes and academic qualifications to make realistic educational and occupational decisions. Similarly, Milbourn (2002) conceptualises educational information as knowledge relating to school curricula, syllabuses, educational policies, institutional regulations, learning resources and co-curricular activities. Such information becomes particularly valuable when students are expected to select subject combinations, determine educational pathways and establish realistic academic and career aspirations.

The relationship between information services and academic performance is particularly significant during adolescence, a developmental period characterised by considerable cognitive, emotional, social and psychological transformations. Secondary school students are frequently confronted with challenges involving identity formation, peer relationships, academic expectations, career uncertainty and adjustment to changing educational environments. These experiences may influence their motivation, concentration, study habits and overall academic engagement. Jensen and Nutt (2016) observe that adolescence is associated with increased vulnerability to emotional and psychological difficulties, while Viner et al. (2012) emphasise the importance of supportive families, schools and peer relationships in promoting healthy adolescent development. Within this context, effective information services may serve both preventive and developmental functions by helping students understand their educational environment, recognise available opportunities and develop the confidence necessary to pursue meaningful academic goals.

The importance of information services extends beyond providing students with knowledge about educational opportunities. Their effectiveness also depends on the extent to which the information provided is accessible, relevant, understandable and responsive to learners' individual circumstances. Students who receive timely academic guidance may be better positioned to identify suitable subject combinations, understand examination requirements, access appropriate learning materials and establish realistic educational aspirations. Similarly, access to occupational information may strengthen the relationship between students' academic experiences and their anticipated professional futures. Okeke (2003) maintains that information services equip learners with educational, vocational and personal-social knowledge necessary for informed life decisions. This suggests that information services should not be perceived merely as supplementary administrative activities but as integral components of the educational

process capable of supporting students' academic engagement and personal development.

Empirical investigations have provided evidence of the relevance of information services to educational outcomes. Oreopoulos and Dunn (2013), in a study involving secondary school students from low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto, examined how access to educational information influenced students' perceptions of higher education opportunities. Their findings indicated that exposure to relevant educational information was associated with improved expectations concerning postsecondary education, greater awareness of financial assistance opportunities and increased aspirations for further studies. Similarly, Ida (2016), in an investigation of library services and students' academic performance in Mtwara Mikindani Municipality, Tanzania, observed that students attending schools with adequately equipped libraries demonstrated better academic outcomes than those in institutions with limited library resources. The study further highlighted the importance of reading habits and access to appropriate learning materials in supporting academic achievement.

In a related investigation, Maya and Bala (2020) examined the relationship between academic library services and students' educational success in India. Their findings established a significant relationship between library utilisation and academic performance, while emphasising the need for information literacy programmes that would enable students to identify, access and effectively utilise available educational resources. Collectively, these studies suggest that the educational value of information services depends not only on the availability of information but also on students' ability to access, interpret and apply such information to their academic activities. Nevertheless, differences in educational systems, institutional resources and socioeconomic circumstances suggest that findings obtained in other geographical contexts may not adequately explain the experiences of secondary school students in Cameroon.

The theoretical foundation of the present study is anchored in Carl Rogers' Person-Centred Theory, which emphasises the individual's capacity for self-understanding, personal growth and constructive behavioural change within a supportive interpersonal environment. Rogers' approach identifies empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence as essential conditions for facilitating meaningful personal development. Applied to educational guidance and counselling, these principles suggest that students are more likely to benefit from information services when counsellors demonstrate genuine understanding, acceptance and sensitivity to their individual educational and psychological needs. Rather than treating learners as passive recipients of information, the person-centred perspective recognises their capacity to interpret educational experiences, identify personal aspirations and participate actively in decisions affecting their academic development. Consequently, the effectiveness of information services may depend not only on the quantity of information disseminated but also on the quality of the counselling relationship through which such information is communicated.

In Cameroon, particularly within the Buea Municipality of the South-West Region, secondary schools operate within diverse institutional, socioeconomic and educational circumstances. The municipality accommodates government, confessional and lay-

private secondary schools serving learners from different social and cultural backgrounds. Although guidance and counselling services are expected to support students' educational development, the extent to which information services are effectively delivered may vary across institutions. Differences in access to educational resources, functional libraries, information and communication technologies, professional counselling personnel and career-related materials may influence students' opportunities to obtain and utilise relevant academic information. These circumstances raise important questions concerning the adequacy, accessibility and effectiveness of information services in supporting students' academic performance.

Of particular concern is the possibility that students may receive general academic and career guidance without having sufficient access to diversified information resources capable of supporting their educational decisions. In an educational environment increasingly influenced by technological advancement and changing occupational demands, dependence on conventional methods of information dissemination may limit students' exposure to emerging educational and professional opportunities. Similarly, inadequate internet facilities, insufficient library resources and limited information literacy support may constrain students' ability to independently explore educational alternatives. These challenges suggest that the mere existence of guidance and counselling programmes does not necessarily guarantee the effective provision or utilisation of information services.

Despite the recognised importance of educational information in promoting students' academic development, there remains a need for context-specific empirical evidence concerning the relationship between information services and academic performance in secondary schools within Buea Municipality. Much of the literature reviewed has examined information provision, library utilisation and educational decision-making in contexts outside Cameroon. While these investigations provide valuable insights, they do not sufficiently establish how information services operate within the institutional realities of secondary schools in Buea or how students' access to such services relates to their academic performance. Furthermore, the relationship between counsellor-provided academic information, career guidance, access to information technologies and students' academic outcomes requires closer empirical examination within this setting.

Against this background, the present study examines the relationship between information services and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Buea Municipality, South-West Region of Cameroon. Specifically, the study investigates the provision of academic and career-related information, the availability of information resources and communication channels, and the extent to which information services are associated with students' academic performance. By drawing on the perspectives of students and school counsellors, the investigation seeks to provide empirical insights into the contribution of information services to educational development within the municipality. The findings are expected to inform school administrators, guidance counsellors, educational policymakers and other stakeholders on the need to strengthen accessible, responsive and learner-centred information services as part of broader efforts to improve students' educational experiences and academic outcomes.

Conceptualising Information Service in counselling

Information/library service refers to services intended to assist individual, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, raining and careers choices and to manage their careers.it includes a wide range of activities. For instance, activities within the school to help students clarify career goals and the world of works, personal or group-based assistance with decisions about initial courses of study, courses of vocational training, further education and training. According to Borrow (1983), students need information related to job opportunities, training opportunities and academic qualifications required. The counselling services deals with educational information which deals with facts and knowledge relating to curriculum, syllabus, books, policies and programme, of schools, its rules and regulations, tradition of schools and co-curricular activities (Melbourn, 2002).

Counselling services can help students to manage and understand this information. Braddock (2007) states the purpose of counselling in school is to improve academic performance, foster positive study attitude and habit, increase acquisition and application of conflict resolution and school dropout. This can only be achieving through information. Also, occupation information makes the counselling service informative motivational and evaluative and accepted as helpful for students. Collection, classification and dissemination of occupational information are therefore important to assist students in their vocational choices vocational planning and vocational placements. Furthermore, Educational information helps students to select appropriate subject combination base on their personality, interest and abilities or achievement, level of aspiration state of health and emotion Okeke (2003), information services are tailored towards equipping students with the necessary information of educational and vocational and personal social in order to be able to make wise decision about life. The information collected will assist the Counsellor to determine whether or not the objectives of the programme have been achieved (Bulus, 1990).

Counsellors also create awareness of, institution for further studies, and scholarship opportunities available for them. The information will include admission requirement, into national and foreign institution, programmes for job opportunities in company and enterprise and pressure demand in job markets (Nugent & Jones, 2009). Career decision directly influences wellbeing in terms of self-esteem, job performance, life satisfaction and income (Slaten-Baskin, 2014). Also, career decision can potentially have extensive repercussion, as the failure to plan career decisions could adversely affect vocational future educational goals and psychological health (Ball Mann & Stamm, 1994). The amount of unemployment in the country is an indicator of how poor the school and University graduates career planning and understanding were handle (Greenbank & Hepworth, 2008). Therefore, a good Career planning information is highly related to students understanding on the career itself (Srivastava, 2019, Han, 2019 & Prescod et al., 2019). So, information that helps students determining the type of work and meeting the criteria so that the selected job is aligned with their potential (Pustika, 2019).

Also, on personal and social information (Jensen &Nutt 2016), holds that adolescence is a phase in which they are exposed to emotional and mental health problems because at this

stage, they are hypersensitive to stress. (Sawyer et al.2012) holds that it is an important period in life when the opportunity for good health and foundation for future pattern of adult health are established. To support the above view (Viner et al.2012). holds that there is evidence that the health of adolescents is affected by social factors, safe and supportive families and schools, together with supportive peers are crucial in helping adolescents develop to their full potential and attain the best health in the transition to adulthood. Also, Dacey and Kenny (1997), holds the view that during developmental stage of adolescence young people face many stressful challenges that affects their academic performance. But (Frydenberg&Lewis,2002., Patton &Noller,1990), holds the view that when adolescence managed these challenges adaptively but others do not and are therefore at the risk adopting maladaptive responses to stress. According to Mellin (2009), when adolescent do receive adequate care, meanwhile this is likely to have negative effects on their school performance, juvenile delinquency, and substance use, worse it may pose harm to other people as evidenced by Sandyhook, Virgina techi and other recent school shootings.

Information service and academic performance.

A study was conducted by Orepoulos and Dunn (2013) to study the effect of the provision of the information service on the educational attainment of students from high schools in low in income neighborhood in Toronto. The study used the descriptive and correlation designed with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected using Students and interview guide to sixteen (16) administrators and teachers who are directly involved in information services.

The findings revealed that students who have that students who have been exposed to educational information report higher expectations of their own returns to post-graduate education, express a higher likelihood that they are eligible for a grant and are more likely to say that they aimed at completing a college degree three weeks after intervention and the intervention changes students' behavior. Those who were shown videos were likely to down additional information about higher education. Out of 152 Students responded only 10 (6,6%) reported that they have not had information at any moment. Accessing the service showed significance correlation with Students' behavior toward higher education choice (p+o.05). It was concluded that accessing information service has an effect in shaping students' behavior toward career choice.

Ida (2016) carried out research entitled "Influence of Library Service on Students Academic Performance in Ordinary Certificate of Secondary Education Examination in Mtwara, Mikindani Municipality, Tanzania. The study was intending to fulfil the following objectives: firstly, to identify schools with and without library services and uses, secondly to compare academic performance of students in secondary schools with libraries and without libraries and thirdly, to explore how students use library services available to improve their academic performance. The study adopted qualitative research design on generating, analyzing data obtained from 100 sample size. Data from the respondents were collected through an interview, questionnaires, documentation review and observations. The findings reveal that some of secondary schools in Mtwara, Mikindani municipalities had no libraries. Moreover, the students from secondary with libraries and

enough materials were observed to perform better in CSEE than secondary schools with no libraries and enough materials due to the fact that the availability of well-equipped libraries encourage learning habits and strengthen students study skills which result to performance of the students CSEE, from the field also it was identified that the was no culture of reading in the libraries for both students and teachers of Mtwara Mikindani municipalities and the observed libraries in Mtwara Mikindani municipality were seen to lack enough books and some were outdated books. In the light of this finding, the study recommended that secondary schools in Mtwara Mikindani municipality should be encourage to establish libraries as to improve performance in CSEE.

Maya and Bala (2020) carried out research in India entitled "The Impact of Academic Library Services and Students Success and Performance." The aim of this study is to investigate the student's satisfaction with library resources and services provided by academic libraries. Random survey was conducted to find out t5he problem and difficulties faced by the students in accessing the library resources and its impact on academic success and performance. The finding in the study showed that there is a significant and re markable relationship between the library usage and students' academic performance and success. The major finding of the study is to conduct the information literacy programme for the students to improve awareness about the resources, services and facilities available in the library so that the students can take maximum advantage provided by the library. One way to overcome this problem is to encourage the students to embrace using the library in the academic studies and explain its benefits.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Person Centered Theory of Rogers (1940-1950)

Teaching today in Cameroon Schools specifically in Buea municipality is a very challenging job. It is becoming increasingly difficult to establish a classroom environment that is free from disruptive behaviours and might affect academic performance. Therefore, some ideas from Person Centered therapy have been applied to schools and classroom management to create more inclusive environment to improve academic performance. Wilkins (2010) say there is often much more help needed to move students toward constructive action. This theory is suitable for this work because researchers believe helping should best take place by focusing on unexpected expressed feeling, clarifying what students' experiences and helping them to fully understand through counseling.

The goal is to provide students with the opportunity to develop a sense of self wherein they realised how their attitude, feelings and behavior negatively affect their studies and make an effort to find their true positive potential. This theory is understood as a process of helping students discover new and satisfying personal meaning about themselves and their studies. With this awareness, the student will drive toward high academic performance, growth, personal development and adjustment (Makinde, 1984). The proponent assumes that interaction is only possible when certain conditions should prevail in the case of counselor's demonstration in the counselor's-client orientation. According to Omulema (2000), these conditions include counselor's demonstration of

empathy, unconditioned positive regard and warmth to students. He notes that growth occurs in an acceptance, warm and empathetic, nonjudgmental environment that allow students the freedom to their thoughts and feelings and to solve their problems. Therefore, classrooms and counselling services that lack these characteristics cumulates into poor performance in academics.

Therefore, the Person-Centered approach, where the student as client is made responsible of his or her own behaviour could be part of the solution to academic performance. For the above reason, the Person-Centered approach based on the work of Roger (1902-1987) was designed to promote openness, growth and change in understanding the counseling processes. It is an approach which is practical and helpful in education, because it can solve some problems outside the curriculum faced by students. Example provides a way of understanding and solving issues of relationships, emotional development and ethical behaviour that seems to be at the root of most of the problems in schools and society at large. For this reason, Roger is commended for emphasizing the Person therapy students will question how client can supply accurate self-appraisals (Cooper et al., 2007). Moreover, Person Centered approach identify naturally occurring combination of intrinsic motivation and controlled forms of extrinsic motivation and their effect in academic performance. So, Person Centered studies have focused on academic performance (on grade and score) and other learning outcomes (e.g. attitude about cheating, distraction in class). Therefore, Person Centered approach wherein the student as the clients is made responsible for his or her own behaviour could be the focus of educational yet assertive discipline program (Gatongi, 2007).

However, it is essential to incorporate some accelerating ingredients to inform conditions which facilitate growth. According to this theory, there are three core conditions for success, traditionally seen as between "helper and client". These core conditions are empathy, Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR) and Congruent which are the key components of positive change and development of an individual to achievement. Empathy is a construct grounded in humanist psychology advocating human needs and interest with the intent of providing some all-round basis for personal growth and development, to go on throughout the life in a self-directed manner (Burger, 2006). Whereas empathetic classroom climate refers to a set of attitudinal qualities of teachers which facilitate learning to promote academic achievement of secondary school students. Rogers (1983) holds the view that these attitudinal qualities help to understand the student's phenomenological perspective to each learning condition and to develop sensitive awareness of the students through openness, attentiveness and positive relationship in counseling services.

Cooper (2010) also view empathy as the most powerful aspect for the development of learning relationships achievement of students. Some teachers communicate empathy, non-verbally through facial expression. So, empathy understanding is a crucial concept which is used to improve academic performances. Hence, it is important in this work. According to Bridget Cooper, there are key types of empathy in teaching and learning relationships and group empathy. Empathy manifest a system of code manners and empathetic structures which helps the teacher to maintain the whole class and try to pay attention to everyone. Also, teacher applies fundamental empathy which teach, create

primary relationship with the student's behaviours such as giving attention expressing enthusiasm or accepting the voice or words used to describe one's thoughts.

With the above tactic, the teacher gains deeper awareness of student's inner world that boost academic performance. All the above is connected with construct like the teacher's self-knowledge, the willingness to meet the child's need and the sense of happiness. Researchers have posited that the extent to which students feel they belong to the community is likely to relate to their academic motivation and subsequent achievement Ryan and Patrick (2001) Furthermore, unconditional positive regard is use, which is, teacher and counsellor accepting the students worth their experiences and various features of character without expectation towards individual (Rogers, 1957).

Also, creating unconditional acceptance condition requires not only basic trust in others but also constructive way to deal with stressful situations. Therefore, in educational context, when the sense of relatedness is present, the student feel that they are respected and liked by the teacher that boost their moral to learn. Niemie and Ragan (2009) supports the view that individuals are more likely to perceive ideas and values of those they are attached to as their own. Birch and Ladd (1997) found that teenagers put more efforts in their school work and achieve better results when the quality of the relationship with the teacher is high. Reeve (2006) alleged that educators give their learners time to deal with tasks in their learner's time, engage them in explaining various problems which can give them the chance to pay attention to seemingly uninteresting problems. So, accepting the students and not rejecting them, despite their flaws or misbehaviours will make them feel secure and respected in any circumstance.

The last factor which is based upon the client centered or person-centered theory to improve students' academic performances is congruence. This is congruity between the therapist's internal awareness of his own emotions and external expressions of them. According to Seeman (1999), congruence teacher is a person who shows the students who they really are whereas the learner perceives their educator as present and therefore they feel attached to him. This kind of attitude fosters their relationship and make the students believe their tutor (Seeman, 1999). Genuineness is marked by congruence between what the therapist feels and says, and by the therapist willingness to relate on a person-to-person basis rather than through a professionally distant role (Mearns, 2007). Both counselling services and teachers uses the above core conditions to improve academic performance.

This theory is relevant in that tools are essentially methodical ways to ensure that Education is meeting the needs of each learner. That is, unique style of learning, communication, building relationships and making decisions. It is also used for management practices such as staff performance review. Also, it supports students with learning disability, sense of positive worth, and coping skills as well as health and social care in schools' individualized educational programmes. Again, it is the answer to disruptive or maladjusted behavior in our classrooms. For example, antisocial personality and deviant behaviour. Moreover, this theory can solve some problems outside the Curriculum faced by students e.g. provides a way of understanding and solving issues of relationships, emotional development and ethical behavior that seems to be at the root of

most of the problems in school and society at large. In effect, this theory reassures majority of persons who do not have an optimal childhood that there is hope for change and development towards psychological maturity to improve their academic performance. In another way, counseling is useful in helping students to overcome specific problems such as depression, anxiety, personality disorder, eating disorder and alcohol addictions. Again, this theory helps students to reconnect with their inner self. For example, self-esteem, self-reliance, and self-awareness. All of these if not taken into consideration in the teaching learning process will influence academic performance of learners.

Research Design

The design used for this study was a mixed method design. This was because the approach was both quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative research is one in which it tries to bring out an understanding of the problem in terms of quantity. This means that it quantified the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. Qualitative research is used to get an in-depth understanding of the opinions, and reason of respondent. The research design is suitable for this work because the study involved seeking opinion of the students and counselors in their natural setting and correlating the finding with student academic performance in schools. In addition, data were collected from a sample using questionnaire and interview guide for the purpose of identifying and describing the population represented by the sample at that particular time.

Area of the Study

The Buea Municipality in which the study was carried out is located in South West Region of Cameroon, Buea Municipality and the South West Regional Head quarter of Cameroon. Created on the 29th of June 1977 by presidential decree No: 77/203, Buea Municipality has a surface area of 87Sq km, 67 villages, four distinct identified urban space as per outlined criteria (Buea station, Soppo, Molyko/Mile 17 and Muea) it is of a highly complex community caught between a blend of urban, semi urban, rural and traditional settings. Buea municipality is bounded to the North by tropical forest on the slope of mount Cameroon (4100m above sea level).

The mountain range extends to the beautiful sandy beaches of the Atlantic Ocean. the town also shares boundary with other major town like the city of Limbe to the South West, Tiko Municipality to the South East, Muyuka Municipality to the East and Idenau District to the West with an equatorial Climate temperature are moderate with a slight seasonal variation (rainy and dry season) Buea has moderate economy with agricultural, administrative business, tourism the financial sector taking the central stage of the town above all Buea is the center for education due to the presence University of Buea and other private Universities like the Catholic University HIMAT, Pan African Institute.

Buea has an estimated population of about 200000 inhabitants (2005) BUCREP figures and annual growth rate of 5 us per united Nation projections for urban population growth rate for Africa constituting essentially of the Bakweri (the indigenes) in the villages and highly cosmopolitan population within the urban space putting the indigenes at the

minority. The Bakweri language spoken by the natives is equally written and documented. English and French are two official language used for general interaction while pidgin is the Lingua Franca. Buea is one of the fastest growing towns in Cameroon today with a mix cosmopolitan setting and a constellation of about 67 villages. These villages are inhabited by the Bakweri who according to social scientists, have lived around mount Cameroon for at least 4,000 years. Its urban rims now include Molyko, Buea station, Muea, GRA, Mile 16 Clerks and Federal Quarters, Great Soppo, Likoko membea, Bokwaongo and Bunduma.

Source at the Council say over 7,000 people migrate into the municipality each year for the following reasons academic and research activities, professional and administrative services business and commercial activities, jobs and livelihood search into the urban space, tourism sports and Leisure activities, agriculture due to conducive climate and fertile soil. The present Anglophone crisis in Cameroon rendered many areas in the South West Region unsafe. The researcher chose Buea Municipality because of its safe compared to other areas and getting facts about the research is easy. Also, Buea is the center for Education, seat of wisdom blessed with all category of school ranging from kinder garten, primary, and tertiary where the variable of this study can be measure,

Population of the Study

The target population of the study comprised of secondary school students and counselors of both gender in four schools, Bilingual Grammar School, Molyko-Buea, Government High School Bokwaongo, Bishop Rogan College and Summerset Bilingual College with ages ranging from 15 years to 20 years.

Table 1
Population of the Study

Title	**Schools Enrolment**		
Government schools	**Boys**	**Girls**	**Total**
Bilingual Grammar School	2,274	3,187	5461
Government Bilingual High School Muea	48	125	173
Government High School Buea-Bokwaongo	754	1295	2049
Government High School Buea Town	632	937	1569
Government High School Great Soppo	168	303	471
Government High School Buea Royal	93	124	217
Government High School Bonjongo	37	42	79
Government High School Bomaka	2	3	5
Government High School Bolifamba	2	2	4
Government Secondary School Bwiyuku	91	119	210
Government Secondary School Dibanda	15	35	50
Sub-total	**4116**	**6152**	**10268**
Confessional Schools			
Baptist High School Buea	196	294	490
Bishop Jules Peters Buea	84	134	218
Bishop Rogan College Buea	280	0	280
Our Lady of Mount Camel	17	26	43

Presbyterian Comprehensive High Buea	250	369	619
ST. Joseph College Buea	195	0	195
Baptist Comprehensive College Buea	198	125	323
Sub-total	**1220**	**948**	**2168**
Lay Private Schools			
Nabest Comprehensive College Buea	208	316	524
Holy Child Comprehensive College Buea	68	70	138
St. Theresia In't Secondary School Buea	170	154	324
Summerset Bilingual High School Buea	189	322	511
Mantho Bilingual College Buea	84	100	184
Sub-total	**890**	**1208**	**2098**
Grand Total	**6226**	**8303**	**14,534**

Source: Divisional Delegation of Secondary Education for Fako-Division (2021)

Target Population

The target population of this study was made up of all students from the four selected schools.

Table 2

Target Population of the Study

S/N	Name of Schools	Target Population	Accessible Population		Sample population	
			Counsellor	Students	Counsellor	Students
1	Government High School Bokwango-Buea	2,049	2	2,049	1	50
2	Bishop Rogan College Buea	280	1	280	1	40
3	Summerset Bilingual College Buea	511	1	49	1	40
4	Bilingual Grammar School Buea	2,274	5	2,274	1	50
Total		**4,652**	**9**	**4,652**	**4**	**180**

Source: Divisional Delegation of Secondary Education for Fako-Division (2021)

Table 3

Showing the Descriptive Analysis of Demographic Information

Variable	Sub Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Name of School	**G.H.S Buea Bokwoango**	50	27.8
	Bishop Rogan College	40	22.2
	Summerset Bilingual College	40	22.2
	B.G.S Molyko Buea	50	27.8
Gender	**Male**	81	45.0
	Female	99	55.0
Age range	**12 – 15**	43	23.9
	16 – 16	121	67.2

20 – 22	15	8.3			
23+	1	0.6			

According to the Demographic information table above the following information were presented as, Name of School, 50(27.8%) of students were selected from GHS Bokwaongo, 40(22.4%) of students were selected from Bishop Rogan, 40(22.4%) of the students were also selected from Summerset Bilingual College and Lastly 50(27.8%) of students were selected from Bilingual Grammar School Molyko. BGS Molyko and GHS Bokwaongo had the highest number of students sample sizes.

Secondly, the gender of the respondents was as follows, the Male respondents represented 81(45%) and the Female represented as 99(55%) who responded to the questionnaire and the female were the highest who respondents to the questionnaire because they are more prone to societal ills than the male respondents.

Lastly according to the demographic information, the Age Range were presented as follows, 12-15 years were 43(23%) respondents, the age range 16-19 years were 121(55%) respondents and had the highest population among the age ranges, 20-22 years were 15(8.3%) respondents and 23+ had just 1(0.5%) respondent who responded to the questionnaire.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Simple random sampling was one in which each member in the sample has equal chance of being selected. A ballot method of selection was carried out to determined students who will participate. Following the rules of ballot, the student who picked yes was eligible. This was done to give the students equal chances to participate in the study. The demographic characteristics of respondents included students 0f form three to upper sixth. The researcher worked with both male and female students so as to avoid gender bias.

Instrument for Data collection

Two instruments were used for the data collections in the study. These include a structured questionnaire for the students and an interview guide for counselors. The scale used for the study was developed by the researcher with the aid of literature. The scale matched with the variables under study and answered the research questions. The questionnaire was closed ended and required the respondent to select an option (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) that best suit their school condition and it was made up of five sections that is, A-E. A total of 180 questionnaires were administered. Section A was made up of demographic information and section B, C, D and E were measuring the main research variables. The questionnaire was developed on a four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The interview guide was designed to gather information from counsellors from the chosen schools in other to get their verbal opinions on how they involve in their student's success. The guide was structured following the five variables used for the research which were counselling service, orientation services, information service, placement service,

and follow-up service. It was made up of two sections, the first section consists of demographic and the second section on was made up of questions.

Table 4
Information Services and Academic Performance

Item	$\bar{X}$	S	Dec
1. Guidance counselors provide us with sufficient information for academic guidance.	3.33	0.68	A
2. Information on different professional career opportunities is always available to us.	2.78	0.93	A
3. Guidance counselors use diverse media in making career information available to us.	2.30	0.92	D
4. There are internet services available to improve on availability of career information in schools.	2.42	1.02	D
5. Changes in ICTs environment and resources affect my information seeking behavior.	2.47	0.94	D
6. Our library professionals understand information seeking behaviors of users, they give us direction on how to search information effectively.	2.36	1.03	D
MRS	**2.61**	**0.92**	**A**

The data analysed in the table above shows that guidance counselors provide students with sufficient information for academic guidance; Information on different professional career opportunities is always available to them; though a majority of the counselors do not use diverse media in making career information available to students. The internet services are not available to improve on availability of career information in schools; Changes in ICTs, environment and resources have little effect to their information seeking behavior; and most of their library professionals do not understand information seeking behaviors of users, do not give them direction on how to search information effectively. Conclusively, information services have a great impact on academic performance of secondary school students in Buea municipality in the South West Region of Cameroon ($\overline{X}$ = 2.61±0.92).

Ho_2: There is no significance relationship between information services and students' academic performance of secondary school in Buea Municipality.

Table 5
Relationship between Information Services and Students' Academic Performance

			Information services	Students' academic performance
Spearman's rho	Information services	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.225**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
		N	180	180
	Students' academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	.225**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
		N	180	180

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The data analysed in the table above shows that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. It was therefore concluded that there is a linear significance relationship between information services and academic performance of secondary school students in Buea municipality in the South West Region of Cameroon (r = 0.225**). This implies that as information services improve, academic services may also improve in the Region.

Interview for Counselors on Information Service and Academic performance
The table below presents interview for counselors on information service and academic performance in Buea municipality in the South West Region of Cameroon.

Table 6
Interview for Counsellors on Information Service

Questions	Counsellor	Respond	Explanation
Do you give them sufficient information for career guidance?	1st	Yes	We do through charts, we draw their attention to different fields. We illustrate subject and career to them.
	2nd	Yes	I first of all ask them what kind of career choice they wish to have, I examined passion.
	3rd	Yes	We teach them about different field of study in class. We display charts on some field of work.
	4th	Yes	Beginning from form three, in subjects combination telling them of different jobs opportunity.
Do you have internet service available to give information that can be disseminated to students?	1st	No	
	2nd	No	
	3rd	No	
	4th	Yes	Yes on personal; effort not in school
Do you have diverse media in making	1st	No	
	2nd	No	

career information available to students?	3rd	No	
	4th	Yes	Posters and charts

The interview from counselors revealed that they give them sufficient information for career guidance; they do not have internet service available to give information that can be disseminated to students; and do not have diverse media in making career information available to students.

Discussion

The result obtained from this study affirmed that Counselor provide adequate and relevant information to assist students improve in their academic performance. They also provide information about higher institution that is information that motivate students to work harder in other to achieved their goals. In addition, students are provided with career information and what requires of them to attain professional opportunities. Based on literature in chapter two Milbourn (2002). affirmed that counseling information service deal with Educational information which deals with facts and knowledge relating to Curriculum, syllabus, books, policies and programmed of schools, its rules and regulation, tradition of schools and co-curricular activities. Therefore, Braddock (2007) supports the view that that Counselling services can help students to manage and understand this information. This is in line with Okeke (2003) who opined that information service are tailored towards equipping students with the necessary information of educational and Vocational and personal –social in order to be able to make wise decision about life.

Furthermore, empirical study conducted by Ida (2016) affirmed that students from secondary school with libraries and enough materials were observed to perform better than student who do not have enough information. Also the information which is given encourages learning habits and strengthen student study skills which leads to improvement of students' academic performance,
This study is supported by Person centered theory of Roger (1940-1950). According to the proponent the goal is to provide students with the opportunity to develop a sense of self wherein they realized how their attitude, feeling and behavior negatively affects their studies and make an effort to find their true positive potential. This information is disseminated as a process of helping students discover new and satisfying personal meaning about themselves and their studies. Makinde (1984) affirmed that with awareness, the student will drive toward high academic performance, growth, personal development and adjustment.

Also, according to researcher, adjustment Difficulties like sleeping, disturbance, concentration problems and depression are most evident in secondary school. Therefore, to help this student to resolve these adjustment issues information service is relevance. Though majority of the respondents accepted to the fact that information services improves academic performance, a minority of the respondents where against the opinion that, few counselors denied the fact that internet services are available to give information that can be disseminated to students and also some of the counselors do not have diverse media in helping students with career information which are available to students. These are some of the threat to counseling services in some secondary schools

that can be taken into consideration if not are bound to discourage students' academic performance. This is in line with the findings of Glewwwe and Kremer (2006) the highly competitive nature of educational systems, with limited instructional materials in many developing countries such as Cameroon discourage students' from continuing with their education. Also the finding of Jensen (2010) individuals or students living in poor rural areas is often to have imperfect or inadequate information because locating reliable information tends to be relatively costly or impossible

Also, empirical review by Orepoulos that students with access to information service showed significant correlation with students' behavior toward higher education choice. It was also noted that accessing information services has an effect in shaping students behavior toward career choice. Maya and Bala (2020) empirical reveal affirmed that there is a significance relationship between the library information resources and the usage and students' academic performance and success.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between information services and students' academic performance in selected secondary schools in Buea Municipality, South-West Region of Cameroon. The findings underscore the importance of information services as an integral component of school guidance and counselling programmes, particularly in facilitating informed educational decisions, strengthening academic aspirations and supporting students' personal and vocational development. Fundamentally, the study demonstrates that students' academic experiences are shaped not only by classroom instruction and individual intellectual abilities but also by their access to relevant educational information and institutional support systems. This observation reinforces the position of Okeke (2003) that information services constitute an important mechanism through which learners acquire the knowledge necessary to make meaningful educational, vocational and personal-social decisions.

The quantitative findings established a statistically significant but weak positive relationship between information services and students' academic performance (Spearman's $\rho = 0.225$, $p = 0.002$). This finding suggests that students who reported greater access to information services also tended to demonstrate better academic performance. Although the strength of the relationship indicates that information services represent only one of several factors associated with students' academic outcomes, the statistical significance highlights their relevance within the broader educational support system. The findings are consistent with Oreopoulos and Dunn (2013), who demonstrated that access to relevant educational information can influence students' educational aspirations and decisions concerning further studies. Similarly, Ida (2016) and Maya and Bala (2020) reported positive relationships between access to library information resources and students' academic achievement. Taken together, these findings suggest that educational information becomes particularly valuable when students can translate acquired knowledge into informed academic choices, improved learning practices and realistic educational aspirations.

Beyond the statistical relationship, the qualitative findings revealed important institutional realities concerning the delivery of information services in the selected secondary schools. School counsellors acknowledged providing students with academic guidance, career information and assistance in selecting appropriate subject combinations. However, the findings equally exposed considerable limitations in the availability of internet facilities, diversified information dissemination channels and other resources necessary for effective information delivery. These challenges suggest that although information services are recognised within the school counselling system, their practical implementation remains constrained by inadequate technological infrastructure and limited institutional resources. Consequently, the existence of guidance and counselling services should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of their accessibility, comprehensiveness or effectiveness. As Maya and Bala (2020) observed, the educational benefits of information resources depend considerably on their availability, accessibility and effective utilisation by learners.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings provide contextual support for the relevance of Rogers' Person-Centred Theory to educational guidance and counselling. Rogers (1957) emphasised empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence as fundamental conditions for facilitating personal growth and constructive behavioural change. Within the school environment, these principles suggest that information services are likely to be more meaningful when delivered through supportive relationships that recognise students' individual differences, aspirations and developmental needs. Information provision should therefore extend beyond the routine dissemination of educational and occupational facts to include personalised guidance that encourages self-awareness, independent decision-making and academic responsibility. This interpretation aligns with Makinde's (1984) position that effective guidance and counselling facilitate personal adjustment, self-understanding and the development of individuals' potential.

An important implication emerging from the study is the need to reconsider the institutional position of information services within secondary school education. Rather than treating information provision as an occasional counselling activity, educational stakeholders should recognise it as a continuous developmental service requiring adequate professional competence, institutional commitment and material support. School administrators and educational authorities should prioritise the provision of functional libraries, accessible educational information resources, appropriate information and communication technologies, and diversified career guidance materials. Equally important is the continuous professional development of school counsellors to strengthen their capacity to identify students' information needs, communicate educational opportunities effectively and provide guidance that responds to changing academic and occupational realities.

The study further highlights the importance of adopting a more inclusive and learner-centred approach to information dissemination. Students differ considerably in their educational aspirations, socioeconomic circumstances, learning experiences and access to information outside the school environment. Consequently, information services should be structured to accommodate these differences rather than assume that all

learners possess equal opportunities to obtain and interpret educational information. Particular attention should be directed towards students experiencing academic difficulties, uncertainty regarding subject combinations, limited access to learning resources or inadequate knowledge of future educational opportunities. Strengthening information services within these contexts could contribute to more equitable educational experiences and support students in making informed decisions about their academic and professional futures.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted within the methodological boundaries of the investigation. The study was conducted in four selected secondary schools within Buea Municipality, involving 180 students and four school counsellors. Furthermore, the correlational nature of the quantitative analysis does not establish that information services directly cause improvements in academic performance. Other factors, including students' socioeconomic backgrounds, learning motivation, parental involvement, instructional quality and school resources, may also contribute to academic outcomes. Future investigations should therefore consider larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal approaches and additional explanatory variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between information services and academic achievement.

The study concludes that information services constitute a relevant, though not independently sufficient, component of students' academic development in secondary schools. Their significance lies in their potential to connect students with educational opportunities, strengthen academic decision-making and support meaningful engagement with the learning process. However, the realisation of these benefits requires more than the formal existence of guidance and counselling programmes; it demands accessible information resources, professionally competent counsellors, supportive institutional environments and sustained investment in educational information systems. The central contribution of this study is therefore its demonstration that information services deserve greater attention within educational planning and school improvement initiatives in Buea Municipality and comparable educational contexts in Cameroon. Strengthening these services represents a practical opportunity to support students' academic aspirations, educational adjustment and preparation for responsible participation in society.

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