

# Home Location as a Predictor of Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disabilities in the Buea Municipality, South West Region of Cameroon

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## ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine home location as a predictor of academic performance of children with learning disabilities in the Buea Municipality, South West Region of Cameroon. The study design was the purposive survey. The study population was made up of all children with learning disabilities in primary schools in the Buea Municipality in the South West Region of Cameroon. The purposive sampling technique was also used to select the sample for the study. Data was obtained through the use of a written exercise for the learners with learning disabilities. Data was analyzed using Epi data and result presented in frequencies, and proportions. Multiple Responses Analysis was also used for the grounding of concepts that emerged from the open-ended questions. Chi-Square test of equality of proportions was used to compare proportions for significant difference. Relationship between conceptual components was accessed using Spearman Rho Correlation test. Findings from the study indicated that there was a significant relationship between home location and academic performance of children with learning disabilities. Conclusively, there was a significant relationship between home location and academic performance of children with learning disabilities. This means that for persons with learning disabilities to academically perform well in school, the home factor towards education must be taken into consideration such as home location.

**KEYWORDS:** Home, Location, Predictor, Academic Performance, Children, Learning Disabilities, Buea Municipality, South West Region, Cameroon

## Background of the study

The history of learning disabilities can be traced as far back as April 6, 1963, when Professor Sam Kirk and others coined the term learning disabilities at a meeting of parents and professionals in Chicago. The effort began in the elementary schools and was later extended to high schools. It continues to expand today, as more special programs for post-secondary students and adults with disabilities are developed.

The study of learning disabilities, however, started long before 1963 (Hammill, 1990; Weiederholt, 1974). During the 1920s and 1930, Samuel Orton, a specialist in neurology, developed theories and remedial reading techniques for children with severe reading problems, whom he called 'dyslexic' and believed to be brain-damaged. In the 1930s, Helen Davidson studied letter reversals-writing some letters [such as b d q and g] back words, a problem consistently observed with many pupils with learning disabilities (Davidson, 1934, 1935). In the 1930s and 40s, Sam Kirk, who worked at the Wayne Country School helped to develop a set of word drills such as A B C D and other teaching procedures he referred to through-out his career. In 1961 he and his colleagues published the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA) which sought to identify individual's strengths, weaknesses, learning styles, and learning achievement. This test was used for many years to identify

pupils with learning disabilities. Also in the 1960s, Marianne Frostig developed materials designed to improve pupil's visual perception, which is the ability to understand information that is seen. Her notion was that if visual perceptual skills were enhanced, reading abilities would also show improvement (Frostig, 1978).

The 1970s saw the field of learning disabilities embroiled in heated debate, and at the heart of the controversy was what approach for treatment of learning disabilities was most effective. In what was called the 'process/product debate', one group promoted instruction directed at improving pupils perceptual abilities to improve their academic skills (for example explicitly teaching pupils to read) as the best approach. The dispute was resolved when (Hammill & Larsen's (1974) research analysis showed that perceptual approaches were seldom effective in teaching academic skills but direct instruction techniques do not make a difference (Hammill & Larsen, 1974)

Byoung-suk (2012) stated that children need safe, healthy and stimulating environment in which to grow and learn. In recent decades, there has been a proliferation of studies on the empirical aspect of the home influence on the development of children, and trends have emerged which analyze the effects of household structural and dynamic

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indicators on pupils with learning disabilities (Xia, 2010). Result shows that home socio-economic level (Dear, McCartney & Taylor, 2009; Gil, 2011; Liu and Lu, 2008; Part, 2008), its typology characteristic (Burnett & Farkas, 2003; Gennetian, 2005), a suitable home environment (Barkauskiene, 2009; Bodovski and Youn, 2010; Campbell and Berne, 2007; Ghazarian & Buehler, 2010; Khan, Haynes, Armstrong, and Ronher, 2010), parents positive outlook on education, their active involvement in it (Fiouri & Dumas, 2009; Sirvani, 2007; Mo & Singh, 2008) and television viewing. The effect of television viewing in the home environment and its relation to academics has been studied with controversial result (William, Haertel, & Haertel, 1982), expectations regarding their children's academic performance are factors affecting the academic development of the vast majority of children. This influence is even more relevant for pupils with complex results (Williams, Haertel, and Haertel, 1982). The effect on academic performance ranges from largely significant to insignificant and further research in this area is warranted to support past findings.

Family environment and their immediate surroundings such as the family background of education, the financial status and the activities done at home for example television programs makes up the total environment that bring together physical, social and organizational components. Ecological psychologist Roger Barker (1968) described such complex environment as "behavior settings"

Abraham Maslow has been considered the father of Humanistic Psychology. Maslow's theory (1908-1970) based on the notion that experience is the primary phenomenon in the study of human learning and behavior. He placed emphasis on choice, creativity values, self-realization, all distinctively human qualities. For him, development of human potential, dignity and worth are ultimate concern. He is famous for proposing that human motivation is based on hierarchy of needs the lowest level of needs are physiological and survival needs such as hunger and thirst. Further level includes belonging and love, self-esteem and self-actualization. From Maslow's perspective, the drive to learn is intrinsic. The purpose of learning is to bring about self-actualization, and the goals of educators should include this process. Learning contributes to psychological health. From Maslow's notion, for pupils to effectively achieve academically, especially those with learning disabilities, the basic needs beginning from the home must be met. This could be love from parents, which makes the children feel belonging, provision of their basic school needs and above all, the concern of the teacher towards the pupils with learning disabilities. From Maslow perspective, the home environment should be a place where the essential needs of children with learning disabilities is provided without discrimination so that their self-esteem rises and as such they are able to attain high academic performance. This is done through parental involvement in children's education.

Lev Vygotsky's theory of Social Interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) states; *"every function in the child's cultural development appears twice"*. That is, on the social level, and later, on the individuals level, First between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological). Again Vygotsky's is of the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)"; a level of development attained when children engage in social behavior. Full

development of the ZPD depends upon full social interaction. The range of skill that can be developed with adult guidance or peer collaboration exceeds what can be attained alone. Pupils with learning disabilities, according to Vygotsky, can only be successful academically if there is collaboration between parents, teachers and peers. That is, parents must follow up their children after school and give them remedial classes.

Albert Bandura (1977), agrees with the behaviorists learning theory of social conditioning and operant conditioning; however, he adds two important ideas. Mediating processes occur between stimuli and responses; Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. This is illustrated during the famous Bobo doll experiment. (Bandura, 1961). Individuals that are observed are called models, such as parents, within the family, characters on children's, Television, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models provide examples of behavior to observe and imitate, for example masculine and feminine, pro and anti-social (inability to cope with the peers). Bandura, in his idea, talked of four principles (which serves as a motivating factor for learners with learning disabilities and which are both intrinsic and physical) attention, retention reproduction and motivation.

Learning disability is a concept that encompasses heterogeneous group disorders which manifest in significant difficulties in understanding, speaking, reading, writing reasoning and mathematical ability, the presumably of biological origin and related to the functioning of the central nervous system (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Lerner & Kline, 2006). From the above perspective it is therefore maintained that learning disabilities are disorders of biological-genetic origin which are intrinsic to the individuals. However there has been a shift in focus towards environmental variables, including the home which in it claimed can enhance or minimize the negative effects of these difficulties and therefore must be thoroughly examined and taken in to consideration (Phaua, Rheula, and Schmitz, 2011; Snowling, 2007; Shur-Fen, 2007).

In simple terms, a learning disability results from a difference in the way a person's brain is 'wired'. A learning disability cannot be cured or fixed; it is a lifelong issue with the right support and intervention. However, children with learning disabilities can succeed in school and go on to successful, often distinguished, careers later in life. Parents can help their children with learning disabilities achieve such success by encouraging their strength, knowing their weaknesses, understanding the educational system, working with professionals and learning about strategies of dealing with specific difficulties.

Some common learning disabilities are; Dyslexia, which is a language-based disability in which a person has trouble understanding written words, it may be referred to as reading disability or reading disorder. Dyscalculia is another disability which is a mathematical disability in which a person has difficulty solving arithmetical problems and grasping mathematical concepts. Auditory and visual processing are also disorders. This is a sensory disability in which a person has difficulty understanding language despite normal hearing and vision. Dysgraphia is a writing disability in which a person finds it hard to form letters or

write within a defined space. Non-verbal learning disabilities; are neurological disorder which originates in the right hemisphere of the brain, actually cause problems with visual-spatial, intuitive, organizational, evaluative and holistic processing. Dyspraxia; this disability affects motor skills development. Children who have dyspraxia typically exhibit difficulties with both fine and gross motor skills. They also find it difficult to properly execute large movements, such as jumping and running, resulting in clumsiness. Children with dyspraxia may also have difficulties with language, vision and perception (Shey, 2016)

### Theory of Social Learning by Albert Bandura (1977)

Basic principles of Social Cognitive Theory were set in the earlier works of Julian Rotter, Neal Miller and John Dollard. Bandura's social learning starts from the assumption that we can learn by observing others. The following key processes derived during this type of learning, such as observation, imitation and modeling. Such involved attention, memory, and motivation. People learn through observing others behavior attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors. This theory therefore outgrows behaviorism and from it connection to cognitivism as it claims people did not just respond to stimuli, but interpret them and include cognitive aspects like motivation and attention. People are shaped by the outside world and at the same time they shape the outside world (reciprocal determinism). Instead of just being machines modeled and conditioned by the environment. Bandura's theory is therefore often considered a bridge between behaviorism and cognitivist learning perspectives. Albert Bandura was the major motivator behind the social learning theory. One of the main things that he was concerned with was, how cognitive factors influence development, but he confined his approach to the behavioral tradition. Bandura called his theory a social cognitive theory. Like other behaviorists, Bandura believed that cognitive development alone cannot explain changes in behavior in childhood and he believed that learning processes are primarily responsible for children's development. However, he felt quite strongly that the cognitive abilities of the child affect learning processes. This, he feels, is especially true of the more complex types of learning.

He adds two important ideas, mediating processes which occur between stimuli and responses. Behavior is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Children observe the people around them behaving in various ways. This is illustrated during the famous Bobo doll experiment (Bandura, 1961). Individuals that are observed are called models, such as parents, within the family, characters on children's Television, friends within their peer group and teachers at school.

Bandura, in his idea talked of four essential elements which help in learning. Attention; which is the extent to which the child is exposed or notice a behavior, for a behavior to be imitated it has to grab attention. Retention; how well the behavior was remembered. The behavior may be noticed, but is not always remembered. Reproduction; Which was the ability to perform the behavior that the model had just demonstrated. We see much behavior on a daily basis that we would like to imitate but that is not always possible. Motivation; is the will to perform the behavior. The reward and punishment that follow behavior will be considered by the observer. If the perceived reward out-weighs the perceived cost then the behavior will be likely to be imitated

by the observer. Bandura's theory was criticized by biological theorist, who argued it ignores biological states and autonomic nervous system responses. It is a fact that some behaviors and responses are not learned but partly inherited. The Bobo doll experiment was also criticized for being too artificial and if an adult was acting violently to a child other children would not repeat the behavior, or that children were manipulated into repeating the aggressive behavior, or that children were only playing rather than aggressing the doll. Bandura's ideas on violent behavior acquisition through repeating media were also subjected to criticisms. Some authors have found that watching television actually reduces the amount of aggressive behavior since children can relate themselves with characters involved in a violent act and release their violent thoughts (The catharsis effects)

Lev Semyonovich Vygotsky (Russian) (1896-1934), proponent of proximal development and scaffolding theory of development

### The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky conceives of the zone of proximal development as central to instructional enhancement and classroom change in Mathematics. According to Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or collaboration of more capable peers (Murray, & Arroyo, 2002). Vygotsky (1978) opined that the ZPD is the current or actual level of development of the learner and the next level attainable through the use of mediating semiotic and environmental tools and capable adult or peer facilitation. In other words, it is what a child can do alone at a particular point in time. The second, "potential development" is defined as that which a child can achieve if given the benefit of support during the task.

The second concept of focus is the Scaffolding. scaffolding is directly related to the zone of proximal development in that it is the support mechanism that helps a learner successfully performs a task within his or her ZPD. Typically, this process is completed by a more competent individual supporting the learning of a less competent individual. So, for example, there could be a teacher assisting a pupil, or a higher-level peer assisting a younger peer.

To understand this concept better, let us think about how scaffolding was used in the construction of a home. The scaffolding is an external structure that provides support for the workers until the house itself is strong enough to support them. As the home gain stability the scaffolding became less necessary and was gradually removed. Scaffolding is applied similarly in the classroom. First, the teacher should provide clues about how to proceed through the problem. As the child becomes capable of solving the problem without support, the teacher gradually removes these clues. This process is referred to as fading.

Vygotsky had several learning supporters of his theory of social-cultural learning. There have also been some who view the theory as incomplete, noting it did not spend enough time focusing on individual in knowledge acquisition aside from collective social interaction. Some have also found that the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is vague in its explanation of how learning actually occurs. One of the main criticisms of Vygotsky was that the theory ignores the role of



the individual and in contrast emphasizes the social or collective learning. In Vygotsky's theory the mind is not seen as autonomous from the socio-cultural group. Vygotsky argued that knowing is relative to the situation in which knowers find themselves. The theory does not acknowledge that there is a possibility for anyone to rise above social norms based on their ability to generate personal understandings (Lui&Matthews, 2005). The theory, for example, does not acknowledge gifted pupils or prodigies, who may not experience social interaction with a 'more knowledgeable others but still progress to an expert level.

Secondly, theory was assumed to be applicable to all cultures and abilities. Vygotsky's theory viewed social groups as being a whole and equal, with the potential to extract the same meaning from engagement. However, collaboration and participation differ for every individual and thus inequalities exist for each person. Differences in skill set are always present, offering constraints in learning. A pupil with learning disabilities, for example, may not extract the same meaning from group interaction as a pupil without (Lui&Matthews, 2005). Another issue with Vygotsky's theory is that the zone of proximal development is very vague and does not contain an accurate picture of a child's learning style, current ability level, or motivational factors. It also does not explain the process of development or how exactly development occurs. The model itself offers little details. Perhaps the greatest disappointment of Vygotsky's theory, however, is that it appears to be somewhat incomplete. This was likely in part due to his death at a young age. It cannot, never the less be ignored that Vygotsky made invaluable contributions to the field of educational psychology.

Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) began with the assumptions that people are free to shape their own lives and that their most important motivation is the desire to achieve self-actualization. A self-actualization person, as defined by Maslow, finds fulfillment in doing the best of which he or she is capable, not in competition with others but in an effort to become 'the best me I can be' (1971a, 1971b).

Maslow derived his theory of personality development largely from studies from healthy creative, self-actualized people who made full use of their talents and capabilities for example Abraham Lincoln, Ludwig van Beethoven, Eleanor Roosevelt. The humanist psychologist is sometimes called the 'third force' in psychology. [Behaviorism and psychoanalysis are the other two forces.] The pioneering humanistic psychologists are Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. They are the proponent of the hierarchy of needs (1970). At the bottom is the Physiological needs, need to satisfy the basic-biological needs for food, water, oxygen, sleep and elimination of body waste, Safety needs; Need to for safety and security; Belonging and love needs; need to love and be loved, need to affiliate with others and be accepted; Esteem needs; Need to achieve, gain competence, gain respect and recognition from others, lastly Self-actualization' need to realize ones fullest potential. To account for the range of human motivation (humans needs). He placed physiological need at the bottom of the hierarchy, stating that these needs must be adequately satisfied before higher ones can be considered.

If our physiological needs (water, food, sleep, sex, and shelter) are adequately met, then the motives at the next higher level [the safety and security needs will come in to play]. When these needs are satisfied, we climb another level

to satisfy our needs to belong and to love and be loved. Still higher are the needs for self-esteem and the esteem of others. At the top of Maslow's hierarchy is the need for self-actualization, the need to actualize or realize our full potential unlike lower level needs, this level is never fully satisfied; as one grows psychologically there are always new opportunities to continue to grow. Self-actualized people tend to have needs such as Truth, Justice, Wisdom, and Meaning. Self-actualized persons have frequent occurrences of peak experiences, which are energized moments of profound happiness and harmony. According to Maslow, only a small percentage of the population reaches the level of self-actualization.

Maslow's excellence appears to be giving us a route. Cons of Maslow's Hierarchy as pointed out by Ajit Beri, Management consultant, India The spectrum of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is dwarfed by the pace of expansion of human activities, vivid occupation choices. The emerging needs of humans are too complex to be gauged only by the original theory. Maslow's excellence appears to be giving Psychologist route plan through raw fields where there were no roads but now we need to give rest to his sacred soul. We need to accurately place the groups of people as per their choices of professions and desired life objectives to apply the hierarchy of their needs. We may not justify our actions if we think of uniformly apply Maslow's study in the present context.

### Conceptual Review

A home is a place where pupils live with their parents or guardians and it is the place where they are groomed. It is a place where the pupils begin to earn the norms and values of the society in which they find themselves. The family is a social unit in any society and experience in children (Collins, 2007),

Parents' social economic status, which was conceptualized as parents' education, parents' income and parents' occupation, is linked to academic performance. The figure shows that academic performance is dependent on parents' social economic status. That is students from high social economic backgrounds will perform better than their counter parts from low social economic backgrounds as discussed. This is supported by Dills (2006), and Owens (1999). It is also in line with Hansen and Mastekaasa (2006), who argued that according to the cultural capital theory one could expect students from families who are closest to the academic culture to have greatest success.

Lack of some nutrients in children such as proteins fats and oils carbohydrates often affects the children brain and made them not to reason well intellectually and thus develop learning disabilities such as reading problems, writing understanding and response.

### Concept of Learning Disabilities

Learning disability is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulty in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span. Problems of self-regulatory behavior, social perception and social interaction may exist with learning disabilities, but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability. Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other impairment conditions (for

example sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the results of these conditions or influences (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, NJCLD, 1988, 1993).

Similarly, Hammill, (1990) has put the concept of learning disability (Learning disabilities that can affect reading are more prevalent than people think. In an article by the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities, this fact was addressed along with why it is important that every parent and educator become aware of the symptoms, effects on reading and necessary intervention for certain learning disabilities. Becoming aware of the warning signs of learning disabilities and getting children the necessary help early on can be key to a child's future. Learning disabilities affect one in seven people according to the National Institutes of Health. Parents, therefore, need to be familiar with the early indicators of a learning disability in order to get the right help as soon as possible.

The earlier a learning disability is detected, the better the chances a child will have to succeed in school and in life. Parents are encouraged to understand the warning signs of a learning disability as early as pre-school. The first years in school are especially crucial for a young child. The most common learning disability is difficulty with language and reading. Many children and adults with learning disabilities remain undiagnosed and go through life with this "hidden handicap." The resulting problems can lead to poor self-esteem, failure to thrive some of the information in school, and difficulty in the workplace with the learning disability. All children learn in highly individual ways. Children with learning disabilities simply process information differently, but they are generally of normal or above-average intelligence. Having a learning disability can affect a child's ability to read, write, speak, do math, and build social relationships. This book can be an important resource to understand these learning disabilities, recognize the symptoms, learn how they affect reading, and what intervention (s) can be helpful.

A recent National Institute of Health study showed that 67 percent of young students identified as being at risk for reading difficulties were able to achieve average or above average reading ability when they received help early. Dyscalculia and dyslexia, Aphasia, Dysgraphia Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) are the types of learning disabilities that can affect school-aged children. Also known as mathematical disability, dyscalculia refers to a persistent difficulty in learning or understanding concepts related to numbers, counting, and arithmetic. Dyslexia refers to difficulty with respect to reading, and other related language base processing skills. The severity can differ with each individual but can affect reading fluency, decoding some of the information, reading comprehension, recall, writing, spelling, and sometimes speech and can exist along with other related disorders. Dyslexia is sometimes referred to as a Language Based Learning Disabilities. In both cases, the deficits are 'unexpected', meaning the child seems to have the capacity, the motivation and the adequate instruction to learn these concepts, but still struggles to do so.

Interventions for learning disabilities work best when initiated early in life, usually around the preschool years. Identifying at-risk children this early poses a major

challenge, however. The signs of trouble are not always clear. For example, children who appear to have good language development in their first years of life may show signs of dyslexia only after they begin to learn to read, and some children who initially struggle with reading eventually rally and never develop dyslexia.

Both dyscalculia and dyslexia are serious public health concern. This is because Dyscalculia is a disability which affects the child's ability to understand mathematics which is very vital in the society and Dyslexia which affects the child's ability to read. Without help, children with learning disabilities could develop persistent problems with learning. Although most children with learning disabilities grow up to be productive citizens, left untreated these conditions have been associated with a higher risk for mental illness, social and emotional problems, behavior problems at school, and time in prison.

Children with dyslexia generally have trouble with phonological processing that is, using Phonological information, especially the sound structure of oral language, in processing written and oral language. Recently, brain imaging studies have demonstrated a biological basis to this difficulty. During reading exercises, good readers show activity in three areas on the left side of the brain. In dyslexic readers, there is much less activity in two of these three areas. There is strong evidence that both environmental and genetic factors affect the likelihood that a child will develop dyslexia. Environmental influences can include the complexity of the orthography of the language being learned as well as reduced stimulation experienced by children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The influence of genetics on the risk for dyslexia has been made clear in studies demonstrating that children with parents, siblings, or other close relatives who have dyslexia are at dramatically increased risk of developing the condition themselves.

### Statement of the Problem

For most children, interior of the home and its immediate surrounding are the first environment they are exposed to throughout their early years. This is because young children, spend a majority of their time in the home surrounded by all environmental factors. It has been noted from literature review that the home environment of children with learning disabilities has not been taken into cognizance for the past years especially in developing countries including Cameroon as such children with learning disabilities are often seen left behind as their peers continue in education. This can be due to the lack of cooperation between parents and teachers. Also, due to the poor financial status of some parents and their poor educational background, children with learning disabilities often see themselves as children who cannot achieve as their peers in education. The type of television programs that parents encourage their children to watch at home in fact influence the academic performance of children with learning disabilities. Good teaching programs like words building enhance the children's learning (children with learning disabilities) and can help them to achieve in education just like their peers without learning disabilities. While on the other hand, programs that do not involve cognitive abilities in the area of academic can reduce the children's chances to achieving academically. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to investigate the impact of Home Environment on the Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disabilities. Thus, clarifying the

relationship between the Home Environment and Academic Performance

### Research Objective

- To find out whether home location can have an influence on the academic performance of children with learning disabilities.

### Research Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>**; There is a significant relationship between Home Location and Academic Performance for children with Learning Disabilities.

### METHODOLOGY

The research design was survey. A survey collected data from a few people or items considered to be a representative of the entire group. It is an ex-post factor correlation survey, because the study involved seeking opinion of the pupils in their natural setting and correlating the finding with pupils' performances in school.

The Buea Municipality in which the study was carried out is located in the South West Region of Cameroon. Buea is the Sub Divisional Headquarter of Buea Municipality and the South West Regional Headquarter of Cameroon. Created on the 29th of June 1977 by Presidential Decree No. 77/203, Buea municipality has a surface area of 870 Sq. km, 67 villages, four distinct identified urban spaces as per outlined criteria (Buea Station, Soppo, Molyko/Mile 17 and Muea). It is 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 towns 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, temperatures 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 and above all Buea is the center for education due to the

presence of Buea University and other private Universities like the Catholic University, HIMAT, Pan African Institute.

Buea has an estimated population of about 200. 000 inhabitants (2005 BUCREP figures and annual growth rate of 5% as per United Nation projections for urban population growth rate for Africa) constituting essentially of the Bakweri's (the indigenes) in the villages and a highly cosmopolitan population within the urban space putting the indigenes at a minority. The Bakweri language spoken by the natives is equally written and documented. English and French are two official languages 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 Bakweris who, according to social scientists, have lived around Mount Cameroon for at least 4, 000 years. Its urban rims now includes: Molyko, Buea Station, Muea, GRA, Mile 16, Clerks and Federal Quarters, Great Soppo, Likoko-Membea, Bokwaongo, and Bonduma.

Sources at the council say over 7, 000 people migrate into the Municipality each year for the following reasons: academic and research activities, professional & administrative services, business and commercial activities, jobs and livelihood search into the urban space, tourism, sports and leisure activities, agriculture due to the conducive climate and fertile soil.

The population was classified into three; the general population which is the population of all the pupils in primary schools in the Buea municipality, the target population which consisted of all the pupils in some three selected primary schools (Government Practicing School (GPS) Molyko, Redeemer International Primary School and Catholic School Molyko) in the Buea municipality and the accessible population consisted of pupils with learning disabilities in classes four and five from the three selected primary schools in the target population. A summary of the accessible population is shown on the table below;

**Table 1: Accessible population and Sample Population selected.**

Name of School	Class	Number of Pupils	Number of Pupils with LDs
GPS Molyko	4	24	13
	5	25	10
Redeemer International Primary School	4	24	1
	5	22	2
Catholic School Molyko	4	32	15
	5	31	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>158</b>	<b>50</b>

**Source:** Total number of pupils with and without Learning Disabilities in the targeted schools and the sample from the school head office.

From the table above our accessible population was 158 pupils and our sample was 50 pupils. GPS Molyko class four, accessible population 24, sample 13; class five accessible population 25, sample 10.

Redeemer International Primary School Molyko class four, accessible population 24, sample 1; class five accessible population 22, sample 2.

Catholic School Molyko class four, accessible population 32, sample 15; class five accessible population 31, sample 9.

The Purposive Sampling Technique was used to select the schools and classes that constituted target and accessible population respectively. Fraenkel and Norman (2000), define purposive sampling as a technique in which the researcher assumes that he/she can use his/her knowledge of the population to judge whether or not a particular sample will be representative of the study. This is done based on a previous knowledge of a population and the specific purpose of the research. In this type of technique therefore, personal judgment is used to select a sample. This method was chosen because the researcher could only



work with children with learning disabilities and therefore identified Government Practicing Primary School Molyko, Redeemer International Primary School and Catholic School Molyko. Classes four and five were also selected purposively firstly because it is at these classes that words building are completely mastered. Secondly, remediation programs implemented at this level will be effective if these pupils are identified.

The pupils used were gotten by checking their birth certificates in schools in order to get the pupils who were at the age 7-12 years. This was because at this ages the children who could not reason like their peers. Using documented literature on learning disabilities as well as the experience gotten from practicum and with the assistance of their class teachers the researcher also checked their note books which comprises of their writing books, spelling, mathematics and understanding and response books, and also their first and second term results through the reading exercises spellings mathematical test. This was done after the researcher had observed the pupils for some weeks. Thus a purposive sampling technique was used as only those selected by the class teachers and the researcher were involved. Thus those who had difficulties in these areas and were below average during the first and second term examination were said to be pupils having learning disabilities.

### Sample description of school

**Table 2; Distribution of sampled school**

Schools	Frequency	Percentage of pupils per school
GPS Molyko	6	12.0
Redeemers International Primary School	17	34.0
Catholic School Molyko	27	54.0
Total	50	100.0

Three schools were sampled for the study among which Redeemers International 12.0% (6) a lay private school, Catholic School Molyko 34.0% (17) a confessional school and GPS Molyko 54.0% (27) a government school. Percentage represents the percentages of the pupils selected from the three schools that the researcher used.

Two instruments were used for data collection in this study. These included a structured questionnaire for pupils and an interview guide for parents of children with learning disabilities.

Open-ended questionnaire and interview items were analyzed. Further consistency, data range and validation checks were also performed in SPSS version 21.0 (IBM Inc., 2012), to identify invalid codes.

Data were made essentially of categorical variables and they were analyzed using frequency and proportions and Multiple Response Analysis to aggregate responses within conceptual components. Reliability test was performed to assess the internal consistency of responses using Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis. Chi-Square test was used to compare proportions for significant difference.

Composite variables were generated and the effect of parental attention, parental encouragement, parental communication and home location on the emotional development of pupils was measured using Pearson's correlation test because all the variables violated the normality assumption at the 0.05 level (Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for normality:  $P < 0.05$ ). In fact, these tests of normality verify the null hypothesis that the real distribution of the data does not depart significantly from the theoretical assumed normal distribution. The null hypothesis is expected to be accepted if the normality assumption is not violated therefore giving room for a parametric test to be used, but it was not the case for this study.

### FINDINGS

The data collected in this study was subjected to both Descriptive and Inferential Statistics following the objective of the study with, the findings being presented according to the objective of the study.

**Research question: To what extend does home location affect the Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disabilities?**

**Table3: Home location as perceived by children with learning impairment.**

No	Items	Agree	Disagree	N
1	I trek for long distances to get to school	48.0% (24)	52.0% (26)	50
2	My home is located near the market	28.0% (14)	72.0% (36)	50
3	There is lot of noise around my home	34.0% (17)	66.0% (33)	50
4	My neighborhoods is busy with drinking parlors, sale points and other businesses	48.0% (24)	52.0% (26)	50
5	My home is located near the road	52.0% (26)	48.0% (24)	50
6	Our house is located in an urban area	60.0% (30)	40.0% (20)	50
	<b>MRS</b>	<b>47.7% (143)</b>	<b>52.3% (157)</b>	<b>300</b>

In aggregate 47.7% (143) of pupils with learning disabilities agreed that home location had an influence on their education. In critical study 48.0% agreed that they trekked for long distances to school. Again 28.0% (14) accepted that their homes were located near the market. 34.0% (17) further accepted that there was a lot of noise around their homes. 48.0% (25) agreed that their neighborhoods where busy with drinking parlors, sales points and other businesses. 52.0% (26) of pupils with learning

disabilities agreed that their homes were located near the road. Furthermore, 60.0% (30) agreed that their houses were located in urban areas.

**Table 4: Home location as perceived by children with learning impairment distributed by background indicators**

Indicators	Categories	Agree	Disagree	N	Chi-square
Sq	Government	56.7% (85)	43.3% (65)	150	$\chi^2=2.16$ P=0.339
	Lay private	33.3% (6)	66.7% (12)	18	
	Confessional	33.3% (6)	66.7% (12)	18	
Gender	Male	44.4% (68)	55.6% (80)	144	$\chi^2=0.00$ P=0.982
	Female	45.5% (71)	54.6% (85)	156	
Age	7-9	54.8% (23)	45.2% (19)	42	$\chi^2=0.05$ P=0.819
	10-12	43.4% (112)	56.6% (146)	258	
Academic achievement	Poor	44.0% (124)	56.0% (158)	282	$\chi^2=7.51$ P=0.023
	Average	100.0% (6)	.0% (0)	6	
	Good	41.7% (5)	58.3% (7)	12	
Person with whom living	Both parents	42.7% (64)	57.3% (86)	150	$\chi^2=19.72$ P=0.000
	Father	45.8% (11)	54.2% (13)	24	
	Mother	73.2% (22)	26.7% (8)	30	
	Relative	36.7% (33)	63.3% (57)	90	
	Non-relative	83.3% (5)	16.3% (1)	6	
Marital regime	Monogamy	41.4% (82)	58.6% (116)	198	$\chi^2=0.01$ P=0.918
	Polygamy	58.3% (21)	41.7% (15)	36	
Religion	Islam	100.0% (6)	.0% (0)	6	$\chi^2=8.93$ P=0.011
	Traditional religion	47.2% (17)	52.8% (19)	36	
	Christianity	43.4% (112)	56.6% (146)	258	
Father's occupation	Farming/hunting/ Fishing/Animal husbandry	47.0% (79)	53.0% (89)	168	$\chi^2=4.46$ P=0.485
	Trade	27.8% (5)	72.2% (13)	18	
	Business	54.2% (13)	45.8% (11)	24	
	Skilled worker	46.3% (25)	53.7% (29)	54	
	Semi/unskilled worker	36.7% (11)	63.3% (19)	30	
	Student/applicant	33.3% (2)	66.7% (4)	6	
Mother's occupation	Farming/hunting/ Fishing/Animal husbandry	47.2% (68)	52.8% (76)	144	$\chi^2=4.55$ P=0.474
	Trade	50.0% (6)	50.0% (6)	12	
	Business	47.2% (17)	52.8% (19)	36	
	Skilled worker	50.0% (24)	50.0% (24)	48	
	Housewife	36.1% (13)	63.9% (23)	36	
	Semi/unskilled worker	29.2% (7)	70.8% (17)	24	
Development index	Very low	54.8% (46)	45.2% (38)	84	$\chi^2=1.37$ P=0.711
	Low	44.4% (32)	55.6% (40)	72	
	High	44.4% (40)	55.6% (50)	90	
	Very high	31.5% (17)	68.5% (37)	54	
Father's level of school attainment	Primary	45.2% (38)	54.8% (46)	84	$\chi^2=0.38$ P=0.944
	Secondary	34.5% (29)	65.5% (55)	84	
	Higher	47.2% (51)	52.8% (57)	108	
	Never been to school	53.3% (16)	46.7% (14)	24	
Mother's level of school attainment	Primary	70.8% (17)	19.2% (7)	78	$\chi^2=3.66$ P=0.301
	Secondary	46.7% (56)	53.3% (64)	120	
	Higher	29.2% (21)	70.8% (51)	72	
	Never been to school	53.3% (16)	46.7% (14)	30	

More of children that were satisfied with the location of their home performed either average (100%) or good (41.7%). Cumulatively, 61.1% of those who were satisfied with the location of their home performed average or good as against 44.0% for those who performed poorly and this difference was significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) and this is consistent with the correlation test below. Children who stayed with non-relative were the most satisfied with their home location with proportion of 83.3% ( $P < 0.05$ ) and those whose religion was Islam were equally the most satisfied with their home location with a proportion of 100% ( $P < 0.05$ ).



**Hypothesis: There is no Significant Relationship between Home Location and Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disabilities****Table 5: Perceived Effect of Home Location on Academic Performance**

			Location of house	Academic performance
Spearman's rho	Location of house	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.345
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.039
		N	50	50
	Academic performance	Correlation Coefficient	.345	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.039	.
		N	50	50

Home location had a significant Effect on the Academic Performance ( $r=-0.345$ ;  $P=0.039$ ) therefore implying that the better the home location was perceived, the better the academic performance.

Parents perceived that when school is far it entails expenditure as the child goes to school by bus. Another parent emphasized this very issue and added that this also makes the child to get to school tired (far and entails expenditure as the child go to school by bus, and disturb child education as he gets to school tired). Another parent believed that when the school is close the child has the tendency of coming back home (Appendix). As such, the null hypotheses was rejected and the alternative hypotheses was accepted.

It can be said that those who pupils whose homes were located near the school performed well in school more than those who were far because they got to school late and could not study well in class due to tiredness from travelling. Parent further responded that their children's were far and they in turn spend much on transport. A good number of parent agreed to the fact that home located near the school had a lot of disadvantages in that the children constantly runs back home to eat.

Home location has a high correlation and significant influence on pupil's academic performance especially as there was reduction in transportation and increase concentration in class as respondents said they go to school on time and spend less on transport. This finding is supported by OgBenudia and Aiasa (2013), who maintained that physical and psychological condition of environment affect the children academically. This study discovers that when pupils homes are located in an environment where there is noisy, market, and noisy sound of machine from industry, tea polio's these affect negatively students or pupils performance in school, because the noisy environment disturbs them from concentrating while reading and studying at home and even listening to educative radio programmes. This is why Diaz (2004),

emphasized on the importance, provision and influence of family educational climate that is conducive for learning, which is defined by the amount and the style of help children receive from the family, that is determine by elements of the family context, like dynamic of communication and effective relationships, attitudes towards values and expectations.

From the above discussions, it is clear that home environment is a significant determinant of the academic performance of learners or pupils with learning disabilities. Therefore, the teachers of these pupils no matter their difficulties in teaching the pupils should try by all means

possible to create a supportive link between the parents of pupils who will constantly support their children at home and thus will increase the children level of understanding in class. Again parents should be involved in school seminars so that they can boost the educational attainment of their children. When the learners also understand the importance of education, they will tend to develop a positive attitude towards the learning despite the situation of the home.

This is supported by the observational learning theory Albert Bandura, LevSemynovic Vygotsky. 91896-19340), theory of Proximal development and scaffolding, Maslow's Hierarchy of needs which holds that teaching is based on the belief that learning occurs as learners have the basic materials for studying both materially and psychologically thus they will be actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction as opposed to passively receiving information. In order for learning to occur therefore, learners should purposefully interact with new experiences. Learners are the makers of meaning and knowledge (Duffy and Jonassen, 1992). Constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking, and creates motivated and independent learners.

In addition, according to the social-cognitive theory, learners' believe in modelling and ability to copy what they see peers doing and adults this in turn influence their academic performance.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the study investigated home location as a Predictor of Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disabilities. It was identified and established that the above variable affect the Academic Performance of Children with Learning Disabilities. For this reason, home location facts should be highly considered as far as academic performance is concerned because there is no way a child can perform well in school without a good home location.

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