



**ASSESSING THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
AS A DETERMINANT OF STUDENTS' LEARNING
WITHIN ARMED CONFLICT CONTEXT: THE CASE OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF BAMENDA, CAMEROON**

Genevarius Njiⁱ

Dr.

Department Chair,
Department of Science of Education,
Higher Technical Teacher Training College,
University of Bamenda,
Bamenda, Cameroon

Abstract:

This study examines the effects of the school environment on students' learning in the context of armed conflict in the North West Region of Cameroon. Due to the Anglophone crisis, students' learning abilities have been hampered by environmental insecurity. When students fail to learn appropriately, institutional inefficiency becomes redundant. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, and the questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument. Using the purposive and simple random sampling techniques, a sample size of 354 students was selected from three schools of the University of Bamenda. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Spearman's rho is used to test the hypothesis of the study. The findings indicated that the physical environment positively influences students' learning in the University of Bamenda within the armed conflict context by 54.8%. Similarly, the social environment positively influences students' learning at the University of Bamenda during the armed conflict crisis by 51.2%. Finally, the emotional environment positively influences students' learning at the University of Bamenda during armed conflict by 55.4%. Based on these results, we conclude that school environments within conflict areas are strong determinants of the quality of learning in the University of Bamenda. From the findings, we recommend that teachers, administrators, and students be trained to build resilience in the face of challenges. At the same time, stakeholders have been called upon to ensure environmental security for all actors on campus.

Keywords: university environment, students' learning, physical environment, social environment and emotional environment

ⁱCorrespondence: email ngenevarius@gmail.com

1. Introduction

The Anglophone conflict started in October 2016 with protests and strikes related to sectoral demands, which escalated into a crisis over the socio-economic and political marginalization of Cameroon's Anglophone minority. Although the government has made some concessions, it must rebuild mutual trust with Anglophone actors in order to avoid instability, with which a committee was formed to carry out a national dialogue that failed to stop the crisis (International Crisis Group, 2017). The crisis has been on for about 9 years now, with frequent gunfights from the Cameroon military and the separatist forces now known as the "Abazonians". The crisis is also characterized by an obligatory lockdown (ghost town) on Mondays and a total boycott of national activities like the National Youth Day, amongst others. The crisis greatly affects education as many schools have been shut down in the two English-speaking Regions. The University of Bamenda is situated in Bambili, in the heart of violent clashes between armed groups. At times, students are targeted and kidnapped for ransom by armed groups. It must be noted that the school environment is loaded with fear as teachers and students run the risk of being victimized. This makes pedagogic activities inefficient and prevents students from acquiring the required skills.

Furthermore, Ajeole and Okebukola (2000) stress on a number of factors which can cause students' poor academic performance in school. The factors include: poor school climate, teachers' attitude and peer pressure. Poor performance of students in the university may be a reflection of the type of learning environment not being conducive to learning, inadequate motivation from teachers, classroom size and high negative peer influence, such as absenteeism. This opinion was not complimentary as he did not include armed conflict as a determinant which could determine the quality of the learning environment. Farombi (1998) observed that the school environment may have a negative influence on students' academic performance, especially if such an environment lacks good school infrastructure, good school climate and poor teacher quality.

Within the context of this study, the school environment is more than a classroom, and Al-Issa (2021) notes that in order for teaching to be effective, the classroom has to be a safe place for sharing experiences and finding healing during times of risk, conflict, and controversy.

The learning environment here includes: the physical environments (classroom, dining hall, examination hall, football field, etc.), psychological environments and emotional environments. Zaria in Aliande (2008) points out that the school environment or learning environment is a place where teachers impart knowledge of the various subjects to students, thereby bringing them up morally and guiding them as regards career choice. The imparting of knowledge is out of fashion because it places the teacher at the centre of the teaching learning process. Here, there are no effective interactions in the teaching environment between the teacher and the learning. The most interactive environment that optimises learning is one with the teachers as a guide and the learner placed at the centre of the teaching and learning process. Awule, cited in Aliade (2008),

also stated that the environment should have good infrastructural development, adequately trained lecturers, good leadership and adequate instructional materials, among others. Based on the author's characteristics above, students at the University will have good academic performance. Several studies have been carried out on the physical environment of the school plant, but few on the emotional and social environments, which are fundamental to determining students' learning.

Akande (1995) says learning can occur through one's interaction with one's environment. This means that the environment is a determining factor as far as quality learning is concerned. Farombi opined that school facilities are a potent factor in quantitative education. The importance of teaching and learning in the provision of adequate instructional facilities for education cannot be overemphasised. The dictum that teaching is inseparable from learning, but learning is not separable from teaching, is that teachers do the teaching to make the students learn, but students can learn without the teacher. According to Farrant (1991), Farombi (1998), Enjoh (2018), Owoeye, and Yara (2011), the learning environment refers to the facilities available to support student learning outcomes. It includes: books, audiovisual, software and hardware for educational technology, size of the classroom, sitting position and arrangement, availability of tables, chairs, chalkboards, and shelves on which instruments for practical are arranged and not forgetting the role of parents.

School environments play a vital role in determining how students perform or respond to circumstances and situations around them. This implies that no society and no organisation, together with its elements, are void of environmental influences. The learning environment determines how a student behaves and interacts; that is to say, the environments in which we find ourselves turn to construct or modify our behavior so as to meet the demands of life either negatively or positively. This is why the desire for formal education has multiplied the problem of providing an effective, adequate or favourable learning environment for teaching and learning. In Cameroon, particularly in Tubah Sub Division, there is an increase in the number of students enrolling in the University despite the prevalence of violent and deadly clashes but there is little regard for improving the learning environment so as to improve students' performances.

2. Problem Statement

The northwest region has been embroiled in a violent armed conflict for almost a decade, and this has created a significant impact on education as it loads that school environment with fear. Many students cannot have full access to school, either due to gun exchanges between armed groups. schools in these conflict zones face severe challenges such as teacher/ student displacements, destruction of school infrastructures, psychological trauma, kidnapping, rape and killing of both teachers and students. This prevents the teaching learning transaction from taking place smoothly. Despite the government's efforts to promote university education in conflict-affected areas, there remains a limited understanding of how the school environment influences students' learning outcomes in

this context. Within the context of this work, the school environment has been seen in terms of physical environment, psychosocial environment and teacher-student relationships, ascertaining a link to the learning process in an armed conflict zone.

2.1 Main Research Question

- To what extent does the school environment influence students' learning in an armed conflict context?

2.2 Specific Research Questions

- How does the physical environment affect students' learning in an armed conflict context?
- To what extent does the social environment affect students' learning in an armed conflict context?
- How does the emotional environment affect students' learning in an armed conflict context?

2.3 Main Research Objective

- To examine how the school environment influences students' learning in an armed conflict context?

2.4 Specific Research Objectives

- To investigate how the physical environment affects students' learning in an armed conflict context.
- To study the effects of the social environment on students' learning in an armed conflict context.
- To assess the impact of the emotional environment on students' learning in an armed conflict context.

2.5 Research Hypotheses

The following research hypothesis guided this study.

2.5.1 Main Research Hypotheses

- **Ha₁:** There is a significant relationship between the school environment and students' learning in an armed conflict context.
- **Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between the school environment and students' learning in an armed conflict context

2.5.2 Specific Hypotheses

- **Ha1:** There is a significant relationship between the physical environment and the students' learning in an armed conflict context.
- **Ha2:** There is a significant relationship between the social environment and students' learning in an armed conflict context.

- **Ha3:** There is a significant relationship between emotional environment and students in an armed conflict context.

2.6 Significance of the Study

2.6.1 Theoretical Significance

- This study will provide valuable insight into the complex interplay between school environment and students' learning in armed conflict zones.
- The research will add to the body of knowledge on education in conflict zones, thus emphasizing challenges and opportunities in armed conflicts in the North West Region.
- The study will provide policymakers with empirical evidence to inform decisions on education in armed conflict areas in Cameroon.

2.6.2 Practical Significance

- By studying the psycho social impacts of conflicts on students, educators and other stakeholders, we will help students and teachers to build resilience in an environment plagued with mishaps and equally help in the elaboration and implementation of security measures to provide more safety to students in this region.
- The findings of this study would equally help elaborate salient strategies to help support teachers in conflict zones.
- This research can help policymakers to allocate salient resources to prioritise interventions to respond to the pressing needs of school actors in conflict-stricken zones in Cameroon.

2.6.3 Social Significance

- By focusing on students in armed conflict areas, the research will amplify the concerns of vulnerable populations.
- The study would also highlight the importance of education in conflict zones emphasizing its role in stability, peace and sustainable development.

3. Review of Literature

3.1 Empirical Literature Review

Assefa, Tilwani, Moges and Shah (2022) mentioned that the destruction of school infrastructures generates substantial impediments to the supply of schooling. Consequently, students' educational enrolment decreased, and students' dropout rate, out-of-school students' rate, and related educational wastage increased. Therefore, it can be concluded that sound school administration and active participation by parents and the local community are urgently needed to enhance the continuity of schooling and the educational process.

AlMunifi and Aleryani (2021) pointed out that during armed conflicts, educational institutions continue, though irregularly, to practice their roles in spite of the destruction of many educational facilities, the severe shortage of learning resources of all types, and the insufficiency of academics. Classes run under fire, and with this, the quality of education is jeopardised. The number of lectures decreased, which resulted in incomplete curricula coverage. The destruction of electricity and telecommunications networks reduced access to educational resources to a minimum, thereby hampering learning efforts.

Al-Issa (2021) noted that armed conflicts are destructive in many dimensions for humans, the environment and all living and non-living organisms. Not only does it displace populations, but it also creates health and hunger crises, which, in turn, lead to the destruction of human capital in both the short and long runs. However, all of these factors, individually or combined, lead to devastating, nefarious effects in the field of education. There are various ways in which war may affect education. These include the destruction of schools and the reduction of physical access to them. By reducing the role of school inputs, war negatively affects both the quantity and quality of education as it hampers quality assurance and control measures. Armed conflicts and violence can deplete the teaching force, due to teachers being intimidated, injured, abducted, killed, or forced to flee the conflict zones or even the entire country. The short and long-term adverse effects of these can increase teacher shortages, disrupt education systems and employment cycles, and impact the recovery, reconstruction and development efforts.

Nadiya, Kateryna, Liubov, and Kateryna (2024) found out that armed conflicts pose significant challenges to higher education systems in post-conflict regions, including the destruction of infrastructure, displacement of students and faculty, disruption of academic programs, and limitations on academic freedom. The findings of their study underscored the importance of addressing the impact of armed conflicts on higher education institutions as part of broader post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Initiatives aimed at rebuilding educational infrastructure, supporting displaced students and scholars, promoting access and inclusion, and fostering peace and reconciliation are essential for the development of academic institutions in post-conflict regions.

Several researchers have explored the lasting, nefarious effects of armed conflict on higher education systems, revealing persistent barriers to academic development and successes even after the cessation of violence. Kot and Lytvychenko (2022) suggest that the torture and trauma experienced by learners and school institutions during armed conflicts can hamper students' ability to engage in the learning process effectively. In the same vein, Habib (2023) identified trust deficits and weaknesses in the school system as potential obstacles to educational reforms and development. All obstacles, whether individually or combined, can work against effective learning in educational settings. By assessing successful examples and best practices, strategies for rebuilding effective and sustainable educational infrastructures, reintegrating displaced students, and fostering a culture of peace and reconciliation have been elaborated. It is in this light that Milton & Barakat (2016) highlight the role of international partnerships and funding initiatives in

providing a strong response and supporting the recovery of higher education systems in conflict-affected regions. Based on this, it becomes clear that the challenges facing higher institutions in post-conflict regions are daunting, but not insurmountable.

Through the analysis of source data (voices) and taking the “multivocal review” as a method, Cervantes-Duarte, and Fernández-Cano (2016) combined the voices in to nine categories, namely: Refusal and impediments to a return to education; Educational infrastructure damaged or destroyed; Cuts in or withdrawal of spending on education; Loss of the educational and protective functions of the family; Loss of the academic community; Non-qualified teaching staff; Drastic loss of skills; Abandoning school (population movements, destruction of networks and social environment); Behavioural problems: traumas, pedagogical roles and self-victimization. These categories have highlighted the serious consequences arising from conflicts, infringing as they do the most basic human rights and, in particular, the right to a sound education at all times.

3.2 Learning Environment

The learning environment can be defined as the physical and social context in which teaching and learning take place. It contains the physical environment, teacher-student interactions, and culture of the classroom (Niyazova & Khuziakhmetov, 2021; Smolyaninova *et al.*, 2021). Learning environment can be categorized as academic environment, physical, and psychological environments; and well-designed learning environments help students to learn effectively, according to Ashton (2001). A learning environment is the entire context, be it physical, virtual, social, and cultural, where learning happens, encompassing physical spaces (classrooms, online platforms), interactions (teacher-student, peer), routines, and ethos, all designed or naturally occurring to facilitate learning, engagement, and well-being, from formal schooling to informal settings. According to Jean Bernard (2012), the learning environment is a place to learn: lessons from research on learning environment, learning environment refers to the complete physical, social and pedagogical context in which learning is intended to occur. The term most often refers to school classrooms but may include any designated place of learning, such as science laboratories, distance learning contexts, libraries, tutoring centers, teachers' lounges, gymnasiums and non-formal learning spaces.

3.3 Physical Environment and Influence on Students' Learning

In recent studies carried out by Baafi (2020), on school physical environment and student academic performance, the study examined and compared the effects of the school physical environment on the academic achievement of senior high school students in Ghana. The findings of the study confirmed that the students in senior high schools with a pleasant environment perform better than those in schools where the learning environment is not conducive. Based on empirical evidence, he established that adequate school facilities provide a positive educational climate suitable for student learning.

Kimaro (2020) claims that positive and negative physical environments affect students' educational progress and experiences. Sabihee & Naime (2021) conducted a

phenomenological study of non-formal basic education schools in Punjab. The study's findings revealed that a poor physical environment negatively impacts students' learning. However, the finding showed that teachers' motivational and positive behavior helps students to continue and to make progress in their studies.

Raymond (2023) states in his article that the impact of physical environment on K-12 students includes classroom design, school architecture, environmental factors, strategic lighting and technology, all of which contribute to creating a conducive learning environment that supports student engagement and holistic development. By understanding the impact of the physical environment on student education, educators, policy makers and designers can collaborate to create schools that prioritize the well-being and success of all learners. Investing in thoughtful design, sustainable practices and technological innovation can help create inclusive, equitable and inspiring educational spaces for generations to come.

Hallak (1990) holds that facilities form one of the potent factors that contribute to the academic achievement of students in the University system. They include the school buildings, lecture halls, accommodation, libraries, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment, apparatus and other instructional materials. He went further to say that their availability, relevance and adequacy contribute to the academic achievement of students. He, however, added that unattractive university buildings and overcrowded lecture halls, among others, contribute to poor achievement of the students in the universities and other levels of education.

Your study space plays a vital role in how effectively you learn and absorb new information. Comfort, noise, lighting and colour can all affect your learning ability. You should therefore keep these important factors in mind to help you create your ideal study space (Hendrix, 2024).

3.4 Emotional Environment and Its Impact on Students' Learning

According to Goetz *et al.* (2003), there are three reasons for exploring emotions in education: their impact on learning quality, students' wellbeing (physical and mental state) and their role in socialization (peer and teachers). It is believed that emotions affect the internal motivation of students to learn based on interest and curiosity in learning as well as their external motivation associated with the achievement of positive results or to prevent native consequences. Also, emotions are expected to facilitate the use of different learning strategies (Goetz *et al.*, 2003). In addition, emotions can contribute to styles of self-regulation. Positive emotions such as enjoyment, hope and pride are believed to contribute to both internal and external motivation, promote the use of flexible learning strategies and support self-regulation (Tyng *et al.*, 2017; Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018). Thus, they have a positive impact on academic performance conditions. Conversely, negative emotions such as hopelessness and boredom are set to reduce motivation and easy processing of information, implying a negative impact on performance. Emotional influences on students' mental and physical states are also underlined by some scholars as an important factor in learning (Goetz *et al.*, 2003; Rudd, 2012). As a result, emotions

affecting mental state can cause some behavioral changes, often expressed in communication. That shows a strong connection between emotional state and learning ability.

According to Hodgman (2012), a good emotional environment will provide children with: adults who provide them with emotional support, understand their feelings and show empathy. It also provides a sense of feeling safe and secure, enabling them to learn and develop, giving them the confidence to explore and overcome any challenges they may face. More so, it provides a safe place to explore their feelings, knowing they will be accepted by the adults around them and supported to develop how they express their feelings over a range of emotions, positive and negative. It also maintains warmth and a welcoming and accepting environment. It supports inclusivity, where everyone is valued, embracing all cultures, genders, ethnicities, languages, religions, special educational needs and disabilities. Finally, the emotional environment supports the development of their independence and life skills.

Mustafina (2020), in the article *Emotions and Their Effect on Learning* gives a general overview of the link between emotions and learning and their impact on the learning process. Adults are believed not to be influenced by emotions as children, nor in their ability to direct their learning process. Emotions can help a person remember details and, at the same time, distract them from the learning topic. The article presents different perspectives on negative and positive emotions in learning. Some research reveals the double character that these have, in that when they are positive, they can have a negative impact, and when they are negative, they can positively influence learning.

Cordova *et al.* (2023) examine the influence of stress and emotions in the learning process. They stated that emotional instability and stress are the main disturbances that condition the learning process, affecting both teachers and students. Armed conflicts are severe stressors that rob people of peace. The quality and intensity of emotions resulting from stress can influence emotions as well as the learning process. Positive emotions are healthy and can promote optimal learning in crisis moments. The activation of resilience strategies constitutes a key mechanism for dealing positively with problems and challenges generated from a conflicting environment. Correct management of emotions in stressful situations could promote effective learning through enhanced attention, resilience and capacity to solve problems.

Sasha *et al.* (2022) in the research work *Classroom Factors That Contribute to Emotional Intelligence*, in the case of primary school learners in South Africa, state that a healthy classroom climate has been related to the socio-emotional development of learners, which has in turn been associated with an increase in academic success, intrapersonal skills and the quality of interpersonal relationships. The results of the research indicate a strong relationship between classroom climate and emotional intelligence; satisfaction and cohesiveness correlated positively with emotional intelligence levels, while friction, competitiveness and difficulty correlated negatively with emotional intelligence levels. Creating a social and emotional learning environment

is a powerful way to foster collaboration, equity and self-management among students in an emergency situation (Morgan, 2024).

3.4.1 Social Environment and Its Effect on Students' Learning

Lukman (2023) purports that social environment factors can influence and become a source of learning in the process of formulating on behavior through various patterns of social learning. This is because humans naturally mimic, whether imitating in a positive or negative direction. The environment can affect the appreciation of the individual's moral values. Appreciation of moral values is the final stage of the social coverage process formed through social learning that incorporates aspects of social learning, fundamental elements such as stimulus, reaction, affirmation, compliance, identification, modeling and impersonation. The environment has an important role in the formation of individual identity and behavior. This role involves significant individuals such as parents, family members, peers, teachers and mass media. It has a strong influence on the formation of each individual's identity. More so, positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can increase achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behavior. Home background, as one of the factors that affect the academic performance of secondary school students, helps to position a child academically. If a child is brought up well, he will excel academically, and the reverse will be true if he is brought up in an unfriendly environment, such as a polygamous home where attention is given to many people in the family.

From the research work of Budiarti and Solehudin (2024), aimed to find out the influence of social environment on the academic performance of children at an early age, they state that the social environment, includes interaction with family, friends, peers, as well as teachers is believed to play a very important role in the cognitive development and academic achievement of the child. The results showed that social environment support, such as attention, active parental involvement in child education, positive interactions with friends and peers, and a motivating teaching approach by the teacher, have a significant positive correlation with the child's academic performance. Kids receive emotional support and develop adequate cognitive abilities in the social environment. The interest in the study of social environment stems from a major belief that 'social environment consists of the sum total of a society's beliefs, customs, practices and behaviors. At the same time, children are reprimanded for exhibiting negative behaviors that can contribute to various forms of problems for themselves, families, communities and countries (Arifin *et al.*, 2018).

Based on a research project on the effects of social environment on secondary school students' academic achievement in Buea published by Project-House (2020), the researcher recommended that the community, family, peer group and the type of school milieu that is conducive contribute significantly to student academic achievement.

Yussuf and Kadir (2023) stated that the social environment significantly impacts the younger generation, especially teenagers and students. Education is the foundation for individual development and advancement, and the primary platform for shaping

noble moral character. Several social environment factors influence the development of students' morals, self-identity and personality. Social environment factors can nurture and decide students' morals if students can adapt well. The article, which focused on discussing the social environment that affects and influences the formation of students' morals, and the issues and challenges faced from the research, concluded that the social environment was identified as having a substantial impact on developing students' morals, consisting of parents, peers, teachers, schools, residential settings and mass media. One must prioritize the role and responsibilities of parties related to each other to determine the student's moral.

Khan *et al.* (2023) in the research project Social Environment at University: investigating the impact on students' motivation and engagement, done with a sample of five universities in Punjab, revealed that a statistically significant and moderate positive effect on social environment has been found on the university students' motivation and engagement.

3.5 Students' Learning within a Crisis Context

Learning can be defined as a relatively permanent change in behavioral potentiality based on past experience and practice (Kimble, 1961). There are a lot of factors that comprise the challenges of students learning in armed crisis areas.

They face *psychological and emotional challenges* emanating from violent clashes among belligerents that cause trauma, anxiety and stress that affect students' potential in learning. Another psychological and emotional challenge is fear and insecurity. This can create a sense of fear, vulnerability and uncertainty.

In war zones, there are *disruptions in education systems*. Conflicts not only lead to school closures but can equally lead to students' and teachers' displacements. In the English-speaking regions, hundreds of schools have been shut down, and thousands of school actors have been displaced. All of this creates disruptions as it can lead to changes in school systems, curriculum and educational community. In this guise, learning cannot be adequately optimized.

Resource constraints: Schools in crisis zones may have a lack of vital school needs and facilities. Schools can equally be overcrowded with inadequate facilities, poor water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions, which can lead to outbreaks of pandemics, cholera and typhoid, thus creating environments which are not conducive to learning.

Poverty and economic challenges: In conflict areas, families may face poverty and economic hardship, as they may face difficulties providing basic educational needs. These may increase dropout rates and reduce access to education. Students may be forced to compromise their education by indulging in hazardous activities or being recruited by armed groups. These are activities that may compromise learning and well-being.

3.6 Theoretical Framework

3.6.1 Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1986, and 1982) work encourages researchers to study the changing relationships between students and the environment in which they study. This theory deals with the environmental systems that affect the way students end up developing competences or achieving in their academic endeavors. He believes that the interactions between the students and the learning environment are the main focus of good student achievement. Bronfenbrenner proposed 5 major types of environmental systems that greatly on students' development of competences in school. According to the ecological theory, if the relationship in the immediate microsystem breaks down, the students will not have the tools to explore other parts of the environment.

3.6.2 The Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner distinguishes five levels of the students' environment. The lowest and most important of Bronfenbrenner's levels of the Microsystems is the smallest immediate environment in which the students interact. Students' microsystem will include any immediate relationships or organizations they interact with, such as their immediate families, their peers in school and their lecturers. The progress of the students is dependent on how these groups interact with them, and student develops high competences when these groups interact through encouraging and nurturing relationships and places. More so, how the students react to these people and places in the microsystem will affect the development of competences. Each student's skills, abilities, and personality traits end up being developed depending on the environment in which he or she studies. To Bronfenbrenner, the student is not a passive recipient of but an active participant in the learning process. This means that he has to be provided an adequate environment for proper interactions.

3.6.3 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem is the next level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which involves linkages between microsystems. This level describes how different parts of the system work together to support the students. The connections between microsystems define it. The mesosystem reflects the relations among the various settings in which the students spend their time. The mesosystem includes the link between home, school environments, neighbourhoods, church or religious groups and other extracurricular activities. All these subsystems play a vital role in students' development of competences. However, during conflict periods, students' interactions with various settings are limited, thereby reducing learning opportunities.

3.6.4 The Exosystem

The third level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is the exosystem. This involves settings that students do not enter into, but it affects their process of competence development indirectly, such as parents' work places, lecturers' moods. Other exosystem

influences include: social media, television, friends, radio and other mass media. What students receive through social influences affects their development of competences positively and negatively. In most conflict scenarios, social media platforms hardly work well because of power outages and a lack of adequate internet connectivity.

3.6.5 The Macro System

It is the largest and most remote student body, but it still has a great influence over them. It refers to the consistencies in the systems at lower levels across an entire society or culture and includes the freedom permitted by the national government, cultural. More so, Bronfenbrenner (1972) affirms that the macro system includes the values and beliefs that accompany and maintain similar environments.

3.6.6 The Chronosystem

The last level of Bronfenbrenner's model deals with the variations not in space or extent but in time. The chronosystem refers to patterns of stability and change in students' school environment over time. As students grow older, they move from secondary school environments to university environments and from the University to society. The changes these students face in the learning environment must be considered in the ecological model because students can be affected by the change in their current learning environment or school environment. Armed conflicts introduce changes and variations in the environment that affect students' mobility from one level to another.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) not only states that students are greatly influenced by their school environment, but he also assumes that students play an active role rather than a passive role in their own development. In fact, Bronfenbrenner holds that nature and nurture have significant effects on school development. As far as the present study is concerned, it can be said that the school environment from which students often interact has critical roles to play in their education. Students from stable school environments are likely to develop high competences and view life from a positive perspective than students who emerge from unstable and conflicting school environments.

4. Research Methodology

This study examines the influence of the learning environment on students' learning at the University of Bamenda during armed conflict.

4.1 Research Design

The research design adopted for the study was the survey research design. This design was chosen because it is cost-effective, and with it, data could be collected from a large sample size, and findings generalized.

4.2 Area of the Study

This study was conducted at the University of Bamenda, located in the North West Region of Cameroon. It is one of the two Anglo-Saxon universities in Cameroon. The campus of the University of Bamenda is located in Bambili, Tubah Sub-Division in the Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon, 475km North-West of Cameroon's capital, Yaoundé. It is an active conflict area with many armed groups operating.

4.3 Population of the Study

The target population consists of about 21000 students at the University of Bamenda.

The accessible population includes students from the Faculty of Education, the Higher Technical Teachers Training College, and the College of Technology. Population here refers to all members of a group concerned or to a group of people with one or more attributes or characteristics of interest to the project.

Table 1: Distribution Target Population

Faculty/school/college	Population
Faculty of Education	1540
College of Technology (COLTEC)	1200
Higher Technical Teacher Training College (HTTTC)	1878
Total	4618

4.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

For this study, two sampling techniques were used. Schools were selected using simple random sampling. This was done using balloting in which names of the schools, faculties and colleges were written on small pieces of paper and separated according to schools, faculties and colleges in the University of Bamenda. The researcher then randomly picked a piece of paper from the various ballot boxes. The names of the schools, faculties and colleges written on the pieces of paper picked were then read to know the sample to work on. The samples were the Faculty of Education, COLTEC and HTTTC. The sampling population was selected using purposive sampling, in which we determined the number of students to be included in the research.

Table 2: Distribution of the Sample Population

Faculty/school/college	Sample
Faculty of Education	125
College of Technology (COLTEC)	125
Higher Technical Teacher Training College (HTTTC)	104
Total	354

4.5 Research Instrument

The instrument used was a researcher-developed questionnaire, which was examined and approved by the researcher's supervisor. The questionnaire was used because it is not time-consuming and is less costly. According to Denga (2003), the validity of a

research instrument refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure. Content validity was established for the research instrument.

Table 3: Calculating Content Validity

Items	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	IJVI	CVI
1	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
2	✓	✓	X	2/3	0.7
3	✓	✓	X	2/3	0.7
4	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
5	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
6	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
7	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
8	✓	X	✓	2/3	0.7
9	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
10	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
11	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
13	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
14	✓	X	✓	2/3	0.7
15	✓	X	X	2/3	0.7
16	✓	✓	X	2/3	0.7
17	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
18	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
19	✓	✓	✓	3/3	1
20	✓	X	✓	2/3	0.7
Content Validity					0.845

Table 4: Reliability Analysis Report for Students

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Coefficients	Variance	Number of items
Physical environment	0.734	0.142	8
Emotional environment	0.704	0.156	7
Social environment	0.738	0.169	5
Overall reliability	0.712	0.173	

To establish the reliability of the research instruments test re-test reliability was used, and the overall reliability of the instrument was 0.712. The content validity index (CVI) obtained was 0.8. Based on this, the instrument was judged valid and reliable.

4.7 Administration of the Instrument

The instrument was administered at different times to some students from the selected schools and faculties in the University of Bamenda. It took four days per school to give the respondents enough time for clarifications, amongst others. Therefore, it took about two weeks to administer the questionnaires to the students. The researcher went to the selected schools after obtaining permission from the school authorities, and then went directly to the selected students. The students were briefed on what the exercise would be about, and instructions were given on how they were to respond to the questionnaire items.

4.8 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0) with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics tools used are frequency count and percentages. The Spearman's rho test, which is a non-parametric test, was used in testing the hypothesis of the study because the data for all the variables were not approximately normally distributed.

5. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 5: Respondents' Background

Items	Modalities	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	149	42.1
	Female	205	57.9
Age	Less than 18 years	21	5.9
	18-22 years	205	57.9
	23 years and above	126	36.2
Level	Level 200	91	25.7
	Level 300	79	22.3
	Level 400	133	37.6
	Level 600	51	14.4

Describing the respondents by gender, 149, that is 42.1 % of them were male, and 205 (59.9 %) were female. Describing the respondents by age range, 21 (5.9 %) were less than 18 years of age, 205 (57.9 %) were 18-22 years of age, and 126 (36.2 %) were 23 years and above. All this completed the sample population of 354 respondents. Describing the respondents by level of study, 91 (25.7 %) were in level 200, 72 (22.3 %) were in level 300, 133 (37.6 %) were in level 400 and 51 (14.4 %) were in level 600.

Table 6: Respondents' Perception of Adequacy of School Physical Facilities within a Crisis Context

Statements	Stretched					Collapsed
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
The school's infrastructure is safe and secure for learning	177 (50.0%)	163 (46.0%)	14 (4.0%)	0 (0.0%)	340 (96.0%)	14 (4.0%)
The classroom environment is conducive to learning despite the crisis situation	99 (28.0%)	49 (13.8%)	106 (29.9%)	100 (28.2%)	148 (41.8%)	206 (58.2%)
The school provides adequate facilities for students' basic needs (e.g. water, sanitation)	122 (34.5%)	197 (56.6%)	35 (9.9%)	0 (0.0%)	319 (90.1%)	35 (9.9%)
The physical environment of the school affects my ability to focus on studies	50 (14.1%)	262 (74.0%)	35 (9.9%)	7 (2.0%)	312 (88.1%)	42 (11.9%)

I feel motivated to learn in the current school environment	29 (8.2%)	36 (10.2%)	156 (44.1%)	133 (37.6%)	65 (18.4%)	289 (81.6%)
The school environment has impacted my academic performance	91 (26.7%)	150 (42.4%)	71 (20.1%)	42 (11.9%)	241 (68.1%)	113 (31.9%)
The school provides sufficient resources e.g. textbooks and technology for learning despite the crisis	50 (14.1%)	262 (74.0%)	35 (9.9%)	7 (2.0%)	312 (88.1%)	42 (11.9%)
Teachers adapt their teaching methods to accommodate the challenges posed by the physical environment	91 (26.7%)	150 (42.4%)	71 (20.1%)	42 (11.9%)	241 (68.1%)	113 (31.9%)
The school administration prioritizes students' well-being and safety in the face of the crisis	99 (28.0%)	49 (13.8%)	106 (29.9%)	100 (28.2%)	148 (41.8%)	206 (58.2%)
Multiple response set	398 (18.7%)	765 (36.0%)	623 (29.3%)	338 (15.9%)	1163 (54.8%)	961 (45.2%)

From the above table, using the collapsed responses, we see that 340 (96%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school infrastructure is safe and secure for learning, while 14 (4%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 148(41.8%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the classroom environment is conducive to learning despite the crisis situation, while 206 (58.2%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 319 (90.1%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school provides adequate facilities for students' basic needs, e.g. water, sanitation. Whereas, 35 (9.9%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. More so, 312 (88.1%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the physical environment of the school affects their ability to focus on studies, while 42 (11.9%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 65 (18.4%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel motivated to learn in the current school environment, while 289 (81.6 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 241 (68.1 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school environment has impacted their academic performance, whereas 113 (31.9 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. More so, 312 (88.1 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school provides sufficient resources, e.g. textbooks and technology for learning, despite the crisis, while 42 (11.9 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 241 (68.1 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that teachers adapt their teaching methods to accommodate the challenges posed by the physical environment, while 113 (31.9 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Equally, 148 (41.8 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school administration prioritizes students' wellbeing and safety in the face of the crisis, whereas 206 (58.2%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the respondent's analysis, we had 1163 (54.8%) strongly agree and agreed, while 961 (45.2 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed, multiple response set.

Table 7: Respondents' Data on Social Environment and
Students' Learning in the University of Bamenda within a Crisis Context

Statements	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
My teachers provide emotional support and understanding during this crisis	93 (26.3%)	71 (20.1%)	91 (26.7%)	99 (28.0%)	164 (46.3%)	190 (53.7%)
I feel connected to my peers and classmates despite the crisis	106 (29.9%)	99 (13.8%)	57 (18.1%)	92 (26.0%)	205 (57.9%)	149 (42.1%)
I feel safe and supported in my interaction with staff	77 (21.8%)	107 (30.2%)	127 (35.9%)	43 (12.1%)	184 (52.0%)	170 (48.0%)
School administrators prioritize student well-being and mental health	35 (9.9%)	35 (9.9%)	206 (58.2%)	78 (22.0%)	70 (19.8%)	284 (80.2%)
My relationship with classmates has been positively affected by the school's response to the crisis	106 (29.9%)	70 (19.8%)	71 (20.1%)	107 (30.2%)	176 (49.7%)	178 (50.3%)
The school does not foster a sense of community and belonging	56 (15.8%)	58 (16.4%)	112 (31.6%)	128 (36.2%)	114 (32.2%)	240 (37.8%)
The social environment at school has helped me stay motivated to learn	106 (29.9%)	70 (19.8%)	71 (20.1%)	107 (30.2%)	176 (49.7%)	178 (50.3%)
I feel that my social relationships at school have been resilient during the crisis	93 (26.3%)	71 (20.1%)	91 (26.7%)	99 (28.0%)	164 (46.3%)	190 (53.7%)
The support from teachers and peers has positively impacted my academic performance	93 (26.3%)	71 (20.1%)	91 (26.7%)	99 (28.0%)	164 (46.3%)	190 (53.7%)
Multiple response set	663 (26.8%)	776 (31.3%)	535 (21.6%)	504 (20.3%)	1268 (51.2%)	1210 (48.8%)

From the above table, using the collapsed responses, we see that 164 (46.3%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their teacher provided emotional support and understanding during the crisis, while 190 (53.7%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 205 (57.9%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel connected to their peers and classmates despite the crisis, while 149 (42.1%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 184 (52%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel safe and supported in their interaction with staff. At the same time, 170 (48%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. More so, 70 (19.8%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school administrators prioritize student wellbeing and mental health, while 284 (80.2%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 176 (49.7%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their relationship with classmates has been positively affected by the school's response to the crisis. At the same time, 178 (50.3 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 114 (32.2 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the

school does not foster a sense of community and belonging, whereas 240 (37.8 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. More so, 176 (49.7 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the social environment at school has helped them stay motivated to learn. At the same time, 178 (50.3 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 164 (46.3 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel that their social relationships at school have been resilient during the crisis. At the same time, 190 (53.7 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Equally, 164 (46.3 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the support from teachers and peers has positively impacted their academic performance. Whereas, 190 (53.7%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the respondent's analysis, we had 1268 (51.2%) strongly agree and agree, while 1210 (48.8 %) disagree and strongly disagree, in the multiple response set.

Table 8: Respondents' Data on Emotional Environment
and Students' Learning within a Crisis Context

Statements	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	SA/A	D/SD
I feel emotionally supported by my teachers during this crisis	127 (35.9%)	155 (43.8%)	50 (14.1%)	22 (6.2%)	282 (79.7%)	72 (20.3%)
The school provides resources to manage stress and anxiety related to the crisis	77 (21.8%)	100 (28.2%)	106 (29.9%)	71 (20.1%)	177 (50.0%)	177 (50.0%)
I feel comfortable expressing my emotions and concerns to school staff	21 (5.9%)	64 (18.1%)	134 (37.9%)	135 (38.1%)	85 (24.0%)	269 (76.0%)
The crisis has negatively impacted my emotional well-being and mental health	156 (44.1%)	191 (54.0%)	7 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	347 (98.0%)	7 (2.0%)
I feel overwhelmed by the challenges posed by the crisis	149 (42.1%)	28 (7.9%)	98 (27.7%)	79 (22.3%)	177 (50.0%)	177 (50.0%)
The school environment helps me feel calm and focused despite the crisis	155 (43.8%)	79 (22.3%)	63 (17.8%)	57 (16.1%)	234 (66.1%)	120 (33.9%)
My emotional state affects my ability to concentrate and learn	93 (26.3%)	71 (20.1%)	91 (26.7%)	99 (28.0%)	164 (46.3%)	190 (53.7%)
The emotional support from the school has positively impacted my academic performance	106 (29.9%)	70 (19.8%)	71 (20.1%)	107 (30.2%)	176 (49.7%)	178 (50.3%)
I feel that my emotional well-being is prioritized by the school administration	93 (26.3%)	71 (20.1%)	91 (26.7%)	99 (28.0%)	164 (46.3%)	190 (53.7%)
Multiple response set	673 (27.2%)	685 (27.6%)	567 (22.9%)	553 (22.3%)	1374 (55.4%)	1104 (44.6%)

From the above table, using the collapsed responses, we see that 282 (79.7%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel emotionally supported by their

teachers during the crisis, while 72 (20.3%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 177 (50%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school provides resources to manage stress and anxiety related to the crisis, while 177 (50%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 85 (24%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel comfortable expressing their emotions and concerns to school staff. Whereas, 269(76%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. More so, 347 (98%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the crisis has negatively impacted their emotional well-being and mental health. At the same time, 7 (2%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 177 (50%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel overwhelmed by the challenges posed by the crisis. At the same time, 177 (50 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 234 (66.1 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the school environment helps them feel calm despite the crisis. Whereas, 120 (33.9%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. More so, 164 (46.3%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that their emotional state affects their ability to concentrate and learn. At the same time, 190(53.7 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Also, 176 (49.7 %) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the emotional support from the school has positively impacted their academic performance. At the same time, 178 (50.3 %) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. Equally, 164 (46.3%) of respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they feel that their emotional well-being is prioritized by the school administration. Whereas, 190 (53.7%) of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed. From the respondents' analysis we had 1374 (55.4%) strongly agreed and agreed, while 1104 (44.6 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed, multiple response set.

5.2 Inferential Statistics

Table 9: Relationship between Physical Environment
and Students' Learning within a Crisis Context

Spearman's rho	Statistical parameters	Physical environment	Students' learning
	R-value	1.000	.777**
	P-value	.	.001
	N	354	354

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

Statistically, findings showed that there is a very significant relationship between the physical environment and students' learning ($P\text{-value} < 0.05$). The positive sign of the relationship ($R=0.777^{**}$) implies that students' learning is more likely to increase when the school has adequate facilities to support students' learning. Thus, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between the physical environment and students' learning in the University of Bamenda within a crisis context is rejected.

Table 10: Relationship between Social Environment and
Students' Learning in the University of Bamenda within a Crisis Context

Spearman's rho	Statistical Parameters	Social Environment	Students' Learning
	R-value	1.000	.506**
	P-value	.	.000
	N	354	354

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

Statistically, the findings showed a very significant relationship between the social environment and students' learning (P-value <0.05). The positive sign of the relationship (R= 0.506**) implies that students' learning is more likely to increase when the social environment is positive and more likely to decrease when the social environment is negative. Thus, the null hypothesis stated above was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the social environment and students' learning at the University of Bamenda within a crisis context was accepted.

Table 11: Relationship between Emotional Environment
and Students' Learning in the University of Bamenda within a Crisis Context

Spearman's rho	Statistical parameters	Emotional environment	Students' learning
	R-value	1.000	.689**
	P-value	.	.000
	N	354	354

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

Statistically, findings showed that there is a significant relationship between emotional environment and students' learning (P-value<0.05). The positive sign of the relationship (R=0.689**) implies that students' learning is more likely to increase when the emotional environment is adequately supportive and more likely to decrease when it is not. Thus, the null hypothesis stated above was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states that there is a significant relationship between emotional environment and students' learning in the University of Bamenda within crisis context was accepted.

Table 13: Summary of Findings

Hypothesis	Alpha	Correlation coefficient	P-value	Decision
Ha1	0.05	0.777	0.01	Ha retained; Ho rejected
Ha2	0.05	0.506	0.00	Ha retained; Ho rejected
Ha3	0.05	0.689	0.00	Ha retained; Ho rejected

From the table above, the alternative hypothesis is retained in the first variable. Also, the null hypothesis is rejected in the second variable. Lastly, the null hypothesis is equally rejected in the third variable.

6. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was carried out on the learning environment and its influence on students' learning in the University of Bamenda in a crisis context. In this section, the findings obtained are summarized, rounding up discussions by giving some recommendations.

6.1 How Does the Physical Environment Affect Students' Learning in the University of Bamenda within a Crisis Context?

Findings show that the physical environment positively affects students' learning in the University of Bamenda. This implies that a conducive school physical environment will increase students' learning, while unfavorable conditions will cause a decrease in students' learning. This finding corroborates Baafi's (2020) research on school physical environment and students' academic performance. The findings of the study confirmed that the students in senior high schools with a pleasant environment perform better than those in schools where the learning environment is not conducive. Based on empirical evidence, he established that adequate school facilities provide a positive educational climate suitable for student learning.

It also ties with Sabihee and Naime (2021) article on the impact of physical environment on the educational experiences of students at the primary level. Findings showed that a poor physical environment negatively impacts students' learning.

Moreover, the findings align with the work of Raymond (2023), who concluded that the impact of the physical environment on students is that classroom design, school architecture, environmental factors, strategic lighting, and technology contribute to creating a conducive learning environment that supports student engagement.

These findings tie with Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (1979, 1982, and 1986), which deals with the environmental systems that affect the way students end up developing their competences. He believes that the interactions between the students and the school environment are the main focus of good student achievement. Bronfenbrenner proposed five major types of environmental systems, and he increasingly gives attention to the macro systems as an important environmental system which impacts the development of competences of students in school. According to the Ecological theory, if the relationship in the immediate microsystem breaks down, the students will not have the tools to explore other parts of the environment.

6.2 To What Extent Does the Social Environment Affect Students' Learning in the University of Bamenda within a Crisis Context?

Findings showed that the social environment positively influences students' learning in the University of Bamenda. This implies that social environmental characteristics portrayed by teachers and learners will make students easily learn, while negative social environmental characteristics portrayed by teachers will cause a decrease in the level of students' learning. As such, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis that states that there is a significant relationship between social environment

and students' learning in the University of Bamenda within crisis context was accepted. This finding is supported by Budiarti & Solehudin (2024) in the research titled The Influence of Social Environment on the Academic Performance of Children at an Early Age. Findings showed that social environment support, such as attention and active parents' involvement in child education, positive interaction with friends, peers, as well as motivating teaching approach by the teacher, have a significant positive correlation with the academic performance of the child.

6.3 How Does the Emotional Environment Affect Students' Learning in the University of Bamenda within a Crisis Context?

The finding regarding this research question shows that the emotional environment affects students' learning at the University of Bamenda. This implies that a positive emotional environment will increase the level of students' learning, while a negative emotional environment will cause a decrease in the level of students' learning. This finding is supported by Mustafina (2020), in the article Emotions and Their Effect on Learning; which gives a general overview of the link between emotions and learning, and their impact on the learning process. Adults are believed not to be influenced by emotions as children, nor in their ability to direct their learning process. Emotions can help a person to remember details and, at the same time, distract them from the learning topic.

Also, the research findings tie with Cordova *et al.* (2023), examining the influence of stress and emotions in the learning process: the example of COVID-19 on university students. They state that emotional instability and stress are the main disturbances that condition the learning process, affecting both teachers and students. The main objective of the review was to analyze the influence of stress and emotions on the learning environment. Stress is a physiological mechanism that the organism develops to adapt and survive external and internal challenges. In this context, stress turns out to be seen as a negative condition in the learning process when it is chronic. Extreme stress situations, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can generate anxiety and frustration in students. However, other studies indicate that controlled stress can positively enhance the learning process. On the other hand, the quality and intensity of emotions resulting from stress can also influence the learning process. Positive emotions are healthy and can promote optimal learning. Emotions lead to sentimental, cognitive, behavioral and physiological changes, which will have a strong influence on intellectual performance. The activation of coping strategies constitutes a key mechanism for dealing positively with problems and challenges, generating positive emotions essential for the self-regulation of learning. Correct management of emotions in stressful situations could promote effective learning through enhanced attention and the capacity to solve problems. It equally implies that context-specific policies could be developed to take into consideration the specific needs and challenges of students in armed conflict areas.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between the Bamenda University environment and students' learning within the context of the Anglophone crisis. Hypothesis testing at the specific levels allows us to conclude that physical, Social, and Emotional environments significantly influence students' learning at the University of Bamenda in a crisis context.

This study, therefore, concludes with the general alternative research hypothesis that a school environment in armed conflict areas is a significant determinant of quality learning.

This implies that increased funding is necessary to support education in conflict-affected areas, including resources for infrastructure, staff and implementation of school program.

7.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings, here are some recommendations:

- Stakeholders should ensure that schools have sufficient resources such as workshops, laboratories, libraries, technology and infrastructure to support learning. Safety measures need to be implemented. Safety protocols for students and teachers need to be established. The presence of security personnel and surveillance systems needs to be reinforced, and emergency response plans need to be made to create a safe learning environment.
- The sense of inclusiveness among school actors needs to be promoted. The fostering of inclusive environments that value diversity and promote empathy is very important. Local communities have to be engaged to promote, encourage and support students' schooling in conflict areas. The building of positive rapport between students and teachers and peers through mentorship programs, social activities and counseling services is vital.
- Psychosocial support services have to be created on the school campus to provide counseling, therapy, and psychosocial support to students and teachers who have been victimized and are traumatized or stressed out. With this in mind, teachers and school authorities need training on trauma-informed teaching practices and classroom management strategies in armed conflict areas. Incorporating stress-reducing activities, such as mindfulness, art, or sports, into the school curriculum for everyone is also important.
- Policy makers need to allocate sufficient funding to support education in conflict-affected areas, including resources for infrastructure, personnel, and programs. The policies and programs need to be oriented to meeting the specific needs of students and teachers in armed conflict-affected areas. More collaboration between governments, organizations, and stakeholders needs to be fostered to ensure a comprehensive emergent response to the educational needs of students in conflict-affected areas so as to reduce suffering and preserve lives.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author hereby declares that there are no conflicts of interest on this article.

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