

Instrumental support and psychological wellbeing of internally displaced secondary school students in Mezam Division, North West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

The socio-political crisis in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon has led to heightened insecurity and forced many to seek asylum in safer grounds. Mezam Division is one of those localities hosting Internally Displaced Students (IDS). These students face challenges that somehow impact on their psychological wellbeing. Some of them often exhibit symptoms of loneliness, low self-esteem, demonstrate lack of skills to engage with school and other related activities. This psychological exigency might require assistance from parents, school authorities or their peers. It is against this backdrop that this study aimed at examining the influence of instrumental support on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students in Mezam Division of Cameroon. An embedded mixed method research design was used combining simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data with the use of questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide from 331 IDS selected from 15 schools in Mezam Division. Quantitative data were analysed using percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviation, while qualitative data was thematically analysed. The findings showed that the provision of instrumental support significantly influenced the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students. This implies that IDS who constantly received support like books, fees and food, develop aspects of psychological wellbeing like; a sense of belonging, positive self-esteem and positive relationships. Based on these findings, it is recommended that school authorities and other stakeholders should offer practical assistance to IDS such as school supplies, learning materials, library services, educative websites and textbooks.

Keywords: instrumental support, internally displaced students, psychological wellbeing

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1. Introduction

Psychological wellbeing is an essential component of human functioning and it relies on the available social support provided by various social support networks (Gurung, 2005). Deterioration in an individual's psychological wellbeing can have wide-ranging effects on various aspects of his life. These effects can impact the emotional, cognitive, social, and physical domains of such an individual. As suggested by Phillips et al. (2000), a decline in psychological wellbeing could result in diminished independence and a lower quality of life for internally displaced persons. Displacement can lead to loss of social support from the people around the internally displaced students such as family members, friends, peers, neighbours and significant others. Psychological wellbeing therefore is a major concern for internally displaced students during this period.

When students are internally displaced from one environment to another they may be faced with such challenges as; adapting to the new environment, creating new relationships, coping with stress due to academic pressure, acquiring and accessing the necessary school needs and loss of social support network, amongst others. These challenges may cause these students to be psychologically unstable and may therefore affect their academic performance and psychological wellbeing negatively. As such, these students may need social support either from teachers, parents, other school authorities or their peers to enable them handle these problems. The people that they turn to in times of need for guidance, and instrumental support, or with whom they share information or things going on in their lives form their social support network (McDonald, 2020). These people can provide them with various sources of instrumental support such as financial assistance, educational resources and information, basic needs, food, and other material goods to overcome daily challenges. In the educational settings in Mezam Division for example, fellow students, teachers, school counsellors, administrators, parents, peers, and neighbours may be sources of support that can help these students adapt to their new environment, help build their self-esteem, reduce the amount of stress experienced due to displacement as well as help them develop self-satisfaction. In line with the above statement, Teoh and Rose, (2001) hold the view that the provision of social support helps individuals to reduce the amount of stress experienced as well as help them cope better in dealing with stressful situations

In Cameroon, the various disasters such as landslides, famine and especially the Boko haram insurgency in the Far North and Northern Regions of Cameroon, the socio-political crises plaguing the country in general and the North West and South West Regions, in particular, have led many people to flee their homes and relocate to other countries, towns and villages (Safotso, 2020) as either refugees or internally displaced people. The on-going conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon has resulted in persistent displacement and a heightened demand for social support. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), World Food Program (WFP), Plan International, and the UNHCR in partnership with local NGOs based in Mezam Division have been actively engaged in delivering social support services to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), focusing on instrumental support by providing basic necessities like food, household items, and agricultural training. The approach taken by NGOs in the Mezam Division reflects the region's unique socio-political situation, particularly in the context of the on-going Anglophone crisis (Ousmanou, 2022).

The evolution of social support services in Mezam Division has been driven by the on-going needs of the Anglophone crisis and the increasing recognition of the importance of psychological well-being as a key aspect of humanitarian aid. NGOs, both international and local, have made efforts to adapt to the changing situation, incorporating innovative methods, and building local capacities to deliver effective and culturally sensitive social support services. These supports may not directly go to alleviate the needs of the IDs and their psychological wellbeing. However, despite the available support some internally displaced students still portray some symptoms of loneliness and low self-esteem and also demonstrate lack of skills to engage with school and other related

activities which may affect their psychological wellbeing. This study therefore seeks to investigate the influence of instrumental support on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students in Mezam Division in the North West Region of Cameroon.

Research question

- How does the provision of instrumental support influence the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students in Mezam Division?

Research hypothesis

- H₀: The provision of instrumental support has no significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students
- H_a: The provision of instrumental support has a significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students

2. Background and Review of Related Literature

According to Cutrona, Shaffer, Wesner, and Gardner (2007), instrumental support is the furnishing of financial, material, or physical assistance, such as the provision of money or help with chores and errands. Cohen and Wells (1995) cited by Schultz et al. (2022), state that, the concept of instrumental support was introduced by behavioural scientists and it was used to describe a subcategory of social support, along with other terms that focused on the social needs of individuals. Other terms that are used interchangeably with instrumental support include tangible, functional, informal, practical, enacted, and task support (Schultz et al., 2022). Instrumental support is identified by actions that include help with personal and other care such as transportation, food, shelter and other chores. This problem focused support may be offered by significant others. Instrumental support can assist in the overall wellbeing of a person by not just solving their immediate problems, but by providing them with the assurance that they are not alone. Taking responsibility for someone's task is a great way of helping them face their problems.

Wong et al. (2018) refer to instrumental support as the provision of instrumental resources and practical help provided by teachers to students that assist them solve academic problems and develop academic skills. On their part Federici and Skaalvik (2014) indicate that Instrumental support can also be considered as an action-facilitating support Teachers can provide instrumental support by questioning students, elaborating and clarifying concepts, correcting errors, and modelling learning behaviours that contribute to understanding, problem solving and skill development. Definitions of instrumental support typically include students' perception of being provided with instrumental resources and practical help that enhances self-esteem (Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Suldo et al., 2009). Such practical support is noted in various motivational theories, for instance, Bandura's social cognitive theory, which highlights the essential role of communication and modelling in promoting mastery experiences and expectations, which again increases motivation and performance outcomes, decreases anxiety and improves on self-concept (Bandura, 1977, 1997 cited by Federici and Skaalvik, 2013).

Instrumental support can be seen as the provision of tangible help, such as financial assistance, housing, or other material resources, which can be critical for people facing displacement (Barrera, 1986). For internally displaced persons, this kind of support can have a significant impact on their psychological wellbeing by reducing the immediate stresses caused by displacement. Research has shown that various forms of instrumental support can improve mental health outcomes among IDPs, including reducing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This support helps IDPs meet their basic needs, which in turn can foster a sense of stability and control, thus, contribute positively to psychological resilience (Barrera, 1986). Studies often find that instrumental support can serve as a buffer against mental health challenges associated with displacement such as; access to resources, security and stability, resilience and coping (Federici and Skaalvik, 2014). They went further

to say that, instrumental support helps reduce the stressors associated with displacement, such as poverty, insecurity, and uncertainty. This can significantly buffer the negative effects of displacement on mental health, particularly in the following ways:

Reduction in Stress: Basic material support helps mitigate the anxiety and stress associated with unmet basic needs, which are often elevated in the context of displacement.

Restoration of Stability: Having access to consistent resources (e.g., food, shelter, healthcare) helps re-establish a semblance of stability and control, which are critical for emotional resilience.

Alleviating Trauma: For IDPs, the traumatic experience of displacement (e.g. losing homes, family members, or witnessing violence) can lead to high levels of psychological distress, including PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Instrumental support can reduce the immediate stressors related to survival, thus allowing individuals to focus on longer-term recovery.

Instrumental support has been positively associated with effort, perceived task value (Federici and Skaalvik, 2014), achievement (Wong et al., 2018), and subjective wellbeing (Suldo et al., 2009). Bandura's social-cognitive theory (SCT; 1997) provides a theoretical rationale for a potential association between instrumental support and academic buoyancy. According to SCT, instrumental support promotes communication and modelling which may facilitate students' mastery experiences, including mastery in challenging situations. This is consistent with research finding that instrumental help is important for completing tasks and overcoming challenges (Martin and Dowson, 2009). Instrumental support can therefore be said to help IDPs cope with the varied stresses that they face.

Morrison et al. (2016) also pointed out that several psychological mechanisms exist through which instrumental support influences mental well-being. The researchers proposed the following mechanisms: **Reduction in Perceived Stress and Anxiety:** Access to basic needs reduces the immediate survival stress that IDPs often face, such as hunger, lack of shelter, or inability to provide for their families. When these stresses are eliminated, individuals can focus on rebuilding their lives and addressing deeper emotional needs, leading to reduced anxiety. **Sense of Control and Stability:** Instrumental support can restore a sense of control and stability that may have been disrupted due to displacement. A sense of control is strongly correlated with lower levels of depression and anxiety. **Facilitation of Social Integration:** Instrumental support can help IDPs reintegrate into host communities by providing access to necessary resources like housing, healthcare, or employment opportunities. Successful integration is linked to increased social connectedness, which in turn enhances psychological resilience and reduces feelings of isolation or alienation. **Buffering Effects:** Instrumental support can act as a buffer against the negative psychological effects of trauma. For example, financial aid or access to health services can reduce the psychological burden caused by physical health issues, displacement-related trauma, and economic instability.

3. Research Methods and procedures

3.1 Design and Sample

The research design used in this study was the embedded mixed-method research design where data was collected using a questionnaire and a focus group discussion guide. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 15 schools from which the respondents were chosen. From the schools, again a purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select only internally displaced students. It was observed that there are 2482 internally displaced students distributed in the various schools selected for the study. After noting the total of IDSs in each school, the researchers used the Krejcie and Morgan Table to determine the sample size of 331 IDS. This was then followed by the selection of respondents using a simple random technique. For the focus group discussion, internally displaced students who did not answer the questionnaire were asked to opt to participate. Those who opted to participate were grouped until the quota of ten persons envisaged for each focus group was attained and

this was done until the sample size was achieved. Five focus group discussions were carried out with a group of 10 students and each FGD took 1 hour 30 minutes.

Table 1

The accessible population and sample of the study according to schools in the study area

S/N	SCHOOL	ACCESSIBLE POPULATION			SAMPLE		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	BCHS NKWEN	56	89	145	12	6	18
2	GBHS ATIELA	58	126	184	15	9	24
3	GBHS DOWNTOWN	145	372	517	13	12	25
4	FONAP NKWEN	1	5	6	1	3	4
5	PCHS BAMENDA	45	72	117	20	16	36
6	GBHS BAMENADA	321	87	408	28	30	58
7	SJCHS- BAFUT	9	11	20	2	5	7
8	GBHS BAMENDANKWE	156	355	511	12	10	22
9	HOLY ROSARY	8	7	15	2	3	5
10	CCAST BAMBILI	69	76	145	3	6	9
11	SMASA NKWEN	12	15	27	20	16	36
12	GTHS BAMBUI	13	3	16	2	1	3
13	GBTHS BAMENDA	35	28	63	16	17	33
14	GTHS NKWEN	95	110	205	20	15	35
15	GTHS BAMENDANKWE	73	30	103	9	7	16
TOTAL		1096	1386	2482	175	156	331

3.2 Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were a questionnaire and a Focus Group Discussion Guide. The questions were close-ended with the use of a Likert scale. The questionnaire was divided into three sections; Section A contained items used to collect demographic information of the participants, and section B consisted of 10 closed- ended items on scale of four (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree) were based on participants' perception of instrumental support received and its contribution to their psychological wellbeing. Section C was made up of items measuring the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students. Also, Focus Group Discussions were conducted with the students using a Focus Group Discussion Guide. The Focus Group Discussion Guide was made up of open-ended questions pertaining to the provision of instrumental support and its influence on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students. The focus group discussion guide was used to collect qualitative data to refine and explain the statistical results by exploring participants' views in more depth, giving explanations for the quantitative findings. Face to face method was used to administer the instruments with the help of school counsellors.

3.2.1 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The instruments were validated in two phases, that is, face and content validity, in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was then pilot- tested on a sample of 30 internally displaced students from GBHS Bayelle who had similar characteristics with the sample of the study. The reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha measure of internal consistency. The calculations gave a reliability coefficient of 0.76. The instruments were validated using face and content validity. The content validity index was obtained as 0.87. The quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 while qualitative data was thematically analysed using Atlas Ti 6.0. The Linear regression equation is given by; $Y = a + bX$, where Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable; b is the slope of the line and the y-intercept. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

3.3 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and simple linear regression with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 while qualitative data was thematically

analysed using Atlat Ti 6.0. The Linear regression equation is given by; $Y = a + bX$, where Y is the dependent variable, X is the independent variable; b is the slope of the line and the y-intercept. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was taken from all the respondents before administering the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity was also ensured by not including names of participants in the instrument and also to ensure that the rights, safety, and dignity of the participants were respected.

4. Findings

The findings are presented on the frequency of participants' response on the provision of instrumental support, thematic analysis on the provision of instrumental support, the extent of psychological wellbeing among ID students and on verification of the research hypothesis

4.1 Participants' response to instrumental support

The results on participants' response to the provision of instrumental support on table 2 reveal that an average of 49.8% was positive while 50.2% were negative. This suggests that IDPs need more support.

Table 2

The prevalence of instrumental support among ID students

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Collapsed agreement	Collapsed disagreement	M	SD
My classmates often share lunch with me	70 (21.1%)	122 (36.9%)	69 (20.8%)	70 (21.1%)	192 (58%)	139 (42%)	2.58	1.04
I often borrow textbooks from my classmates to do assignments	105 (31.7%)	151 (44.6%)	34 (10.3%)	41 (12.4%)	256 (77.7%)	759 (22.7%)	2.96	.95
Teachers often provide us with extra reading materials	34 (10.3%)	75 (22.7%)	89 (26.9%)	133 (40.2%)	109 (32.9%)	222 (67.1%)	2.03	1.02
The school library gives us access to reading materials	105 (31.7%)	139 (42%)	41 (12.4%)	46 (13.9%)	244 (73.7%)	87 (26.3%)	2.92	.99
The school often provide us with text books and other needs (pens, rulers and exercise books)	35 (10.6%)	62 (18.7%)	83 (25.1%)	151 (45.6%)	97 (29.3%)	234 (70.7%)	1.94	1.03
The school at times provide us with financial assistance	28 (8.5%)	62 (18.7%)	97 (29.3%)	144 (43.5%)	90 (27.2%)	241 (72.8%)	1.92	.97
Non family (classmates, host families) members provide us with basic school and other needs	47 (14.2%)	62 (18.7)	118 (35.6%)	104 (31.4%)	109 (32.9%)	222 (67.1%)	2.15	1.02
Family members take care of my school fees and basic school needs	91 (27.5%)	118 (35.6%)	61 (18.4%)	61 (18.4%)	209 (63.1%)	122 (36.9%)	2.72	1.05
My parents take me to the hospital when I am sick	76 (23%)	173 (52.3%)	35 (10.6%)	47 (14.2%)	249 (75.2%)	81 (24.8%)	2.83	.93
My parents provide me with transport fare to school	27 (8.2%)	63 (19%)	91 (27.5%)	150 (45.3%)	90 (27.2%)	241 (72.8%)	1.90	.98
Multiple response set average					165 (49.8%)	166 (50.2%)	2.58	.99

Table 2 shows that a slight majority of 58% agreed that their classmates often share lunch with them while 42% of them denied it. A wide majority of 77.7% agreed that they often borrow textbooks from classmates when they have assignments while 22.7% disagreed. A minority of 32.9% agreed that teachers often provide them with extra reading materials while 67.1% disagreed. A majority of 73.7% of respondents agreed that the school library gives them access to reading materials while 26.3% of them disagreed. A minority of 29.3% agreed that the school often provide them with text books and other needs while 70.7% disagreed. Similarly, a minority of 27.2% agreed

that the school at times provide them financial assistance while a majority of 72.8% disagreed. In like manner, a minority of 32.9% agreed that none of their family members provides them with basic school and other needs while 67.1% disagreed. Only 36.9% of the respondents agreed that family members take care of their school fees and basic school needs while a majority of 63.1% denied. When asked if their parents take them to the hospital when they are sick, a majority of (63.1%) agreed and a minority of 36.0% disagreed. A minority of 27.2% agreed that their parents provide them with transport fare to school, while 72.8% disagreed.

Summarily, from the multiple response set, averages of 49.8% responses on the provision of instrumental support were positive while 50.2% of them were negative. The mean for the provision of instrumental support was 2.58 which is closer to the hypothesized average of 2.5 on a scale of four points. It can be inferred that the provision of instrumental support to the internally displaced students was just average. The standard deviation for the provision of in instrumental support was 0.99. This is small it could be interpreted that the responses were similar.

4.2 Thematic analysis for the provision of instrumental support

Table 3

Thematic analysis for the provision of instrumental support

Question	Theme	Code description	Quotations
What are the various forms of instrumental support available to internally displaced secondary school students in Mezam Division?	Textbooks	Kind of support received by ID students	"Classmates who have textbooks often share with us"
	Library		"I do not make use of the school library"
	Basic needs		"Have a few friends in the quarters that assist me"
What type of support do you often receive from friends, family members and others?	Good study habits		"Teachers direct us on how to study despite our difficulties"
	Advice		"Teachers and school authorities advice to study hard and avoid issues that will disturb our studies"
	School library		"We often make use of the school library even though at times it is overcrowded"
	Consolation		"Friends console us when we have emotional difficulties and share with them"

Table 3 indicates that most of the students who participated in the focus group discussion were of the opinion that the instrumental support received was in the form of books, food, shelter and finances. The table also proves that the instrumental support received was not sufficient.

4.3 Psychological wellbeing among ID students

Table 4

The extent of psychological wellbeing among ID students

Items	SA	A	D	SD	Collapsed agreement	Collapsed disagreement	M	SD
Self-esteem								
I often feel inferior in front of my classmates	56 (16.9%)	129 (395)	90 (27.2%)	56 (15.95)	185 (55.9%)	146 (44.1%)	2.56	.96
I often doubt my capabilities when responding to a question	70 (21.1%)	143 (43.2%)	83 (23.1%)	35 (10.6%)	213 (64.3%)	118 (35.6%)	2.75	.90
I do not care about my self-image	88 (26.6%)	201 (60.7%)	42 (12.7%)	0%	289 (87.3%)	42 (12.7%)	3.14	.62
I feel worthless in front of my friends	41 (12.4%)	126 (38.1%)	55 (16.1%)	109 (32.9%)	167 (50.5%)	164 (49.5%)	2.30	1.04
I often feel incompetent when my classmates ask help from me	61 (18.4%)	159 (48%)	35 (10.6%)	76 (23%)	220 (66.5%)	111 (33.5%)	2.69	1.04

Sense of belonging								
I have a good relationship with my family	62 (18.7%)	103 (31.1%)	83 (25.1%)	83 (25.1%)	165 (49.9%)	166 (50.1%)	2.43	1.06
I get along with my classmates	76 (23%)	97 (29.3%)	89 (26.9%)	69 (20.8%)	173 (52.3%)	158 (47.7%)	2.54	1.06
My classmates often like to discuss with me out of class	21 (6.3%)	105 (31.7%)	110 (33.2%)	95 (28.7%)	126 (38.1%)	205 (61.9%)	2.15	.99
Peers in the neighbourhood often come to me for advice	35 (10.6%)	84 (25.4%)	124 (37.5%)	88 (22.6%)	119 (36%)	212 (64%)	2.20	.91
Teachers often co-opt me as discussion group leader	35 (10.6%)	157 (47.4%)	112 (33.8%)	27 (8.2%)	192 (58%)	139 (42%)	2.60	.78
Self-satisfaction								
My friends hold me in high esteem	85 (24.5%)	105 (31.7%)	103 (31.1%)	42 (12.7%)	190 (57.4%)	141 (42.6%)	2.60	.98
My friends and family love me	76 (23%)	193 (58.3%)	21 (6.3%)	41 (12.4%)	269 (81.3%)	62 (18.7%)	2.81	.88
I feel good about myself	96 (29%)	159 (48%)	49 (14.8%)	27 (8.2%)	255 (77%)	76 (23%)	2.71	.87
I am satisfied with my life	61 (18.4%)	83 (25.1%)	104 (31.4%)	83 (35.1%)	144 (43.5%)	187 (56.5%)	2.26	1.05
I feel worthless at times	35 (10.6%)	152 (49.5%)	96 (29%)	48 (14.5%)	187 (56.5%)	144 (43.5%)	2.42	.86
Multiple response set average					193 (58.3%)	138 (41.7%)	2.54	.93

Table 4 shows that a majority of 55.9% of them often feel inferior in front of their classmates, while 44.1% deny it. A wide majority of 64.3% agreed that they often doubt their capabilities when responding to questions in class and a minority of 35.6% denied. Also, a majority of 87.3% agreed that they do not care about their self-image while 12.7% disagreed. A slight majority of 50.5% agreed that they feel worthless in front of friends while 49.5% disagreed. A majority of 66.5% agreed that they often feel incompetent when classmates ask help from them while 33.5% denied this assertion.

Half of the respondents 49.9% agreed that they have a good relationship with their family while 50.1% disagreed. A slight majority of 52.3% agreed that they get along with classmates while 158 (47.7%) disagreed. A minority of 38.1% agreed that their classmates often like to discuss with them out of class while a majority of 61.9% disagreed. Still, a minority of 36% agreed that peers in the neighbourhood often come to them for advice while a majority of 64% denied. A majority of 58% agreed that teachers often co-opt them as discussion group leaders while 42% disagreed.

When the respondents were asked whether their friends hold them in high esteem, a majority of 57.4% agreed while a minority of 42.6% denied. Equally, a majority of 81.3% agreed that their friends and family love them while 18.7% disagreed. In like manner, a majority of 77% agreed that they feel good about themselves while 23% disagreed. A minority of 43.5% agreed that they are satisfied with life while 56.5% disagreed. Similarly, 56.5% of the respondents agreed that they feel worthless at times and 43.5% disagreed.

Summarily, from the multiple response set, averages of 58.3% of responses on the psychological wellbeing were positive while 41.7% of the responses were negative. The mean for psychological wellbeing was 2.54 which is around the hypothesized average of 2.5 on a scale of four points. It can be inferred that the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students was just average. The standard deviation for psychological wellbeing was 0.93. This is small and could be interpreted that the responses were similar.

4.4 Verification of the research hypothesis

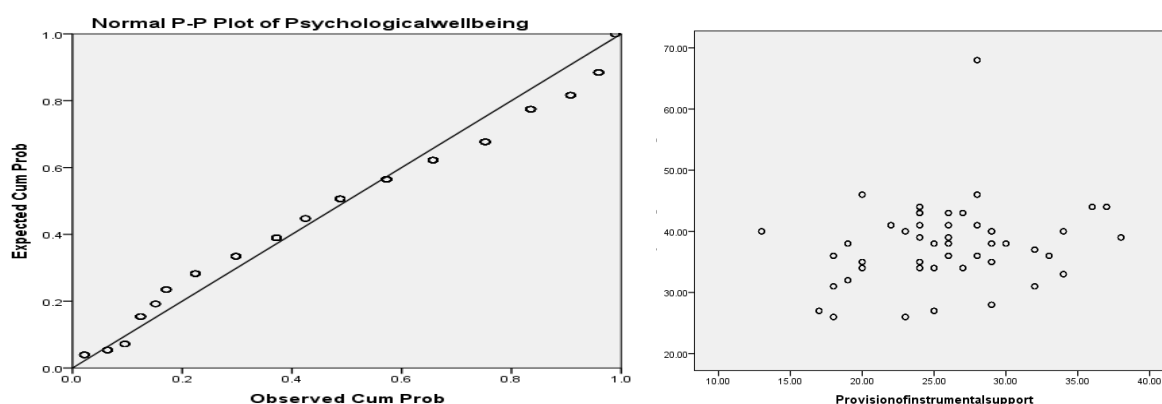
In order to test the research hypothesis, a linear regression analysis was used as the statistical tool to verify the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule: reject the null hypothesis if the calculated P-value is less than 0.05 and retain the null hypothesis if the P-value is greater than 0.05.

A bivariate linear regression was conducted to verify the strength of the provision of instrumental support on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students in Mezam Division of the NW Region of Cameroon. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was 0.105 indicating that 10.5% of the variance in the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students was accounted for by provision of instrumental support.

The regression equation to predict psychological wellbeing was obtained as psychological wellbeing = 30.646 + 0.280 provision of instrumental support. When the provision of instrumental support is zero, the psychological wellbeing will be 17.24. According to the slope, for each additional unit change in the provision of instrumental support, psychological wellbeing of ID students will increase by 0.280. The constant term is positive. This means that there are still some factors not included in the model that aggregately influenced positively the psychological wellbeing of ID students in Mezam Division of the NW Region of Cameroon within the period of study. An increase in these factors will positively impact the psychological wellbeing, everything being equal. Considering the t- value for the provision of instrumental support, the result is significant ($p < 0.01$). This explains that the provision of instrumental support was an important factor that affected the psychological wellbeing of ID students in Mezam Division in the NW Region of Cameroon.

The ANOVA revealed that the provision of instrumental support has a significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of ID students $F(1, 329) = 18.351.115$, $P < 0.01$. The P-value = 0.000 is less than 0.05 indicating a significant effect of the provision of instrumental support on the psychological wellbeing of ID students. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative which states that the provision of instrumental support has a significant effect on the psychological wellbeing of ID students was upheld.

Figure 1: P - P plot and scatter plot for provision of instrumental support as a predictor of psychological wellbeing



In addition to the regression analysis, a scatterplot and P – P plot of the data were examined to ensure model assumptions were met. The residuals were seen to be normally distributed (Shapiro-Wilk $W = .98$, $p = .203$), homoscedasticity was confirmed by examining the P- P plot for the data set, and the residuals appeared to be independent (Durbin-Watson $D = 1.85$, $p = .486$). To verify the absence of multicollinearity, the variance inflation (VIF) factor was examined. The results of the test gave a variance inflation factor of 1.002 and collinearity tolerance value of 1.001.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the provision of instrumental support to IDSs in Mezam Division was just average. Furthermore, the regression analyses show that provision of instrumental support in the form of (tangible support, basic personal and school needs, shelter etc.) is a significant factor that influences the psychological wellbeing of ID students. This is seen in the fact that the provision of school needs such as books, pens, meals etc. to IDSs reduces the daily struggles, anxiety, and depression, of these students and allows them to focus on their studies.

Tangible support helps to alleviate the sense of hopelessness and sense of belonging of the students. These findings are grounded in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory as it points out that instrumental support directly addresses the underlying issues of the basic needs of students. The theory points out that by providing food, water, clothing, shelter and ensuring that these fundamental needs are met is crucial for the survival and physical well-being of internally displaced students. This implies that without these basics, students cannot focus on (may not achieve) higher-order needs. From the perspective of the theory, instrumental support can include resources for education and personal development, such as school supplies, uniforms, and tutoring services. Providing these resources helps students succeed academically, which boosts their self-esteem and earns them respect from peers and teachers. Recognition of their achievements contributes to a positive self-image. Therefore, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory brings to light how instrumental support addresses multiple levels of needs for internally displaced students as seen in the findings of the present study.

By ensuring that their physiological and safety needs are met, instrumental support provides a foundation for ID students to focus on higher-order needs such as belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. This comprehensive approach enhances their overall psychological well-being, enabling them to thrive despite the challenges posed by displacement. These findings tie with that of Federici and Skaalvik (2013) who found that teachers instrumental support predicted lower levels of anxiety in students, promoted intrinsic motivation and helped seeking behaviour and engagement in students and hence improving their psychological functioning. The researchers concluded that teachers should endeavour to provide instrumental support to students in the form of appraisal and guidance during the teaching learning process. Also, the present findings are confirmed by Chien and Valcke (2020) who indicated that the provision of instrumental (instructional) support to students boost the student's willingness to communicate, confidence to be involved in spoken English lesson and enhancing their psychological functioning and wellbeing. Contrary to the direct significant effect of instrumental support on the psychological wellbeing of ID students found in the present study, Huang, Matthews, Liang and Choi (2023) in their study found an indirect effect of instrumental support on psychological wellbeing. They indicated that the influence of instrumental support on psychological wellbeing could only be felt if it is being mediated by psychological capital. Also, the above researchers indicated that instrumental support from teachers and school had no significant influence on the psychological wellbeing of students contradicting the present findings where ID students perceived instrumental support from teachers and school to be very important for their psychological adjustment. Some of the students indicated that they borrow textbooks from teachers and the school library which help them in their academics and thus reduce the psychological stress of not being able to do assignments and thus improving on their psychological functioning.

Also, the findings of the present study are in line with those of Suldo et al. (2009) who indicated that teacher support types accounted for 16% of the variance in students' subjective wellbeing. In fact the study of Suldo et al. (2009) indicated that instrumental and emotional support from teachers were very important factors in improving student's subjective and psychological wellbeing. Wong, Xi Tao and Chiaki (2018) support these findings by indicating that instrumental support from teachers significantly influence self-esteem and self-worth of students. Furthermore, these findings are in line with those of Adamou (2018) who found that peer support and basic psychological needs were strong predictors of students' academic motivation in the University of Ngoundere. Kent et al. (2020) investigated the effect of instrumental support on distress among family caregivers. The researchers found that poor instrumental support was associated with high distress among caregivers, suggesting the need for palliative and supportive care interventions to help caregivers leverage instrumental support. The analyses of the qualitative data also indicated that most ID students in Mezam receive instrumental support mainly in the form of textbooks and their basic needs.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of instrumental support on the psychological wellbeing of internally displaced students in Mezam Division. The study's findings offer valuable insights into how instrumental support influences the psychological well-being of internally displaced persons, particularly students

in Mezam Division. The results confirm the hypothesis that instrumental support plays a significant role in enhancing the psychological wellbeing of displaced students in this region. Using simple linear regression, the study demonstrated that instrumental support improves the mental health of these students. The regression analysis revealed that instrumental support in the form of finances, basic needs, textbooks medical care and others are crucial in maintaining the psychological well-being of internally displaced students in Mezam Division. The focus group discussions highlighted that while the instrumental support received by these students helped improve their well-being, it was not always sufficient. However, if contextual factors such as displacement experiences and school environment are taken into account by various stakeholders when providing instrumental support to internally displaced students, it will go a long way to enhance their psychological wellbeing.

The findings of the study imply that students who receive instrumental support in the form of basic needs such as books, pens, and meals experienced a reduction in their level of anxiety and depression. Hence, they are less worried about daily exigencies and concentrate on studying which may lead to better academic performance and mental health. Also, the provision of basic needs and shelter to these students can create a feeling of belonging and emotional stability which enhances social integration with peers. The findings further highlight the need for teachers to recognize these student's difficulties beyond the classroom. This will enable them create a nurturing environment that promotes learning and emotional resilience among the students. Finally, teachers who understand the importance of instrumental support on students' psychological wellbeing can advocate for better resources from the administration, NGOs and social workers in order to provide a nurturing environment that favour the teaching-learning process.

Based on the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data that answered the research questions, recommendations were made to some stakeholders in relation to the psychological wellbeing of ID students.

- Teachers, school authorities and other stakeholders should offer practical assistance such as school supplies and learning materials to students in need. Also, teachers in particular should provide extra help with homework and assignments to ensure students keep up with their studies and refer students to additional support services when necessary. Such services may include libraries, websites or other relevant textbooks
- Parents and host families of IDS should ensure the provision of basic needs such as food, clothing, and school supplies. This will enable the students to find it easy to study and participating in the teaching learning process. Parents and guardians of IDS are encouraged to participate in school activities and support networks that provide instrumental support to students.

7. References

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